



FRIENDS OF WARRNAMBOOL BOTANIC GARDENS

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NEWSLETTER
www.wbgardens.com.au

BOTANIC GARDENS TEAM UPDATE FEBRUARY 2012

We have had a few staff changes in the gardens since our last team update. Mark Atkinson has been loaned to the Environment team and Ros has required extended time off. Replacing both Mark and Ros is Andrea 'Murtle' McLeod who is on loan to WBG from Parks and Gardens. Murtle has done a sensational job at hitting the ground running and has been invaluable in her assistance to both maintaining and developing the gardens.

Summer has taken its toll on some plants, particularly given the 43 degree day we endured in early January. We continue to drag hoses and move sprinklers. Fortunately, we were able to provide green lawns for both Australia Day and Wunta's Jazz in the Gardens.

Despite the dry weather we planted out a few pines within the northern section of the pinetum. These pines are from Bill Funk who has provided us with a great selection of pines that will enable the pinetum to reach its full potential in time. More plantings will continue in autumn.

Removal of bed 9 occurred recently, a circular display bed to the northeast of the cannon, which has allowed the mulching of the mature Claret Ash. Lawn has replaced this bed. Slight modifications to both beds 8 and 10 have also occurred to provide more planting opportunities and ease of maintenance.

Mulching continues in shrubs beds and around lawn specimen trees. 200 *Scilla hispanica* (Spanish Bluebells) were recently planted within the mulched exclusion zone of the 'Money Tree'.

For the record we had 80 organised functions within WBG during 2010 which is encouraging to see the formal usage of the gardens continuing.

Feel free to catch up with one of the team at the gardens and please make Murtle feel welcome.



Lone Pine *Pinus brutia*

Grown from a seed from our own Lone Pine by one of our members

John & Murtle

AN ELM TREE'S PLACE IN HISTORY

The Wych Elm

Few of us would know that we have in our possession one of the first bibles translated from Latin into English. It is in the proud hands of the University of Western Australia. The Great Bible as it was known, dated 1540, came from Ely Cathedral in England. The other day to the amazement of the librarian, Susan Howard, it was found to contain, pressed amongst its beautifully illustrated pages, three leaves from a Wych Elm.

We all know and treasure our old Dutch Elm *Ulmus x hollandica* down by the lake, known as the 'Money Tree' because of the expensive rods put through its branches. But sadly, this particular elm no longer exists in Europe because of the Dutch Elm disease and a similar fate awaited the Wych Elm, a variety which had been common across Europe and especially in England but had died out to a plague in the middle of the 16th century.

In an effort to establish the exact age of the leaves, scientists and botanists both here and overseas carried out extensive research to verify when they might have been placed in the bible.

Carbon-dating tests on the leaves proved that there was no evidence of coal-burning (introduced in the Industrial Revolution). Only wood was burnt for heating up to this time. Also found in the leaves was evidence of silver and gold, possibly from paints used in the illustrations. Furthermore they had not even stained the pages where they were found, as modern leaves would have done.

They confirm, once and for all, the date of the writing of the Great Bible and exist to this day as evidence, 470 years later.

Extracts from 'The Age' 23/12/11



Dutch Elm *Ulmus x hollandica*

Marigold Curtis

AUSTRALIA'S FIRST CHRISTMAS CARDS

The original series of Australia's first Christmas cards is held in the Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

Australian floral series nos. 1-24 was published 118 years ago by two remarkable sisters who had fallen on hard times and were obliged to use their talent for botanical illustrations to boost the family income.

Harriet Scott was 49 and her widowed sister Helena was 47. They were living with their father at Ferndale in Rushcutter's Bay, Sydney and already enjoyed the respect of botanist William Swainson and the curator of the Australian Museum, curator Gerard Krefft. Baron Ferdinand von Mueller and John Dallachy at the Melbourne Botanic Gardens also noted their work with interest.

By the early 1850's Harriet and Helena were busy on drawings for their father's work *Australian Lepidoptera* and their transformations, published in London in 1854. Their illustrations were favourably reviewed by botanist William Swainson in the Sydney Morning Herald.

The sisters found that scientific illustration was not highly rewarded and they turned to more commercial work, private commissions and the first Australian Christmas cards.

In the Australian bicentennial year craftsman House published historical drawings of native flowers by Harriet and Helena Scott.

Sydney's Mitchell Library treasures the originals of their work and has produced correspondence cards showing their designs.

Marie Johnstone



TECHNOLOGY, HERITAGE AND WARRNAMBOOL BOTANIC GARDENS

Innovation and invention is the theme of the National Trust Heritage Festival in 2012.

“The festival is a national annual event celebrating the places and stories that make Australia and Australians special. The week is about raising public awareness of the importance of conserving and protecting our special heritage places, our rich Indigenous heritage and the diverse historic sites that together reflect our development as a nation. It is also about encouraging communities and organisations to use this time to host a local heritage event or activity.”

The Friends plan to celebrate the festival with a gathering by the well at 4.00pm on Thursday May 17th. Almost 130 years of Garden history is sunk in our well.

Describing Warrnambool Botanic Gardens in 1884 “The Vagabond” wrote’

...A good deal of money has been spent here by the town council, and a very large amount will yet to be expended before the gardens will be thoroughly representative of the wealth and importance of the town, although even now they form a pleasant resort. A windmill has been erected over a well and tanks provided to store water for irrigating purposes, the waste being conducted to a lake which occupies the lower portion of the ground

The Argus , 6th December 1884

The well deserves to be conserved and protected and the windmill reinstated as part of the story of water supply, innovation and invention.

From the 1870s through to the end of the century there were up to ten windmill manufacturers in Warrnambool. James Alston became the most famous, but John Morieson, John Esam and Bruce and McClure were well known throughout the region and beyond. Alston was inventive and experimented with designs taking out numerous patents. Morieson likewise was inventive in the wind mill business. John Esam was manufacturing mills as early as 1863 and may be Australia’s first manufacturer of wind mills

Innovation and invention have shaped our Gardens, from pick and shovel to bobcat and tractor, from pen and ink to computer and e-mail.

The sweeping lawns that characterise WBG are the product of an adequate water supply and another innovation – the lawn mower.

The first ever patent for a lawn mower was issued in 1830. That expired in 1855, and by 1859, new designs were flooding the market, machines that made smooth lawns, free of uneven patches a scythe might leave.

Peter Macinnis, Ockham’s Razor 6 June 2010

Macinnis goes on to point out that the expansion of games: cricket, football croquet and tennis was encouraged by clean turf replacing the droppings of the animals that previously grazed the grass. Today’s picnickers would agree.

Meantime, the Victa Mower, an Australian icon still defines domestic lawns and suburban routines.

Come along and celebrate the likes of James Alston and the other inventors who have shaped our past, while we dream of an innovative future. Meet for tea, tall tales and true, by the well or in the rotunda, depending on the weather.

Pat Varley



Water Wise Garden and red well shed at the end of the path

**The Friends of Warrnambool Botanic Gardens
Invite you to join them for a walk and talk in the
Warrnambool Botanic Gardens**

on

**Thursday March 22
5.00 – 6.00 pm**

Followed by refreshments at the Rotunda.

**We would like to take this opportunity to
re acquaint you with the Gardens....with all the stories to be told
and**

**legends to be shared concerning the heritage of our significant
Guilfoyle designed gardens**

We are encouraging all councillors to attend

**RSVP
March 18th**

**friends@wbgardens.com.au
President Pat Varley 5562 4800
Secretary Mandy King 55620343**

**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 2012

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

'MORNING IN THE GARDENS'

All Friends welcome

First Wednesday of the Month

11.00 AM in Scoborio's Shed WBG

March 7th Warrnambool Garden Club Speaker

April 4th Early Days - Friend's to visit the past

May 2nd Preparation for Heritage Festival May
17th

June 6th Dedication of Memorial trees - Isobel &
Kathy

For details contact Billie Rowley 55611583

WEBSITE

The Association of Friends of Botanic Garden web site.
www.friendsbotanicgardens.org

Keep abreast with the insidious disease affecting many of our
gums. **Myrtle Rust**

The latest update includes the notification of two
more infected premises in Victoria bringing the total to 25.
One of these new sites is a large public garden in the SE
suburbs of Melbourne and includes infections on a number
of taxa. Information can be found at:

[http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/forestry/pests-
diseases-weeds/diseases/myrtle-rust](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/forestry/pests-diseases-weeds/diseases/myrtle-rust)

COMING EVENTS

Walk and Talk in the Gardens
Thursday 22nd **March** 5-6pm

Children's Services from TAFE
Thursday 15th **March** 10am at the Rotunda. They provide
fun and education activities for pre schoolers. Contact Pat
Varley for further details

The Friends will celebrate the 'Heritage Festival' with a
gathering by the well in the gardens, with tea & coffee on
Thursday **May** 17th 4.00pm

Friends AGM: Wednesday 18th **July** 12 noon. To be held at
TAFE. Guest speaker Annett Zealley to talk about plans for
Eastern Park and Geelong Botanic Gardens. Further details
next newsletter

Annual Spring Garden Day
Sunday **September** 23rd 11am - 2pm. While you are
gardening between now and then we would be excited if you
could pot up some cuttings or seedlings to sell on the day.
More details in the next NL