



FRIENDS OF WARRNAMBOOL BOTANIC GARDENS

A0032902E



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Spring 2005

NEWSLETTER

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The 'Friends' were formed in 1989 and since then have worked to enhance the Gardens. In presenting my first Annual Report I am acutely aware of the vision dedication and hard work of all the members over those years.

Last August the Committee reaffirmed its main purpose; to maintain and develop **Warrnambool Botanic Gardens as an outstanding Guilfoyle garden**. These Gardens, now registered by the National Trust, were established in 1869. They were developed to a plan designed by William Guilfoyle and for 136 years the Council and citizens of Warrnambool have retained and maintained them. They are described on the Australian Heritage Data Base as having;

high integrity being one of the few untouched examples of a Guilfoyle garden, second only to the Royal Melbourne Botanic Gardens.

We identified five main ways to achieve our purpose.

Further develop links with other gardening groups

In conjunction with the Society for Growing Australian Plants we are establishing a native garden which will showcase flora of South Western Victoria. This joint venture is well under way and planting will begin very soon. We also acknowledge generous donations of special plants from other gardens and individuals. We maintain links with State and National bodies and have initiated a garden group on the net.

botanic-gardens@yahoo.com

The Wood turners have been able to preserve some of our ancient and historic timber as bowls, pens and special souvenirs.

Facilitate greater use of the Gardens by the Community

The Teddy Bears' and Fairies' Picnic sponsored by the Friends and 3YB attracted a big crowd as did community events such as the Wunta Festival, and the Australia Day celebrations. Other activities catered for both ends of the spectrum when TAFE Diploma students presented activities for the aged and disabled and on other occasions for tiny tots and preschool children.



Disseminate information about the Gardens and its collection.

We have continued our Quarterly Newsletter, occasional articles in the Standard and fortnightly guided walks. Rob Wallis, one of our members gave a fascinating talk on Ferdinand von Mueller. We have just compiled a new brochure for distribution, while the labelling of plants has progressed steadily. An enormous amount of unseen work in maintaining a data base has been undertaken by our Secretary.

Consolidate and strengthen Membership.

We would like to do better. Our membership fluctuates, but averages around one hundred and twenty. This year a well attended film night in cooperation with Warrnambool Rotary, and our Christmas function in the Rotunda, were the main social events. Several other events were cancelled when numbers were too low. A conservative estimate of the volunteer contribution from 'The Friends' to the Gardens would be between 1000 and 1500 hours each year. Like all voluntary organizations we have the challenge to renew, to revitalise and to survive

Maintain strong links with Warrnambool City Council

In the course of the year a new Council was elected, a new committee structure was created, Director of Physical Services Peter Reeve left to take up a position in Geelong and Stan Crow, our long serving Head Gardener retired. We thank Peter and Stan for their work over many years.

Terry O'Sullivan, whose responsibilities include parks and Gardens and the Aerodrome reports to our monthly meetings and members of the Committee appreciate the time he takes to periodically walk around the Gardens with them. The staff work hard, but there is no dedicated curator to assist or direct them and this is a serious impediment to garden development.

Neil Allen as Director of Physical Services has supported a good working relationship with the Friends and we are grateful for his support. But we still need a curator.

It is disappointing that the Conservation and Management plan for the Gardens (which recommends the appointment of a curator) has taken so long to be accepted.

Initially tendered in September 2003 and scheduled for submission to Council late in 2003 it is in danger of becoming irrelevant.

The Friends have identified their first priority. It is the appointment of an appropriate person to manage our very valuable asset, our trees and our heritage.

Let's finish with the good news. - Preserving our Heritage

The urns. These are now being stabilised with the aid of a grant from Heritage Victoria and much research by Marie Johnson.

The Fernery. The new doors have been designed, commissioned and purchased by the Friends.

The old Stump. Relic of the original plantings attributable to Mueller.

The Lone Pine. A seed from 'our tree' germinated and matured at Ballangeich.

It has been a pleasure to work with such a dedicated and enthusiastic committee.

Thank you all.

Pat Varley 20/7/2005

Native garden

Post script: The native garden is doing very well and many flowers have been in bloom during September

Water Grant

The WCC with the help of the Friends have applied for the Australian Government's Community water grants.

"This project will enhance the efficiency of irrigating at the Botanic Gardens. An extension to the existing water service is the first stage of progressing to an automated watering system for the Gardens. By providing a computer controlled watering system measured amounts of water will be delivered when and where required."



THE LONE PINE

In our last newsletter (June 2005) we told of our excitement on discovering that a mature tree grown from seed of the "Lone Pine" that grows in Warrnambool Gardens, grew at Ballangeich. This is the only known offspring of our tree. Most of the trees distributed by Legacy to mark the 50th anniversary and later the 75th anniversary of Gallipoli, were grown from seed harvested from the tree at the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne.

The story of the Lone Pine (*Pinus Brutia*) that grows in Warrnambool Botanic Gardens, has become a legend and like all legends, developed different versions with repeated telling.

Many stories refer to Keith McDowell, the soldier who collected the pine cone at the battle of Lone Pine, as a member of the 24th Battalion, but there was no Keith McDowell in the 24th Battalion. There was a Thomas Keith McDowell in the 23rd Battalion, and indeed this was correctly reported in the Warrnambool Standard of Monday 24 January 1934.

The seedling ... was grown from a seed from a cone which Sergeant Keith McDowell of the 23rd Battalion A.I.F. brought as a souvenir from Gallipoli. The cone was off the original "Lone Pine". After twelve years Mrs R Gray, of Grasmere obtained permission to try to raise seedlings from the seeds in the cone, and she was successful in growing four. One seedling was planted at Wattle Park, Melbourne, on 7th May 1933. A second was given to the 24th Battalion and planted at the Shrine of Remembrance, Melbourne, on 11th June, 1933. The third was planted at The Sisters Memorial Hall on 18th June 1933. The fourth one which was dedicated at the service, [23/1/1934] was given by Mrs Gray on 23 April 1929, to Mr M.L. Carter secretary of the Warrnambool Progress Association. It has successfully been transplanted and is making steady growth.

Who was Keith McDowell, where did he come from and how was he connected to Emma Gray?

Thomas Keith McDowell was born in London in the County of Middlesex, a natural born British subject. He spent seven years as an apprentice hairdresser in London. However, he was working as a miner in Wonthaggi, Victoria, when he enlisted in the A.I.F. on the 14 Jan 1915. At that time he was 25 years and five months old, weighed 150 pounds and was 5 feet 8½ inches tall. He had blue eyes and a light complexion and light hair. He gave his religion as Presbyterian, and his next of kin as Mrs. Lilian Watt of Carlton. He stated that he had served in the Territorial Forces. He was appointed to the 23rd Battalion with the rank of Private.

McDowell embarked at Melbourne on the *Euripides* on the 10 May 1915 and spent seventeen weeks on Gallipoli. The Battle of Lone Pine was fought from Aug 6th to Aug 9th 1915. Both the 23rd and the 24th regiment fought at the battle of Lone Pine, fighting on alternate days.

After Gallipoli he served in France where in June 1916 he became ill and was evacuated to hospital in England. Mrs Watt, his next of kin, who now lived at Fenton Street Camperdown, was advised. McDowell returned to Australia where, he was discharged as permanently unfit, as of December 8, 1916. His character was described as "very good" and he collected three service medals – 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and the Victory Medal

Mrs Emma Gray, was born in 1870 at Tower Hill, the seventh child of William Johnson and Ruth Lord. She married Robert Gray of Warrnambool in 1893. They ran the general store at Grasmere where she grew four pine trees from the cone collected by Keith McDowell.

Emma's older sister Mary Johnson, born 1863, married Francis Alf Shiells and their daughter Iris Constance Shiells, born 1892, married Thomas Keith McDowell in 1917.

So Keith McDowell married Emma Gray's niece and so knew Emma as "Auntie"

Lilian Watt, named by Keith McDowell as his next of kin was in fact his sister, Lilian McDowell who married Alexander Watt. She was living in Camperdown in 1917 when her son Thomas Keith McDowell Watt was born. That was the year Keith and Iris were married. They had a son Gordon Ellison McDowell born in Essendon in 1918, and possibly other children. In 1967 Keith was living in Cranbourne, and he died at Frankston in 1977, aged 88.

The Service record shows that Pte T.K. McDowell of the 23rd Battalion was discharged in the 3rd Military District on the 8th December 1916. Just eight days later 16th December 1916 in the 3rd Military District he enlisted in the Guard. Some eighteen months later he suffered a reoccurrence of

tuberculosis and was discharged as medically unfit for general service. He was 29 years old and held the rank of Sergeant.

The tree at The Sisters Memorial Hall still stands. Vern Gray son of Emma had a block at The Sisters, which was an area of closer settlement and soldier settlement after the 1914-18 war. The **Terang Express**, Tuesday June 20, gave an account of the planting in 1933;

A ceremony unique in character, and one invested with historical significance, was performed before a large attendance in the grounds of The Sisters Memorial Hall on Sunday afternoon. The occasion was the planting of a tree grown from a cone taken from the Lone Pine at Gallipoli.Mrs R. Gray, of Grasmere, presented the tree, which is five years old, and her nephew, Sgt. Keith McDowell, of Geelong, who brought the cone from Gallipoli, performed the planting ceremony, in the whole of which work he was joined by Mr S.G. Black, former owner of the land on which it was planted.

Of the remaining two trees grown by Emma Gray, the one at the Shrine of Remembrance is declining and a second tree will be dedicated next Armistice Day. The tree at Wattle Park, home ground of the 24th Battalion, was the first of the four to be dedicated.

This year Warrnambool Legacy Club will host the National Conference of Legacy and on Sunday 30th October at 11.00am a Memorial Service will be held in Warrnambool Botanic Gardens, ninety years after the Battle of Lone Pine.

Researched by Marie Johnstone and Pat Varley with assistance from members of the Warrnambool Family History Group, Service records of the National Archives and Edna Shaw, whose research into the Lone Pine at Wattle Park provided the catalyst for our renewed inquiries. September 2005



CHRISTMAS DRINKS AT THE ROTUNDA



**The Committee
invite all
Members and Friends
of the Botanic Gardens
to attend our
annual break up**



**25th NOVEMBER 2005
6pm - 8pm**



To assist with catering please contact a committee member or email your reply by 21st November

The Smell of the Bush

In its August newsletter the Warrnambool and District Historical Society told of an early resident, Henry Watts, who established a flower distilling plant and perfumery in Warrnambool in the 1860's. Watts made perfumes from native flowers and used blackwood and wattle blossom collected from the surrounding bush.

"In 1869 he was advertising in Warrnambool, for a supplier of a quantity of Native Box (*Bursaria Spinosa*) growing on the Warrnambool Reserve..."

A remnant *Bursaria Spinosa* still grows in the Gardens. We have several young shrubs, grown from its seed, which we plan to plant nearby.

Watts was a keen collector and gathered over 100 varieties of sea weeds from this area. The collection and preservation of plants and flowers was a popular hobby. Has any one of our readers a story to tell about their collections? They may in deed be a record of plants now gone.

Members we are wondering if you would like to join our enthusiastic band of GUIDING FRIENDS Isobel Jones is organising a day when you could come along, learn about guiding have a cup of tea meet the other guides and explore the possibility of becoming a guide (no commitment at this stage). If you are interested could you contact Isobel, Pat or Mandy or drop us a line and we will get back to you with further details.



Anchor Plant. *Colletia paradoxa*. Sth Brazil, Uruguay

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2005

- Legacy National Conference Hosted by Warrnambool 27th - 29th October
- Geelong Botanic Gardens Plant Sale 5th - 6th November 10am - 4pm
- Ladies of Legacy - Laurel Club meeting in the gardens 25th November
- Christmas Drinks - Friday 25th November 6pm - 8pm
- Friends of Port Fairy Gardens - Tour of gardens Dec 7th

Guided walk dates: Oct 23. Nov 13 & 27 Dec 11. Every 2nd & 4th Sunday starting at the Main Gate at 2.30pm

Remember that if you would like to organise a group 'tour of the gardens', for your family or business, please contact Isobel Jones or another committee person. Most times can be accommodated.

**FRIENDS OF WARRNAMBOOL
BOTANIC GARDENS Inc.**

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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.

October 2005

VALE MARION DUNCAN

We have lost one of our most supportive and sincere members. A Friend since the earliest days, Marion was always ready to help and support our many activities.

She was a great friend of Laurence McPhee, Curator 1959–86, and his wife Yvonne with whom she exchanged visits regularly over the years. Laurence once gave her some bamboo plants from the Gardens which still grow outside the Fernery. Two years ago both plantations died down simultaneously, only to shoot again with renewed vigour. This epitomized Marion's optimism and resilience.

Marion will be greatly missed by us all.

Marigold Curtis

THE GROWING FRIENDS

We have finished the pruning of the fruit trees and are now preparing the Fernery for mass replanting. It has been agreed that the entire Fernery should contain only ferns indigenous to the Otway Ranges, not just the centre section as in the past. With the help of Lorraine Deppeler and Bradford Phillips the ground has been prepared and suitable plants have been selected around half of which have already been planted.

Lorraine Richardson.

GUIDING FRIENDS

Due to the very wet winter we have not shown a large number of people through the Gardens. It will be a very different matter, however, when summer comes and our beautiful new brochure is distributed around Warrnambool and throughout the district

Isobel Jones.