



Friends of the Bible Garden

NEWSLETTER

February 2021



Well what a year!!! But as I write this letter – the Garden is looking magnificent – the rain and warmth and the plantings in the Spring have all brought the Garden into prime condition – so a very well done to all the Gardeners who do such a sterling job in maintaining the Garden through the seasons.

At the end of 2020, we were very saddened to learn of the death of Barbara Robinson, the wife of Gerald Robinson and who succeeded Sister Beatrice Robinson, as Curator of the Bible Garden, prior to its transition to the care of the Pittwater Council and “The Friends”. Barbara was very active as curator and is well remembered by those who have been active Gardeners for many years.

Barbara was strongly supportive of the transfer to the Community from the Robinson Family and the ongoing, community based, care of the Garden. Her legacy now lives on in the beautiful Garden that now exists.



I have included two photos that represent the transition in the Garden over the last 60 years – the first is Gerald Hercules Robinson and his “gardener” at an early stage in the life of the Garden and the second, the three living

treasures of the Garden – Jill Taylor, Julie Bennett and Susie Holman – with the same view behind. I think that Gerald Hercules Robinson would be very pleased with the results of his legacy.

Covid 19 has not harmed the Garden, the care was maintained, nothing could be better social distancing than working away alone in the Garden. The Garden was “closed” during the Avalon Cluster” lockdown – with no harm done – just fewer weddings!

In fact the Bible Garden has become the venue of choice for outdoor weddings on the Northern Beaches with, on average, one a fortnight throughout the year. Weddings are not our core business and they do put pressure on the Garden by way of wear and tear and occasional lack of respect for the space. We are working well with Council Officers to ensure that those who are using the Garden – respect its tradition and ambience.

A major change in our structure took place at the Annual



General Meeting in July 2020, when we decided to vary the form of Membership such that there be only one form of Membership as a Friend of the Palm Beach Bible Garden – “Life Membership”. All existing Friends were immediately transitioned and all new Friends become Life Members for a one off payment of \$25. The main benefit being simpler administration – donations are still welcome and the occasional bequest, but in truth, we are in good shape both financially and organisationally and feel very confident about the future of the Garden.



Friends of the Bible Garden

We have been very pleased to welcome new, active gardeners, this year – some returning and some new – all bringing down the average age! We particularly welcomed as “Friends”, a group who are associated with a Uniting Church in the Ashfield Area that supports the large Korean Community there. They have commenced their own Bible Garden in their area and have been involved in our working bees.

The Officers of the Northern Beaches Council have really stepped up their support in the last year, both in terms of active interest and in the support of larger projects. During the year we installed a “pop up”



sprinkler system for the lawns adding to the existing garden bed watering system. The lawns suffered in the drought of 2020 but we now believe we have drought proofed the Garden for the future.

The Northern Beaches Council funded the work of installation of the pop up sprinklers from the funds held for the Garden by the Council. The next major project is to improve the access from the side driveway, with alteration to the stone masonry, in order to provide a safer and level access to the lowest level. Thereby replacing the steep, and at times, slippery, muddy track. We can also thank a former President, Susie Holman for this, when she went for a sixer down the slope-reminding us of the danger. Fortunately she was not harmed by her spill.

The Native Bee Hive, donated by the Pizzey family, has completed 12 months in the Garden, elevated on the Eastern Wall, and the Hive was split late in the year, and just in time. The Bees were very apparent in the Spring and the swarm was very noticeable – but of course – being Native Bees -not a danger.

Half the Hive has now found a new home overlooking Whale Beach.

The Garden is used by the community for much more than the occasional visit and weddings – we experience engagements – one recently as the sun rose, baptisms, the occasional memorial and many lunches, late afternoon drinks and of course visits by dogs – some unattended. From talking to many of the visitors – there is no doubt



as to the special place the Garden holds in the consciousness of the Northern Beaches Community and in fact the wider Sydney diaspora. The Annual General meeting will

be held in the Bible Garden on Saturday 24th April 2021 at 3PM – everyone is welcome.

If you would like to join the Committee please contact me – it is not arduous -meets 4 times per year, in a good year.

Finally a sincere thank you to the 20 Gardeners who have taken part in the roster over the course of the year.

Unusually, the roster breaks the year into 52 weeks and their duty is only to check on the Garden, minor tidying, gentle gardening if necessary, a bit of blowing away of the Stone Pine's needles and topping up of the pool. Heavier work is outsourced. But without them – the Garden would fall into disrepair very quickly.

Their commitment and friendly presence – often engaging with visitors – gives the Garden the added spirituality that is apparent in the fondness for the Garden that is expressed by visitors, and must surely have been part of the vision that Gerald Hercules Robinson held for his Palm Beach Bible Garden.

Stuart Spring, President

You are invited to attend the Friends of the Bible Garden
Annual General Meeting
to be held in the Bible Garden on Saturday 24th April 2021 at 3:00pm

About the Bible Garden

The Bible Garden is located at 6A Mitchell Road, Palm Beach NSW Australia.

The Bible Garden is open to the public every day from sunrise to sunset. It is cared for by volunteer members of Friends of the Bible Garden Memorial Inc.

For information contact Stuart Spring Tel: 02 9974 4635 email stuspring1@gmail.com

www.palmbeachbiblegarden.org

PO Box 55 Palm Beach NSW 2108 Australia