



# BELEURA

HOUSE & GARDEN  
MORNINGTON

Edition 69  
May 2023



Jan Cleveland, Sue Wearne and Louise Pratt carefully polish the silver.

## GENERAL MANAGEMENT

Well, it has been a very long time for you to stay tuned waiting for a Beleura newsletter.

My apologies but we have been very busy. All our past visitors and volunteers have come rushing back. We have been close to booked out for tours and concerts this year and the Gatehouse is humming. Our guides chat in the alcove waiting to lead tours whilst our hospitality volunteers are busy serving visitors, the gardens volunteers are head down in the rose garden and the archives ladies (and Warren) are sorting through our new Australian Ballet photos.

We have a number of new volunteers who joined Beleura in the past six months. Anne Bischoff, Anne Neale, Roger Oates, Victor Sullivan and Lesleigh Agnew will join Max Ervin, Marion Brauer and Jenny Clubley who came late last year. They are all bringing a new energy into the volunteer guide pool, and we really appreciate their enthusiasm and efforts learning new material and joining the team.

A recent comment from a visitor revealed the important the work you do on tours.  
*"Your guides were the element that made our visit so good. The information they gave brought the house to life."*

We also welcome a new staff member Rachel Singleton who oversees our Front of House, receiving and serving visitors. I am sure you will meet Rachel as she runs around the kitchen with a hot coffee pot in hand steering visitors.

This was another recent comment from a smaller visitor:- *"I collected your Fairy dust to use in my magic. I will turn people into frogs."* This was made after seeing our *Pirate Fairy Rainbow Dinosaur Magic Show* during the April School Holidays.



Jo Clyne was our Magician recently.



Samantha Hargreaves and James Emerson

Richard and Dugald haul giant pots into the Pavilion under George's supervision. Ingrid arranges a cornucopia of flora and it's brilliant. The Show will go on tomorrow! It will be a triumph!

At that moment Sharolyn from the Melba Opera Trust rings to tell me that the male opera singer booked for tomorrow's show has just come back from the doctor. He cannot sing. I will have to call you back she says. We are ruined. Totally and utterly ruined!

I continue to smile at everyone hauling in giant pot plants through gritted teeth. My phone rings again. Sharolyn has found a singer at short notice. The Show will go on. And it does. And it is a triumph. Everyone has fun. We all go home a little weary.

Only 24 more shows to go this year.

**Martin Green**

### **ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER**

It is with a heavy heart that I begin my entry of our first *Stay Tuned Newsletter* in 2023 with an announcement of the passing of Helen Armstrong.

Helen began volunteering at Beleura in 2012 as a house guide, along with her husband Neil who drove the bus. We affectionately referred to Helen as 'Helen G' as she shared her names, both first and second with fellow house guide Helen Armstrong 'of Brighton'.

Helen possessed a happy and positive disposition and was always willing to take on new challenges. Consequently, it wasn't too long before she took over the role of House Guide Coordinator from Diana Grose, another volunteer we remember fondly, and served in the role for a number of years.

In 2018 Helen and her husband Neil moved from Mornington to McCrae, where they purchased the decommissioned 24 seat Fuso bus from Beleura and embarked on a new business venture as tour bus operators! It was at this time that they both made the decision to move on from Beleura and pour themselves into their exciting new future.

Helen passed on the 26th of March 2023 after a long illness.

Seeing children running through the garden in excitement leading their grandparents to an old-fashioned magic show was joyous despite the threat of wanton misuse of Beleura's fairy dust.

I would like to pay tribute to Helen Armstrong who passed away recently and acknowledge her valuable contribution to Beleura over many years. Monique offers her fond memories of Helen at Beleura in this newsletter below.

### **Behind The Scenes**

I thought this story might show you what actually happens behind the calm exterior at our events.

You might think putting on an Opera is difficult. Well putting on an Opera in a Garden at Beleura was nigh impossible earlier this year.

For our first show of the year with the Melba Opera Trust we hoped to reproduce the joy of last year's performance in the Palm Garden with sunshine, palm fronds, love songs, champagne, and imploring arias.

Then came the weather forecast. Our planned garden opera happened to fall on the hottest forecast day of 37 degrees in three years. "Don't you think if we just have lots of umbrellas and fans and ice drinks that we could still..." I ask Monique. "Definitely Not." she interrupts. What to do? What to do? (repeated hitting of head with fist).

Aha! – If we cannot enjoy the garden outside then let's bring the garden inside. And that's what we do.



extensive Klytie Pate collection, with intermittent attention to a large assortment of Miscellaneous, to which Jan Cleveland lends a hand when she can.

Reflecting on her volunteer service since 2005, Sue Wearne said they have been magic years. She began in Hospitality and lasted a mere day before finding her feet as a garden guide, inducted back then by Kaye Longman and Kate Philip. By 2007 Sue joined Archives and began photographing individual plants or zones of the garden to record the nuances of each season. Her subsequent focus was on the correspondence of John Tallis, reading his thousands of letters, which offered rich insights into the creative, social and administrative worlds of a singular Beleura resident and benefactor.

On a brighter note, we welcome Rachel Singleton to our team. Some of you may have already had the opportunity to meet Rachel who comes with a wealth of experience in visitor services having worked with the Mornington Peninsula Shire, Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery and Royal Botanic Gardens.

Sue Wearne will retire at the end of the year. She emphasises the joy Beleura brought – and still brings – to her life. We will no doubt toast Sue at the year's end along with so many other golden volunteers.

You will see Rachel in the Gatehouse helping to coordinate tour days and our musical events.

### **Ingrid Hoffmann**

Rachel's arrival is giving me a little more time in the office so therefore, amongst other things I have begun updating all of our volunteer registration forms.



Upon your arrival at Beleura you may see me come at you with form, pen and polaroid camera. Don't be alarmed!

### **Monique Bladen**

#### **ARCHIVES**

I've been talking about it for ages and now it's not far off. My three-month break begins July 1st, when I head to tropical north Queensland, followed by the thrill of Italy in September, exploring Puglia, the Amalfi Coast and Sicily. Ahh.

Batteries re-charged, early October will see Archives purr back into gear after the same three-month period of hibernation.

Archives teams on Tuesdays and Thursdays continue refining details of the Fairfax photographs and the

Conservation Cleaner Annette Karchi cleans George Tallis' Murano glassware. Very carefully!



### New Things at Beleura

Anthony's phenomenal detective work uncovered Mick Tallis' original custom-built caravan that was parked in the covered driveway outside the small flat. A Mount Martha resident had opened the van for decades as his father had originally built it in the sixties.

Designed for Central Australian sojourns it has some ingenious features and will be slowly restored.

The Time Garden has a new layout and design. Richard has installed a pattern of pencil pines scattered around the garden circle. The original rosehip beds struggled in a very hot and arid area of the garden with poor soil.

Now when you stand on the paving block in front of the stone fountain all the pines appear to snap into alignment.



### FROM THE KITCHEN

I hope you are all keeping well and getting ready for the colder months that are creeping up on us.

With the colder months upon us I've been thinking of some lovely warm sweets for the guests to enjoy on their return from tour.

Today everyone got to sample my mother's Golden Syrup Dumpling Recipe. I think it was a hit and we discussed how it could work on bigger tours. As you may all know the dumplings need to cook in the beautiful golden syrup mix, which takes up all your attention. I have asked my mother if she has an idea on this matter. Stay tuned for more updates on this.

Look forward to seeing you all soon. Keep warm and think of some lovely warm sweets to tell me about and to enjoy yourself.

**Nicole Milsom**

### HOUSE GUIDES NEWS

What a wonderful start to 2023 – Tours are filling up and I was able to roster every guide for a tour in February and March.

A few years ago a some guides told me they would love the opportunity to read through John Tallis' diaries. Since this would logistically prove to be a bit difficult, I thought I would ask Iain Buckland, who researches in Archives and had read the diaries, whether he could give us an Insight into them. Well, Iain is now working on Number 27 and there will be more coming. There has been nothing but positive comments about his Insights and we have all learnt so much from them. Thank you Iain.

*Insight Number 25* was about John Tallis and Italian cuisine. When we think about Italian cuisine 'Spag Bol' seems to be every one's favourite but risotto was what John Tallis hungered for.

Apparently in May 1995 he set off with his driver to *Enoteca Sileno* in Carlton where he returned with the necessary Arborio rice and several risotto recipes.

What a shame he hadn't met Denise Dardi as he certainly wouldn't have bothered going further than her kitchen for the perfect Fungi Risotto.



New Time Garden layout.

Thank you to the guides who sent me emails about their favourite Italian dishes and favourite restaurants. How could I have forgotten *Pellegrinis* and *Florentinos* which were two established Melbourne restaurants!

*Insight Number 26* was an interesting article on the auction of “*Beleura-on-the-Sea*” on the 8th of January 1916.

It sounded more like a party than a serious property sale as people were encouraged to bring a picnic and even hot water would be provided to make a pot of tea. (Our neighbours hired a Coffee Van when their house was auctioned and we met many people in the street we hadn’t met before, all sipping on free Lattes and Long Blacks!)

There was even a specially scheduled train for attendees! Over 500 people were reported to have travelled to the auction on the special train but Amelia and George Tallis upstaged them all by arriving in a very unusual and expensive car.

Thank goodness they purchased the mansion Beleura and also significant amounts of the surrounding land and then filling Beleura with their interesting artefacts and art works to which John Tallis added even more.

So, now we are the beneficiaries of all the owners of Beleura – Butchart who built it, Bright and Jenner who added on the kitchen, tower and extra rooms, Smith who put in the leadlight windows and Edwick

who added the hydronic central heating, salt water supply to the main bathroom and even an electric lighting generator plant.

No wonder Julie Edgar depicted John Tallis smiling contentedly like a proud grandfather in her bronze portrait sculpture as he watches the guests happily walking back from their tours. What a wonderful privilege we have to share it with all the new (and sometimes been many times before) guests.

**Carol Hunt - Volunteer Guides Coordinator**

## Coming up at Beleura

### Workshops

Ikebana Workshop with Dr. Shoso Shimbo  
Wednesday 24 May

### Concerts

Luluc	Friday 26 May
Gould & Grabowsky	Thursday 8 June
Collide Ensemble	Friday 16 June