



# FRIENDS OF WARRNAMBOOL BOTANIC GARDENS

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

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## SPRING GARDEN DAY

### ROTUNDA 100 YEARS ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 11am – 2pm

The focus of this newsletter is the Rotunda which is 100 years old this year. Included is an extract from the excellent Conservation and Management Plan, produced for Warrnambool City Council in 1995 by Jill Orr-Young and Patrick Mallon.

We have reproduced an article by Marie Ziebell that was first published in our winter Newsletter of 2001 and also a citation from the Victorian Heritage Register January 2006. Just to demonstrate that we are not completely parochial, we look at other band stands and rotundas in Victoria.

While 100 years may seem to be in the distant past, we have tangible links with those times. Marigold Curtis, a foundation member of the FOWBG is the grand daughter of Mayor Younger, who officiated at the opening of the Rotunda in 1913, and Helen Clarke is a descendant of Alex Donaldson of Beattie and Donaldson, the contractors who erected the building.

At our Annual Spring Garden Day on 22<sup>nd</sup> September we will celebrate. Plants and produce will be on sale from 11.00am. The sausages will sizzle from 11.30 and from 12.00 noon, memories and memorabilia will be shared as members present short talks and walks to include not only the Rotunda, but Scoborio's Shed and the Cannon which was cast 200 years ago. Bands and other entertainers will occupy the band stand so do come along.

*Pat Varley President.*



### ROTUNDAS, BRASS BANDS, MEMORIALS AND MEMORIES

In the year 1913 Mayor John Wilson Younger performed the opening ceremony for the Band Rotunda in Warrnambool Botanic Gardens. One hundred years later, his grand daughter Marigold Curtis will take part in the centenary celebrations to be held at that Rotunda, on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> September.

The Rotunda is one of many similar buildings erected in towns and cities through out Australia around the end of the nineteenth century. This was the heyday of brass bands and out door musical entertainment.

The Mountaineer Brass Band Rotunda at Walhalla is one of the oldest still in existence. Built in 1896, it is a wooden structure, octagonal in shape, with a tin roof. It was the stage for the Mountaineer Brass Band founded in 1885 in the boom time of the golden era.

The Titanic Band Stand in Sturt Street Ballarat was built as a tribute to the band that resolutely played on, as the ship went down.

Beaufort has one of the States most ornate band stands. Built in 1903 in 'commemoration of the glorious reign of Queen Victoria' it is topped with a clock donated by Admiral Bridges of Trawalla Estate. Appropriately, Beaufort for many years, had an exceptional brass band, one of whose members regularly wound the clock.



*Ballarat*



*Bairnsdale*



*Beaufort*

There is another octagonal band stand at Port Melbourne. It was built in 1918 in honour of the Australian soldiers who fought in the First World War. It was paid for by the Port Melbourne Women's Welcome Home Committee. Port Melbourne was the embarkation point for many troops and the place to which some returned.

The band rotundas at Natimuk and Fitzroy were also built as war memorials. Hamilton's elegant rotunda was relocated to the Gardens in 1988. Before this it was located at Melville Oval. It dates from about 1900 and is made of wood with a corrugated iron roof.

The rotunda in Buninyong Gardens was opened in 1901. A simple structure with walls of lattice, it was dedicated to Queen Victoria and paid for by seventy pounds raised by 'the ladies of Buninyong'.

Closer to home, Camperdown Gardens once had a band stand on the top of the hill. The foundations can still be seen. At Port Fairy much of the gardens and structures have been absorbed in the camping grounds. At Koroit, the Gardens were a regular venue for open air concerts and performances by the brass band. An obelisk erected in 1928 pays tribute to those killed in the first World War.

The Warrnambool Band Rotunda was largely paid for by local residents, but it does not appear to be dedicated to anything or any one in particular. This year the bands will again play as it celebrates its 100th birthday.

*Pat Varley*  
*August 2013*

## RESTORATION OF THE ROTUNDA

The band rotunda was built in 1913 as an expression of Council commitment to musical entertainment in the Gardens, in response to community initiatives. It belongs to the heyday of Australian bandstands (1880-1920) and council correspondence suggests that its design was influenced by similar structures at Launceston, Prahran, Fitzroy Gardens and Albert Park (Melbourne).

The rotunda is sited on sloping lawn above the lake giving it prominence from a number of viewpoints.

The builders were Beattie & Donaldson, Raglan Parade, Warrnambool at a cost of 300 pounds of which 200 pounds was contributed by fund raising from the local residents through such activities as bazaars, fetes and concerts. The open bandstand area is elevated about 2.7 metres above a ground floor room which originally functioned as a tea kiosk.

An extract from the Geelong Advertiser – News of the Week 6/3/1913 on the opening of the Rotunda by Mayor Younger:

**“These conveniences will be greatly appreciated by many of the ladies who have painful memories of former bazaars, when the boilers refused to boil even with ceaseless encouragement from man, woman and kerosene. A penny-in-the-slot gas ring is also provided for the use of smaller functions and family tea parties.**

**The opening ceremony was performed by the Mayor on Tuesday evening, when the three bands marched to the gardens and took part in the program. The Lyric Company screened a good program of pictures and an unexpected item was supplied by a chorus of jackasses from the neighbouring trees. As they chose the middle of the Mayor’s address for their serenade, he was obliged to give it in sections, the diversion caused by the friendly jackasses being too much for all concerned. The entertainment was a great success, and the funds raised will be devoted to fixed music stands for the bands, and a rainwater supply in connection with the refreshment room.”**



Major alterations were made to the rotunda in 1981. The timber upper floor was replaced with a concrete slab and the external timber staircase replaced by an internal concrete stairway and the window openings filled in with concrete blocks.

Restoration works will re-establish the outside staircase allowing access to the rotunda and opening up of former windows. The internal room will be modestly fitted out with basic kitchen facilities.

A public fundraising appeal for the restoration of rotunda has been ongoing for some years, prior to the recent grant. The Friends have held many events in the gardens and served afternoon teas from the rotunda for this purpose. The money raised for this restoration has been held in trust and will be contributed towards the cost of this restoration. Any surplus will go towards the restoration of the gas lamps and urns in the Gardens.

*Marie Ziebell 2001*

## FROM THE WBG CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

FEB 1995 P29-31

The construction of the Band Rotunda/Tea Kiosk was preceded by correspondence with Launceston (10), Melbourne (11), and Prahran (12), City Councils, requesting advice on design and construction. In relation to the sounding board, Prahran replied: “..... we had no difficulty in fixing the position of the sounding board, which has a drop of 1 foot 3 inches in the centre, as per sketch underneath, and the Bandmasters consider it one of the best stands in the state” (12). In May, 1913 the contractors – Beattie and Donaldson, Raglan Parade, Warrnambool – list the final construction cost as 297 pounds (13).

The Band Rotunda is sited on the sloping lawn above to the lake giving it prominence from a number of viewpoints, either as the focus of a vista or as an accent in a broader view. (Figures 18 and 19)

The building is octagonal on plan, with the open bandstand area elevated about 2.7 metres above a ground floor room which originally functioned as a Tea Kiosk. Access to the upper floor was by means of an external stair on the north side, now removed and replaced with an internal staircase.

Construction of the lower storey is rough-cast render over brickwork, originally with a timber-framed roof which was covered with floorboards and bitumen to form the bandstand floor.

Dominating the building is the conical octagonal roof, steeply pitched to its apex and sweeping down in an elegant curve to a pronounced bell-cast at the eaves, all supported on slender cast iron columns decorated with cast iron lace in the Victorian manner. The roofing material of unglazed terracotta Marseilles pattern tiles is distinctive and somewhat unusual in this application, bandstands elsewhere generally have metal or slate roofing, although at the time of construction, tiles were rapidly becoming a most popular roofing material thanks to large-scale importing in the early 1900’s, followed by Australian manufacture from 1910.

Whilst the roof shape and its tiled covering is typically Queen Anne/Edwardian in style, the stucco-covered brick base and the cast iron columns and decorative iron lace are characteristic of the 1860-1880 period, particularly in view of the restrained and rather delicate nature of this ironwork. The authors have found no plans nor any evidence of a professional architect having been involved with this building. Rather, it would appear to have been a design produced in the Council offices, with information collected from other municipalities in response to Warrnambool enquiries.



## VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER JAN 2006

The Warrnambool Botanic Gardens are of social significance for their long association with the community, tourists and students. The Gardens are highly valued for their role in landscape, botanical and horticultural education. **They continue to be an important venue for major public events, musical performances and official celebrations.**

### REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

As you will read from these reports, we have sketchy information of the building and the opening of the Rotunda. We have obtained some interesting pictures from the Warrnambool & District Historical Society. If you are lucky enough to have some pictures or any anecdotes we would love to add them to our collection and share them with our members. We are able to copy these pictures and return the original, much care will be taken in handling and returning these picture. Please share your history.

Please email [friends@wbgardens.com.au](mailto:friends@wbgardens.com.au) or phone Mandy King 0355620343

### TWO HUNDRED YEARS OLD

When next in the Gardens, wander down to the cannon and check the date on the left hand trunnion. This is the date the barrel was cast and indicates it is 200 years old.

The Conservation and Management Plan for Warrnambool Botanic Gardens (1995) describes the gun as follows:

The gun was cast at the Carron Ironworks at Sterling, Scotland in 1813. The date 1837 on the barrel probably indicates it was bored out to convert it from a 24Pr to a 32 Pr in that year. It may have originally been a naval gun and the conversion undertaken when it was brought ashore. It is very probably one of the 15 guns that are known to have constituted the defences of Victoria in 1860. It was possibly sited at Cannon Hill before the defences moved to Flagstaff Hill. p.29

It is of a type known as a carronade. These short cannon were designed for use on ships of the fleet where they could, at close quarters smash a hole in the hull of enemy vessels. They had a range of about 3 kilometres, and aboard ship were quite manoeuvrable. They were used during the Napoleonic wars (1808-1815) The development of steel sheathed hulls and weapons of longer range made them obsolete by the middle of the century.

These ship's guns were heavy. The gun in the gardens weighs over 2.25 ton. (The weight in cwt, qrs and lbs - 45-3-24 is inscribed on the barrel) While afloat they were manoeuvrable, but on land they needed a traversing platform to allow them to swivel around.

Climb on board and let your imagination take you back to the Napoleonic wars. Well it was a bit late for the Battle of Trafalgar but Britannia ruled the waves – and the sea lanes of the world. It was to protect these trade routes that this gun was placed in Melbourne in the 1860s and later in Warrnambool, as part of the defences of South West Victoria. By this time it was already obsolete. In 1910 it was moved to its present site in the Gardens.



# PRIORITIES IN WARRNAMBOOL BOTANIC GARDENS 2013 - 2014

## 1. Sustainable use of water

### Irrigation upgrade

PRESENT SITUATION WASTES WATER AND STAFF TIME

### The well and the windmill

Noted landscape gardener A. Laidlaw is preparing a concept design.  
Advice on the well would be very helpful.

## 2. Paths in need of maintenance.

### Main paths

Protect original stone edges, as they are part of the heritage listing.

A slight camber on the paths would improve drainage.

Tree root damage requires special treatment. Consult Curator.

### Minor access

The fernery calls for an elevated deck or similar over the tree roots for continued unimpeded access

## 3. Signage

### Street signs

Closure of Cockman Street still creates confusion. Redesign desirable.

Directional signs still need upgrading

'Main Entrance' sign at East end of Cockman St

## 4. Update management plan

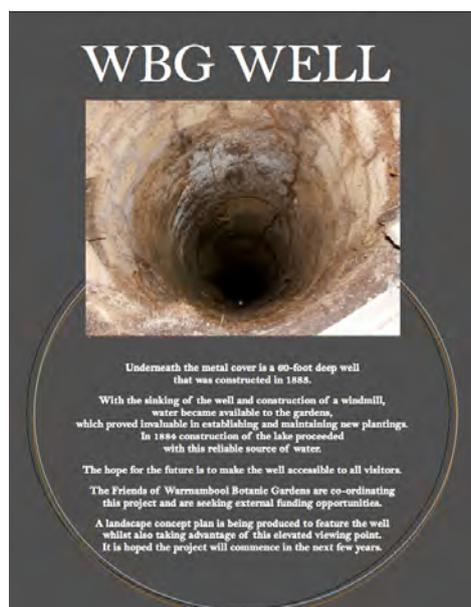
2005 MP out of date and needs reviewing

## 5. Picnic tables.

Two more sets in same design as the existing two.

## 6. Toilet

**An accessible toilet on the Northeast is already under discussion.** It is high priority. If approved in principle, designs will be considered.



## 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 2013

## 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

*\*Thankyou to the Warrnambool & District Historical  
Society for the archive photos used in the Newsletter*

## BOOKING AN EVENT IN THE GARDENS

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

### MORNING IN THE GARDENS

John Sheely will talk on his study trip of gardens in  
Europe and the UK

Join us in Scoborio's shed at 11.00am.

### SPRING GARDEN DAY & CENTENARY OF THE ROTUNDA

The committee are preparing the day and ask the  
members if you are able to provide produce, plants or  
books relating to gardens for sale on the day, please  
contact a committee member, email the Friends or call  
Mandy on 03 55620343.

Donations can be brought on the day or left at the  
depot during work hours. Thank you for your  
assistance.

### SIGNS IN THE GARDENS

When you next visit the gardens you will notice the  
start of our new and informative sign project. There is  
one on Scoborio's Shed, two new Guiding signs on the  
two main entrances and one at the well. Thanks go to  
the Sheely family for their input.

### A MUST VISIT

As you know our project at the moment is to  
incorporate the well area into the gardens. This area  
has been cleared of shed and vines and is now waiting  
to be structured into what is mooted to be the top piece  
of real-estate in Warrnambool.

## MEMBERSHIP PAYMENTS

Membership payment for 2013-14 was due by the AGM  
With the new constitution rules bought in this year, by law  
non financial members will be cleared from our database.

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