



FRIENDS OF WARRNAMBOOL BOTANIC GARDENS Inc.

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Issue No. 23

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2000

HISTORICAL JOTTINGS

Extracts from Town Council minutes 18th July 1906

THE ROSE-BED PROPOSAL

Cr. Swinton drew attention to the proposal made by the "Warrnambool Standard" to establish a rose-bed in the Botanical Gardens. He thought the suggestion a good one and worthy of consideration. There were several large trees in and near the centre of the gardens which would, with advantage, be taken away. The Mayor said he inspected the gardens on Saturday, and he agreed with Cr. Swinton. He thought the curator should be given more assistance in regard to labor. He favored engaging apprentices. It would be a good opportunity for youths thoroughly learning the trade of gardening.

The various matters mentioned were referred to the Parks and Gardens Committee for report.

Cr Margell said the money subscribed for the War and Commonwealth Memorial, amounting to about £40. Which was still in the bank, could be advantageously expended in providing attractive and suitable entrance gates to the gardens. Such gates might form an appropriate Town Jubilee Memorial. He knew a resident ready to subscribe a guinea towards the cost of such gates. Cr Younger was of a similar opinion, and urged that steps be taken with the object of providing suitable gates at the gardens.

The Mayor intimated that he would convene a meeting of those who had subscribed the money and place the proposal before them.

The Mayor said he was sorry to hear of thefts of flowers from the gardens chiefly by ladies who appeared to be under the impression that they could take as many flowers as they wished.

The town clerk said there were notices at the gates prohibiting the taking of flowers. The only remedy was to prosecute offenders.

This matter was also referred to the Parks and Gardens Committee.

Marie Johnstone

FRIENDS' CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Tuesday 24th October

Garden Tour to Dunkeld (see below)

New Members Welcome – please see details below

Christmas in The Gardens – details of this day will be given to members closer to the date

GARDEN TOUR TO DUNKELD TUESDAY 24TH OCTOBER 2000

Visit three gardens

Griffin's Hill – Toora West – Narrapumelap

\$35 per ticket includes

bus, morning & afternoon tea,

lunch & admission fees

Depart Warrnambool Tourist Information Centre

8.45 am return 5.30 pm

Bookings call: Kathy Wicherson 5562 1436

Mandy King 5562 0343

GRIFFIN'S HILL

A wide range of exotic plants set against the perfect backdrop of mountains and native flora is the enticement to Griffin's Hill. An amazingly modern property located at the very base of the Grampians southern end at Mount Sturgeon. Meandering paths take you through six acres of parkland. Throughout the garden, there are pieces of sculpture and a natural rock area highlighted by a waterfall.

TO ORA WEST

A structural and sophisticated garden with a variety of mature trees. Notable features would include the red delicious espaliered apple and a striking specimen of *Crataegus horizontalis* 'Alba'. Controlled colour themes are apparent, predominantly gold and silver around August to a flush of colour in the spectacular spring display of blossoms, wisteria and clematis. Hidden corners reveal treasures awaiting to surprise and delight you.

NARRAPUMELAP

Considered one of the most significant examples of French gothic style in rural Victoria, built in 1873 by a wealthy pastorals. The entrance to the property is through perhaps the finest wrought iron gates gracing a country estate, hung on massive bluestone columns they provide the visitor with an elegant example of 19th century casting. The nearby gatehouse in the Gothic revival style sets a mood of anticipation. An elm-lined carriageway winds through a 20 hectare park of specimen and decorative trees.

NEW MEMBERS WELCOME

We will be holding a morning tea and guided walk at the gardens for recently-joined new Members in November. New members will receive an invitation closer to the date. If you have not been able to attend a previous orientation function and would like an invitation, please call Isobel Jones on 5568 1076

**FRIENDS OF WARRNAMBOOL
BOTANIC GARDENS INC.**
A0032902E

Patron

Hon. Richard McGarvie

President

Ms Marie Ziebell (03) 5561 1137

Secretary

Mrs Mandy King (03) 5562 0343

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Mrs Judy Phillips (03) 5562 3320

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Our newsletter is published spring, summer, autumn and winter. If you would like to contribute to our publication please forward material to the above address

Published by:

Marigold Curtis Mandy King
15th September 2000

IT'S WATTLE TIME - AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL FLORAL EMBLEM

The common name "wattle", used for Australian species of Acacia, is derived from an Anglo-Saxon building technique. Wattles were flexible twigs or small branches interwoven to form the framework of buildings. The frame was then daubed with mud, a building method known as wattle and daub. This style of building was introduced to Australia by early British settlers and species of Acacia were used as wattles.

The Aboriginal people used the gum from the wattle as food or mixed into drinks. It was also taken as medication for dysentery or applied to wounds. The green seed pods were cooked and eaten, dry seeds ground into flour and the inner bark used to make string and bark infusions used for medicine. The Tasmanians hung the blossoms in their huts to help them sleep. Blackwood, with its beautiful grained hard wood was made into spears, shields and clubs.

Wattles were destroyed in large numbers because of the valuable tannin in the bark. Europeans stripped the bark to tan cattle and sheep hides in Australia and also exported quantities to overseas tanneries.

The golden wattle, *Acacia pycnantha*, was proclaimed the official floral emblem in August 1988.

It is found in South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and the ACT. There are more than 760 species of Acacia in Australia making it by far the largest genus in the Australian flora. Since Federation in 1901 the golden wattle has enjoyed popular acceptance as the national floral emblem. In 1912 on the recommendation of the Prime Minister, the Hon. Andrew Fisher MP, it was included as the decoration surrounding the Commonwealth Coat of Arms and has been used in the design of Australian stamps and many awards in the Australian honours

system. The emblem of the Order of Australia is a single wattle flower in the form of a convex disk. In 1913 a Federal Constitution for an association known as the Wattle Day League was established. The League's aims included the wearing of wattle blossom on 1 September each year. This tradition is still followed in many schools and organisations.

The flowering plant reflects the national colours, green and gold - very apparent at this time with the Sydney Olympic Games. Wattle has been omitted from the bouquets to be given to athletes at the Games because it can cause allergic reactions.

Wattles are to be planted as the understorey on the northern and eastern boundaries of our Botanic Gardens. Next year, on Wattle Day, 1 September, it is planned to involve school children in the planting of these wattles which will be grown by the Warrnambool Branch of the Society for Growing Australian Plants.

Some species to be planted are:

Acacia meurnsii (Black Wattle)
Acacia pycnantha (Golden Wattle)
Acacia sophorae (Coast Wattle)
Acacia melanoxylon (Blackwood)
Acacia dealbata (Silver Wattle)

I had the pleasure of speaking to the above Society for Growing Australian Plants in August and look forward to a happy association with them and their involvement in the Botanic Gardens. I hope many of you were able to visit their Annual Flower Show at which many wattles were displayed.

Marie Ziebell

Reference: *Koonie Plants Koonie People* by Nelly Zola and Beth Gott
Australia's Awards & National Symbols - Dept of Administrative Services,
Canberra

THE OLYMPIC FLAME - WARATAHS

On the outskirts of Sydney at the Mount Annan Botanic Garden 2000 plants of a new Waratah cultivar have been propagated called "Olympic Flame" the result of a selection program at the University of Sydney, which owns the Plant Breeders Rights. It has been designed to dazzle Olympic visitors and will be seen at Olympic venues, the Sydney Gardens and in an extensive potted display at an exhibition. Waratahs, whose natural habitat in Sydney sandstone areas has been stripped to the point that they are now a threatened species, are the subject of considerable horticultural research. They are the floral emblem of New South Wales. Waratahs are also found in Gippsland and Tasmania.

Marie Ziebell

Ref: *Botanic Magazine* Vol. 8 Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne

FRIENDS OF WARRNAMBOOL BOTANIC GARDENS INC.
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
19TH JULY 2000
PRESIDENT'S REPORT

An annual general meeting is a time to review the past year and to present plans for the future.

This year the Friends have:

Seen the removal of 10 "von Mueller" Pines from the boundary of the Gardens, mostly from the northwest for safety reasons. These trees were planted by Charles Scoborio in the late 1800's.

Provided free guided tours by the Guiding Friends who present themselves at the Gardens entrance every Wednesday and the last Sunday of the month on a roster basis. They continue to upgrade their information under the guidance of Isobel Jones.

Supported the new Growing Friends group in their endeavours to restore the old curator's cottage garden and seedraising beds into a plant propagating area and the continuation of the espaliered fruit trees and watering systems. The main entrance bed to the Gardens is being restored with the help of the Growing Friends who have researched and obtained plants for this bed.

Had fundraisers this year including a film luncheon, catering at Minjah and a Day in the Gardens with music provided by the Warrnambool Pipe and City Bands, which included our first plant, produce and craft sale which was very successful. Afternoon tea was again served from the rotunda. Issued our quarterly newsletter with a new format and the addition of articles from members and regular features. Produced and distributed widely the first colour brochure of the gardens.

Continue to research the origin of the urns and gas lamps and sought out the experts in their fields with a view to restoration as the urns, in particular the smaller ones, are deteriorating.

Four members of the Committee attended the Annual Conference of the Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens (Vic) Inc. held in Albury where they attended lectures and workshops which were very inspiring. Many new friends of gardens were represented at the conference and the Association is accepting the fact that it will have to go "national". The Albury Botanic Gardens were particularly well managed, the staff very well informed even taking guided tours through the gardens. The Albury Botanic Gardens are lit at night which are very beautiful as you drive through the town.

The history of the Friends group (now in its 11th year) is being compiled this year and our archives will be put in order and storage and a homepage sought.

The Committee was able to have the opportunity of "brainstorming" its function through the services of Business Thinking Systems and we thank Neville Smith for volunteering his time and expertise. We look forward to being even more efficient as a result of this exercise.

The Friends have arranged for the rebinding of the original Curator's Report Book 1898-1958 which is a valuable resource of the City of Warrnambool and available at the Library. A copy will also be donated to the Library for research purposes to protect the original from handling.

Plans for the future:

We have arranged for the propagation of the Gardens ancient Eucalypts, Blackwood and the one remaining Bursaria which predate the Gardens.

We have been kindly assisted by Ken Arthur, a member of the Society for Growing Australian Plants.

We continue to seek Council assistance for interpretative signs at the entrances to the Gardens together with the completion of the Queen Street boundary fence.

We will continue to seek, through Council, the appointment of a "shared" horticulturist or curator for the Gardens to ensure the botanic role of the Gardens.

Educational tours and special walks are planned for the Gardens – the labelling of plants will be a necessity before this can take place.

The continued restoration of the garden beds to improve their botanic integrity and the compilation of a database to assist in the management of the Gardens. We will continue to apply for grants to enable the labelling and database to proceed.

I would like to sincerely thank the Committee for their time and enthusiasm. Much has been achieved through their support and attendance at meetings and functions. They reflect the strong support in the community for the Gardens and their continuation. The Friends membership is currently at 110 and family membership is now included. We hope to expand our sub-committees this year to achieve the goals we have set ourselves and welcome new members.

We look forward to working with the Council to ensure the Warrnambool Botanic Gardens continue on into the 21st Century and engage the new generation to celebrate their heritage.

Marie Ziebell

President

BIRD WATCH

The grey cranes have once again been seen nesting in one of the pine trees, some of these trees will be taken from the perimeter of the gardens because of safety fears.

We are putting together a "register of events" within the gardens – if you sight anything of interest on your walk around the gardens, we would appreciate your assistance by recording where and when, then report these sightings to any one on the committee, we will then report these sightings in the newsletter for others to enjoy and put them in the register for the future history of the gardens.

HISTORICAL RESEARCH

The Friends are in the process of compiling as many details of the gardens as possible for future generations. In this endeavour we ask for your help with "interesting and quaint stones", these stones may be ones you have been involved in or maybe you have heard from ancestors or friends. Our idea is to compile facts and stories together to produce a booklet, they will also be stored with our data base as we have found that these accounts have been useful in restoration projects. Please call or deliver you anecdotes to one of our committee.

BOTANIC GARDENS OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

From Alice Springs the Stuart Highway runs almost due north for 1400 kilometres to Darwin. The Northern Territory's two botanic gardens at Alice Springs and at Darwin illustrate the contrasting climate of the arid centre and the sub tropical north.

At Alice Springs, the Olive Pink Botanic Garden features native plants of the arid zone. The name conjures up images of pink rocks and muted olive green foliage, but this is not the explanation. The gardens are named for Miss Olive Pink (1884 - 1975) who came to Central Australia in 1930 and lived in the Tanami Desert with the aboriginal people. Olive Pink was an anthropologist, naturalist and very feisty lady, a fierce advocate for the rights of aborigines and of women. When she moved into Alice Springs she worked for the establishment and development of an arid zone botanic garden. In 1956 a reserve of 16 hectares was established across the Todd River within walking distance of the city centre. Miss Pink was the honorary curator and with the help of aboriginal gardeners developed the area until her death. The garden is now managed by a voluntary Board of Trustees. It receives some assistance from the Northern Territory Government but relies heavily on volunteers and public donations.

Displays in the visitor centre explain the interaction of plants, animals, insects and people of the arid zone. Outside plantings are grouped for example, by sand dune, waterhole or other environment. All plants are labelled with scientific names and a common name if applicable. Because of this years unusually heavy rainfall there was a bonanza of flowering plants in July 2000. Nardoo grew on the swampy ground and around the pool. This little plant, with a leaf like a four leaf clover has spores that can be ground into flour. Bourke and Wills are reported to have gathered and eaten Nardoo, but did not treat it correctly and suffered from the toxins it contained. One of the rarer plants, Waddi Wood, is a very hard timber sought after for shaping waddies. It is an acacia with very spikey needles, in shape vaguely resembling a christmas tree. The gardens are being invaded by Buffel Grass, a native of South Africa, which is believed to have been spread throughout wide areas of Australia from the straw stuffing in the saddles of the Afghan's camels. In grazing lands the grass is controlled, but where it is allowed to seed it invades native grasses. It was planted around the Alice Springs aerodrome to stop dust. Now it is regarded as

invasive and the recent floods have spread seed along the water-courses. The Afghan camel traders also spread dates, dropping seed around the water holes much as Von Mueller spread blackberries through the Otways to provide future food. Now the territories Parks and Wildlife Commission are removing the ferrel female palms. The management of the Olive Pink gardens aim to conserve, display and study the flora of Central Australia. In doing so they also encourage other life like the mathematically described Inch Ants and the vocal Babbiers. This latter group of talkative birds that flock together and have a communal nursery tree, seem to parallel human behaviour with our creches and play groups. Would the eccentric Olive Pink approve?

Pat Varley. Sept 2000

ITEM OF INTEREST

The Friends of the Elms are compiling a register for private and public Elms to allow quick action by experts in the event of Dutch elm disease spreading to Australia. The WCC will be registering local trees. For a registration form, phone 0409 870 860.

ARAUCARIA HETEROPHYLLA Norfolk Island Pine

Captain James Cook first sighted these pines on Norfolk Island in 1774 on his first voyage of discovery. As the Royal Navy was desperately short of timber for making ships' masts they hoped that their tall, tapering trunks would prove suitable. However the timber was found to be too soft for mast building and was used for interior joinery only.

The Norfolk Island Pine or *Araucaria heterophylla* was introduced into the colony in the early 1800's and became one of the most fashionable ornamental trees for both private gardens and public parks, particularly suited to the coastline. It is recorded that trees were first planted as early as 1812 around the first settlement of Sydney, some being planted in the Domain. Governor Lachlan Macquarie it is believed planted pines in the vicinity of a creek now part of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney. This pinetree as we all know has become a Warrnambool emblem, the first ones being planted along the coast and in the main streets in the late 1800's. Charles Scoborn our first curator was responsible for planting the trees in Raglan Parade. In April 1901 he recorded in his diary to Council "... fourteen of the Pines have had the leading shoot broken off by some mischevious (sic) persons." A problem we are faced with even today.

At the main entrance to our gardens there are three relatively young pines and another very old one in the Curator's Cottage garden. Inside the gates a further one was planted in 1996 by Jim Guilfoyle in honour of his grandfather, William Guilfoyle, who designed the Warrnambool Botanic Gardens 120 years ago.

Marigold Curtis

GROWING FRIENDS

Lorraine visited the Growing Friends at the Melbourne Botanic Gardens and purchased *Clivia nobilis* and *Iris 'Hugh Waters'* for planting in the front garden bed. The borders of the main entrance beds have been completed with *Echeveria elegans* - 'Heri & Chickens'. This succulent originated in Mexico and was used in the past to form attractive "ribbon planting". We are grateful to Colin McKenna of Midfield Meats for donating hundreds of these plants to the Growing Friends. Three new apple trees have been planted in the Growers Section along with three figs which were donated by Cas Kimpton.

OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST

October 26 Thursday 7.30 - 10.30 pm

Penelope Hobhouse - lecture at Camberwell centre park view room

Garden lecture series \$77 Ph/fax 9592 0825

October 26 - November 12 10am - 5pm

"Art of Botanical Illustration" at Mueller Hall RBGM (all works for sale)

October 28 & 29 Saturday and Sunday

"Dalvu" Terang. This garden will be open to the public as part of the Ausi Open Garden Scheme

October 28, 29 & 30th Saturday - Monday

"Wigandia," Noorat - William Martin- Aust. Open Garden Scheme

November 16 Thursday

Charles Quest-Ritson - Garden Lecture Series \$72 Ph/Fax 03 9592 0825

November 23 Thursday

Care Australia Christmas Fair 2000. Held at "Mawalok" Beaufort. 30 stalls. \$7 admission. Tea, lunch, music, gate prize, raffle.