



**Friends of Williamstown
Botanic Gardens Inc.**

**NEWSLETTER No 8
July 2011**

President: Sue Murray ph 9397 5698 *Secretary:* Geoffrey King ph 9397 5672
Postal address P.O. Box 826, Williamstown 3016
email williebotgardens@gmail.com
website <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~wbotanic/>

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April was a busy and successful month for the Friends of the Williamstown Botanic Gardens.

There were three major events.

**General Meeting
Monday 4th April 2011**

This first event was a talk by Richard Barley, Chief Executive Officer of Australia's Open Garden Scheme and former Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens.

This was most entertaining and stimulating, covering the historical context of botanic gardens in Victoria, their contemporary and future roles and also Australia's Open Garden Scheme. It was accompanied by an excellent digital slide presentation

Richard first talked of the establishment of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne in 1846 under the curatorship of Ferdinand Von Mueller. He then discussed the major changes to the Gardens when Guilfoyle was appointed curator using slides to illustrate the differences. He showed a map of the large number of Botanic Gardens established in Victoria in the 19th century where exotic trees were planted to determine what species would acclimatise. Interestingly he told us that the stock for elms in Melbourne came from English elms which had originated in Turkey.

He showed us the Children's Garden in the Royal Botanic Gardens with the delightful bronze sculptures of the main characters from Norman Lindsay's Australian children's classic "The Magic Pudding" at the entrance. The placing of the sculptures led to support for developing the Children's Garden which has been a great success with people of all ages. Richard made the point that Botanic Gardens need to evolve not just remain static.

Moving on to Australia's Open Garden Scheme Richard described it as a not for profit organisation whose aim is "To promote the enjoyment, knowledge and benefits of gardens and gardening in the Australian community and to build strong public support for the development of gardens across the nation." It receives no external funding from government or other organisations. For fuller details of the Scheme you may wish to visit the website <http://www.opengarden.org.au/aboutus.html>

Twenty seven people attended Richard's presentation including some new members. We were pleased to welcome, Ian Brown, Manager Parks, Shelley Wood, Head Gardener, and Loraine Callow from Hobsons Bay City Council (HBCC). We thank Richard for his informative and engaging presentation.

The second major event for the month was –

**Paint the Gardens
Saturday 16th April 2011**

The judging of this competition, which was part of “Art in Public Places”, took place on a perfect autumn day in the Williamstown Botanic Gardens and was visited by more than 200 people (including members of Friends of St Kilda Botanic Gardens). There were 69 entries, 37 in the Open Competition and 32 in the Children’s Competition. Three marquees were provided by Hobsons Bay City Council.

- **First Prize was won by Dimity Gregson with her work “Towards the Bay”**
- **Second Prize was won by Dimi Simeonidis for her work “Granpa Bunya Bunya”**
- **The People’s Choice was won by Jenny Viney for her work “Moreton Bay Fig”**
- **The Children’s Section Prize was won by Christina Pelosi-Thorpe for her work “The Bottle Tree”**

The judges were so impressed by the standard of the entries that they added six **Highly Commended Prizes won by:**

- **Heather Horrocks for “Bark”- Open Section**
- **Jan Johnston for “Spring Anemones in the Cactus Garden”- Open Section**
- **Jenny Viney for “Moreton Bay Fig”- Open Section**
- **Mia Dewar for “Spiders Web”- Children’s Section**
- **Ella Isaacson for “Autumn Flowers”- Children’s Section**
- **Clarisse Sawyer for “The Subtle Succulent” - Children’s Section**

We thank the following **sponsors:**

- **First Prize - Community Sector Banking, Bendigo Bank and Kim Sawyer**
- **Second Prize - Marks Bros Electrical**
- **People’s Choice Prize - Banjo Plumbing**
- **Children’s Prize - Bonny Gardens**
- **Highly Commended Prizes - Hobsons Bay City Council Ward Grant initiated by Councillor Angela Altair**
- **Real Estate Agents Jas H Stephens for supplying three community notice boards.**

Other important contributions were made by Friends of Altona Library who supplied children’s books and gardening books for sale, the Propagating Group of Friends who supplied plants for sale, Stefan Gevers and Erika Gofton who ran botanic art classes for children, the Newport String Quartet (lead by Michael Stewart of the Newport Folk Group) which provided an accompaniment to the afternoon. Our Propagating Group made over \$400.00 selling their many and varied plants. Many members of the Friends assisted on the day. Everybody’s contribution is appreciated.

Finally, thanks go to Councillor Angela Altair, Stefan Gevers and Erica Gofton who acted as judges and to the staff of Hobsons Bay City Council including Tanya Blackwell, Tamara Watt, Janet Dawes and our Head Gardener, Shelley Wood, for their great help and support.

The final event for the month was

**Story Time in the Gardens
Friday 29th April 2011**

This was the last of five successful story times this season for children. It was a Teddy Bears Picnic in the Gardens at 10.30 am on 29th April. About 250 people and more than 100 teddy bears attended. This series has been a great way of introducing children to the Botanic Gardens. Its success has been very much due to the creative presentations by Anja Lee of the Friends and Russell Barret of Hobsons Libraries with support from a number of Hobsons Bay Libraries staff, Hazel Finney of Hobsons Bay City Council and members of the Friends. Sale of children's books supplied by Friends of Altona Library was a great success on the day. We look forward to holding more story times for children through the coming spring, summer and autumn.

Upcoming Events and Activities

Throughout May, June and July the committee and sub committees have been meeting - reviewing Paint the Gardens, planning for another art competition in 2012, for children's activities for The Year of Reading 2012 and for resumption of propagating activities in late August, early September for sales later in 2011. Applications for grants have been sent to HBCC and to the Federal Government. We now have an Australian Business Number.

The first event is -

**General Meeting of Friends of Williamstown Botanic Gardens
Wednesday 17th August 2011
Speaker from Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens**

You are invited to a General Meeting of Friends of Williamstown Botanic Gardens at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 17th August at the Williamstown Ladies Bowling Club (Melways Reference 56 B9). Jenny Possingham, Volunteer Guides Coordinator for the Geelong Friends will give a brief history of the Geelong Botanic Gardens with an emphasis on "fashions" in Botanic Gardens and then outline the history and role of the Geelong Friends group. She will be accompanied by Helena Buxton (President of Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens). This will be an opportunity for us to share ideas and learn from a highly successful and long established Friends group. Please come. Non members are most welcome.

The second event is -

**Guided walk in Williamstown Botanic Gardens
Saturday 15 October 2011**

John Hawker, Horticulturist for Heritage Victoria will lead a walk for the Friends of WBG at 2.00pm on Saturday the 15th of October. He will talk about significant trees which will link with the tree labels the Friends have provided. Please diarise this event.

The third event is-

**Annual General Meeting of the Friends of WBG
October 2011 - date to be advised**