



FRIENDS OF WARRNAMBOOL BOTANIC GARDENS



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Maintaining and developing Warrnambool Botanic Gardens as an outstanding Guilfoyle garden

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NEWSLETTER

www.wbgardens.com.au

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – SUMMER 2016

As we plunge headlong into our sesquicentenary year, the Friends committee along with members of the specially co-opted planning committee for the 150th anniversary are working hard to provide many opportunities to participate in the celebrations. It is our hope that all Friends will become involved during the year, and also new friends will come on board.

Gala Night in the Gardens – Saturday 19th March

Plans are well advanced for our big night. Some invitations have been sent via email and post, though it is important to stress that this is a public event. Response, in the form of ticket sales has been good. Through media coverage the news is getting out that this is a night not to be missed. There are still tickets available, though with only 300 in total, it seems likely that this



event will sell out. So for anyone planning to attend, please contact us now to obtain your tickets. We do not want to disappoint any of our members.

Tickets can be purchased online by following the links to the booking form at www.wbgardens.org.au. If booking this way, please remember to then pay by direct deposit into our bank account, clearly marking your deposit with your surname, or to send us a cheque. If you would like to book in person please do this by contacting Janet or

Mandy by phone. We can then arrange to collect payment from you and deliver your tickets.

Photo Competition – until May 31st

If you haven't yet visited the Gardens with your camera in hand, there are three months of great autumn weather remaining in which to do so. The Gardens are looking fabulous following the recent rain and the conditions are great for taking some atmospheric shots. WBG is not only a botanic garden, home to a diverse range of animals and plant species, but a centre for cultural and social activities. There are bats in the trees, fairies in the fernery, picnickers on the lawns, ducks & tortoises in the pond – all waiting to be photographed.



Restoration of the Well and landscaping

Our plans for the development of this area have been sent to Heritage Victoria for their approval and we are awaiting a positive response to begin work on transforming this site.

Hoping to see many Friends at the gala on March 19th, all gussied up and ready to celebrate!

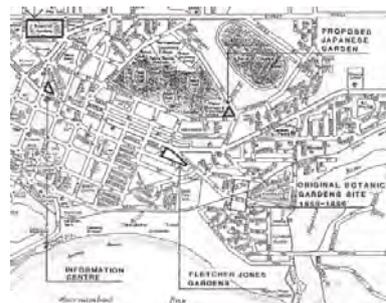
This year, 2016, marks the 150th anniversary of the establishment of the Warrnambool Botanic Gardens on their present site. The Newsletter plans to publish a history of the Gardens in three instalments. This month we look at their establishment and the first fifty years.

THE STORY OF WARRNAMBOOL BOTANIC GARDENS

For a detailed history the reader should refer to WBG Management Plan 1995

The First Site

Provision for a botanic garden was made very early in Warrnambool's history. The municipality was just over ten years old when in July 1858, it received a 500 pound grant towards the formation of a botanic garden. The chosen site was 10 acres close to the Hopkins River and west of the cemetery, with another 10 acres reserved for future expansion. Charles Scoborio was appointed the first gardener in February 1859, working from 8.00a.m. to 6.00p.m with a salary of 100 pounds. By July a gardener's cottage had been built.



The site proved unsuitable and by 1864 Council was considering an alternative location.

The present site was selected on the recommendation of Scoborio and Clutton, the latter being an horticulturalist living at Spring Gardens.

The spot was chosen for its proximity to the town, the undulating and romantic nature of its conformation and the quality of its soil...

Supplement to the Warrnambool Standard May 25, 1877

The Present Site

Scoborio remained at the original site until 1865 when arrangements were made to transplant the trees and shrubs to the other reserve.



Work on the current site at the Gardens began in 1866. At this time the land was heavily timbered with a dense undergrowth of scrub, ferns and tussocky grass. The Gardens were without a curator for several years during which time von Mueller, Director of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens supplied various plants including 200 young pines. Charles Hortle was appointed first gardener at the new site in 1869. The next year a well was sunk and a cottage built for his use. The original drawings indicate a four roomed cottage,

which with some additions still stands.

In 1872 Charles Scoborio applied for, and was reappointed as curator. He remained as curator for 34 years, retiring in 1906. Scoborio was a Cornish man, but even his own family believed stories of his Italian heritage.

It was generally believed that the family was of Italian origin of a romantic kind, but...research in Cornwall revealed that the family name Scoborio, appeared in the parish registers in Cornwall as far back as records are available. So it might appear that an Italian father was an invention.

Veni Scoborio to Marie Ziebell June 1998

Charles was born in 1827 and baptised at Mevagissey on the 2nd of December. He was the son of Thomas Sciborio (sic) and his wife Catherine and the grandson of Charles Scaborio (sic) all of Heligan Estate Cornwall.

Heligan, seat of the Tremayne family for more than 400 years, is one of the most mysterious estates in England. At the end of the nineteenth century its thousand acres were at their zenith; yet only a few years later bramble and ivy were beginning to draw a green veil over this "Sleeping Beauty."

Lost Gardens of Heligan brochure

Now referred to as the 'Lost Gardens of Heligan', the estate near Mevagissey dates from the early 17th Century. The extensive gardens were neglected and forgotten throughout most of the 20th Century, when gardeners and labour were hard to get. They have now been restored and attract tourists to their walled gardens, Italian water garden and jungle area planted with palms and bamboos, tree ferns and other unusual plants.

Heligan House was sold in 1972 to pay death duties. It is now privately owned and divided into 13 apartments. Mill House, where Charles lived is still there.

Charles is said to have been a student of Dr John Lindley of the Royal Horticultural Society and to have studied landscape gardening in various parts of Europe on a travelling diploma from the Society. He came to Warrnambool in 1857 with his wife and two year old son, Thomas Henry. The population of Warrnambool at that time was 1594. After six years at the first botanic garden site he went as head gardener to Mr Aitkin of *Ellerslie*, formerly the Dobson's Royal Archer Hotel in Koroit Street and later to Mr Joseph Ware of *Minjah*.

He joined the Warrnambool detachment of the Western Artillery, later the Militia, on its formation in 1866, and from 1879 he was Drum Major. The Cannon in the Gardens, a smooth bore 32 pounder was brought to Warrnambool for the Western Artillery in 1867 and relocated in the Gardens in 1910, when the fort was dismantled.

Scoborio's early tasks involved clearing grass and grubbing out blackwood trees from what the Standard described as having been:-

'as wild a piece of bushland as could well be selected in the district. It was heavily timbered, with a dense undergrowth of scrub, ferns and tussocky grass. No great alacrity was shown in fencing in the ground and applying it to the purpose for which it was designed.

Supplement to the Warrnambool Standard May 25, 1877

He was also potting-up seedlings, including 130 *Pinus insignis*, and obtaining new stock from the Curator at Portland. Tree planting around the perimeter was a high priority and Scoborio collaborated with Melbourne Botanic Gardens Director von Mueller, in the trial planting of conifers around the boundary.

Scoborio built rockeries from stones he gathered on the site. The knobbly limestone rockery and fountain remain today as a monument to his work. Narrow paths and enclosed spaces are typical of his work.

In addition to his role as curator Scoborio was responsible for Warrnambool's public recreation grounds and street trees. He supervised the planting of federation trees in the hospital grounds and, between 1903 and 1904, the double row of Norfolk Pines along Raglan Parade and the pines and olive trees in Henna Street. He was paid £3 (\$6) a week and found it necessary to supplement this wage by acting as a waiter at various functions, something of which the Council disapproved.

In 1877 the Borough Council commissioned William Guilfoyle, who followed von Mueller as Director of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens, to design an appropriate layout for the gardens. Guilfoyle's plan incorporated fifteen feet wide swerving paths, large sweeping lawns dotted with specimen trees, glimpses of water, dense shrubberies displaying a rich variety of plants and focal points of dramatic form and colour, such as yuccas, palms and bamboos. Unfortunately this plan, last seen in 1947, has been lost.

The triangle of land bounded by Jamieson, Queen and Cockman Street was purchased in 1879 at a cost of 30 pounds, to secure the best approach to the Gardens. *(Closed by WCC 2008)*



The 1880s were boom years in Victoria and an affluent community supported the rapid development of the Gardens.

A well and windmill were constructed in 1882. The original specification for the well, from which the following extracts come, is held in the Corangamite Regional Library, Warrnambool.

The well to be sunk where the Town Surveyor shall direct a little westerly of the Curator's Cottage

The well shall be four feet in diameter to be sunk perfectly perpendicular and to a depth of four feet below the level of the water.....

The wall to be built with sandstone where required ..to be all through stone neatly and carefully jointed and the whole to be bedded and jointed in mortar.

A platform to be constructed at the bottom of the well 4 feet above the level of the water,.....

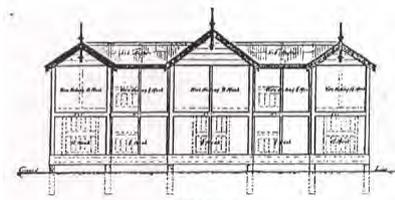
Contractors shall tender for the work specified at per foot in depth...

It is dated 9th December 1881 and signed by A. Kerr Borough Surveyor.

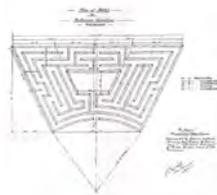
Andrew Kerr was the Town Surveyor and municipal engineer from 1856 to 1887.

Work on the lake began in 1884 and by 1886 the lake, the early bridge and the lake fountain, plus the rockery and fountain at the south east entrance were all complete.

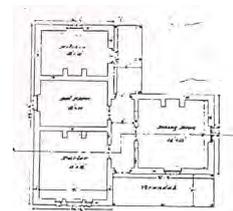
These were followed by the fernery, the aviary and the maze based on the Hampton Court Palace maze London. The aviary and the maze no longer exist. The maze was removed in 1913, while the old fernery collapsed in 1937 but was rebuilt. For a time there was an octagonal summerhouse south of the lake. The urns and the sundial, memorial gifts, date from end of the C19th. When the Merri River water scheme opened in 1893, reticulated water was available to the gardens and in 1904 gas lamps were installed.



Aviary



Maze



Cottage

Scoborio oversaw the development of the Gardens from an economic and scientific testing ground where exotic plants were trialed in a new environment, to a landscaped pleasure ground, pleasing to the eye and soothing to the temperament..

The narrow walkways, the menagerie complex, the fountain, rockeries and boundary plantings can be attributed directly to Scoborio.

The Gardens were first gazetted in 1897 by which time Scoborio had implemented Guilfoyle's plan. There were at least 15 tree species. Conifers dominated, followed by tropical evergreens and palms. Floral displays were also featured. The Gardens were the venue for many community activities,- family picnics, group picnics, musical performances, bands and Sunday strolls.

After forty years in the Council's employ, Charles Scoborio retired in 1906 at the age of 79. He was an impressive man, six and a half feet tall and of magnificent build, with a long white beard.

The Warrnambool Standard published his obituary on 9th December 1912.

A pioneer resident of Warrnambool passed away yesterday in the person of Mr Chas. Scoborio, at the advanced age of 85 years. The deceased was a native of Cornwell,(sic) England, and came to Warrnambool about 60 years ago. He was curator of parks and gardens for the Town of Warrnambool for almost forty years, and many of the pine plantations which at present enhance the beauty of the town, both in the streets, the gardens, the parks and at the Hopkins and coastal reserves, owe their existence to his judicious and systematic planting operations many years ago.

Pat Varley with input from Marie Johnstone February 2016.



CELEBRATING 150 YEARS OF THE WARRNAMBOOL BOTANIC GARDENS - BEING IN THEIR PRESENT POSITION

Night in the Gardens - Gala event 19th May 2016

Tickets are selling - don't miss out - go to our web site to find booking details

Photo competition - Entries to be in by 31st May 2016

The weather is perfect, visit the gardens and capture it's beauty. All details are on our web site

Family day 12th November 2016

More details will be announced once we have enjoyed celebrating the Gala Ball

Restoring the Well

This is well underway through the red tape process. Work on the ground is not far away.

Commemorative 150th garden bed

This bed is the large bed west of the fernery, keep visiting the gardens and watch it grow

Special Art instillation

In the process of gaining funding and commissioning an artists - more news in the following Newsletter

Drone Footage

This has been a really exciting project that shows us a completely different view of the gardens. It is easy - sit in your chair and take a tour

Facebook - Instagram

Keep an eye on facebook, it is a great way of keeping up with what is happening day to day. Or maybe you prefer to follow on instagram

Fluker Post - This has been placed on the north east side of the lake facing the bridge.

Take your phone or camera to the gardens, take a photo and load it onto the WBG's Fluker photos site, instructions are on the post.

The Fluker Post Research Project is a citizen science system designed to allow community members to contribute towards the ongoing care of various natural environments by taking photographs from fixed photo-points (Fluker Posts), emailing them into FlukerPost@gmail.com

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 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

PAYMENTS

Our Banking details are below
EFT

BSB: 083 957

Account Number: 048342632

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

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

FOR YOUR DIARY

This year we are concentrating on this auspicious occasion - the 150th year of the gardens

We are getting closer to our Night in the Gardens, we encourage you to book and not miss out. As we have expressed we have chosen to keep the guest list to a minimum of 300 people, thus creating an exclusive and exciting event.

We have given all (adult) ages consideration and have catered for all. We encourage smart dressing without feeling that you need to hire a tux.



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 043862034

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.