

La Trobe's Cottage Garden News

Winter Update – June 2013



The Camellia revealed – flowering

We didn't do much in the garden over summer as it was too hot, but the volunteer team was certainly busy over autumn. Everything had grown and it came time when things needed another good prune. Helen took on the Elm bed and did a fantastic job pruning back everything growing into its neighbours. Jenny pruned back the plectranthus to reveal the camellia was flowering and Beverly and Paula planted lots of the bulbs around the garden. Allen pruned all the creepers on the veranda posts that were starting to grow into the shingles, something we cannot allow to happen.

The camellia (*Camellia japonica* 'Anemoniflora') that the Growing Friends of the Botanic Gardens has propagated for us is doing well, but it is still a little small to be planted out into the garden.

What's Happening in the Garden at the Cottage?

We are another step closer to installing the lattice on the front veranda steps. Good quality lattice is almost impossible to find but John Drury, the chairman and treasurer of the Friends of La Trobe's Cottage, has found some. We are using Helen Botham's book *La Trobe's Jolimont: a walk round my garden*, which contains several sketches of the cottage with lattice, as a reference for this installation. Mrs Perry's Creeper (*Maurandya barclayana*) will at last have something solid to climb on.



'Mrs Perry's Creeper' ready for the lattice



Rosa 'Arthur de Sansal'

To improve the garden at the back of the cottage and make it symmetrical, it was decided to plant another rose where there was some dead space. The rose 'Arthur de Sansal' has been ordered from Mistydowns and Sam from Citywide very kindly donated the pot when Sandi couldn't find one at a reasonable price. Large pots and saucers are very expensive.

Mentioned in Garden Despatches

Our exciting news is that we have found a craftsman who is very happy to make our garden bench for us, just like in the picture by Edward La Trobe Bateman in Helen Botham's book *La Trobe's Jolimont: a walk round my garden* - page 46. It is reminiscent of a little jetty and will fit perfectly under the oak, which is where the wine barrel is at the moment.

Alastair Boell is a very talented craftsman in working with wood. He graduated from the world-renowned North Bennet Street School in Boston (USA) and came home and decided to establish the Melbourne Guild of Fine Woodworking in 2007, to pass on the traditional skills of working with wood. Alastair's passion is wood and he has collected some of the tree species that have fallen in the Domain during our famous Melbourne storms. It is very exciting because he suggested using the wood from the *Cupressus macrocarpa* (Monterey pine) that he collected. It is a really nice connection that the tree is coming back to the Domain and will be a part of the Cottage. Alastair's website is included here so you can see the beautiful work he does <http://www.mgfw.com.au>

We would like to thank Hancock Bulbs of Menzies Creek, who very kindly donated 300 bulbs made up of the species we know La Trobe had from a letter written by his friend Ronald Gunn in Tasmania (1844) where it mentions jonquils, ixias and babiana. With the help of the volunteers at our working bee, we planted them all around the garden. Make sure you visit the garden in spring and see our spectacular display.



Jonquils - a variety donated by Hancock's

Our other good news is that our treasurer, John Drury, has approved the purchase of some garden labels made by the Friends of Bumley Gardens. Cheryl Andrews, a FOBG volunteer, has made around thirteen for us and they include botanical name, common name, family and where the plant originates from.

We would like to thank all our volunteers, especially Joy who came and worked when perhaps she didn't feel as up to it as usual.

Sandi's Garden Chat

A strange happening occurred at the garden recently. It was late in the afternoon, all was quiet and no-one was around. Sandi was there pottering and noticed the water bowl under the tap was nearly empty. So she refilled and kept on working. But she noticed it kept draining and began wondering what was going on. It began to puzzle her, as she kept refilling it. Meanwhile the magpie larks and magpies were poking around the lawn and it suddenly dawned on her that someone was having a bird bath or were they perhaps playing games?



Two years on looking towards Weeping Elm



Geranium hedge



Handsomenew label