

Mayor William Little  
from Mayor's Annual Report 1890

I have enjoyed the honor of being elected to a seat on the Board of Public Health as representative of the Western Boroughs Group, and I have since given regular and close attention to the duties; I have consequently attained to much experience on sanitary matters, and hope in the future to be useful to this Council as well as to my Constituents.

What can be said on this subject that cannot be in terms of congratulation? With ordinary care in maintenance, the beneficent forces of nature are doing the annual duty of improvement, so far as vegetation is concerned. The Gardens do not cease to be a centre of attraction alike to residents and Visitors, the latter increasing yearly in numbers. It is the business of the Council to recognise the influx of Country Visitors during the season, and so to provide for their needs as to assure the maximum of enjoyment and convenience for them, with the minimum risk of mischief that might arise for want of regulation when they come in numbers. To that end the Council has at length wisely resolved to construct a Pavilion to improve the means of catering for refreshments, and in the hope of drawing the Pic-nicing to our centre; thus reducing the evil of *débris* being scattered far and wide. The valued site at the Lawn justly demanded that such a building should be ornamental as well as utilitarian. Accordingly, competitive designs were invited for premiums of £25 and £10. The premiated designs were those of Mr. W. H. Piper and Mr. A. J. Tweedie, both of Ballarat. The former has been engaged to superintend the erection of the one he originated, and if his plan be justified by results, an ornament, and a new attraction, will have been added to our Gardens. A new and enlarged Greenhouse has also been erected, which will greatly increase the means of propagation.

It would be a grave omission were I to pass over the subject of the Gardens, and especially of the Fernery, without a passing tribute to the memory of our esteemed and genial Colleague, the late Councillor F. M. Claxton. In his day he did good service to this Corporation, and none better than the unremitting advocacy of his pet hobby, "*The Lake and Gardens*." No public man earned a better title to recognition of his efforts in that regard than he! I am therefore glad that during my Mayoralty a Public Subscription resulted in the erection of a Bust of our departed friend in front of the Fernery. May it long remain to recall the memory of one who did so much to promote the development of that place of public resort of which we are all so proud.

I pass on, by natural affinity, from the Gardens to the Lake. It goes, without saying, that it fully asserts its popularity; but, sad to say, those who enjoy its recreative capacity little know the trouble and anxiety of maintaining it. The idea of cost may be set aside when compared with its inestimable value and attraction. The trouble is, not the outlay, but how to expend it to best advantage; the Vegetation baffles all foresight and effort to keep it down. It persists in growing! during winter as if in summer; by night as well as by day. Really, it appears as if there were no other course open but to continue doggedly cutting until, mayhap, some solution of the difficulty may occur.

Difficult and disappointing as efforts to check the vegetation have been, I bear grateful record to the efforts of all who promote aquatic recreation, whether rowing, sailing, or angling. Some improvements have been going on at the foreshores by aid of Government Grants: notably the extension of the landing place at the garden side; also banking up and gravelling at eastern and southern shores; the vote is not all expended, and application has already been made for re-vote of the unexpended balance. During the year the Corporation has been indebted to Mr. Chas. Sommers, of Rome, for the gift of four handsome white swans from the Pincian Hill, Rome; they arrived in good condition, and were transferred to open water in April, but, sad to relate, two of them have since died, one from cause unknown, the other from violence. The efforts to introduce these handsome birds have been very unfortunate, but happily a breeding pair remain, and will be well cared for in the hope of progeny.

Not much can be said on this subject. Notwithstanding the wonderful results of last year's hatching, by which it was hoped to have many thousands of young trout for the Lake and other waters, we have been deprived of the beneficial results by robbery of the Ponds during the late summer; it is much to be deplored that there are people in our midst who would stultify the efforts of acclimatisation for their own selfish and dishonest purposes. Another misfortune for this season is that the breeding fish so far have not come up to the rill, perhaps owing to want of water; the fear is that they will become over-ripe, and the season may be lost.

I deem it good fortune, personally, that the great work of planting Victoria Park should have been identified with my mayoralty.

The Grant-in-Fee for the Park had been received by my predecessor, whereupon the Council had deemed it time the ground should be utilised; a Committee was accordingly appointed late in June, 1889, but the season was then too far advanced for effective work; it was not, however, lost sight of; in due time I was reminded of the necessity for the work being taken in hand, when it occurred to me as an auspicious time for instituting "Arbor Day" at Ballarat. By happy coincidence, the Ballarat Horticultural Society and the Australian Natives' Association moved in the matter of planting the Park, which gave a public impetus to the movement; and by the time arrangements were completed for celebrating "Arbor Day" on the Queen's Birthday, public opinion was fully seized of the importance of the approaching event. Nearly all invitations to heads of families to be represented were accepted with alacrity. A plan of plantation was carefully prepared, showing varieties of trees, locality of each tree to be planted, as arranged by ballot; also a register of tree, number, and name of planter, to facilitate future