

STAY TUNED

Newsletter for Beleura Volunteers – *Edition 56*

January-April 2019

From Anthony

You will have noticed the preliminary work for the new building, from Kalimna Drive, tentatively called Key West II, and from inside, The John Tallis Research Centre. (Key West after George Cassius' home at No.1 Kalimna Drive and John Tallis Research for obvious reasons.)

There is a formal performance salon downstairs with the Melba piano, a library and a show vault, a strong room where we will be able to exhibit treasures from the collection. All will need names, suggestions welcome!

A new shop will be where the present kitchen is and this is where the two buildings join together. Upstairs there will be a fireproof room, a Tallis Family muniment room, four storage rooms, a work room and two offices. A second staircase and a lift together with a few new water closets and a kitchenette. The builder thinks it will be complete by this time next year.

I wrote in the last Stay Tuned about a piano we had been given, made by Jabez Carnegie. It is now with Wayne Stuart for repair after Thomas Mintsenikos restored the case. It looks splendid and Wayne is excited about the works, apparently in Australian timbers. Sadly, whilst it came with wonderful photographs of Carnegie and his family and the Carnegie family history it is missing its candle sconces. Should you know of any without a piano we would be interested!

A few weeks ago we were given a very unusual piano stool by a guest, Fiona Anderson, very suitable for the very small Carnegie Piano.

Whilst on the subject of pianos Margaret McKeogh, who has been guiding here for a number of years has retired from guiding. It turns out she is a beautiful piano player who will now enjoy a new role enchanting visitors on the John Tallis Steinway when groups are touring the house and at lunch in the Gatehouse on selected days. It will add that bit extra that makes Beleura what it is. I hope you are enjoying the elegant flowers often put in the house by Sue Shergold, Jill Fox and Sophie Adamson.

Anthony Knight OAM

Director and Trustee

From Administration

Well this year is already moving quickly!

January saw us conducting our usual half day tours, gently easing us back into normal routines after the holidays. Then in February we held a guide workshop focusing on the Automobile Museum (much thanks to Iain Buckland for his hard work in creating the content) and on the 8th, on what would have been her 110th birthday, Beleura unveiled a beautiful bronze relief portrait of Dame Elisabeth Murdoch created by local artist and friend of Beleura Julie Edgar. Dame Elisabeth opened the gardens here at Beleura and often enjoyed a ramble in it on Sunday afternoons, so we are happy to have her as part of the garden permanently!

From the time we returned in 2019 we were anticipating the arrival of tradesmen as our new John Tallis Research Wing was to begin construction but we didn't really see any action begin until late March with the staff carpark fencing coming down first of all. We now have a fairly large clear open space where the new part of our building will sit. It is now more easily imagined and our excitement builds! The following months will be challenging with lots of changed circumstances so we ask that you be patient with us and pay attention to the changes that we make to normal routines and procedure and the things we may insist on for your own safety. March also saw the introduction of our new programme with a few events being extremely popular, and also the introduction of the shiny and new Mrs. Georgina Thorogood. Yes Georgina was married on the 9th and the day, I'm sure she will attest, was indeed an extremely happy one!

If at any stage you are wondering where our Ferguson tractor has gone, it will soon be leaving us for a soft refurbishment, overseen by our trustee Mr. Bill Kirk, so do not fear!

Our April PLOS events went smoothly week before last along with the Spirit of The Tango last week. Now with Easter also over the year will be gone before we blink!

Monique Bladen

Administration



Mr. & Mrs. Samuel Thorogood

From Archives

Jennie Lighton, a long-term Archives volunteer and good friend to those who worked alongside her, passed away just before Easter, on April 17th. The trial of her sudden cancer was all the more shattering because Jennie's daughter had passed away only weeks earlier. At Beleura we remember Jennie's skilled data-entry work, her friendliness and her sunny spirit. Jennie's husband, Bob Lighton, their family members and all the Thursday volunteers offered nothing but love and generosity throughout a time of great sadness.

Vale Jennie Lighton, 1942-2019.

In keeping with this edition's theme of transition as the building works advance, I have in mind the sorting and packing required in the second half of this year. It's so exciting to imagine Archives housed in a brand-new work space by 2020, with purpose-built storage, a fine new library area and an upgraded data base.

Not only physical research materials will be rehoused but our entire digital data will also 'migrate' to a new user-friendly system. This involves the catalogue-records of around 19,000 items in Beleura's collection, including House furnishings, the primary research materials in our current centre, precious Tallis photographs and letters, ephemera pertaining to the history of theatre and performing arts in Victoria, documentation of Beleura itself as a house museum over a fifteen-year timespan and so much more related memorabilia and treasure.

Now is a good time to reinforce how invaluable Archives volunteers are in recording, researching and caring for our collection.



Long-term Archives volunteers, L-R: Barbara Rollinson, Jan Dayton and Bronwyn Mills

Ingrid Hoffmann

Curator

From Hospitality

Well we said 'Stay Tuned for the upcoming developments' at Beleura, and alas, they are upon us!

We are all wondering how this will affect us in the Hospitality arena...I DON'T KNOW!

Everyday however brings new challenges... Access has been cut off from our back entrance, lots of lovely holes and dirt piles.

One day no toilets, next day toilets. One day no water, next day ok. Freezer defrosts due to a fuse blown, we now have a new fridge- the culprit for the blown fuse! Our Busses are now dropping off guests at the car garage and so our modus operandi has changed somewhat.

However as they say 'the show must go on', we have a full schedule of events and tours for the next few months and they are all filling! So we will take it all in our stride and rise to each new circumstance. Thank you all for your continued support and patience during this time.

Hope to see you all soon.

Nikki Ellis

Hospitality Manager

From the Garden

I came here 12 years ago in the middle of the 10 year drought and cannot remember a longer period of time without rain than what we are experiencing now. I don't know what Mornington did wrong but two weeks ago I was called by my wife in Dromana to tell me it was hailing after raining for much of the day. I was in a t-shirt under blue skies, for much of the day.

When someone leaves here, we often say "on behalf of everybody this person will be sorely missed" knowing, quite frankly that for whatever reason, one or two can't wait to see the back of them. However when it comes to John Christie, I wholeheartedly know that when I say on behalf of everybody I know it's true. John goes on to work for Sage's Cottage, a community based service provider for people with various disabilities.

Taking over from John and in fact Carol too is Dugald Noyes who worked with me at Rippon Lea many moons ago as the head fruit and vegetable gardener and then as the head gardener at Heide museum of modern art. Both positions were held for ten years so the experience especially in the kitchen garden will be a blessing.

Richard Smith

Head Gardener

