



## Frederick Moses Claxton

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### Mayor's Report 1890 (possibly Mayor William Little, Estate Agent)

#### 'Memorial to the late Cr. Claxton'

"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 than 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 the 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."

NOTE: Following the above is a record of the cost and trouble of continuing the constant cutting of lake weed and reeds a subject close to the heart of Councillor Claxton.

Extracts from 'Lucky City' 1851 - 1901 - <sup>WESTON</sup> W. Bate

Page 195:- 'By May 1880 R M Serjeant had a claim beyond and under the Lake and F M Claxton was at the Showgrounds.'

NOTE: This would be the old showgrounds on the North East shore of the lake, bordered by Wendouree Parade, Martin Avenue, Haddon Street and Gregory Street.

Page 220:- 'The first and most popular manifestation of civic-mindedness was out of doors at the lake and gardens. By 1890 F M Claxton, the man who above all others had fostered them and stuck to his vision, was recognised as a hero. His Mayoral year in 1877 produced improvements at both ends of the lake, but especially at View Point where pleasure steamers were boarded for a trip to the gardens.'

Page 223:- 'The prestige of the lake, as well as the amount of capital invested in steamers and other craft, ensured that the fiasco of 1869 when the lake dried up, would not be repeated. Public funds were mobilised and adequate water levels were maintained. Reeds then became the major problem, and Claxton was said to have them on the brain; reaping machines and various weird devices pulled by horses and steamers were tried, but nothing replaced laborious hand-cutting costing up to 500 pounds a year.'

Page 226:- 'Near by stood William Wallace the Scottish hero (for Thomson was Scot), and a bust of Frederick Moses Claxton, the Councillor with water then reeds on the brain. Here was a prophet honoured at the scenes of his triumph, a grocer turned stockbroker, whose vision embraced urban and rural, bourgeois and democratic traditions, as possibly only a Ballarat man of that generation and social class could.'