



Friends of Williamstown Botanic Gardens Inc.

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1. Recent Events and Activities

Story times under the Golden Elm “Pond Life” – 28 February 2014 and “Teddy Bear’s Picnic” – 4 April 2014

As usual these events were greatly enjoyed by a large number of families, Anja Lee of the Friends and Russel Barret of Hobsons Bay Libraries entertaining with stories, songs and activities in the two final sessions for the season. Thanks go to our presenters and to Hobsons Bay Libraries for their partnership and support.

General Meeting - 3 March 2014

Peter Lindstrum reported on a visit to the Geelong Friends growing group providing ideas for improving the set up for propagating and for sales and suggesting our group be named The Growing Group. Carol Challis demonstrated the new web site. Barbara Sloan was thanked for her work over the years on the previous web site and for her contribution to publicity. Lindy Wallace reported on the history project which is well under way with work on the archives and interviews for the oral history project. More details later in the newsletter.

Curator Shelley Wood informed the meeting that some of the cypresses in the Pinetum along the Esplanade fence are to be removed as they have been assessed by arborists as being in poor condition and could be a danger. (This removal has now happened and they have been replaced.) Kerbing and channelling will take place adjacent to the Gardens in Giffard Streets to resolve problems with parking to close to Gardens fence and damage from wet weather. It will be in bluestone. A footpath will be installed between the kerbing and the fence. Osborne Street will have an asphalt path.

An early draft of the new master plan has been received and has gone to the Williamstown Botanic Gardens Advisory Group for input and feedback. A facility for the Friends Group and its sub-committees is being considered to allow for meetings, education activities, growing plants and an archive. The Master Plan will be available for public comment shortly.

General Meeting - 7 April 2014

This meeting was specifically to outline the tasks for Paint the Gardens and to get times members could assist in order to set up a roster for Sunday the 13th of April.

Book Corner - 7 April to 17 April 2014

Once again the book corner was set up on fine week days by members of the Friends and provided a quiet focus point of activity in the Gardens. Thanks to all the members who set up and packed up.

Paint the Gardens – 13 April 2014

Despite wet weather in the week before, the event took place on a clear day. It was a day of interesting activities and plenty of art work to view – the Saturday Morning Team provided refreshments and face painting for children, the Friends sold plants and set up the book corner, Nora Roberts had a display of her wild life photography including pictures of many insects in the Williamstown Botanic Gardens and the Newport Folk and Fiddle group played in the afternoon.

The prize winners were:

Open Section

First Prize	Carole Smith	Light in the Gardens
Second Prize	Jan Johnston	A Quiet Corner
Emerging Artist	Taeko Fuentes	Paradise
Emerging Artist	Donna Richards	A Pathway of Beauty
People's Choice	Gwen Temby	Spring Morning Botanic
Highly Commended	Liz Mckeag	Ficus Macrophyllus
Highly Commended	Christina Thorpe	Reflection
Highly Commended	Alanna Meehan	After School in the Garden

Young Person's Section

First Prize	Julien Batch	Tree in Autumn
Emerging Artist	Sophie Mills	Untitled
People's Choice	Alyssa Dreaneen	Untitled
Highly Commended	Florencia Ho	Impressionist Impression of Botanic
Highly Commended	Liam Cullen	Untitled
Highly Commended	Madison Thompson	Untitled

We thank our generous sponsors **Back to Basics, Banjo Plumbing, Ferguson Street Provisions, Friends of Williamstown Botanic Gardens Inc., Hobsons Bay City Council, JAS H Stephens, Lantern Tours, Paint Right, Pioneer Textiles, Poppi and Pippa, Romany Woman and the Saturday Morning Team.** Without them the event would not be possible.

Many people contributed to the success of the day, a collaboration of the Friends and Hobsons Bay City Council's Arts, Events and Tourism Department. We appreciate the assistance of Tania Blackwell and other staff from HBCC Arts, Events and Tourism in preparing for the event as part of the Art in Public Places programme, Shelley Wood, and Loraine Callow for their wonderful contribution on the day (starting at early and finishing late) and all the members of the Friends who worked to make the day such a success. In particular we thank Kim Sawyer for all his efforts including sourcing the entries, preparing the catalogues and cards for the painting, obtaining easels, and his family, Kessada and Clarisse for their assistance. Special thanks to Ian Brown of HBCC Parks for the support with infrastructure for the event. The Friends Growing Group had a wide variety of plants sourced from specimens in the Gardens for sale and their wonderful commitment is acknowledged.

Friends of Bendigo Botanic Gardens Visit - 30 April 2014

About ten members of the Friends of Bendigo Botanic Gardens arrived by train and started their tour in the work area – appreciating morning tea. Before setting off through the Gardens the group stood around in the yard with morning tea while Sue Murray gave them a talk about the history of the Gardens including Latrobe Bateman's path structure, original plantings (contributions of Von Mueller and Daniel Bunce as well as locals), the achievements out of the Master Plan and a bit about the Friends doings. They were pleased to receive a handout provided by Shelley Wood and very interested in the folios of postcards and the ornamental lake renewal project. In fact they thought the folios an idea they could use. They were given John Hawker's list of trees in the Gardens and some of our brochures and told about the web site.

Then we had a leisurely stroll in the Gardens taking in the three significant gates, identifying some of the trees (a couple of the group were quite expert), our MLA, the elm walk mentioning the cannons, the pinetum (where the trees were coming down - we talked about the need for renewal – removal of aged trees and replanting - all understood), the main path with its planting design, enjoying the winding paths, the jubilee drinking fountain and finishing at the restored ornamental pond/lake. Jane Cleary who saw it empty and sad was blown away with how beautiful it now is and how well established the plantings are. They all thought it lovely. They organised a group photo on the main path.

Helen Tribe, Liz Mckeag, Phil Hooper and Sue's sister Diane (who was over from Perth) represented our Friends and we hosted them in a relaxed and friendly way. There were lots of chats and sharing stories. They then headed off for either a picnic lunch or to buy something.

We can learn quite a bit from them and they were interested in what we do. They are now keen for our Friends to visit them. They suggest a Saturday in spring so we will organise a date for one possibly in September.

Heritage Walk in the Gardens - 13 May 2014

A number of our members joined a group of about fifty or more visitors for a fascinating walk through the Gardens led by Shelley Wood as part of the National Trust Heritage Festival. Everybody enjoyed Shelley's lively presentation of the history spiced with interesting anecdotes.

Presentation to Seaholme Probus Group – 14 May 2014

Sue Murray gave this group a talk about the Gardens and the Friends group and they reciprocated with a donation of \$25.00 towards the work of the Friends.

Visit of Mont Albert Probus Group - 23 May 2014

This group were led on a tour of the Gardens by Shelley Wood and they kindly donated \$100.00 to the Friends.

Friends Book Corner at the Williamstown Literary Festival – Report from Loraine Callow

“Carol Challis and Anya Lee were kind enough to set up and share the Book Corner with guests at the Williamstown Literary Festival Hub in the Williamstown Town Hall on the weekend of May 31st and June 1st. The festival celebrated the idea of "A Sense of Place" and the Book Corner showcased the work of the Friends to bring the simple pleasure of reading to the gardens. The corner was enjoyed by lots of kids (and parents who were happy to spend some quiet time with the book collection). Many thanks to the Friends!”

Richard Aitken at the Williamstown Literary Festival – Report from Loraine Callow

WBG Curator, Shelley Wood introduced and chaired a session on Sunday, 1st June in the morning with historian, curator, architect and author, Richard Aitken. Richard spoke on his latest book *Cultivating Modernism - Reading the Modern Gardens 1917-71*. In a fascinating conversation Richard discussed "what is a modernist garden?" including post WWI design influences such as architecture, art, new building materials, and new ideas about how gardens might function to provide for health and social inclusion. Richard's connection to the WBG dates back to the mid-eighties when he prepared a Conservation Management Plan for the gardens.

2. Looking Ahead

As winter sets in the committee continues to meet and work progresses on the history projects. Lindy Wallace is continuing work on the archives. Processing and document procedures are now in place; a number of items have been documented and uploaded to the Victorian collections data base and web site. Details of the web site are on the History Sub-committee's web page of the Friends' web site for members to access.

The Oral History Project is underway with a number of interviews completed (interviewed, copied to CDs, transcribed and uploaded to data base). A presentation of the project is planned for November.

In September we are looking to have a general meeting with a speaker, a visit to the Friends of Bendigo Botanic Gardens. In October story times will commence in Children's Week and the AGM will be held.

Growing Group – Report from Shelley Wood

“Unfortunately due to some recent OH&S concerns regarding the current nursery site at the WBG, the “Growing Group” is on hold for a time however, it is planned to rejuvenate the group when site improvements occur, hopefully in the near future.

On a positive note we recently had a visit from Ashley Filipovski, Horticulturist Nursery, Geelong Botanic Gardens who took the time to share many of the ideas utilised in the Geelong Botanic Gardens plant nursery. WBG Staff and Friends discussed the interesting plant material, future propagation opportunities and the importance of plant sales, and once we can ensure a clear space for propagation, the future of a “Growing group” as part of the WBG Friends looks very bright!”

Enormous thanks are due to Helen Olsen, Peter Lindstrum and Diane Miovich who have worked fortnightly propagating and to all other members who have assisted with propagating and with sales.