



# FRIENDS OF WARRNAMBOOL BOTANIC GARDENS

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Issue No. 57

Spring 2010

## NEWSLETTER

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### Warrnambool Botanic Gardens Team Update

Well another year has passed and more trees and shrubs have been added to the landscape within Warrnambool Botanic Gardens.

The team has been busy ensuring that the landscape doesn't remain static but rather dynamic to reflect the natural changes that occur within a garden.

Projects undertaken by the team over the past year include:

- Reworking of the front gate bed to clearly distinguish between the annual displays and the perennial/shrub border. This has been achieved with the installation of metal edging.
- Reworking of the Urn bed again to delineate between the annual displays and shrubs. Again metal edging was installed.
- Mulching of both beds has ensured a better environment for plant growth and weed suppression.
- Pruning, mulching and fencing of the 'Money Tree' in an attempt to prolong its life expectancy. Mulching and fencing has enabled the 'Money Tree' to be further enhanced as a prominent part of the landscape. Mulching has also permitted the under planting of bulbs within the mulched exclusion zone.
- Stage 2 of the waterwise garden has commenced with clearing works finalised and planting due to start shortly.
- Removal of the Pampas Grass around the fountain and replanting of more 'environmental friendly' screening species.
- Planting of specimen trees in lawn areas.
- Mulching of the Cedars in the northeast corner.
- Removal of a dead Lawson Cypress.
- Continued mulching of beds.
- Thinning of the water lilies.

The continued support of the FOWBG is greatly appreciated and we again look forward to further developing this relationship.

I look forward to seeing you all at the gardens over the coming year and would encourage you to grab a team member and have a chat.

Happy gardening!

John Sheely  
Curator  
Warrnambool Botanic Gardens

## **PRESIDENTS REPORT (AGM)**

The past year had seen much accomplished in the Warrnambool Botanic Gardens. The Friends have continued to work with the capable staff of the Gardens, the Friends have continued to support the curator John Sheely and his team who have worked tirelessly.

With the onset of changing patterns of weather conditions and environment, John and his team have been continually developing the Gardens to adapt to such conditions. The Friends have seen the Gardens become sustainable to survive and flourish. Weather patterns of drier conditions have dictated different methods used to preserve our gardens.

The Waterwise Garden of which stage one has been completed and stage two is now being developed, is a great example of sustainable management of the gardens. There have been interpretative signs erected to indicate how a waterwise garden can be sustained. To be waterwise, one must know 1. Why we use water 2. What is good watering 3. Your soil and plant selection and 4. The importance of mulching. John and his team are continuing to create the waterwise gardens for the sustainability of our magnificent gardens. If you enter through the front gate and follow the path to your left past the fountain you will see the 'waterwise' garden at the side of the Curator's Cottage.

The Friends have conducted a number of activities throughout the year.

In September the Friends held a successful Annual Spring Garden Day. People were able to buy plants and receive planting advice while eating a sausage or having a coffee or tea, as well as listening to the vibrant tones of the Warrnambool City Band and the Pipes and Drums, the setting of the rotunda and the sweeping Guilfoyle Gardens provided a wonderful backdrop. Also don't forget to start potting up plants for this year's Garden day, which can be dropped off at the depot yard any time. Plants such as herbs proved very popular. The date this year is Sunday September 19<sup>th</sup>.

In October, the Friends celebrated the opening of the renovated fernery by the Mayor, Michael Neoh. The 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Friends was also celebrated at the same time. Thanks to Marie Johnson who added to her compilation of the 'History of the Friends of the Gardens 1989-2009'. Marie gave an eloquent speech outlining the Friends History, Ellen Dwyer responded and Isobel Jones cut the cake so expertly made and iced by Leonie Cumming.

Our curator, John Sheely, has continued to impart his knowledge to us every 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month at the Curator's Morning 10.30 - 12pm. Everyone is welcome in the depot yard and the gardens.

The Friends have continued their mission to be able to use and renovate the Curators, Scoborio's Cottage. Thanks to Central Warrnambool Rotary most of the work is completed and soon the Friends shall be able to hold our meetings in it.

The Friends enjoyed a 'Growing Friends' day at Marigold Curtis's home where Marigold most generously opened her garden and home to us. The Friends spent the morning digging up various bulbs that found a home in the Gardens.

In March, Ellen Dwyer invited foundation members and the present committee to her home to celebrate the Friends participation in the Gardens, Ellen showed us around her magnificent gardens.

Throughout the year there have been ongoing developments with the cannon. As the undercarriage was severely deteriorating, after much consultation and advice it was decided to have the carriage ex-rayed. The barrel was removed by crane onto a new temporary cement structure. At the moment the Triton Woodworkers are soon to make a new replica carriage. The Friends thank them for their continued endeavours. The Cannon has been a source of enjoyment for many generations of Warrnambool's children as part of the Gardens, which it is hoped will be enjoyed by the community for many years.

The Friends have also utilised the expertise of the Warrnambool Woodworkers Group who construct excellent pens which are for sale.

The Friends are a voluntary organisation that has the support of many philanthropic organisations of which we are most grateful.

The Friends need more members so if you know of anyone who could be interested please suggest joining the Friends to them.

Finally, I'd like to thank the various members of the committee who have been invaluable over the past three years. Our secretary, Mandy King, has been outstanding in her skills with the newsletter, creating magnificent cards of the Gardens, the website and grant applications with Pat. Thanks also to Pat and the rest of the committee.

The Friends have a number of projects mooted including the researching of the well and a windmill.

I wish Pat well in her endeavours as President.

Thank you Anne Lynch

## **ANNUAL REPORTS – 1009-1010**

Our annual general meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> July marked another good year for *The Friends* as reported by President Anne Lynch and Curator John Sheely. Their reports are included in this newsletter. Southwest Institute of TAFE made their conference centre available for the meeting. It is an excellent facility and we thank them for their contribution.

Guest speaker Tim Hubbard gave a delightful and light hearted talk on conservatories and ferneries, which he called, *Cultivating the Maidenhair and the Maiden Fair — the social role of the late nineteenth century conservatory*.

Anne Lynch, having completed three years as President, stood down from that position. Anne continues as Vice President and Pat Varley was elected President. Pat thanked Anne for her contribution over the past three years. Long serving Secretary, Mandy King, was reappointed to that role and Judy Phillips agreed to continue to act as Treasurer. The Committee, with the welcome addition of Joan Keith, was reappointed, as listed on the back of this newsletter. Mayor, Cr. Michael Neoh conducted the election.

About forty Friends and guests enjoyed a good speaker, good food, good conversation and good company.

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## **THE LONE PINE**

A significant planting took place at Toll Bar Park Lexton on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> August. A seedling from the tree in the WBG was planted with due ceremony by the Mayor of the Pyrenees Shire and the President of the Lexton Progress Association, together with the President of the Friends of WBG.

A second generation lone pine, that had been a valued and dominant feature of Toll Bar Park died from the effect of drought. That tree had been planted to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Lone Pine. When the Friends heard the tree had to be removed, they offered a replacement.

Lexton is a very small community, but it takes great pride in its heritage. The Progress association was delighted with the offer and arranged a community event and BBQ to mark the planting. Pat Varley took a Sunday drive to present our tree and attend the ceremony. In recent years several members of The Friends have successfully propagated seeds from the tree in the Gardens. The tree donated to Lexton was four years old and grown by Lou Hollis. Lou plants seeds about Anzac day and if they germinate they will appear at the new moon in September. She advises a bed of needles from the parent tree as nutrient for the young seedlings.

By coincidence, a report and photograph of Emma Gray and Keith McDowell planting the tree at the Sisters in 1933, was discovered by Janet Mac Donald when doing some historical research. The Terang Express, June 20, 1933 reported;

*“A ceremony unique in character, and one invested with historical significance, was performed before a large crowd in 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.”*

Today The Sisters is even smaller than Lexton, but each values its heritage and the legacy of the Lone Pine lives on.

## WILD WEATHER

A wet and windy winter has fallen two old giants in the gardens.

The Bhutan Cypress near the northwest corner of the fernery came down early in August. Its trunk extended more than 20 meters, from surprisingly limited roots, to the Anchor Plant. Although most of the Anchor Plant was destroyed there remain several shoots, which may survive. Fortunately, staff had the foresight to strike cuttings from this very old planting, one of which is growing in the extension to the waterwise garden. Logs from the tree have been made available to the Triton Woodworkers

The violent storms that swept the State on the first weekend in September caused a lot of damage in the gardens. One of the two remaining pines on the Cockman Street boundary crashed into the depot yard overnight on 4<sup>th</sup> September. These pines (*radiata or insignis*) are thought to be among the last of donations from Ferdinand von Mueller that were planted around the perimeter of the gardens. With great courtesy the old colonist fell to earth without damaging any of the surrounding structures. It is massive. The winds brought down a large branch from the Moreton Bay Fig near the fernery and numerous smaller branches from trees throughout the Gardens, including a small limb from the Lone Pine.

The old well shed, already dilapidated, was further damaged.

Post script, we were in the gardens today preparing for our Spring Garden day, while there we watched new fluffy ducklings swimming on the pond and a pair of White faced herons nesting in the Lone Pine, this pair have had to find new homes over the years as old trees have been removed, hopefully this new site will be safe for many years.



First storm, Bhutan Cyprus near Fernery



Second Storm, Large Pine in the Depot Yard

**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.

Membership: Payable at/or by the AGM  
July 2010

September 2010

**GUIDED WALKS**

Guided walks are conducted by our volunteer  
guides every Second and Fourth Sunday  
of the month commencing at 2.30pm,  
weather permitting

Walks can be organised on request

Walks proceed from the main entrance gate in  
Cockman Street

**DATE TO REMEMBER**

**ANNUAL SPRING GARDEN DAY** is to be  
held in the gardens on the 19<sup>th</sup> September. If you have  
potted up plants for the day, these can be left at the  
depot yard at any time the gardens are open.

If you have any preserves these are also very popular  
and would be appreciated.

As you would appreciate these events are not easy to  
get up and going but very popular on the day, any  
assistance is always appreciated.

Bring along family and friends and enjoy a day in your  
spectacular gardens.

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The Lake has had a clean out: If you have use for water  
lilies, there are hundreds of bulbs for the taking in the  
pinetum

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From the Standard Newspaper 19/3/1909

Fine Display of Roses

**A SALVIA BONFIRE PICTURE**

Visitors to the Botanical Gardens during the past few weeks  
have had the delight of feasting their eyes on a perfect  
wealth of color. The display of bloom for the time of the  
year is quite exceptional, and bears convincing testimony to  
the expert knowledge of the curator in the matter of  
securing a succession of flowers so that when one variety  
dies away others come along to take its place.....

Another surprising feature is the flourishing condition of the  
rose-bed laid out last season, and we are sure there is not to-  
day a councillor who regrets the trifling outlay which this  
great improvement entailed.....

*A full copy of this transcript will be on our web page shortly*

**MORNING IN THE GARDENS WITH JOHN**

John's 'Curator day' is held on the first Wednesday of the  
month at 10.30 am until noon. Each month John organises  
an interesting and educational experience. Come along to  
the gardens. We meet at the growing area at the back of the  
curators cottage.

Calender of dates is attached

**WEBSITE**

My apology for the state of the website, we have had a  
computer/webpage compatibility problem which is being  
fixed and hopefully in a very short time there will be lots to  
see and read.

**Membership renewal**  
**A friendly reminder to some**