



FRIENDS OF WARRNAMBOOL BOTANIC GARDENS

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Maintaining and developing Warrnambool Botanic Gardens as an outstanding Guilfoyle garden

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Winter 2015

NEWSLETTER
www.wbgardens.com.au



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Spring has sprung, the grass has ris, I wonder where the photographers is!

Last Sunday afternoon as I was sitting in the sunshine near the main gate at the gardens at about 2.20pm, I noticed a woman lurking in the shrubbery surrounding the fountain. On closer inspection I saw that she was taking a photo of the large urn, from an unusual angle. "Aha", I thought, "my first sighting of a [photo competition](#) entrant". To confirm my suspicions, I bowled up to her and enquired whether she knew that there was a competition running, to which she replied in the affirmative. Here's hoping there are many more to follow.

The start of spring has been very dry and it appears that we are set for a dry summer, so it is fortuitous that so much work has gone into extending the watering system. Recently some members of the committee were treated to a demonstration of the new pop-up sprinklers which have been added to the system in the lawns south of the pond around the Lone Pine, cannon area, and extending west to the pinetum. If you intend picnicking on these lawns do keep a sharp eye out!



The Lone Pine battle commemoration which occurred on Thursday August 6th was a very well attended and successful afternoon. We received good coverage in the local media and the weather, though a little chilly, was kind on the day. Special guests included Lindsay Miller from Dennington, who as a small boy attended the dedication of the tree in 1934; Dr Lindsay McDowell and Mrs Jean Giblett who spoke about their families' links to the tree, through their antecedents Sgt Thomas Keith McDowell and Mrs Emma Gray.

In his address the keynote speaker, Victorian ANZAC Centenary Committee chairman Ted Baillieu spoke of Warrnambool's Lone Pine having particular significance for residents of the local area, and the importance of finding

contemporary connections to those who served. When speaking of the battle, he exemplified local soldiers' stories, using their names and describing some of their personal details to make those connections.

A huge thank you to Les Lockland of the Warrnambool Camera Club for coming along on the day to take photos of the Lone Pine commemoration. He has presented more than sixty excellent images to the Friends for use in our archives. These not only provide a permanent reminder of the celebrations, but are an accurate record of the Lone Pine in its stately maturity. Thanks also go to member Joan Symons who, at our AGM in July, suggested the idea of creating some car stickers from our 150th anniversary logo. Joan then took the initiative to have some of these printed and donated them for sale during our anniversary year. Guests at the Lone Pine celebration each received one of the stickers, hot from the press, as a pre-launch taster of the celebrations to come in 2016.

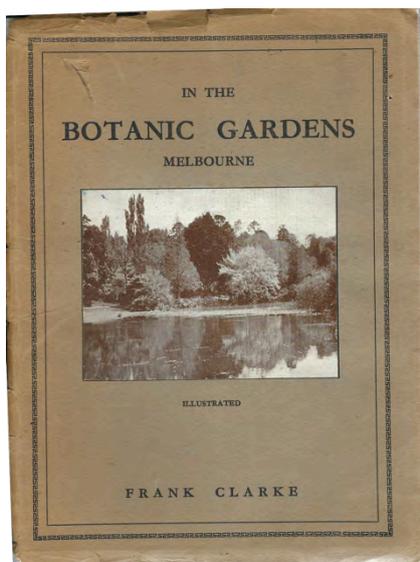
The 150th anniversary planning group's preparations are advancing for some of the special events next year, particularly the gala marquee "Night in the Gardens" in March. Draft concept plans for landscaping and preservation of the well and surrounds have been widely discussed among the Friends committee and refining of the design is ongoing.

The first Wednesday meetings have resumed their guest speaker format. The September speaker, Robyn Bodycoat gave a really interesting illustrated presentation entitled *Wildflowers in Mongolia*. All those who attended came away with much more than botanical knowledge of the country. Robyn's photos and commentary provided fascinating details about the people, the culture and the geography of this little visited part of the world.

Speaker co-ordinators, Marie Johnston and Billie Rowley strive to provide a diverse range of interesting guest speakers for the first Wednesday meetings, so if you have not been before, please consider attending, as it is always cosy when there is a good crowd in Scoborio's Shed. On October 7th Dawn Mott of Port Fairy spoke about her *Gardens in Bloom* award in 2014. Hoping to see you all at our next gathering on November 4th .

Janet Macdonald

IN THE BOTANIC GARDENS MELBOURNE, Frank Clarke, Robertson & Mullins Melb.1944



This little book of just fifty pages is a gem. It leaves you hugging yourself in pure delight at images of the gardens, the people and the plants, painted in language that is akin to poetry.

Guilfoyle made the Gardens what they are today. ...he wrought harmonies with the black-green of ti-tree, eucalypt and conifer, the verdancy of grass and fern, bronze and gold and the silver the sun and wind make with the underside of a leaf .

...Paderewski said of him that he did with his trees what a pianist tried to do with his music.....and if the soul of craftsmanship survives, he, perchance with Rubens, Wagner and Turner, now is given by the wise Gods the planning of the sunsets and the clouds.

The above appears on the first page of the text and has already captivated me by the lavish praise of my idol.

Frank Clarke first published this work in 1924. There was a second edition in 1938 and the third in 1944.

Clarke (1879-1955) was a member of the Legislative Council as were his father and grandfather before him. Of his forty two years from 1913-1955 as MLC, he spent twenty as

President. His ministerial portfolios from time to time included Lands, Water Supply and Public works.

He was educated at Scotch College, Melbourne University and Oxford.

He began his career as an onion and potato grower at Korongah Park, Port Fairy and progressed to become a grazier and company director of numerous entities including the National Bank.

As a half brother of Sir Rupert Clarke of Rupertswood, Frank was well connected and would have been very familiar with the social niceties of the times. He was a keen observer, demonstrated by his memories of Ferdinand von Mueller

As a boy I can remember the Baron. He was very German, after the pattern of the older, better school, a heavy, quaint scientist, who wore in all weathers a white muffler, not always clean, and had a lust for meringues, which singular fact was deeply imbedded in my boyish memory when I sat beside him at a marquee lunch at Sunbury, and from a host's politeness passed to an uncommon anxiety, since he started straight in on the meringues piled on a plate in his neighbourhood, disregarding the decent preliminaries of soup, fish, and meats that a normal appetite honoured.

Clarke's description of the Gardens is enhanced by his scholarship and the links he makes to history and literature. The oaks with Zeus and Caesar and William the Conqueror; the paulownias with Chinese legends; the lotus held sacred by the Egyptians; the willow from Napoleon's grave and the rhododendrons to the intoxication of Xenophon's troops in B.C.400. The medicinal herb beds did not impress him although he quotes Kipling;

“Any thing green that grew out of the mould
Was an excellent herb to our fathers of old.”

A charming book, the work of a classical scholar and a keen observer, its gentle humour and 12 sepia plates take you back to a time gone by. Frank Clarke concludes;

...there is a finer scent, a subtler essence, to be distilled from the trees and flowers than any which science can produce; a garden is the sweeter when memory and imagination aid the material sight to enjoy it.

Our Botanic Gardens are the rarest thing in all broad beloved Australia.

P Varley.

GALLIPOLI OAK - QUERCUS COCCIFERA

The search continues to replace our special Gallipoli Oak which sadly died some years ago. It was known then as Quercus ilex meaning 'holly' oak. As I told you at the time and I quoted from the Anzac Anthem, the boys fighting up those precipitous cliffs thought they were climbing through holly bushes because in the early stages of the oak's life it has holly-like leaves.



In the endless search for another oak to replace our's I have contacted many organisations likely to have a spare one - the RBGM, the Shrine, Legacy and finally the National Trust.

The '[Gallipoli Oak Project](#)' run by the National Trust have planted over 300 to distribute to schools in Victoria. They tell me that this will take some years because they are very slow growing, in fact only about 15cm tall at the moment. They know them as Q. coccifera and tell me that they are a different species to our's. The mystery thickens but our search continues.

Marigold Curtis

WBG Team Update October 2015

The sun is shining and people are back enjoying the gardens!!!

It has been a long winter for the WBG team and the following points are a few of the things we have managed to achieve:

- Beds 10, 12, 15 and 19 have had automated irrigation installed.
- Seven (yes seven!!!) automated lawn sprinklers have been installed.
- Selective pruning works have been undertaken in the two Elms to the south of the pond, one Poplar located within the central lawn and one Fig located near the Pinetum.
- Tom Greenwood and his crew, arborists from Melbourne who specialize in heritage trees, undertook all the above mentioned works.
- Infill planting of the shrub beds continues.
- Mulching of shrub beds and specimen trees continues.
- Behind the scenes work on the 150th bed is progressing well with materials being purchased and planting hopefully to occur late this year or early next year.



Although mentioned in a previous update, but well worth mentioning again, the \$6000 donated by the FOWBG to WBG enabled the above irrigation works to be realised. Without this donation the underground infrastructure would not have been upgraded and we would not have automated irrigation in lawns and beds.

A big thanks again to the generosity and foresight of the FOWBG committee.

Unfortunately, Craig Hanks, Parks, Gardens and Environment Team Leader has resigned and will be leaving Council early October. Craig has been a great supporter of WBG and will be missed by the whole team.

I'd encourage all that haven't been in the gardens for a while to come for a stroll and grab a team member for a chat.

*John Sheely
Curator
1 October 2015*

This is an article from 'The Dry Stone Walls association of Australia' - editor Bruce Munday
We find this article of particular interest in our endeavour to highlight our own well in the Gardens

Well Out of Sight

By Chris Payne, DSWAA member



In our part of the Mt. Lofty Ranges in SA there is dry stone work, largely unappreciated, that involved great skill and was absolutely vital to settlement

This was the construction of wells to access ground water. Before mass clearing of timber (especially after World War II) and large scale irrigation, the water table was higher and the water sweeter than at present. Good water could be obtained with hand dug wells, often less than 10 metres deep. Many of these wells made good volumes of water as is evidenced by the variety of windlasses and pumps with which they were equipped.

These wells generally fall in to two types; square wells 1.8-2.4 m square lined with durable red gum slabs, or round wells 1.5-2 m in diameter and lined with dry stone walling. This latter type is very permanent as the stone built cylinder is very resistant to collapse.

Often the lining material was obtained from the well itself. Because of the terrain, drift drilling and black powder blasting was often necessary to drive the shaft down. On my own property one well is only dry stoned for the top 2.5 m and beyond that it has been cut through solid rock (*below*). This is generally described as a blue schist and can be a dense intractable material. As an aside, this is why most older houses here are built of un-coursed rubble.



The dry stone lining of wells has always been a bit of a mystery to me. Did they build from the top down, or did

they wait till they had got to depth before starting the lining risking having the sides collapse as they worked?

It is most common for wells to be finished level with the ground and covered with red gum slabs. However there are noticeable exceptions. The SA DSWAA members who attended walling workshops at *Rosebank* have admired the wonderful wellheads (*below*), built up about a metre above the ground and finished with massive vertical coping stones.



Not far away is a walk-in well with an incline about 1.8 m deep cut in to one side, paved with flag stones and the sides shored up with dry stone. As the incline is quite narrow it is not intended for livestock and I can only assume the landholder did not equip the well, but simply bucketed out the water. It also implies the water table was fairly stable. Now, my



own well fluctuates from overflowing in winter to an 8 m drop in late summer.

Wells are usually poorly regarded, seen only as a hazard. Many have dried up or become saline, perhaps because less dense fresh water, floats on the saline ground water. As the fresh water is consumed and the aquifer not recharged because of rapid run off due to heavy clearing, the salt rises in the soil profile. Salt efflorescence is slowly eroding the stone and will eventually destroy the wells.

Many wells have been filled in, often used as rubbish pits. On my property 3 of the 4 wells have been filled in. We are cleaning out one and have got down about 2 m. Beyond this we need some kind of windlass and a team of three (in case one is injured, one stays to help and the other goes for assistance.)

Well sinking was a hard, dangerous but skilled trade. I think we owe these people recognition and our respect by preserving their work. Each well should be celebrated as a monument to vernacular engineering.

THE FLAG STONE, ISSUE NUMBER 34 <4>

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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 2015

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 friends@wbgardens.com.au and we will put you on the email list

MEMBERSHIP PAYMENTS

For those memberships over due

We have a few outstanding membership payments. Reminders for those overdue will be attached. Thank you as always for your support in our quest for 'Maintaining and developing Warrnambool Botanic Gardens as an outstanding Guilfoyle garden'

You can make your payment by
Direct Payment, sending a cheque or pay when you come to the AGM

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

FOR YOUR DIARY

Friends of Hamilton Botanic Gardens

Once only opening of *Dunroe*, country garden of Leigh and Geoff Coggins at 7039 Hamilton Port Fairy Rd, Byaduk North. Sunday 18th October, 2015 11am – 3.30pm. \$10 per adult, children free. In aid of Friends of the Hamilton Gardens

Friends of Ballarat Botanic Gardens

Have a great pleasure in inviting you to a tour of two beautiful gardens:

Mawalok Garden & Eurambeen Homestead & Garden. October 26

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2Ds78QAxTeAYzYxQjBzWnNocjRvLUpkd2oyb2ta0EdHaEtn/view?usp=drive_web

150th Celebration

(Gala Ball) Saturday 19th March 2016 time 7pm - midnight

Photo Competition

1st August 2015 to 31st May 2016

MORNING IN THE GARDENS

We hold this gathering every first Wednesday of the month commencing at 11am. We have had representatives from local garden groups, flower clubs, floral arranges and many more. All welcome, do come along, enjoy morning tea and a chat

GIFT CERTIFICATE

The gift of a certificate is a thoughtful way to introduce your family and friends to the Gardens.

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 - excellent to Christmas presents

FACEBOOK

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

BOOKING AN EVENT IN THE GARDENS

Are you thinking of holding an event in the Gardens? Go to our [website](#) 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.