



FRIENDS OF WARRNAMBOOL BOTANIC GARDENS

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Maintaining and developing Warrnambool Botanic Gardens as an outstanding Guilfoyle garden

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Spring 2014

NEWSLETTER
www.wbgardens.com.au

PRESIDENT'S REPORT.....SPRING 2014

Springtime brings on a multitude of events in gardens. The WBG Facebook page features photos of marvellous acts of nature occurring in our Botanic Gardens. The Friends' coach trip to four district properties occurred on Thursday, 13th November. Despite the very hot day, conditions were ideal for viewing these four historic properties, which are described in detail elsewhere in this newsletter. A huge thank you to Anna Affleck for planning this highly successful and enjoyable day, and for her entertaining and insightful commentary relating to the district and the gardens we visited.

Wednesday morning sessions in Scoborio's shed have been well attended, largely due to an interesting line up of guest speakers. In October Margaret Laurence gave a very practical demonstration of flower arrangement, which made the creation of floral art appear deceptively easy to achieve. The November speaker was Alison Wright from the Country Garden Club, who outlined the history of the group which she and a friend founded many years ago, and which maintains its popularity as a special interest garden group. Alison's presentation focussed on organisation of the group and its regular garden tours around the district.

The regular attendees at the first Wednesday of the month morning sessions in the shed thank committee members Billie Rowley and Marie Johnson for their co-ordination of this regular activity. There is always room in the shed to squeeze in a few more to hear these presentations.



The speakers are always interesting and morning tea plentiful, so members who have not attended this activity are urged to come and try in 2015.

Regular visitors, the South West TAFE Children's Services staff, students, parents and children, had a



warm and sunny day on October 21st for their activity morning in the Gardens. The Friends served morning tea from the rotunda for the adults, while the children made the best of the space to run and play.

The Friends group was invited to participate in the recent Hospital Auxiliary Country Gardens Open Day. Committee members held a stall at *Rosehill*, Grasmere, one of the three gardens open on the day. From the sale of plants, produce and our new correspondence cards, the stall raised a little over \$400. It was thanks to committee members Joan, Anne, Pat and Mandy and to contributors of items for the stall.

The committee would like to wish every member a happy Christmas. We hope to see you all at the Christmas celebration in the gardens next week.

Janet Macdonald

WBG TEAM UPDATE NOVEMBER 2014

Another year nearly gone and more trees and shrubs planted within WBG.

It has been another busy year for the WBG team with a few projects ticked off along with the on-going maintenance that is required to present the gardens at a high level. This high level presentation is something that the team prides itself on.

Irrigation was a high priority this year with several new lines and wiring installed, resulting in beds 14 and 16 being fitted out with both pop up and fixed sprinklers.

These two beds have benefited dramatically from having designated irrigation throughout the whole beds with plant growth responding accordingly. It is hoped next year a few more beds may be fitted out with irrigation.

The generosity of the FOWBG deserves to be noted at this point as \$6000 has been allocated to upgrading our old galvanised pipe system to allow for future automation of some beds.

The continued support of the FOWBG for the future of WBG is greatly appreciated by the team.

A snap shot of some works completed during the year include:

- Continued planting out of shrub beds to increase density and diversity
- Continued planting out of specimen trees and pines within the Pinetum
- Mulching of specimen trees
- Establishing a working relationship with Friends of Swan Reserve
- Tree works to manage risks and allow for future tree plantings
- Irrigation works throughout the central lawn and to beds 8, 10, 14 and 16
- Fertilising and top dressing high profile lawn areas
- Maintenance of shrub beds and display beds
- Realignment of depot fence to create a new garden bed

All of the above would not have been possible without the continued support and commitment of both Ros and Murtle.

It is very important to me that the team gets the recognition, rather than an individual, for what has been achieved over the past year.



If you haven't been in the gardens of late, come on in and see what the team has been up to. Remember, anyone can look good on paper!!!!!!



All the best for Christmas and 2015.

John Sheely

FOUR DELIGHTFUL GARDENS

A visit to the gardens of four historic western district homesteads – Lawrenny, Minjah, Spring Creek and Rosehill delighted the fifty Friends and their guests who took part on Thursday 13th November.

The day threatened to be very hot, but overcast skies and mild breezes provided near perfect conditions. The Friends are very grateful to Anna Affleck for initiating and planning this day and to our hosts for their hospitality and generosity in welcoming us to their gardens.

LAWRENNY

"Lawrenny", originally called "Cheynes Station Run" was established around 1840. It was named Lawrenny about 1845 after a small town Lawrenny in Pembrokeshire, Wales. The homestead, begun in 1865, was constructed from local bluestone and designed by Andrew Kerr. Lawrenny was owned and run by Gilbert McArthur whose brother Peter owned Meningoort. It was purchased by the Mann family in 1904. During the second half of the 1900s it fell into disrepair. A major restoration has taken place over the past decade. William (Bobby) and Georgina Mann are the current custodians



Original plantings in the garden were made by the McArthur family, and then further added to by Samuel Furneaux "Barney" Mann. The garden design has been attributed historically to William Guilfoyle, but this claim has been refuted in recent years by garden historian Paul Fox. In 1995, 75 different trees were identified by Bill Funk from Dunkeld. For many years the garden was grazed and damaged by sheep, but the current owners have been working to restore it over the past decade.

Bobby & Georgie Mann

MINJAH

The Minjah area was first settled by the Bolden family, who owned a vast tract of land in the Western District of which Minjah was part. It was then sold to Jacob Plummer, who in turn sold Minjah to the Ware brothers in October, 1845.

The three Ware brothers, Jeremiah, Joseph and John had come to the Port Phillip district from Van Dieman's Land in 1838. In the next twenty years they held Native Creek near Teesdale (12,925 acres) Wooriwyrite (20,800 acres), Koort Koort Nong (32,000 acres) Yallay Poora (66,500 acres), Minjah (22,500 acres) and Muston's Creek.

Minjah homestead was built for Joseph Ware in 1873 from a design by Alfred Smith and Arthur Johnson, respected Melbourne architects. The garden was the work of Charles Scoborio as detailed elsewhere in this newsletter.

The Affleck family purchased Minjah from the Wares in 1897 and it remained in their care until 2005 when it was sold to Tim and Jen Clarke.

The Afflecks, James (Bim) and Anna, transformed an overgrown garden into what we see today. Many beds, bluestone walls and paths were added and trees removed and replaced with native plantings.

The current owner's philosophy is to protect the integrity of the classic English garden style which compliments the architecture of the house.

Tim & Jen Clarke

SPRING CREEK

The original Whitehead settlement of Goodwood of which Spring Creek is a portion, was taken up in 1840 by Robert Whitehead. The Spring Creek homestead was built in 1940 by Win and Ken Whitehead, the house plantations and some deciduous trees went in at that time.

Set on the side of a hill, three terraces divided by lawns form the main part of the garden giving a touch of formality to the otherwise informal design. Paths ramble past borders clearly planted with old fashioned roses, shrubs, perennials and many varieties of bulbs, plus certain ground covers that have been encouraged to naturalize helping to create an easy care garden.

Jenny Whitehead

ROSEHILL

One of Warrnambool's earliest settlers, Scottish-born Gilbert Nicol took up land in the fertile Grassmere valley in the 1850s and named his farm Rosehill. The property, originally used for grain growing later for grazing, was productive and the family were well respected and prosperous. In 1890 they provided land at Johnstone's corner for the Grassmere Cheese & Butter Cooperative.

The bluestone house, designed by noted Warrnambool architect Andrew Kerr, was built in 1890. It is situated in a picturesque location with views of the Merri River winding prettily below and the Grassmere township in the distance.

There is a large two-storey barn with gabled corrugated iron roof and hay loft. It is said the bluestone for this building was taken from the demolished Eagle Tavern on the Mortlake Road.

Rosehill remained in the Nicol family until 1960 when it passed into different ownership. Current owner Nicholas Rule, a descendant of the Nicol family, purchased the property in 1981. The house has been renovated but retains many original features.

The garden is a mix of heritage trees with shrub plantings concentrated around the house and driveway. Old world shrubs and flowers have been chosen to reflect the era of the house with bulk plantings reinforcing this style. Bluestone recycled from the property has been used on retaining walls enabling expansion of the garden and creation of the tennis court. In recent times two arboretums have been created on what was once a paddock. These contain a variety of specimen trees that have been chosen to reflect the historical nature of the property.

Fiona & Nick Rule

Our coach departed from Warrnambool Botanic Gardens at 8.45 am and returned by 5.30 pm. In between, as well as enjoying historic and varied gardens we had a welcome morning tea, a delightful lunch, and afternoon refreshment - our now traditional fruit cake.

Pat Varley

DUNCAN LEITCH, CURATOR (1932 – 58)

'The Scottish Mafia in our Gardens' was the title Pamela Jellie gave to her talk at the Friend's AGM in July this year.

In Western Victoria we owe a great deal to early Scottish influence on our economy, our architecture, our education and our gardens.

When Cornishman Charles Scoborio retired in 1906, he was succeeded by Scottish horticulturalist William Donald, who in turn, on his retirement in 1931 was replaced by Duncan Leitch. A recent email to our curator, John Sheely from a Canadian reader of the WBG facebook page, provided some interesting background information and photographs of Duncan Leitch.

Hello John,

Thank you for being interested in this! I was born in Argyll, Scotland and came to Canada as a child, and I have always been interested in family history. Margaret McGregor, (Nov. 14, 1890 Lochgoilhead, Argyll, Scotland - Aug. 1, 1964, Dennington, Victoria, Australia) was the wife of Duncan Leitch and she was a sister of my great grandmother. Duncan was born about 1890. He had come into Argyll from another area in Scotland, possibly Dunoon as it is where his parents married 1889. His father, Donald Leitch, was a professional gardener as well.



It was the age of 'big houses' (mansions) where all sorts of maids, game keepers, deer stalkers, cooks and laundry maids were needed to tend to the needs of the aristocracy, and many young people came from other places and married locally. Duncan was gardener at Ellary Estate (it still exists today in a lesser form) in Argyll just after the turn of the 20th century. I have seen what remains there today - a large walled garden and the remnants of a greenhouse. Margaret's family wasn't far away at a farm called Ballyourigan, where my mother and grandmother were born. Likely,

Margaret and Duncan would have met a local dance or ceilidh of some sort. They married in December 1912 in Glasgow, Scotland and left for Australia early the next year. At first, I think they were at a farm of some kind near Yarrowonga. That is where their only child, Donald Leitch, was born in 1913. After Duncan retired, the couple moved to Dennington. Duncan died there in 1967, 3 years after Margaret. Donald is gone now too. He had 3 daughters, Ann, Margaret and Joan, who all still live in Australia.



There are some good photos of Duncan, Margaret and their son Donald attached. All of them were taken in Australia - their granddaughter, Margaret (Leitch) Young sent them. You will know best how many of them were taken at WBG. Only one (Margaret standing near a bench) says 'at Warnambool' on the back.

Mary in Canada

There are some fascinating parallels in the life of Duncan Leitch and Charles Scoborio. Each was the descendant of a professional gardener and grew up or worked on a country estate with an extensive garden – Leitch at Ellary in Argyll and Scoborio in Heligan in Cornwall. Each of these gardens was neglected for some years and deteriorated as gardens do. Heligan has been restored and promoted as “The Lost Garden of Heligan”. Perhaps Ellary will also be restored.

Each married before migrating to Australia with their young wife and each had only one child – a son.

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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 2014

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

Please note: If you would like to have
your Newsletter sent by email please
send an email to friends@wbgardens.com.au
and we will put you on the email list

GIFT CERTIFICATE

The gift of a certificate is a thoughtful way to introduce your
family and friends to the Gardens, give a gift for Christmas
Please contact a committee member, email
friends@wbgardens.com.au or call Mandy on 0438620343

GARDEN CARDS

Cards depicting scenes of the gardens are for sale, \$10 for a
pack of 5 cards or \$2 each

MORNING IN THE GARDENS

This gathering will be in recess until February 2015 - Stay
tuned

Join us in Scoborio's shed at 11.00am first Wednesday of the
month to listen to passionate gardeners talk all things garden

FACEBOOK

Don't forget to visit the WBG [Facebook](#) page.



Flowering at the moment are our Marlborough rock daisies
(*Pachystegia insignis*).

These low growing shrubs have very attractive leathery leaves
as well as their eye catching daisy flowers.

We have several of these planted out throughout WBG.
Come into the gardens and see what else is flowering.

BOOKING AN EVENT IN THE GARDENS

Make a booking to avoid disappointment. Are you thinking of
holding an event in the Gardens? go to our [web site](#) to get
information and to download an application form. You are
also able to book by going to the gardens or WCC during
work hours and obtaining a booking form.

A donation to the Friends for the use of the Rotunda for your
event would be greatly appreciated. Much work and
restoration in the Gardens has been achieved through
donations to the Friends. The rotunda is one of many
projects. With public support the fittings and layout of the
rotunda was made possible.
Please contact us for a donation form. On request your
donation will be receipted.

MEMBERSHIP PAYMENTS

We have an on line [membership form](#) that you can fill in and
send to us. Then make your payment by the usual way,
Direct Payment or sending a cheque

EFT

BSB: 083 957

Account Number: 048342632

Refer: Your Name (this is important to enable us to match our
records with your payment)

Family \$25, Single \$20 Corporate \$100