



# FRIENDS OF WARRNAMBOOL BOTANIC GARDENS

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Winter 2012

**NEWSLETTER**  
[www.wbgardens.com.au](http://www.wbgardens.com.au)

## THE OPENING OF THE ROTUNDA



This historic building with its elegant, octagonal-shaped design and roof of Marseilles tiles, will be 100 years old next year. It has been an important feature of our Guilfoyle gardens, a centre for our activities and enjoyed by thousands over the years. Some might remember the outside staircase with its “speakers’ platform” which sadly had to be removed for safety reasons.

It was opened in 1913 – I am proud to say - by my grandfather, John William Younger. He had been a councillor from 1911 – 1918 and as Mayor was asked to officially open the Rotunda. This he did, giving a grand speech from the speakers’ platform. Half way through, he was rudely interrupted by kookaburras from the nearby bushland who burst into song, causing him to pause for several minutes to let them have their say – much to the amusement of the crowd.

*Marigold Curtis.*



*William Younger -  
Historical Society*

The Rotunda was built by Beattie and Donaldson in 1913. Alex Donaldson was a Warrnambool home builder and timber merchant of 231 Raglan Parade. At that time his phone number was 300! Donaldson was a city councillor from 1925 to 1932.

This information, was supplied by his granddaughter Helen Clarke. Helen came to the heritage festival "Tea and Talk" in the Gardens and brought along some historic photos of the Rotunda and those who built it. As next year will see the Rotunda's centenary it is timely to seek out stories, photos and other records of its past.

Members are urged to dust off their albums and bring along old photos of the Rotunda, the Cannon (cast in 1813), the Well & Windmill and other records of our heritage garden.

Your secretary will copy them to disc, give a copy to the Warrnambool and District Historical Society and return the originals with copies on disc promptly to the owner.



*Alex Donaldson - Donated by Helen Clarke (Copy)*

## **Remembering Isobel and Kathy**

On a cold and overcast winter morning, June 6th, past and present committee members and family and friends of Isobel Jones and Kathy Wicherson met to dedicate trees to their memory and rejoice in the love they shared for the Gardens.

Ellen Dwyer, who as founding president of The Friends, had worked closely with Isobel, spoke of the enthusiasm, hard work and dedication that Isobel brought to the role of founding secretary. She established the Guiding Friends group and researched and recorded the story of many of our trees and shrubs as well as the structures that define our Gardens. Her wise counsel and steady support over many years as a committee member was inspirational.

Isobel's tree *Quercus ilex* is a Holm Oak or Holly oak, a native of the Mediterranean Region. The lower leaves of young trees can be spikey; hence the name Holly oak. The wood is hard and tough and used in construction, wagons and wine casks. It is one of the top trees for truffle orchards. It does not enjoy cold winters. Isobel would relate to it.

Marie Johnstone, a life member of the Friends paid tribute to Kathy who as a committee member and past treasurer was a huge contributor. The Gardens were an important part of Kathy's life and as an active gardener and advocate she was most involved with all the activities of the Friends.

Kathy's tree *Quercus Palustris* or Pin oak, also known as Swamp Spanish oak, is native to the NE of the USA. There are several suggestions for the name Pin Oak which include the use of the wood for pins. One of our members suggested that it may well derive from 'pine'. This long-lived tree is good for bringing a more stately presence to difficult and variable sites. It is so appropriate for Kathy.

The trees grow near the Cockman Street boundary, west of the Cypress arch.

## HERITAGE FESTIVAL



### TEA and TALK in the GARDENS

The achievements of innovators and inventors were celebrated with a display of documents and photographs at the rotunda on May 17th. Over forty guests enjoyed the display, tea and talks. The emphasis was on water, wells and windmills, with the focus on the historic well in the Gardens. The Friends want to reinstate the well and reproduce the windmill that once stood over it.

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. John Esam was manufacturing mills as early as 1863 and may be Australia's first manufacturer of wind mills. A map showing the location of manufacturers in Warrnambool was prepared by Les O'Callaghan.

On display were the original hand written specifications for the well in the Gardens, and for the wind mill and frame at Cannon Hill which were built at the same time as the windmill in the Gardens.

To supplement the display, three brief talks by members Pat Varley, Elizabeth O'Callaghan and Janet McDonald described innovators and inventors; Andrew Kerr, John Morieson and James Alston.

The specification 'for a well to be sunk a little westerly of the Curators Cottage' is dated 9 Dec 1881 and signed by the Borough Surveyor - A Kerr.

Andrew Kerr was the Town Surveyor and municipal engineer from 1856 to 1887. He was responsible for the cutting through Flagstaff Hill, a horse drawn tramway from Fairy Street to the jetty, Warrnambool's first street lamps, and the Dennington Bridge. He designed St John's Presbyterian Church the Western Hotel, the Orderly Room (SWTAFE) and the Warrnambool Club, among other public buildings.

He was truly an innovator.

John Morieson is remembered for his inventiveness in the wind mill business. A native of Aberdeenshire, Scotland, he arrived in Warrnambool in 1855 and established a blacksmith and wheelwright business in Liebig Street. He entered many of his designs in local shows and was frequently outraged that the awards he felt he deserved were won by rivals. He was frequently in the courts, suing for debts owed or wrongs suffered, but was a generous and respected citizen and an innovative craftsman.

James Alston started his business at Conn's Corner near Dennington, before moving his "Implement works" to Raglan Parade Warrnambool in the 1880s. He was inventive and experimented with designs, taking out numerous patents for windmills and other agricultural equipment. His business grew as orders came from all parts of Australia and overseas. When he relocated to South Melbourne the Moray Street site covered .4 of a hectare. His family home still stands in St Kilda Road, Melbourne.

It was a great opportunity to share our enthusiasm for history and heritage with so many like minded people, some of whom had travelled from Lake Goldsmith and from Geelong to join us.

## CURATORS DAY

A morning in the Gardens on the first Wednesday of the month has offered an interesting and varied program.

Jeanette O'Keefe, a member of the Warrnambool Garden Club told us about the lovely garden she has established at Winslow. Photos of the garden with roses in full bloom were a tribute to the skill, hard work and clever design that Jeanette has devoted to her garden. She told us that as each of her three daughters left home, she added to the garden. We could relate to how plants, while not a substitute for family, can satisfy our need to nurture, love and care.

Ellen Dwyer, life member and founding president of the Friends joined us in April, for a morning of nostalgia, shared memories and humorous moments. In retrospect the Friends can be very pleased with their achievements over the past quarter century.

Our May meeting was devoted to planning and preparation for the Heritage Festival and in June we dedicated trees to two past committee members. These last two events are covered in more detail elsewhere in this Newsletter.

All members are welcome to these very informal gatherings held in Scoborio's Shed  
11.00 am. on the first Wednesday of the month. (Entry gate into depot yard at back of the cottage)

Thankyou to Billie Rowley and Laurel Myers for arranging speakers.

### **July 4** Port Fairy Garden Club

Margaret Banks and Cherree Densley

The Garden Club was formed under the auspices of the Port Fairy Community House. The Club meets twice a month and on each occasion they go on outings to various gardens both near and far.

### **August 1** Friendship Garden

David Mackenzie

The Warrnambool City Council and the Municipal Government of the City of Miura, Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan entered a formal Sister-City relationship in 1992. As a major symbol of the Sister-City relationship, the WCC with assistance and support from the City of Miura developed a Japanese Garden, now known as the Friendship Garden. The Garden is designed around traditional philosophies of Japanese Garden architecture, utilising Australian native plants.

### **September 5** Warrnambool and District Orchid Society

Elaine Oliver

Elaine is an enthusiastic gardener and very keen about growing orchids. She will give an

introductory talk explaining how to grow orchids in a cool climate – you do not need a hothouse! She will also tell us which orchids are most popular to grow in Warrnambool.

### **October 3** Country Gardeners' Club

Jan McCluggage

Jan founded the Country Gardener's Club 17 years ago. The Club plans two 6 monthly rosters of events each year. Events range from garden walks and invited speakers to sharing plants. Some outings are held during the day and some are held in the evening. The Club arranges a major excursion once a year and travel far and wide to enjoy the experience of visiting other gardens, particularly those in the South West region.

### **November 7** Warrnambool Community Garden -

Speaker to be confirmed

The Warrnambool Community Garden Project started in late 2005 with the purpose of creating a gathering place where members of the community can meet, grow food, share knowledge, learn and practice sustainable living.

**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](mailto:friends@wbgardens.com.au) and we  
will put you on the email list

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**ANNUAL GENERAL  
MEETING**

TAFE Building  
Conference Room Level 3  
Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2012

12.00am

Guest speaker  
Annette Zealley

**Agenda:**

1. Confirmation of minutes
2. Reports
3. Election of Committee Members
4. Election of Office Bearers
5. Annual subscription fee
6. Election of auditor.

Our guest speaker Annett Zealley curator of the  
Geelong Botanic Gardens will talk about plans for  
Eastern Park and the Geelong Botanic Gardens.

**WEBSITE**

The Association of Friends of Botanic Garden web site.

[www.friendsbotanicgardens.org](http://www.friendsbotanicgardens.org)

The Friends contribute to their newsletter 'Campsis' There are 53  
Botanic Gardens who are members within Aust & NZ

BGANZ [www.bganz.org.au](http://www.bganz.org.au)

The Gardens Club of Australia <http://www.gardenclubs.org.au>

The FOWBG's are a member of these three groups

<http://asgap.org.au/> Learn about our native plants

**COMING EVENTS**

**Morning in the Gardens**

First Wednesday of the Month 11am

**AGM – Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> July**

**Annual Spring Garden Day**

Sunday **September 23<sup>rd</sup>** 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

**Membership payment**

We now offer Direct payment for your membership,  
please see your membership renewal form for details.