

FRIENDS OF WARRNAMBOOL BOTANIC GARDENS



NEWSLETTER

Issue Number 91

A0032902E

April 2020

Maintaining and developing Warrnambool Botanic Gardens as an outstanding Guilfoyle garden

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

In the words of Lewis Carroll, “the time has come... to speak of many things”

Yes, of ducks and cars and playing space, of wells and metal rings.

Today, March 12, the polycarbonate dome was attached to the well in the Gardens by a stainless steel collar, the well lights were turned on and the awesome depth of the old well revealed. There are a few teething problems to be resolved and the landscaping to be completed, but after about nine years the end is in sight. It was 2012 when we first got a grant to clear the site and design the project. Our research had discovered the original handwritten specification for the sinking of the well in 1883. The successful tenderer was to complete the work within one month of signing the tender. The well is now quite spectacular. Thanks to all those who have made it possible. We plan a formal opening shortly in conjunction with the celebration of the Friends thirtieth anniversary.

Now for the saga of the nature based play space for which you will recall we gained 347 votes and \$198,000 as a result of Pick my Project toward the end of 2018. The Friends immediately advanced \$3,500 to secure the services of Laidlaw and Laidlaw, renowned for their work on nature based play areas and their knowledge of Guilfoyle gardens. We were eager to secure the best design consistent with our goal of maintaining and

developing WBG as an outstanding Guilfoyle garden. Together with Andrew Laidlaw and Warrnambool City Council we set up a listening post on the proposed site at WUNTA in February 2019 and spoke with interested groups and individuals.

The WBG were placed on the Victorian Heritage Register in 2006, requiring a permit for any major works. We had hoped for a permit exemption as the design did not impact on any significant plants and involved no major structures, but after several discussions with Heritage Victoria where alternate sites were discussed and rejected we lodged an application for the Botanic Road site last November 7th. Time was running out and the application would normally be considered within 60 days. This would enable work to begin in the new year.

The response from Heritage Victoria said they had formed the view that it might harm the registered place and that the proposal should be advertised. The normal 60 day period stopped with the decision to advertise and there would be no further consideration until 14 days after the advertisement. That would be 25th March. However the clock could be stopped again if further information was required. There could be a request for an additional 60 days. This brief outline shrouds the hours of consultations, meetings, video conferencing, recording and

minuting involved. The cost in dollars too has been considerable.

But the shining light that has encouraged us is the fact that over 150 responses were made to the advertised proposal, every one supporting it. Thank you all so much. From individuals, clubs and organisations there was overwhelming informed support for a nature based play space off Botanic Road. We await the outcome, hopefully by March 25th.

These days and for the past 100 years, feeding the ducks has been a high light of children's visits to the Gardens, so we were worried when it was suggested that a sign be erected discouraging this. Concern for some dead ducks found at Lake Pertobe and the possibility they died from being fed bread was the impetus. We are not aware of any dead ducks in the Gardens and like to avoid negative signs, so it was agreed that at this stage only Lake Pertobe will be sign posted.

Curator John Sheely reported that 13 new sprinklers were being installed meaning that now over 80% of the Gardens are covered. State funding of \$10,000 dollars may be available to install mist irrigation for cooling in trees where the Grey Headed Flying Fox hang out, offering protection in extreme heat. This would further extend the automatic sprinkler system.

The City Council is currently seeking input into transport planning it is doing around the Botanic Gardens Precinct. With extensive development to the north of the city there will be greater traffic density along Mortlake Road and Botanic Road. While the study is focussed on pedestrians and cyclists it also provides an opportunity to reconsider traffic, parking and signage in Cockman Street. We would value your opinions.

Thankyou once again to all our loyal and supportive members.

Pat Varley

President 12/3/2020

Mawallock



Friends who visited Mawallock last April will be interested to learn that the property has been sold for the first time since being settled by the Russell family in 1847. It remained in the Russell family until 1980 when it was sold privately to the Mitchell family. The homestead on 2349 hectares is expected to sell for around \$25m. The homestead in the Arts and Crafts style was built in 1908. The Guilfoyle designed garden looks out over a lake to Mt Cole on the horizon. Those who know Dalvui will immediately recognise their similarity and the Guilfoyle style protected in these two lovely properties. While the price paid has not been revealed, Mawallock has been sold to Chinese wool processor Qignan Wen who also owns Lal Lal near Ballarat. Qingnan Wen is China's biggest buyer of Australian wool.

BREAKING NEWS

Today we have been advised through email that the Nature Play Space has got the green light.

Heritage Victoria under the banner of DWELP informed us in part - 'After assessing your application against ss101(2) and 101(3) of the Heritage Act 2017 (the Act), the Executive Director, Heritage Victoria has determined to issue a permit with conditions under s102 of the Act.....'

This has been a long drawn out and exhausting procedure and we would like to thank John Sheely Curator and Paula Gardiner WCC for their diligence and persistence in the quest to deliver this much applauded and exciting project. In the initial process the Nature Play Space a Pick My Project initiative gained 347 public votes. Heritage Victoria asked that we put out a public notice where objections could be lodged, they received an unprecedented 157 letters of support and not one objection. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all that took the time to write emails and letters. We believe this show of support got us over the line.

WILLIAM DONALD

William was born 01/03/1867 in Closeburn, Dumfriesshire, Scotland

At 14 he migrated to Canada with sister. Then to Australia as a young man.

He was a qualified gardener and married the daughter of a gardener Ellen Hastings in 1890 when he was 24 years old.

William went to Kalgoorlie goldfields at the end of C19th. Then some time later was a gardener in Mt Macedon. During this time he propagated all the seedlings for the Melbourne Botanic Gardens.

Following death of second daughter Nellie in 1904 in Macedon they moved to Warrnambool and William took up the position as curator in 1906 until 1932

He was an interesting man who taught himself Latin to enable him to understand all the plant names. He loved music and played the jews harp, the zither and also fancied himself as a singer, though how good a singer was debatable. He enjoyed fishing and had a holiday hut at Jubilee Park. He enjoyed a whiskey or two and cigars. In fact he grew his own tobacco in the cottage garden and dried the leaves on top of the fernery. He gave both up for health reasons but always maintained that if he knew when he was going to die he would take up both again not long before. He was very fond of tropical plants and created a hot house in the gardens fuelled by a coke furnace.

Under his curatorship the gardens became a very social place to be. Not only Ellen's delicious afternoon teas but regular music recitals in the rotunda and during the summer silent films were shown in the gardens. I can remember my grandmother Jean telling me about the carbon arc lights that they used to show the films often exploding which she thought was pretty terrific as a child.

Obviously producing regular afternoon teas must have been hard work for Ellen and Jean told me each of the children had quite a number of household tasks to perform daily. However she also told me that their life at the gardens was a very happy one.

Extract from speech presented by Jane Fury (Astbury)- great grand daughter of William Donald

FRIENDS OF WARRNAMBOOL BOTANIC GARDENS Inc

A0032902E

President

Pat Varley (03) 5562 4800

Vice-president

Janet Macdonald (03) 5562 4059

Secretary

Mandy King 0438 620 343

Treasurer

Fiona Rule 0438 622 199

Committee

Joan Keith (03) 55624377

Anne Lynch (03) 5562 1303

Judi Phillips (03) 5562 3320

Susan Ewers (03) 5562 5608

Donn Lumb

Monique Ferrier

Correspondence:

Friends of Warrnambool Botanic Gardens Inc.

P.O. Box 1190

Warrnambool 3280

Email: friends@wbgardens.com.au

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 2020

To save time, paper and postage
Please ask to have your Newsletter sent by email.
Send us an email at friends@wbgardens.com.au
and we will put you on the email list

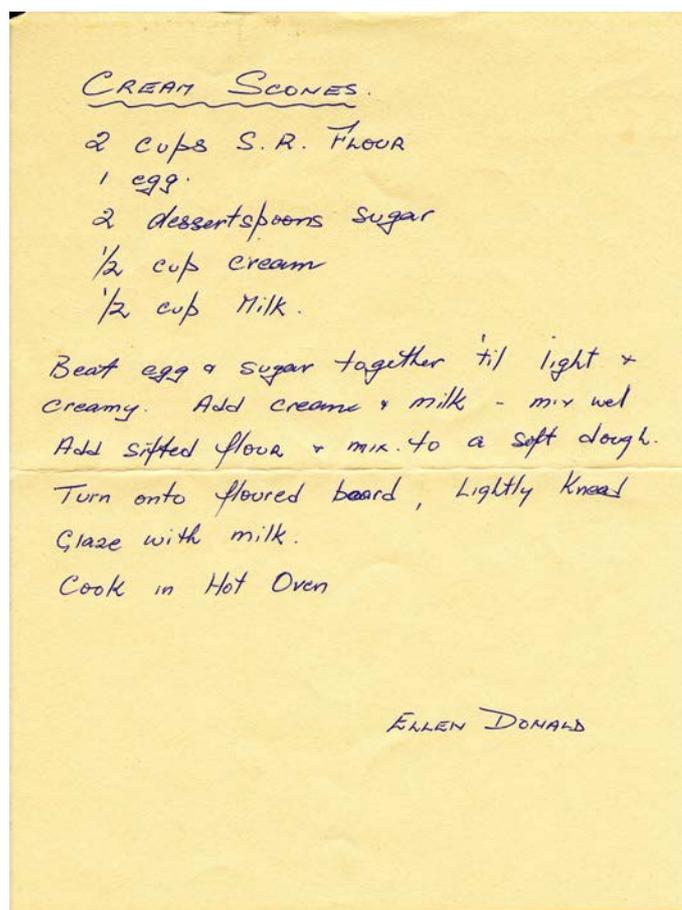
WARRNAMBOOL BOTANIC GARDENS WEB SITE AND FRIENDS OF THE WBG

The web site now has a secure SSL certificate
ensuring it is safe for all to visit.

There is so much to be learned about the gardens by
visiting the site, please click [HERE](#)
You can now tour the gardens on your phone or
computer through the interactive, google tour
Warrnambool botanic gardens drag [your mouse](#) around
the gardens.

GUIDED TOURS

Guided tours are on hold until
further notice



Communication

We are going through different times. We will endeavour to keep you informed with the progress of our projects. As you would appreciate it is not easy to keep our snail mail members fully informed. We would appreciate your assistance in contacting members you know who are not on the internet and keeping them up to date.

We will use facebook and keep the web page up to date so don't forget to check every now and then.

If you are not getting out and about you could tour the gardens [on line](#). This was created a while ago so not totally up to date but a fun thing to do.

We would like you to visit your tranquil gardens as they are a space of relaxation and reflection.

We implore you to follow all government guidelines