

BRIEF HISTORY OF GARDENS

1857 - 1906 - Being a summary of first History.

- 18/12/1855 Ballaarat proclaimed a Municipal District (Mayor's special report 25 years 1881).
- 17/1/1856 First Council Meeting - James Oddie Chairman. During this year application made for area to be reserved for Botanical Gardens. (Mayor's special report 25 years 1881).

FROM COUNCILS MINUTE BOOK.

- 23/12/1857 Police paddock (approx. 80 acres) on west side of Yuille's Swamp by Government Grant reserved for Ballaarat Botanical Gardens.
- 24/3/1858 Road around Swamp to be called "Wendouree Parade".
- 14/4/1858 Council granted possession of the Police Paddock from Superintendent of Police and Public Works Department.
- * SEE BELOW
16/9/58
10/11/1858 A prize of £10/-/- paid to Mr Wright and Armstrong for winning design for lay-out of Botanical Gardens.
Town Surveyor to survey the area.
- 1/12/1858 First tender to remove firewood accepted.
- 8/12/1858 Mr George Longley appointed first Gardener/Curator at salary of £3/-/- per week.
Grubbing of trees and stumps tendered for at 1/- per tree and stump.
- * 16/9/1858 First Government Grant of £500/-/- approved.
- 22/12/1858 Plot of ground 2 acres to be enclosed for a propagating ground.
- 29/12/1858 Committee of Management appointed to cooperate with Council in direction of work of laying out and planting gardens.
- 1/6/1859 Government appropriation of further £200/-/- for gardens development.
- 13/7/1859 By-laws regulating public use of Gardens approved.

FROM COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT MINUTE BOOK.

- 6/2/1860 Plants and seeds received from Melbourne and Geelong Botanical Gardens and private contributors.
- 30/4/1860 Dr Baron Von Mueller, Curator of Melbourne Botanical Gardens, to send plants and trees.
- 7/5/1860 Swamp soil carted to fill up low lying areas. AT 9 PENCE PER LOAD

- 2/7/1860 Western side of Gardens to be dug 18 feet wide also borders 12 feet wide on North and South sides as break winds. Acacias to be planted on Western Border.
- 1/10/1860 2 water holes 10 feet deep by 6 foot wide by 10 feet long dug in propagating ground for retaining water supply.
- 7/1/1861 A gift of swans received and enclosure area of lake constructed.

During 1861 activity in carting in swamp soil, digging additional ground and planting of trees and shrubs and flowers increased considerably.

- 15/4/1862 52 loads of soil carted for the first Maze and Maze area fenced, surrounded by a picket fence and planted with Acacia Armata at a later date. "The Avenue" planted with evergreen and deciduous trees alternately. 1 dozen Cedra Deodora from Dr Von Mueller planted at each end of Avenue and at the gates remainder planted with coniferous plants.
- 15/10/1862 A Branch of the Acclimatisation Society to be formed in Ballarat and to use the Gardens Reserve for their purposes. Small gold fish and silver fish offered.
- 15/4/1863 Public Meeting called for Saturday 25th April to establish the fish Acclimatisation Society.
- 23/4/1863 A substantial grant of £1000/-/- received from the Victorian Government and plans for improvements adopted.
- 8/7/1863 Tenders accepted for construction of 2 lodges wood and plastered at cost of £335.
- 13/8/1863 South Avenue to be planted with Wellingtonia Giganteas. Propagating House to be constructed.
- 17/9/1863 Single gates to be erected at North and South entrances - not less than 12 feet wide. Gold fish pond to be dug, with turf margin.
- 28/10/1863 Windmill to be created.
- 18/12/1863 Main drive formed and gravelled. Lodge Keeper Mr Joseph Cave appointed, duties to include Swamp Ranger.
- 15/9/1864 Water Commission requested to cut a channel from Lake Wendouree to the centre of the gardens to a pier to be erected.
- 22/9/1864 First labelling of most prominent trees and plants commenced.
- 13/10/1864 Tender for a Rotunda in the Gardens accepted. 3 swings to be erected.

NO FURTHER COMMITTEE OF
MANAGEMENT MINUTES AFTER 13/10/1864

No written Mayors reports made from 1864 to 1867.

FROM MAYORS REPORTS 1868 TO 1906

- 18/4/1868 Considerable improvements continue & 1800 expended improving the margin of Lake Wendouree.
- 1870 First report of sewing down lawns with English grasses (seven acres sown down). Gardens and Reserve now in excellent condition and source of great pleasure to citizens.
- 1871 Further improvements included planting of trees at edges of the Swamp (Lake Wendouree).
- 1872 Footpath 12 feet wide formed for entire length of the Wellingtonia Avenue and strips of lawn sown (11 yards wide) on each side. 7 clumps of forest trees (Pinus Radiata) planted at edge of swamp east of the Gardens and also about 50 weeping willows planted.
Acacia walk (1¼ miles long) cleared and sand laid down.
4 dozen seats erected. Work started on the Zoo and
- 1873 Five ornamental houses erected, ¼ acre ground trenched and fenced to house "zoological and ornithological specimens".
- 1874 Wellingtonia Avenue completed by planting 50 chains on north and 30 chains on the south side (in all 1540 yards) the largest avenue in Victoria.
½ mile of box edging planted around garden borders.
11 chains of stone edging and a new walk
71 chains long formed. Large area of new ground trenched and drains laid. Trout hatching pond laid proving very successful.
Bird and wild fowl aviaries and pond constructed. 2¼ acres fenced (6' fence) at South end to run Deer and Kangaroos.
Landing pier 390 feet long built on lake margin, filled with 2000 loads of reef from mines.
- 1875 No activity reported.
- 1876 At lakeside 700 loades of reef laid down, sown down with English grasses, weeping willows and seats provided.
Gardens and Lake being visited by increasing numbers.
- 1877 New walks and drives formed, more birds and animals added to Menagerie. Fruit stalls and new residence for Curator erected.
- 1878 Extension of area known as "The Lawn". Ever increasing crowds visiting Lake and Gardens.
- 1879 Plans to extend Shelter House and later a Conservatory.
- 1880 Additions completed to Fernery and Shelter House. In future more grassy lawns to replace some trees and monotony of

straight walks and flower borders.

- 1881 Lodges renovated, extension of Shelter House and Fernery ordered. Fund for a large conservatory now sufficient to commence. Site of the Old Maze now cleared for that purpose. Designs invited from England. Extensive trenching, drainage, stone work and box hedging done.
- 1882 Aviaries moved from site near the water to another site adjacent to the site for the Conservatory. Designs from English constructors now to hand.
- 1883 Fernery and Camellia House becoming a botanical show place and when extended to the road will be the most attractive in Victoria.
- 1884 Fernery extension completed. 24/5/84 Queen's Birthday - 12 marble statues presented by Mr. Thomas Stoddart were unveiled.
- 1885 Many old pines removed for better views of landscape. Visitors still increasing annually and floral display during past season the best ever.
- 1886 Grass plots replacing old plantations.
- 1887 Fernery extending from East Road to West Road now completed. Displays unique. Erection of a refreshment Pavilion suggested. English Goldfinches and starlings (gift of Mr James Oddie) liberated in gardens.
- 1888 New Maze opened and proved a great attraction. Preparations made to extend "The Lawn" (near present Refreshment Pavilion). Statuary: The group of marble statues purchased by the Trustees of the Late James Russell Thomson now in place in the elegant statuary pavilion erected by Council.
- 1889 24/5/89 Statue of Wallace unveiled. A Rockery and Pond erected at the Western end of the Fernery and a start made on an Aquarium in the Fernery.
- 1890 Council resolved to construct a Refreshment Pavilion on the valued lawn site. Designs invited for Prizes of £25 and £10 Selected designs those of Mr W. H. Piper and Mr A. J. Tweedie both of Ballarat. Former (W. H. Piper) engaged to superintend erection of his plan and design. Fountain and Bust of the Late Councilor F. M. Claxton erected in front of Fernery in recognition of his great work for the Lake and Gardens.
- 1891 Refreshment Pavilion proving popular with picnic parties.
- 1892 Councillor J. H. Thompson (Mayor) and another promised more

pieces of statuary. Councillor the Hon. E. Morey MLC promised a pair of ornamental Entrance Gates.

- 1893 Pair of marble Lions gift of Hon D. Ham MLC erected inside the entrance gates (presented on 17/8/1894) and Entrance Gates gift of Hon Edward Morey MLC presented on same day again mentioned in Mayors Report.
- 1894 A move by Mr W. Luplay to organise practical study classes of Horticulture at the Gardens failed to gain the support the Mayor considered it deserved.
- 1895 Revival of the old Acacia Avenue contemplated. New fence being constructed on Western boundry and old Eucalypt shelter trees being removed and replaced on the opposite side of Boundry Road with good shelter trees. Whole of northern section of the Reserve being cleared of rank growth and underbush and properly laid out. South Lodge lifted and removed back to improve access.
- 1896 Curator George Langley had a long and severe illness. Gardens now showing great improvement under new management - (presumably with George Longley in charge of North No. 1 Section and Thomas Rooney appointed in charge of South Section No. 2.)
- 1897 New Iron fence on western boundary extended by 50 rods. Horse Paddock completely renewed, extended and more secure. Iron gates with Bluestone Pillars erected at South entrance. South end cleared of ugly stunted trees, Councillors and some visitors present, each planting selected trees, and each to bear their names. New boat for rush cutting operations completed. (Previously hand cutting and gathering of rushes and reeds).

1898 First report of Tuberous Begonias being cultivated
28/9/98 (Curator's log book).

SEE BELOW

Now 2 separate reports from Curators. George Longley for North and Thomas Rooney for South. G. Longley reported one of the severest droughts ever experienced. Orchid house extended by 24 feet now one of the best in the colony. 1 dozen seats in Fernery provided, also a new aquarium. T. Rooney reported one of the hottest and driest seasons ever. Boilers supplying hot water for picnic parties unable to cope so additional boiler and building provided. Hot water charge to be levied in future. Large chrysanthemum blooms proved

* JAMES H VEITCH, ENGLISH BOTANIST & HYBRIDIZER VISITED THE GARDENS IN 1893 AND COMMENTED ON THE VERY HIGH STANDARD OF TUBEROUS BEGONIAS BEING GROWN BY GEORGE LONGLEY, IN HIS REPORT ON THE BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS.

very attractive and a new rose garden of 500 roses planted at the South end.

1899

G. Longley report 7/8/1899, summers continue hot and dry, floral displays short due to heat and limited water supply. Fernery thoroughly repaired and a new entrance made from the fernery to the glass house; the walk on the west side improved by a new planting of rhododendrons and azaleas.

T. Rooney reported a shed erected to display chrysanthemums under cover a great attraction.

1900

North Section.

George Longley, curator since 1859, died on 14/10/1899 and John Lingham appointed. Old gum scrub entirely grubbed out at North end and levelled and planted, added a further ten acres to the Recreation Reserve. Hedges removed around north Curators residence. New walk formed from Bird Cages to Fernery. 7000 school children held their annual treat at the Gardens.

Gifts of orchids and Golden Pheasants from Mr. T. C. Naples and Dr. S. L. Woinarski.

South Section.

T. Rooney. Great display of roses, Cannas, Dahlias and chrysanthemums. New Rose Garden planted two years ago such a success that another one formed. Nearly sixteen acres now under cultivation.

1901

North J. Lingham

Magnificent display during good season for Commonwealth (Centenary) Celebrations worthy of the occasion. Last section of fence finished, whole gardens now enclosed with substantial fence. Lawn west of Statuary raised to proper level. 8,500 school children at annual treat. Gifts of birds received.

South T. Rooney

Time and labour spent improving parts, trenching draining filling up, forming new beds and edgings.

1902

J. Lingham: Severe hailstorm damage. Night watering only in summer. New Rose beds formed. Lawn east of Statuary filled and raised.

T. Rooney: Shifted old shed from Gardens to Nursery, and dismantled old summer house. New rose bed planted up. Severe water restrictions, flowers and lawns suffered. Mayors report

stated new glass houses completed in both sections.

1903 J. Lingham: Finest floral display ever. Old nursery ground now laid out in flower beds, lawns and paths. Visitors from all parts and Commonwealth and overseas praise Gardens in glowing terms.

T. Rooney: Dry season. Old Gums along back fence removed, replanted with acacias, creepers etc.

Reports for 1904 and 1905 to hand. Little of real significance reported.

1906 North J. Lingham: Most unfavourable season. Drought still persists through November to March.

South T. Rooney: Worked out borders removed and replaced with lawns and beds instead. Flower show only fair due to shortage of water.