

# Nobelius Heritage Park & Emerald Museum

Newsletter No. 9

Spring 2014

## Funding success!

Emerald Museum were thrilled to receive notification this month that we had been successful in applying for funding to commission a Significance Assessment of our collection through the National Library of Australia. This competitive program provides grants to small cultural heritage organisations that have potentially nationally significant collections to ensure that they are properly documented and preserved.

This money will go towards funding a Significance Assessment, which will determine whether or not the Museum holds material important to the history of Australia, therefore making it *nationally* significant. We at the Museum strongly believe that this is the case, especially in relation to records we hold that relate to the former Nobelius Nursery that was the largest nursery in the southern hemisphere just prior to WWI. The Nursery counted among its clients Melbourne's Fitzroy and Royal Botanic Gardens, and its proprietor Carl Axel Nobelius was involved in having what is now known as the Puffing Billy Railway established to service the export of his bare-rooted fruit and ornamental trees. Our collection includes stock records, wage books and sales transactions that together document the Nursery's peak operations. We look forward to the outcome of this assessment early next year once the remaining funds needed to complete it have been raised.



Postcard from the Museum's Charman family collection, sent from a father to his daughter, containing real human hair.

## History week

19<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> October 2014

Come down and visit the Museum during History Week, where we will have a special exhibition of historic postcards from the collection on display for the first time! The Emerald Museum is open Wednesdays between 10am and 3pm and on Sundays between 1.30pm and 4pm.



Jim Stuart built the rotunda above in 1914 in A'Vard Park; a replica of it now stands in the Nobelius Heritage Park.

### Did you know?

Emerald was once called Main Range when it was marked out as an ideal position for a central township in relation to the Emerald gold diggings in 1859.

Emerald was later named after the Irishmen who came to the gold diggings from the Emerald Isle – many history books claim that it was named after one “Jack Emerald,” a miner, however it has since been proven that this is not the case.

## Museum steps

After delays of more than two years, the NHPM Committee is thrilled to see steps to the Museum entrance from below under construction. A Capital Works Grant was received from Cardinia Shire in 2012 for this project, which was originally for all stonework steps. After numerous delays due to concerns over the safety of the original design and arrangements with tradesmen falling through, Council granted an extension to this September 30. Weather permitting; we hope that the steps will be completed by this deadline.

The Committee is grateful for Council's patience and assistance through all the frustrations, in particular Open Space Team Leader Kevin Alexander and Natasha Kukanja from Community Strengthening.

The project will end up better for the delays, with extras, a concrete path from the Museum to the steps, and a barrier fence at the top of the bank next to the handicapped-parking bay. With the new kiwi fruit frame close by, the area will have had a substantial facelift and future plans are to landscape and plant out the bank either side of the steps.

## *Cornus florida* – by Carey Williams

A mature white flowering American dogwood tree, which was located close to the Emerald Lake Park boundary end of the shared path in Nobelius Heritage Park, died during the extended drought some years ago. Whether this was the dry, old age, or ailment of some kind, I do not know, perhaps it was a combination. The reference 'Encyclopaedia Botanica' says:

**“American Boxwood-** A native of the USA, it is adaptable to most soils and frost resistant, but *drought tender*. A deciduous tree it grows to a height of 10 metres with a spread of 3 metres.”

*Cornus florida* trees flower in mid spring and are a most beautiful sight, so it was a loss to the park when this tree died. It was probably fifty or so years old, dating from the 'C.A. Nobelius and Sons Nurseries' era.

Through our regular Park Advisory Group meetings and committee decision, we replanted a new dogwood not far from the one that died, a little higher in open space, east of the hazelnut row. Two more have recently been planted in line with the first, making a row of three.

As Committee of Management of Nobelius Park and Emerald Museum, one of our roles is to monitor the health of trees and plan replacement plantings. This is done following the Conservation Management and Vegetation Management Plans, and recently we prepared a five-year tree maintenance and replacement plan with which to work in conjunction with Council and Heritage Victoria to maintain and improve the Park. Our purpose is to be thinking ahead – even up to twenty years – so that the trees of major significance are preserved at all costs if possible and the less important are replaced earlier as they develop problems. Some trees have long life spans, others not so. Where possible it is good to have new trees growing into size before the older ones go. Room for new plantings is always a problem.

It is hoped the new dogwoods will do well and be admired by the next generation. There's a pink flowering dogwood in the park, on the north side of the water garden towards the ELP boundary. It is a sight to behold in October. There's a row of *Cornus capitata*, the evergreen Himalayan dogwood, on the west side of the main drive, below the apple plantation. Whilst not as stately as the American cousin, they put on a great show of yellow flowers in late spring into early December and the birds have a wonderful feed on the strawberry-like fruit in autumn. There's also an unusual variety of *Cornus kousa* east of the picnic tables that flowers in December.

