

PO Box 1021, Robinson VIC 3019  
[www.mckaygardens.org](http://www.mckaygardens.org) [contact@mckaygardens.org](mailto:contact@mckaygardens.org)



## Original path found

As we advised in our last newsletter, the Regional Rail Link (RRL) project have been undertaking works in the Gardens to place electricity power lines underground.

It was noted that some of the garden beds they would need to dig up were installed in the 1960s and 1970s but that originally there was a path in that area. There were no records to show if the path had been completely removed or just covered over when the garden beds went in.

RRL were advised of this by the Friends and only a couple of weeks into their work, reported that evidence of the original path had been found.

Not too far below the surface (200mm), a 2.7m wide section was discovered, comprised of three compacted layers of sediment:

- White quartz gravels
- Reddish coarse-grained clayey sand
- Black metal slag



*Top sediment layer of path revealed*

This section of the former garden path, likely dating to the 1920s, appears to have been constructed from waste materials from the operation of the foundry at

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the Sunshine Harvester Works.

There was little remaining of the quartz gravel surface of the path, indicating that material was likely removed for other uses when that path and other features of the Gardens were changed in the 1960s and 1970s.

As per the permit granted by Heritage Victoria, RRL brought in a historical archaeologist to monitor the excavation. All of the path sediment was subsequently removed, including 3 basalt rocks which may have been part of a path border and is being retained by Brimbank Council.

Don't forget you can watch a video of the gardens showing the original paths on the Museum Victoria website.

<http://museumvictoria.com.au/sunshine/displayimage.asp?iid=704>

## General Meeting

The next general meeting of the Friends will be:

**6 April 2013** 10am - 11.30am

Presbyterian Church Meeting Rooms  
120 Anderson Road Sunshine

## Maintenance Day – Dec 2012

The Friends of the McKay Memorial Gardens held an informal maintenance day in December to pull some weeds, pick up rubbish and get in amongst the plants to record any issues or damage.

A beautiful sunny morning meant we got a lot of work done. Bags of rubbish were collected from the garden beds and a large pile of green waste was later collected by Brimbank Council.

Whilst the gardens are doing well, some issues were noted. These included graffiti on signs, benches and paths; extensive amounts of rubbish, damage to trees including graffiti and limbs torn off and very dry garden beds.



*Damaged Tree*

Since then Brimbank Council have increased the frequency of watering in the Gardens and the frequency of emptying bins. They have also installed a new bin in one of the worst affected areas. The Regional Rail Link (RRL) project have completed installing electricity lines

underground at the Northwest corner of the Gardens and intend to have reinstated garden beds over that site by 22 March 2013.



*Some Friends take a break*

Fortunately wilful damage to trees in the Gardens has reduced markedly over the last couple of months, indicating that it was maybe one or two individuals who may have moved on.

Alcohol related rubbish (the most common) has also decreased slightly but we have found one or two syringes, a large knife and a sock with a fist sized rock in it.

The maintenance day gave us a nice opportunity to see people using the gardens as a community resource. People were walking or playing with their dogs, walking through on their way to the central Sunshine business district or just sitting on a bench or under a tree and having a chat.

*“..a nice opportunity to see people using the gardens as a community resource.”*



## Thanks AGCO



*Illawarra Flame tree planting*

AGCO is an agriculture company with direct ties to Hugh Victor McKay.

When the H.V. McKay Company was granted exclusive Australian distribution of Massey-Harris machinery in 1930, the company was renamed H.V. McKay Massey Harris Pty. Ltd.

In 1955, it became a subsidiary of Massey-Harris Ferguson Ltd and was renamed Massey Ferguson (Australia) Limited. In 1995, AGCO purchased Massey Ferguson's worldwide business.

To acknowledge their heritage, AGCO made a donation to the Friends and we used that money to buy an Illawarra Flame tree (*Brachychiton acerifolius*) which was planted into the lawn in October 2012.



*Mature Illawarra flame tree*

The Illawarra flame tree is tolerant of temperate climates and is now cultivated world-over for its beauty. However, the maximum height of 40 metres (130 ft) is reached only in its original, warmer, habitat. It usually grows to be about 20 metres (66 ft). It is deciduous, with spectacular flowering occurring in late spring and new foliage ready for summer rain. In areas where the winter is not particularly dry, this natural rhythm may become somewhat erratic and the tree may flower only partially.

Flowers are scarlet bells with 5 partially fused petals. The pod-like fruits (technically known as follicles) are dark brown, wide, boat-shaped and about 10 cm long. They contain masses of thin bristles that stick in the skin, as well as yellow seeds. These are nutritious and Aborigines were known to eat them toasted.

### Planting Day

The Friends and Brimbank Council hold an annual planting day in the Gardens in June each year.

**Stay tuned for details!**

### Want to join the Friends?

**Only \$5 per year**

Help protect our heritage

[www.mckaygardens.org](http://www.mckaygardens.org)

## RRL Works – update

The Regional Rail Link (RRL) project has confirmed that they have completed works to create an easement and place electrical power lines underground in the Gardens.

Reinstatement works were due to be completed by now but have been delayed and it's likely that RRL will not finish in the Gardens until after Easter.

The Friends have expressed concerns about the ongoing interruption to irrigation for the gardens and RRL are investigating mitigation options should the lack of rain continue.

The reinstatement works will consist of:

- Placement of topsoil
- Irrigation system reinstatement
- Mulching
- Turf reinstatement
- Concrete footpath reinstatement

Brimbank Council's landscape architect has provided input into the placement of reinstated garden beds.



*Trench containing power lines in a cement conduit*

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## Gardens in Spring

