

**BRISBANE CITY
BOTANIC GARDENS
CONSERVATION STUDY**

FINAL REPORT

OCTOBER 1995



5G - HISTORICAL REVIEW
A History of Botanic Gardens

Compiled by Helen Hamley



5G.1 INTRODUCTION

This historical overview outlines how the gardens have changed over time, described broadly. There are eight distinct phases related to the custodial management of the place, namely:

- 1828-1855 : Government Garden
- 1855-1889 : Walter Hill's Curatorship plus Pink & Cowan
- 1889-1905 : MacMahon's Curatorship
- 1905-1917 : J F Bailey's Directorship
- 1917-1940 : E W Bick's Curatorship
- 1940-1956 : WWII & J R Bailey's Curatorship
- 1956-1985 : Caulfield's Curatorship & Beyond
- 1985-1994 : Gardens Point Redevelopment & Beyond.

5G.2 HISTORICAL REVIEW

1828-1855 : Government Garden

The site occupied by what is now known as the Brisbane City Botanic Gardens (to distinguish it from the more recently established Mt Coot-tha Botanic Gardens) was first used as a garden area in the 1820s when the Moreton Bay area was strictly a convict settlement. The Colonial Botanist, Charles Fraser, visited the settlement in 1828 and laid out a Government Garden on a fifteen (15) acres downstream portion of the present site³. A superintendent of agriculture was appointed to the settlement in the same year and fruits, vegetables and spices were cultivated in the garden⁴. Refer to Figure 3A.1

Despite the possibility of eventual closure of the settlement, mooted from the early 1830s, the garden was still thriving in 1836 when James Backhouse, an English Quaker visited Moreton Bay. His published account of his Australian travels refers to the Brisbane Government Garden as an area of 22 acres, fenced with rows of sugar cane and containing vegetables, fruits, immature coffee trees and bamboo⁵.

After the closure of the penal establishment and the beginning of free settlement in 1842, the Government Garden apparently gradually fell into disrepair. By the early 1850s it had become an unfenced 'waste overgrown with weeds' - although it still contained 'many valuable plants'⁶. In February 1853 a group of residents met to form the Moreton Bay Horticultural Society and in December that year successfully petitioned Governor Fitzroy for a grant of about 7 acres of the old Government Gardens,

*for the purpose of forming a Botanic Garden ...[where]... the beautiful indigenous plants of this District could be collected and classified, and a knowledge of their characteristics acquired: and where also tropical plants could be acclimatized.*⁷

By January 1855, the government had voted an amount of £600 for fencing and preparing the ground and an annual vote of £434 for the wages of a superintendent and 3 labourers and for contingencies⁸.

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3. Herbert, D A, 'The Brisbane Botanic Gardens', *Queensland Naturalist*, Vol XIV, No 4, 1951, p. 70.
 4. Steele, J., *Brisbane Town in convict days* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1975) pp. 112-3; Johnston, W R, *Brisbane: the first thirty years* (Brisbane: Boolarong, 1988) p. 42.
 5. Steele, *Brisbane Town*, p. 219.
 6. Letter 8799 Stuart Rupell to [Colonial Secretary] 9 October 1854, COL/A8, QSA; Johnston, *Brisbane*, pp. 253-4.
 7. Letter 1109744 Moreton Bay citizens to Governor-General, December 1953, COL/A8, QSA.
 8. Johnston, *Brisbane*, pp. 253-4; Letter 1028 Wickham to Colonial Secretary, 31 January 1855, letter 8799 Rupell to [Colonial Secretary] 9 October 1854 - both in COL/A8, QSA.

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Recognising the limitations of having no river frontage, interested members of the public pressed the Government Resident, Captain Wickham early in 1855 to request an extension of the Botanic Gardens to include Sections 47 and 48, in addition to Sections 42 and 43 already granted, and to extend the garden grounds to the river⁹. This resulted in an area of about 28 acres being set aside. Refer to Figure 5G.2

Wickham, in response to a request from the Colonial Secretary, recommended Mr Walter Hill for the position of Superintendent, pointing out that not only did Hill bear excellent certificates from 'various gentlemen in England' but he was 'strongly recommended by Mr. Wm. McLeay which alone I consider would be ample testimony of his abilities as a practical botanist.'¹⁰ Hill, who had previously spent nine years at the Kew Gardens was duly appointed¹¹.

1855-1881 : Walter Hill's Curatorship

Hill presided over the Gardens for twenty-six (26) years - the longest curatorship in the history of the gardens - and his mark survives in a number of extant features of the place. His influence, however, on modern Queensland extends further than a few hectares in the heart of the state's capital. After separation in 1859, he was appointed Colonial Botanist and he contributed significantly to the development of botany, agriculture, horticulture and forest conservation during the founding years of the colony.

By maintaining regular communications with botanical institutions worldwide and by mounting impressive displays in intercolonial and international exhibitions, Hill promoted Queensland not only as a desirable place to live, work and invest but as an internationally recognised centre of botanical and horticultural interest. But probably his most notable achievement was his promotion of agricultural enterprises - some of which are still significant industries today - namely the cultivation of sugar cane, tropical fruits and vineyards. Hill's appetite for testing new 'usefuls' was apparently unflagging and his experimental plots were a significant feature on the early face of the Botanic Gardens. He co-operated closely with the Queensland Acclimatisation Society which was formed in 1862 and which later established an Acclimatisation Gardens at Bowen Park. His interest in 'commercial' plants extended beyond successful cultivation to include experimentation in the 'secondary' technology required to manufacture the finished plant-product. In this area his collaboration in 1862 with John Buhot in producing crystalline sugar is well-known¹².

All this scientific research was matched by an exceedingly vigorous distribution program which has left its mark throughout the state. After the initial establishment years, huge volumes of plant material were sent to applicants. In 1871-2 for example the Botanic Gardens despatched over 70,000 items, including 50,000 sugar cane cuttings, numerous mulberry, coffee, tea, ginger, tobacco and other plants as well as 1000 trees and shrubs for public areas¹³.

In the beginning Hill was responsible for a roughly triangular piece of land of about twenty-eight (28) acres, bounded on the west by Queen's Park (which extended westward to Alice Street), in the south by a line extending from George Street to the river and on the

9. Letter 3211 Wickham to Colonial Secretary, 28 March 1855; letter 4869, Mitchell to Colonial Secretary, 18 May 1855; W.A. Duncan & R.R. Mackenzie to Government Resident, 7 Jan 1956; letter 743 Wickham to Colonial Secretary, 14 January 1856 - all in COL/A8, QSA.

10. Letter 1028 Wickham to Colonial Secretary, 31 January 1855, COL/A8, QSA.

11. Note dated 23 Jun 1855, COL/A8, QSA; Clive Veivers, 'Walter Hill', Cairns Historical Society Bulletin 371, August 1991, p. 1.

12. See *Brisbane Courier*, 26 April 1862, p. 3 for Hill's letter to the press about Buhot's experiment in granulating sugar grown in the gardens; McClurg, John, *Historical Sketches of Brisbane* (Brisbane: Library Board of Queensland & Royal Historical Society of Queensland, 1975) p. 19.

13. Curators Annual Report (hereafter Ann Rpt) 1871-2, p. 3.

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third side by the river bank. Although there was high ground towards the southern boundary, the rest of the area was extremely low-lying and poorly drained with at least one semi-permanent waterhole.

The active work program which Hill instigated balanced the recreational, educational and research functions considered important in a botanic garden. His aim was to make the Brisbane Botanic Garden '...not merely a place of healthful recreation, but also of instructive and practical utility...'¹⁴. The place was also to become a major ritual focus for the community. It was here that Governor Bowen stepped ashore on 10 December 1859 to assume responsibility for the new colony of Queensland. Two days later he returned to the gardens for the official welcoming ceremony¹⁵. In 1862 Bowen left his temporary Government House to take up residence in the grand new one which had been built overlooking the gardens¹⁶. As a necessary adjunct to Government House, a battery of guns was built along the riverside boundary of Queens Park from 1863¹⁷. The official status of the area was further enhanced in 1868 with the occupation of the newly constructed Parliament House alongside Bowen's residence¹⁸. In the same year the area was graced with the presence of Prince Alfred, the Duke of Edinburgh, who in February stepped ashore to a temporary reception area in Queens Park at the start of his visit to Brisbane. During his stay in the city he planted two Cook Pines at the top of Queens Park. These were the first items in what was to be a row of six planned to announce the Parliament House frontage. The remaining four were never planted and now only one specimen remains¹⁹. Refer to Figures 5G.3a & 5G.3b

The appearance of the gardens proper also changed dramatically during this period. By 1862 there was a neat cottage with a steeply-pitched roof perched on the rise that still houses a former Curator's residence today. On a ridge near the house, Hill had established experimental plantations of tea and in other places there were healthy plots of sugar cane, cotton, vines, oranges, pineapples and bananas. A generous variety of tropical fruit trees had been established and a coffee tree obtained ca 1858 was flourishing and bearing good fruit. A construction project to which Hill attached great importance - a main drain from the centre of the gardens to the river - was underway. Public walkways were established, probably the longest of which ran beside a row of bunyas planted along the riverside²⁰.

Throughout the rest of the 1860s major changes occurred. Probably the most significant was the integration of the Queens Park area with the gardens in 1865-6. This was a sensible move - Hill had long been responsible for supervising grounds maintenance work in Queens Park (as well as the Domain). To enhance the visual integration of the two areas Hill continued the row of Bunya Pines through to the Edward Street frontage and also planted trees along the old separating boundary. At Albert Street a new main entrance was formed with weeping figs on either side and bamboos planted to form an arch. Following the opening of the Enoggera reservoir in 1866²¹, an extensive pipe system delivered water to a large area of the gardens allowing drinking and ornamental fountains to be installed. One drinking fountain which has since become known as the 'Walter Hill Fountain' remains in the gardens. Built of freestone with Gladstone marble panels to a design by Colonial Architect Charles Tiffin it was installed in April 1867²².

14. Ann Rpt 1860-1, p. 1.

15. *Moreton Bay Courier*, 3 December 1859, p. 2; 13 December 1859, p. 2.

16. Fisher, Rod (Comp.), *Colonial George & William Street Heritage Tour*, Brisbane, Brisbane History Group, 1991, #20.

17. Tiffin's work in the Botanical Gardens - typescript courtesy of National Trust of Queensland.

18. Fisher, *Colonial George Street*, # 12.

19. *Brisbane Courier*, 26 February 1868, pp. 4-5; Ann Rpt 1870-1, p. 3.

20. Ann Rpt 1861-2.

21. Cossins, G. *One Hundred Years of Brisbane's Water Supply*, Institution of Engineers Australia, Brisbane Division, Technical Papers Vol. 7., No. 10, August 1966, p. 4

22. *Brisbane Sculpture Guide*, p. 17; *Queensland Daily Guardian*, 16 February 1867 - reference courtesy of National Trust of Queensland.

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The 1870s saw the extension of construction works. Two quite decorative structures appeared in 1878. In July an octagonal Band Pavilion (still extant), on low ground between Hill's residence and the river, was used for the first time and in the following month a stylish conservatory designed by F D G Stanley was completed. Other earlier buildings, however, had begun to decay. The Library/Museum building and the Curators residence both were subject to damp and white ants.

The decade was a busy one for landscaping projects. In 1871-2, Hill cut three views to the river through native vegetation and followed this up a few years later with more extensive felling of riverbank trees. Before 1875-6 an island, planted with palms and ferns, was established in a large lagoon in the centre of the gardens. This was known for many years as Fern Island and its beauty made it a favourite spot for visitors as well as a popular subject for the camera. Queens Park was completely overhauled at the end of the decade. The sports ground in the lower section was raised and levelled. Between the Albert Street lagoon and George Street the ground was laid out in three terraces, some for lawn tennis, croquet and bowling areas and another for an ornamental fountain.

In direct contrast to the effect of this beautification work was the large volume of vehicular and pedestrian traffic introduced into the gardens when a ferry was established at Gardens Point in 1878-9. Hill complained of the pathways being cut up by carriers loads and of the general wear and tear caused but it suited the Municipal Council to operate the ferry at that place and there it stayed for many years.²³

In 1879-80 there was increased activity along the riverbank as surveyors established in the gardens a base line from which a trigonometrical survey of Brisbane could be carried out. The line extended for a distance of about 2000 feet from a point in the present bus-turnaround garden to a point (near the Conservatory) which apparently has since been dredged away²⁴. Refer to Figure 5G.4

It was during the 1870s that one of the long-standing zoological traditions of the gardens was established. In his 1878-9 report Hill announced that a bird fancier from Sydney had arrived in Brisbane and released '*Budgerygar parrots*' which had settled in the gardens²⁵.

Over the next hundred years or so the practice of releasing animals into the area was to be frequently repeated.

Towards the end of Hill's directorship he began to comment more directly on inadequate funding for the gardens. In 1874-5 the vote was around one eighth of that allowed at the Sydney Botanic Gardens and about one quarter of expenditure on the gardens at Adelaide²⁶. Hill retired in 1881 apparently under a cloud²⁷. At least his successor, James Pink, felt free to intersperse his first report with terms like '*neglect*' and '*disgrace*'²⁸. Perhaps Hill's energies had begun to flag in later life or perhaps years of financial stringency were finally bearing fruit.

1881-1886 : James Pink

23. Ann Rpts 1869-70 to 1879-80.

24. Ann Rpt, Department of Public Lands, for 1879, p. 5; 1890, p. 12; 1893, p. 12.

25. Ann Rpt 1878-9, p. 10.

26. Ann Rpt 1874-5, p. 3.

27. Clive Veivers, 'Walter Hill', Bulletin 372, Cairns Historical Society, September 1991, p. 2.

28. Pink to Under Secretary, Department of Public Lands, 17 March 1881 - reproduced with Ann Rpt 1881-2.

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Pink, previously at the Acclimatisation Gardens²⁹, was appointed on 1 March 1881 - staying a mere four years before being dismissed in 1885³⁰. Unlike Hill his designation was Head Gardener, not Curator and the position of Colonial Botanist was filled by Frederick Manson Bailey who began an updated catalogue of BG plants.

Pink concentrated on the physical form of the gardens and by 1885 several changes had occurred in structures as well as in hard landscaping and plantings. The old iron fence along Alice Street was removed and by June 1885 a new dwarf stone wall surmounted by a decorative iron railing was nearing completion. Other new structures appeared. A new propagating house was finished and heated with a boiler system imported from England and a huge 120' X 54' bush house was built. Some older structures were remodelled or received attention. The old aviary was converted for use as a monkey house in what appears to be the first instance of mammals being kept in the gardens. The monkeys were disposed of a couple of years later.

Pink's taste for views led to some clearing work. Bamboos at the lower end of the Albert Street lagoon were removed to open a vista from the central walk to the terraces and Parliament House. During 1884-5 he cleared most of the vegetation along the riverbank from Edward Street to the ferry, leaving some trees. The Edward Street area of the gardens received a great deal of attention. A palm avenue was planted from the Queens Park end of the gardens to the central plot where a new rosary was laid out. Various Chestnuts and Jacarandas were planted along the river bank from Edward Street to the ferry and Pink planned a parallel row of weeping figs on the other side of this 'long walk'.

Pink tested and introduced asphaltting as an advance on gravelled surfaces. At the Albert Street lagoon, waterfowl including both black and white swans were housed on a man-made island and protected from dog attack by a fence round the entire lake³¹. Refer to Figures 5G.5a & 5G.5b

Pink was succeeded by Alexander Cowan, appointed Acting Head Gardener in January 1886, the appointment being made permanent in the following August³². Cowan came highly recommended by Sir Joseph Hooker, then Curator at RBG Kew.

1886-1889 : Alexander M. Cowan

Cowan stayed for barely three years. He resigned, apparently over some conflict with the Board of Management³³, and was succeeded, this time by a Curator, in April 1889. His period was characterised by the cleaning up of 'old eyesores' but he also introduced zinc labels, continued the tradition of widely distributing plants to public institutions like schools, railway stations and police grounds, began a pharmaceutical collection, and experimented on *Erythroxylon coca* (source of cocaine) - a plant first introduced by Hill during 1876-7³⁴. He was keen to 'preserve the characteristic Queensland nature of the Garden' by establishing collections of terrestrial and epiphytal ferns available on islands in Moreton Bay. In the role of 'new broom', Cowan had the main residence repaired, occupied it, and had the grounds tidied. He shifted the manure and rubbish depots out of sight of the public, removed an ugly fence from around the gun battery and pushed for action on the state of a neglected Queens Park cricket grounds for which local sporting groups were responsible. He continued the work, begun by both Hill and Pink, on the river

29. The vestiges of this renowned place are contained in Bowen Park opposite the Royal Brisbane Hospital at Herston. The Royal National Association grounds were created on the site of the Acclimatisation Gardens.

30. *Queensland Blue Book*, 1886.

31. Ann Rpts 1881-2 to 1884-5.

32. *Queensland Blue Book* 1886.

33. Mckinnon, R D, Summary of the development of Brisbane's (2) Botanic Gardens 1828-1984 (typescript).

34. Ann Rpts 1876-7, p. 6.; 1885-6 to 1887-8.

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frontage - grading and levelling a 15' walk and planting on the slope down to the river. During his time the Brisbane Municipal Council erected earth closets near the ferry. Cowan shifted back the fence around the ferry area, thereby restoring the whole of the bunya row to the main gardens, and asphalted and beautified the walk down the slope to the ferry.³⁵

Further administrative changes occurred both during and after Cowan's period. July 1887 saw the formation of Queensland's first Department of Agriculture which in its infancy relied heavily on the Botanic Gardens to guide the development of agricultural industries in the state. The relationship between the two was formalised after the disturbance of Cowan's departure. In March 1889 the Board of Management was 'relieved' and control of the Botanic Gardens passed to the new department with the Under Secretary dubbed Curator of all botanic gardens, parks and reserves.

1889-1905 : MacMahon's Curatorship

Cowan's replacement, Philip MacMahon was appointed on 23 April 1889³⁶. The period of his curatorship was marked by very trying external conditions. Floods in the early 1890s were followed by the bank failures and severe depression for which the decade is well-known. The great drought of 1902 set back the state's economy and in June that year the gardens lost the positions of Overseer, Propagator and Park Ranger. Further drastic spending cuts during 1904-5 halved the remaining staff. Perhaps more significantly, the period saw the introduction of water meters and with no additional funds voted to pay for water, both the gardens, and MacMahon's temper, suffered. Perhaps these factors prompted his departure, for in November 1905 a new Director was appointed.

Of the several significant features of the MacMahon period, inadequate funding was the most obvious. MacMahon frequently re-iterated the problem, often drawing comparisons with more generous arrangements in other states. He met the funding shortfall with a number of ingenious responses, like the characteristic 'rustic' structures built on the spot by gardens staff with ironbark obtained from the bush. MacMahon seems to have been more of a 'people' man than his predecessors. He pushed and prodded until regular band concerts were held and he frequently noted the need for shelters to protect visitors from sudden tropical storms. During his time the zoo was started in earnest, a kiosk was opened and bicycles were allowed into the gardens (but only under regulations that protected the interests of all visitors).

He was a passionate advocate of a horticultural education system, declaring that '[t]his colony wants gardeners, and wants them very badly'³⁷ and reporting to his political and administrative masters the profound benefits that such a system was producing overseas in places like Great Britain and France. His commitment to horticultural education involved giving lectures to children, and to adults at night, at the Normal School and practical sessions in the pupils' plot at the gardens. This educational function he considered so important that a classroom was included in the new curator's residence built ca 1891. After the Agricultural College at Gatton was opened in 1897, he regularly gave lectures there. He widely promoted Arbor Day amongst the state schools throughout Queensland and every year between May and August despatched thousands of plants to every corner of the state. A great interest in weather study led to the opening of a meteorological station in the gardens - a facility previously considered an unnecessary duplication. as the central Brisbane meteorological station was located in Wickham Terrace. Throughout all these separate concerns, MacMahon maintained a well-considered and explicit position on the role of botanic gardens in general. He articulated

35. Ann Rpts 1885-6 to 1887-8.

36. *Queensland Blue Book, 1889.*

37. Ann Rpt 1899-1900, QVP 1900, Vol 2, p. 753.

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the various functions - scientific, horticultural, educational, aesthetic and recreational - emphasising the need, as well as the difficulty, of reconciling such diverse requirements³⁸.

His first few years brought trying experiences. Early in 1890 extraordinary rainfall hampered cultivation and two floods covered large parts of the gardens, causing great damage. The water level in March 1890 stood at 10' at the rosary. All the herbaceous plants that were covered died and many hardier specimens suffered. The £100 voted by the government for repairs was barely sufficient. The action of the floodwaters probably made things easier for a survey team which after May that year was at work remeasuring the base line to enable the urgently-needed accurate survey of Brisbane to proceed³⁹.

Scarcely three years later the gardens were subjected to more devastating floods. On 4 and 5 February 1893 floodwaters rose higher than ever before (in non-aboriginal memory) or since, to cover most of the grounds. The force of the waters flattened fences; swept away or destroyed buildings; hollowed out under the new curators' residence, creating a deep hole into which the house sunk; and washed away about an acre of land at the ferry site. Huge trees on the river bank were uprooted and carried away, along with clumps of bamboo still attached to the earth in which they were growing. The floating Metropolitan Baths, moored adjacent to the Edward Street entrance were torn away and taken downstream. Refer to Figure 5G.6

Several vessels, both large and small were swept by the floodwaters over the inundated land and left high and (almost) dry across the river road when the waters receded. The grounds were covered with litter and debris of every description and a deposit of silt that stood in places fully 2' deep.

The destruction was great. Once the water had receded, the government sent 'relief' men to the gardens to begin the enormous task of cleaning up. About 2,000 man-hours were devoted to collecting debris into piles, re-erecting fences, shovelling paths and filling holes before a second flood swept through the gardens on 18 and 19 February. This time the current was not as strong, but the water level was almost as high. Some, but not all, of the stranded vessels were floated free of the land (the remaining ones causing a nuisance for many months to come⁴⁰). The floods killed thousands of smaller plants and shrubs as well as many trees. All the exotic conifers were killed and a collection of over 600 varieties of roses was destroyed. Many of the plants that escaped inundation died later because of poor drainage⁴¹.

'Relief' men were again sent to the gardens. MacMahon, whilst noting the immense damage done by the flood and warning of the length of time it would take to set the gardens to rights, tried to look on the bright side by saying the flood had provided an opportunity to completely remodel the grounds⁴². There seems to have been at least one other welcome effect. Apparently the Municipal Council decided to move the ferry site to the end of Edward Street thereby halting what had for many years been a most unwelcome, heavy stream of traffic through the gardens⁴³. The floating baths however were subsequently replaced, this facility remaining at the site until the 1920s⁴⁴.

38. See for example Ann Rpts 1896-7, QVP 1897, Vol 4, p. 936; 1899-1900, QVP 1900, Vol 2, p. 754.

39. Ann Rpt Department of Public Lands for 1890, p. 12.

40. Memo 4390 MacMahon to Under Secretary of Agriculture, 30 June 1893; letter 4601 Thomas Edward to Curator, 24 July 1893; memo 5675 MacMahon to Under Secretary of Agriculture, 24 November 1893 - AGS/N64, QSA.

41. Ann Rpt 1882-3.

42. Letter 2687 MacMahon to Under Secretary of Agriculture, 16 March 1893, AGS/N64, QSA.

43. See various letters after 3099, MacMahon to Under Secretary of Agriculture, 16 April 1893 - AGS/N64, QSA.

44. Corrie & Co to Marine Board, 1 May 1895, AGS/J71, QSA.

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Although the floods wiped away much of the work that MacMahon had carried out, not all was lost. A new 117' X 46' bush house which had been built during 1890-1 was apparently spared. This was surrounded by winding paths. At the junction of the old and new bush houses, there was a rustic fountain surrounded by a platform furnished with silky oak and ironbark seats (also of rustic design) from which visitors could survey the green and shaded scene⁴⁵. Another structure to survive was a Kiosk not far from the bush houses, built ca 1890. Although it was in the main current of the floods, it was not swept away because of the sheltering effect of numerous trees on its upstream side⁴⁶.

The floods ensured an emphasis on improved drainage which by 1895 MacMahon claimed would in the future mitigate against the type of damage seen in the 1893 floods. For some of the drains, porphyry stone from the Kangaroo Point quarry was used, while for others bamboo served the purpose⁴⁷. The perennial water supply problem was eased somewhat during 1895-6 when the Mt Crosby reservoir was brought on line. Improved pressure probably prompted the construction, at about the same time, of a rustic fountain made of St Helena Island coralstone. This apparently was the centrepiece in an avenue of palms planted by MacMahon over the period 1889 to 1891 from a point nearly opposite Parliament House right down to the river. Refer to Figure 5G.7a & 5G.7b

The Kiosk in the gardens encouraged weekday visitors enormously and by 1898 it was such a popular venue for lunch that the lessee built an addition in the shape of an ornamental shelter to protect his customers from sudden showers. Many visitors also came to see the new bush house which, along with a new nursery and a new seed-raising house, was built during 1897-8. The zoo also attracted attention and during 1898-9 a separate enclosure was built for a pair of emus received from Longreach. Visitors could also see small marsupials, birds of prey and some recently purchased mandarin ducks as well as the older waterfowl. A new aviary was built during 1900-1 and in the same period MacMahon's constant nagging bore fruit with the erection of a new decorative Bandstand on the flat below the sloping lawn not far from the curator's office and the bush houses⁴⁸.

The period 1902 to 1904 brought further structural and landscaping changes. During 1902-3 a deep drain was laid from the lagoon near the Albert Street entrance to the river. The idea was to allow emptying of the lagoon by a sluice valve. MacMahon also planned to gradually reduce the area of the lagoon to save on water costs and to beautify the border. A new kiosk was built and MacMahon landscaped the grounds around it, also remodelling and replanting the ever popular Fern Island nearby⁴⁹. Refer to Figure 5G.8

With respect to plant collections, MacMahon introduced several innovations. The Palm Avenue already mentioned was but a part of an extensive collection of palms which he introduced into the gardens. His ambition was to eventually collect every known palm species⁵⁰. MacMahon commented on the paucity of indigenous specimens in the gardens, but although he frequently pointed out the need for collecting trips, apparently frugal economy prevented much satisfaction in this matter⁵¹.

In his report for 1896-7, MacMahon proudly announced success in growing the giant waterlily *Victoria regia* in an outdoor pond. He believed that this was the first time the plant had been grown in Queensland, apparently unaware that Walter Hill had successfully raised a specimen to flowering maturity in 1857⁵². Another oddity that probably had a

45. Ann Rpt 1890-1, p. 25.

46. Ann Rpt 1892-3, p. 23.

47. Ann Rpt 1894-5, p. 22.

48. Ann Rpts 1889-90 (original at letter 6384 of 1890, AGS/N64, QSA) to 1898-9.

49. Ann Rpts 1902-3, 1903-4; letter 6919 MacMahon to US Agriculture, 31 July 1902, AGS/N68, QSA.

50. Ann Rpt 1896-7, QVP 1897, Vol 4, p. 937.

51. Ann Rpt 1895-6, QVP 1896, Vol 4, p. 466.

52. Ann Rpts 1896-7, QVP 1897, Vol 4, p. 937; 1868-9, p. 1.

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different effect on visitors was the sight, on several Sundays in September 1893, of about 1000 sheep grazing on Queens Park. MacMahon introduced them to 'improve the ground'⁵³.

For many years after the 1893 floods it became a tradition for the government to send unemployed men to the gardens for a day's work in return for a week's rations. The use of this labour must have saved the gardens from the worst effects of stringent budgeting for the men were employed in routine maintenance work in the gardens as well as on some of the construction work outlined above. During 1893-4 'relief' men thinned bamboo clumps and cleared the river front and the Domain. They may also have assisted in the progress of an extensive re-labelling program made necessary by the floods. During 1896-7 over 2,000 labels were prepared. MacMahon's system of recording the plant collection involved attaching a numbered metal tag to each plant and registering the numbers, presumably at the office. This apparently enabled ready identification even when there was not time to label the plant immediately⁵⁴.

During 1897-8 MacMahon began preparing for cultivation an area of about 5 acres known as the 'Hill'. Evidently this area was previously considered infertile and indeed MacMahon discovered a subsoil the consistency of 'pipeclay', but by the introduction of nitrogen-yielding plants and by thorough ploughing and drainage, it was made ready for planting⁵⁵. This area came to be called the Clay Border. The slope was altered to give a picturesque undulating effect and in 1902-3 the Hill was the site of a large bed containing 200 varieties of roses⁵⁶.

Other areas were changed by MacMahon. During 1889-90 he opened to the public a space which came to be known as the 'sloping lawn'. This area was occupied by mango trees and, according to MacMahon, was an eyesore. He planned seats and new gardens predicting, correctly, that the area would become 'one of the most favourite resorts in the Gardens'⁵⁷.

Judging from the tenor of his last few reports, MacMahon left his position at the Brisbane Botanic Gardens a bitterly disappointed man. He resented the 'drastic' economies that cut so deeply into his resources and made it impossible to secure the water necessary to maintain the gardens. In his 1904-5 report he angrily exclaimed: 'The whole seventy-seven years of labour and expense involved in the creation of the gardens are being utterly wasted...'⁵⁸. It is hardly surprising that he was gone by the end of the year. Thus was another BG tradition continued - unhappy partings.

53. Letter 4756 MacMahon to Under Secretary Agriculture, 17 August 1893, AGS/N64, QSA.

54. Ann Rpt 1896-7, QVP 1897, Vol 4, p. 938.

55. Ann Rpt 1898-9, QVP 1899, Vol 2, p. 627.

56. Ann Rpt 1902-3, QPP 1903, Vol 2, p. 711.

57. Ann Rpt 1889-90 - original in letter 6384 MacMahon to Under Secretary of Agriculture, 10 May 1890, AGS/N64, QSA.

58. Ann Rpt 1904-5, QPP 1905, Vol 2, p. 576.

1905-1917 : J F Bailey's Directorship

The funding levels that seem to have driven MacMahon away appear to have improved somewhat by the time that his successor, John Frederick Bailey presented his first report - about 18 months after his November 1905 appointment. By June 1907 some significant building works had been effected through a special grant voted for the purpose⁵⁹. The Queensland economy was decidedly healthier after 1905, so it is understandable that the fiscal belt was loosened somewhat at the beginning of Bailey's time. But funding of the Brisbane Botanic Gardens still remained at a lower level than the gardens in other Australian capital cities. In fact one of the reasons given for Bailey's departure in 1917 to take charge of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens was the more generous grants available to that institution⁶⁰.

Bailey was almost 40 when he was appointed Director of the Brisbane Botanic Gardens, having spent about 16 years of his working life as Assistant to his father the Government Botanist, Frederick Manson Bailey. In that position the younger Bailey had travelled widely in Queensland on collecting trips and had written articles for the *Queensland Agricultural Journal*. He had a particular interest in tropical timbers⁶¹. Throughout his directorship Bailey maintained a high profile in community, educational and horticultural affairs. He gave weekly lectures at the Gatton Agricultural College, travelled to local shows to judge horticultural exhibits and frequently journeyed to southern cities, establishing close exchange relationships with botanic gardens in Melbourne, Sydney, Ballarat and Adelaide. He continued MacMahon's tradition of wide distribution to schools for Arbor Days and made visits to Stanthorpe and Warwick to advise on street plantings. When the Governor of Queensland moved residence to 'Fernberg', Bailey spent several months supervising the laying out of the gardens there⁶².

The 11 year period of Bailey's directorship was marked by extraordinary changes in the physical appearance of the gardens. Numerous construction works were carried out. A retaining wall extending from near Edward Street along the river frontage almost to Gardens Point was finished in November 1906. Another early project had a significant effect on the status of the gardens as a public venue. On the evening of 25 April 1908 a plan first conceived in 1906 was brought to fruition when the gardens were lit up by electrical power⁶³. From then until 1915, when wartime dislocations interrupted the supply of bulbs, the gardens were open till 10:30 pm every night from August to May. In summer regular evening concerts were held, attracting large crowds, especially on Sunday nights.

A decision which was to have a profound and lasting effect on the Botanic Gardens was taken in Bailey's time. In 1910 the Governor moved residence to 'Fernberg', in the then outer suburb of Bardon, leaving the old Government House site to the newly established University of Queensland which was to share the area with the Technical College. New buildings were erected in the Domain area in the following years, some encroaching on the Botanic Gardens land. Thus was begun a sometimes troubled relationship between two institutions struggling to survive in an extremely circumscribed space⁶⁴.

On the gardens side of the shared boundary with the University, building activity also increased in this period. In 1909 the long awaited new 'Curators' residence was completed, finally satisfying a need felt since the 1893 floods had destroyed the second

59. Ann Rpt 1906-7. QPP 1907, Vol 2, p. 756.

60. *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (hereafter ADB), Vol 7, p. 137.

61. *Queensland Blue Books*, 1889 to 1905; ADB, Vol 7, p. 137.

62. Ann Rpt, QPP 1910, Vol 3, p. 258.

63. Ann Rpt 1907-8, QPP 1908, Vol 3, pp. 124-6; *Brisbane Courier*, 27 April 1908, p. 5.

64. See for example correspondence re plans for Biology building & Womens Common Room - letter 255, 23 August 1912, AGS/J71, QSA.

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house. Further building works followed with a new kiosk in 1911 and an Office/Botanical Library building in 1915 (on the site of the present Conservatorium of Music Building).

Flood mitigation works in the river led to probably the most significant and disruptive change of the period. From as early as 1898 (after a flood in January) there had been talk of dredging the 'sharpest' angles out of the river's tortuous course so that flood waters could escape more quickly and, hopefully, damage to low-lying river front properties could be minimised⁶⁵. These plans firmed up after the turn of the century and by 1911 the necessary arrangements were being made for the removal of several acres around Gardens Point⁶⁶. In July 1913 the Department of Harbours & Rivers began dredging and before the work was completed during 1916-17, several gardens buildings had been shifted off the 'target' land and many large trees, including bunyas (planted by Walter Hill) and weeping figs, had been removed.⁶

The loss was somewhat compensated for in a couple of ways. Firstly, thousands of yards of soil were removed from the 'target' land in the Domain and used to fill and level the rest of the area⁶⁸. Secondly, both the Domain and Queens Park became officially incorporated into the gardens in 1915-6⁶⁹. This was really a formality because traditionally the Botanic Gardens administration had long been responsible for the maintenance of the two areas. Refer to *Figure 5G.9* and *Figure 5G.10*

Community use of the gardens remained a high priority in the Bailey years, although some changes were made that altered the location of some activities. Bailey, like MacMahon before him, noted in 1907 that the scores of children who came to the gardens on holidays severely taxed the available space. New accessibility to the Domain after 1910 allowed the erection of a children's playground there. Refer to *Figure 5G.11* It was begun during 1913-4 and in use by 1915. Other activities were relocated away from the main gardens area. During 1908-9 a fence around the cricket ground in Queens Park was removed and the tennis court near the lagoon was filled and grassed. Whilst the cricket ground was not altered for some years, the former tennis court site became the zoo area. The waterfowl from enclosures around the ponds were moved to an enclosure around the Albert Street lagoon during 1909-10, and the marsupials and emus were moved into a yard on the former tennis court site during 1912-3.

Late in 1908, the George Street entrance was altered and visitors to the gardens were able to rest on one of the 200 new seats provided for them. The gardens continued to be a favoured venue for community events. On 22 June 1911 special coronation festivities were held in the grounds. Thousands of people gathered in the Domain to watch a fireworks display in honour of the coronation of King George V⁷⁰. Visitors were no doubt highly satisfied when new toilets were built during 1914-5. These were staffed by attendants - one male and one female.

Some of Bailey's planting projects were initiatives which later directors developed into 'trademarks' of the Brisbane Botanic Gardens, like the succulent collection he started near the bush houses during 1906-7⁷¹. Similarly, the caladium collection he established in a bush house rockery during 1908-9 was later expanded into a significant visitor attraction⁷². Bailey also pursued an interest in 'economic' plants and on Plot 17, without removing the rose collection MacMahon had established there, he planted specimens of coffee, cotton, rubber cassava, jackfruit and yams (1907-8). Over the next few years they

65. Ann Rpt 1897-8, *QVP* 1898, Vol 3, p. 1073.

66. Under Secretary [of Agriculture] to Under Secretary, Chief Secretary's Department, 27 July 1911, AGS/J71, QSA.

68. Ann Rpt 1913-4, *QPP* 1914, Vol 2, p. 775.

69. Ann Rpt 1915-6, *QPP* 1916-17, Vol 2, p. 737.

70. *Brisbane Courier*, 23 June 1911, p. 6.

71. Ann Rpt 1906-7, *QPP* 1907, Vol 2, p. 756.

72. Ann Rpt 1908-9, *QPP* 1909, Vol 2, p. 405.

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thrived, offering a source of interest to visitors⁷³. The gardens also continued as a source for the distribution of tropical fruits - during 1912-13 Bailey's staff despatched 2,000 Gros Michel bananas to Queensland growers⁷⁴.

1917-1940 : E W Bick's Curatorship

When Bailey departed for Adelaide early in 1917 he left the gardens in the hands of a man who was closely acquainted not only with Queensland botany but also with the Botanic Gardens themselves. **Ernest Walter Bick** is first listed by name amongst gardens staff in 1906⁷⁵. He was then 36 years of age. When 'Fernberg' became the new Government House, Bick's workplace also changed and for 1911 he is listed there as Head Gardener of a team of three⁷⁶. Shortly afterwards he was transferred to the Agriculture Department's head office as a Botanical and Entomological Collector, a position he retained until promoted Curator of the Botanic Gardens on 1 April 1917. He was to manage the gardens for about 23 years - a period marked by the end of World War I, the hand-over of the gardens from the state government to the Brisbane City Council, the bitter years of the 1930s depression and the beginning of World War II.

The sphere of Bick's activities extended well beyond the boundaries of the gardens - many extant plantings around Brisbane are attributable to his participation if not direction. He supervised the establishment of the Sherwood Arboretum, an initiative funded by the Brisbane City Council and was on the executive committee responsible for the planting of Anzac Memorial Avenue between Petrie and Redcliffe. He also supervised mass plantings of Hoop Pines and Silky Oaks at Mt Crosby. Towards the end of his curatorship he engaged in three significant projects - the raising of plants for the new University grounds at St Lucia, the creation of gardens in front of the new Women's Hospital at Bowen Hills and the supply of plants for gardens flanking the approaches to Story Bridge at Kangaroo Point.

Bick was particularly interested in indigenous plants, promoting them as more suitable for school Arbor Day plantings than the exotics previously preferred. He made frequent trips to southern capitals and one to New Zealand thereby establishing close exchange relationships. He was a regular delegate to the meetings which came to be known as the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science conferences, hosting delegates on tours of the gardens when Brisbane was the conference venue. He acted as judge in the Railway Department's annual station gardens competition. To his botanical interests he added a zoological one, frequently providing lengthy studies of interesting animals in his regular gardens reports.

The role of the gardens as a place for public enjoyment remained a high priority under Bick. From 1917 to 1925 - the year of the hand-over to the Brisbane City Council - community use of the place took various forms. For 'strollers' or 'striders' a novel addition by 1918 was a new path built atop the recently completed river wall⁷⁷. Although evenings at the gardens had been reduced earlier, visitors could enter every night between December 1917 and March 1918 when a charitable amusement area called 'Allies City' occupied the former Queens Park⁷⁸. Refer to Figure 5G.12a

When the war ended the gardens were open in summer on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights and thousands of people gathered around the band stand for regular Sunday

73. Ann Rpts 1907-8, QPP 1908, Vol 3, p. 125; 1910-11, QPP 1911-12, Vol 2, p. 905.

74. Ann Rpt 1912-13, QPP 1913, Vol 2, p. 522.

75. Queensland Blue Book 1905, 1906; Ann Rpt 1906-7, QPP 1907, Vol 2, p. 757.

76. Queensland Blue Book 1911; Ann Rpt 1910-11, QPP 1911-12, Vol 2, p. 906.

77. Ann Rpts 1917-18 & 1918-19, QPP 1919-20, Vol 2, pp. 1038, 1173.

78. *Ibid*, pp. 1038-9; Brisbane Courier, 14 December 1917, p. 2; 17 December 1917, p. 3.

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afternoon and evening concerts. In the 1920s the gardens were open every night during Exhibition Week for the benefit of visitors to Brisbane. Each Easter, band contests were held in the grounds, attracting large audiences.

Weekday crowds of city workers and shoppers were augmented by scores of Technical College and High School students who frequented the Kiosk, played on the lawns and, inevitably, left litter, sorely trying the patience of Bick and his staff. Sports grounds were prepared on the Domain after the dredging was finished and University clubs and the teams of various government departments used them daily for cricket, women's hockey and tennis. Football matches were held there on Saturdays until a 'disorderly scene' resulted in them being banned. Charity functions were also held there and children still enjoyed the playground.

By October 1925 the old Metropolitan Baths on the waterfront near Edward Street were gone - to the relief, no doubt, of the Council which years before had sought their removal on the grounds of health and convenience⁷⁹. The zoo was a special attraction for both children and adults who came to see both native animals like wallabies, emus, cassowaries and scrub turkeys as well as imports like monkeys, baboons and raccoons.. Refer to Figure 5G.12b

The most significant construction works of the period 1917-25 centred on the river front, for obvious reasons. Dredging was finished by mid 1917 and work was begun on a new retaining wall. By March 1918 a continuous wall extended 4,100' from Edward Street to the naval parade grounds at the William Street end of the Domain. Bick was then able to grade the steep banks evenly down to the wall. Soil removed in this process was carted via a tramway to fill the former cricket ground in Queens Park⁸⁰. A new road was formed at the top of the bank and the path already mentioned was made on top of the retaining wall. The slopes were grassed and a line of palms was planted from the Domain ferry to the baths site at Edward Street⁸¹. A flight of stone steps was set into the bank during 1918-19⁸² and two additional flights were built during 1923-4⁸³. The first, the one closest to Gardens Point, was built using stone from the old Government House Lodge (demolished when the University occupied the site). For the other two, stone from the old Geological Survey Building was used.

The period 1917 to 1925 had its fair share of climatic problems. The second half of 1919 was exceedingly dry, following the pattern of the previous few years. The bunyas along the river bank suffered and one specimen died. Severe water restrictions imposed in December exacerbated the problem⁸⁴. In the last half of 1923, for example, the palm collection suffered so much that months later Bick reported that many specimens still showed '*signs of the ordeal passed through*'⁸⁵. A severe storm in October 1920 caused considerable damage - uprooting four trees, tearing large branches off the old jacaranda near the bush house entrance and injuring a *Ficus nitida* and a Kauri pine in the centre of the gardens⁸⁶. On 6 October 1925 another severe thunderstorm, with almost cyclonic winds broke off a bunya a few feet from the ground, wrenched the top off a Kauri pine and blew down bamboos and large bunya branches⁸⁷.

79. October 1925 Report - Box 25, BCC Art Gallery & Museum; letter 12105, Town Clerk to Under Secretary of Agriculture, 1 September 1916, AGS/N71, QSA.

80. Ann Rpt 1917-18, QPP 1919-20, Vol 2, p. 1038.

81. Ann Rpt 1919-20, QPP 1920, Vol 2, p. 88.

82. Ann Rpt 1918-19, QPP 1919-20, Vol 2, p. 1173.

83. Ann Rpt 1923-4, QPP 1925, Vol 2, p. 382.

84. Ann Rpt 1919-20, QPP 1920, Vol 2, p. 88.

85. Ann Rpt 1923-4, QPP 1925, Vol 2, p. 381.

86. Ann Rpt 1920-1, QPP 1921, Vol 1, p. 1138.

87. September Report, 16 October 1925, Box 25, BCC Art Gallery & Museum.

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Despite these set-backs, significant new plantings occurred, the most notable being work done on the former cricket ground. New beds were formed, a circle of Royal Palms planted and a number of *Erythrina* sp. planted along the Alice Street side⁸⁸. A separate Bougainvillea collection was started in 1923-4 with a bed of twenty varieties received from Rockhampton, Honolulu and Florida⁸⁹.

Experimentation, distribution and exchange continued as important functions of the gardens. From 1919 to 1922 Bick tested a variety of grasses in an experimental plot. Some of these were distributed, including kikuyu and elephant grass⁹⁰. During 1922-3 a Florida nurseryman, Mr Reasoner, visited the gardens, thus beginning a long exchange relationship which, amongst other benefits, quickened Bick's interest in avocado cultivation. Bick also distributed Paraguayan Tea, reporting in 1924 that a previous distribution had involved a case of mistaken identity⁹¹. Besides these special projects, Bick routinely arranged for the distribution of plants to various institutions including state schools, churches, cemeteries, local authorities, progress associations, hospitals and local producers' groups⁹².

In the light of these activities, Bick's intense disapproval of the handing over of the gardens to the Greater Brisbane Council in 1925 is understandable. In his final report to the Agriculture Department, he included lengthy comment on the issue, accusing Parliament of not considering the matter carefully, describing the decision as '*parochial*', reiterating the need for a **state** institution, warning of a reduction in the international status of the gardens and quoting at length an 1892 comment by the Director of the Kew gardens opposing a similar hand-over in South Africa⁹³.

Despite Bick's fears for the status of the gardens, experimental, distribution and exchange activity did not cease after the hand-over to the council and the gardens still maintained communications in the international botanical world. Between 1925 and 1940 exchange programs with institutions as widely dispersed as Kew, India, Japan, Fiji, New Zealand, Italy and Singapore continued.

Notable interest was shown in the gardens with two visits by a palm specialist in 1931 and 1934. Captain Johnstone, a British botanist conducting a world survey of palms, met with Bick in the gardens several times in January 1931, identified several specimens and agreed to help enlarge the collection⁹⁴. He returned towards the end of 1934, making a careful survey of the collection and taking photographs. Shortly afterwards he sent numerous packets of palm seeds from Java - most of them new to the gardens⁹⁵. Refer to Figure 5G.13

The gardens also retained its role as a site for testing, propagating and distributing plants. In 1927, at the request of the Institute of Tropical Diseases in Townsville, Bick trialed *Hydnocarpus Wightiana*, the source of a cure for leprosy, with a view to establishing the species in Southern Queensland⁹⁶. The National Institute of Agricultural Botany in Cambridge, England sent specimens of *Digitaria exilis* (Atcha) and *Sesamum indicum* (Sesame) for trials at the Botanic Gardens in 1929⁹⁷. In the same year Bick tested salt water grasses on tidal flats at Luggage Point⁹⁸. In August 1933 the glass houses at the

88. Ann Rpt 1919-20, QPP 1920, Vol 2, p. 88.

89. Ann Rpt 1923-4, QPP 1925, Vol 2, p. 382-3.

90. Ann Rpts 1919-20 to 1921-2.

91. Ann Rpt 1923-4, QPP 1925, Vol 2, p. 382.

92. *Ibid*, p. 381.

93. Ann Rpt 1924-5, QPP 1925, Vol 2, p. 527.

94. January Report, 5 February 1931.

95. April Report, 7 May 1935.

96. March Report, 9 April 1927.

97. March Report, 5 April 1929.

98. June Report, 6 July 1929.

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gardens were being used to raise tea plants for the Agriculture Department⁹⁹. The Botanic Gardens area was the site for an unusual, non-botanical experiment during 1928-9. Inigo Jones, a renowned local scientist and weather forecaster, was given permission to undertake deep earth temperature experiments there and a 30' shaft was sunk with pipes set at various depths. Bick took weekly readings and conveyed the data to Jones¹⁰⁰.

One significant change that did occur in the distribution program during the period concerned Arbor Day trees for schools. In 1931 the state government discontinued its subsidy for tree planting at schools¹⁰¹. Henceforth the number of trees distributed to schools rarely exceeded two hundred - a far cry from the thousands which had been sent annually since the 1890s.

The years between 1925 and 1940 saw even greater daily use of the gardens, an increase in the number and size of regular community events and the provision of further amenities. Commercial classes were transferred from the old Normal School to the Technical College in the first half of 1926 thus introducing several hundred more students to the number already using the gardens daily¹⁰². Children were especially catered for by the conversion of the large fountain into a wading pool in August 1927 - an innovation very popular with the crowds of youngsters who splashed and paddled there in the warmer months¹⁰³. More serious gatherings could be seen on Anzac Day when scores of people packed the area around the Band Stand to listen to the solemn speeches of politicians and join in the singing of hymns¹⁰⁴. Each year the space available was proved increasingly inadequate with record numbers attending the 1930 ceremony¹⁰⁵ - probably the last to be held in the gardens, as the long-awaited Anzac Square was completed later that year. Other events attracted huge crowds, like the regattas held in the late 1930s to raise funds for the Ambulance Brigade. Many thousands of people crowded the river bank near the Edward Street entrance to watch the procession of decorated boats and all the other attractions of a Henley-inspired aquatic carnival¹⁰⁶. Such huge numbers were bound to have some impact on this sensitive area and Bick voiced a preference for the Domain as a more appropriate venue.

Providing for the enjoyment, health and comfort of all these visitors was just part of Bick's job. The period 1925-40 saw a number of amenity improvement projects. By the beginning of 1928 the old smelly earth closet system was a thing of the past with the completion of sewerage connections¹⁰⁷. Further convenience to visitors was provided in 1930 with the installation of new style 'bubble' fountains, a hygienic alternative to the old large drinking fountain which was turned off to await conversion¹⁰⁸ - a project evidently never carried out.

Ensuring the orderly conduct and the safety of visitors entailed a fair share of headaches. Bick's concern over Sunday night 'rowdiness' led to a raid by plain clothes police in January 1926 when six youths were arrested on charges including 'obscene language'¹⁰⁹. Police presence in the gardens dates back to Hill's time, but this incident was unprecedented. Another matter that caused Bick some concern was safety - an issue uppermost in his mind whenever the bunya cones ripened. In 1933, a good year for

99. August Report, 6 September 1933.

100. October Report, 6 November 1928; November Report, 3 December 1928; March Report, 5 April 1929.

101. April Report, 6 May 1931.

102. July Report, 2 August 1926.

103. August Report, 6 September 1927; December Report, 2 January 1928.

104. April Report, 3 May 1928; *Brisbane Courier*, 25 April 1928, p. 11.

105. April Report, 7 May 1930.

106. *Courier Mail*, 12 March 1938, p. 6; 14 March, p. 8.

107. December Report, 2 January 1928.

108. May Report, 7 June 1930.

109. January Report, 31 January 1926.

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bunyas, he noted with some relief that there had been no accidents caused by the falling of cones weighing up to 10 pounds¹¹⁰. Other falling objects were not so easy to predict. On 13 July 1937 a miscalculation in blasting at the Kangaroo Point Quarry sent rocks showering into the gardens. The largest, weighing 21 pounds, 'careered along for 90 feet' before coming to rest. Fortunately no-one was injured¹¹¹.

The zoo remained one of the most significant visitor attractions, its numbers and its accommodation on the increase throughout the period 1925 to 1940. Donations from Queenslanders and exchange programs with Australian and overseas zoos, in particular with Taronga in Sydney, the Sourabaya Zoo in Java and the Rotterdam Zoo in the Netherlands, kept the zoo stocked with both native and exotic animals. Visitors flocked to see animals as fascinating as flamingoes, deer, antelope and rabbits, not to mention the two Galapagos tortoises which arrived in 1939¹¹². A pygmy marmoset provided an interesting addition to the monkey collection which had always attracted a large audience¹¹³. Other novelties were a fish collection in 31 aquaria donated in 1934¹¹⁴ and a rare Kea received from New Zealand in 1937¹¹⁵. Some of the animals were acquired through the operation of quarantine regulations which prohibited the unlicensed export of native animals and import of zoo stock. Animals seized by the Customs Department were sent to the gardens which from 1927 were registered as a zoo for quarantine purposes¹¹⁶. In addition to the captive animals, there were those which had been released into the gardens or, having escaped from custody, were allowed to remain at large. In January 1927, finches seized by Customs were liberated in the BG - some of them proceeding to make their homes there, like the doves released by a member of parliament previously. In his report for July 1928 Bick mentions two porcupines which had escaped and were loose in the gardens. Koalas donated to the gardens also ranged at will amongst the eucalypts along the riverbank and near the Kiosk¹¹⁷.

Construction activity between 1925 and 1940 was moderate. A few additional buildings were erected including a new office for the Curator to fit his altered status as a Council employee¹¹⁸. When the Metropolitan Baths were moved in 1925 a new section of the river wall was built to fill the gap previously occupied by the baths. Subsequently the adjacent river bank was laid out in new beds and a 10' wide flight of stone steps was installed¹¹⁹.

The staffing cuts that occurred in the 1890s depression were repeated in the 'Great Depression' of the 1930s. In 1931, the gardens' staff was reduced by six¹²⁰, but once again 'relief' labour was used to carry out various maintenance works and improvements. So important were the 'relief' men during the period that Bick was to claim in 1938 that it would have been impossible to properly carry out the work of the gardens without them¹²¹. In October 1931 the 'island pond' (probably Fern Island) was overhauled and spaces made for additional tree ferns¹²². Through 1932 new animal cages were built in a new position¹²³, an extensive re-labelling program was undertaken¹²⁴ and the two miles of paths in the gardens were overhauled¹²⁵. Over the next two years several projects were

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- 110. February Report, 7 March 1933.
 - 111. July Report, 7 August 1937.
 - 112. See various reports 1925 to 1940; February Report, 7 March 1939.
 - 113. August Report, 6 September 1927.
 - 114. September Report, 8 October 1934.
 - 115. April Report, 4 May 1937.
 - 116. March Report, 9 April 1927.
 - 117. Reports for December 1926, November 1927, July 1928, September & December 1930, Box 25, BCC Art Gallery & Museum.
 - 118. April Report, 3 May 1926.
 - 119. April Report, 3 May 1926; July Report, 2 August 1926.
 - 120. July Report, 6 August 1931.
 - 121. December Report, 1 January 1938.
 - 122. October Report, 6 November 1931.
 - 123. April Report, 7 May 1932.
 - 124. June Report, 5 July 1932.
 - 125. July Report, 6 August; September Report, 6 October 1932.

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carried out. MacMahon's old coral fountain (in line with the Albert Street entrance) which had been filled in and covered with creepers over 20 years previously, was uncovered and the area around it enclosed for waterfowl¹²⁶. A yard was built near the children's playground to house deer¹²⁷. Repeated trouble with the underground electrical cables, particularly in wet weather, demanded attention and by November 1934, about 1000' had been replaced¹²⁸. This was not to end the matter however. Many sections still needed to be relaid and throughout the period overhead wires were a commonplace in the gardens.

Bick focussed considerable attention on the Albert Street entrance section during this period. In July 1933 the roadway in front of the toilets was being raised¹²⁹. This was followed in 1934 with the renewal of the water mains¹³⁰. In 1935-6 the nearby lagoon was completely re-modelled partly with funding provided by a City Beautification Loan. Two jets were installed on either side of the central island, providing a fountain effect as well as aerating the water¹³¹. A new fence was built around the lagoon and some of the animals were moved to the yard in the Domain¹³².

Projects carried out between 1937 and 1940 included further improvements in the Albert Street section, extensive work on the electrical system and some building repairs. The zoo was indirectly responsible for the presence of the two Japanese lanterns once such a notable feature of the gardens. In 1937 Bick sent a pair of emus and a wedge-tailed eagle to a Japanese zoo, receiving in return the two lanterns in October¹³³. They were installed near the lily pond where a Japanese oak and a weeping willow provided an appropriate setting¹³⁴.

Amidst his 'ancillary' responsibilities Bick devoted most of his attention to the plant collections. The years 1925 to 1930 saw some innovations. In December 1925 Bick established a large collection of crotons in a bed near the George Street gate to add appropriate decoration to what he described as '*the principal entrance to the Gardens*'¹³⁵. Over the following years, crotons became a characteristic feature of the gardens. One of the most significant initiatives of the period was the beginning of a rhododendron collection - a project which did not often yield success in Queensland. Bick started with about 30 plants in October 1929¹³⁶.

But it was tropical plants, especially Queensland natives, that held pride of place with Bick and throughout the 1930s he expanded the collections of acalyphas, crotons, palms, ferns and orchids, obtaining specimens of both indigenous and exotic species from sources in Queensland and overseas. Other plants were not neglected, amongst them non-tropical plants, old favourites and a few oddities. In late winter the azalea bed below the Band Stand was a '*blaze of bloom*'¹³⁷, and of course there were successive waves of flowering annuals throughout the year.

There were the usual losses and set-backs during the 1930s too. On 20 December 1934 a violent thunderstorm struck, blowing down an Indian fig near the cockatoo aviary and a *Harpephyllum caffrum* near the river bank. The top of a very large weeping fig near the Albert Street entrance was blown out and huge branches fell into Alice Street. The river

126. April Report, 6 May; August Report, 6 September 1933.

127. June Report, 6 July 1933.

128. October Report, 6 November 1934.

129. July Report, 7 August 1933.

130. February Report, 7 March 1934.

131. May Report, 9 June; July Report, 6 August 1936; *Telegraph*, 17 July 1936.

132. September Report, 7 October; November Report, 7 December 1936.

133. October Report, 5 November 1937.

134. November Report, 9 December 1937.

135. December Report, 11 January 1938.

136. October Report, 6 November 1929.

137. See for example August Report, 5 September 1930.

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road was also strewn with bunya and other branches¹³⁸. A severe hailstorm in the following October also caused considerable damage, destroying soft-wooded plants and badly injuring the long-suffering jacaranda near the entrance to the bushhouse¹³⁹. During 1936-7 Bick removed trees and other plants and carried out a fair amount of pruning. In May 1936 dwarf bamboos between the river road and the new glasshouse were removed and some cutting back and pruning was done elsewhere¹⁴⁰. Early in the following year Bick had some old trees removed and young ones planted, some as replacements and others new to the gardens¹⁴¹. Some months later an old English oak near the new glasshouse, pronounced dead, was removed. Bick judged it to be one of the oldest trees in the gardens¹⁴².

Bick retired in 1940 but he was not replaced for a number of years, probably because of wartime disruptions.

1940-1956 : WWII & J R Bailey's Curatorship

In March 1940 the administration of the gardens and other parks was handed over to the council's Works Department. At about the same time, demonstration air raid shelters were planned for the gardens and other open spaces as part of a city-wide civil defence program¹⁴³. By July 1941 these were in place¹⁴⁴. Preparations were also made for a complete overhaul of the gardens. However, new work was drastically curtailed from the beginning of 1942 when the war in the Pacific brought increased disruption to Queensland, and until the end of the war maintenance work only was carried out.

The gardens were closed every evening until the end of 1943 when visiting US Forces provided a huge Christmas tree with hundreds of coloured lights and a mass choir conducted carol singing to an estimated audience of 15,000 people. Other carol-nights followed¹⁴⁵. The role of the gardens as a major venue for community celebrations had been restored. At Easter 1944 crowds of people gathered at the gardens for a special sunrise service to stand before a 20' cross and listen to the music provided by choirs and bands¹⁴⁶.

There was also additional pressure on the Domain during the war. The Royal Australian Navy (RAN) occupied a large area towards Gardens Point, erecting dozens of buildings there. This was an emergency wartime extension of a process of 'alienation' begun much earlier. After Federation, part of the Domain near William Street was allocated as a Naval Brigade Drill ground and around 1910 a further piece of land was used for a Morgue building.

The gardens were filled with crowds of emotional people again when the war ended. On 17 August 1945 huge numbers assembled there, as they did in many other parts of the city, to celebrate the end of a particularly tense period in Queensland's history. Refer to *Figure 5G.14*. In the following year, crowds thronged the gardens again for Victory Day celebrations. In the morning of 10 June 1946, after watching a street parade, people gathered in the gardens for '*alfresco victory revels*' and returned in the evening for further revelry and to watch an RAN fireworks display on the river¹⁴⁷.

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138. December Report, 9 January 1935.
 139. October Report, 5 November 1936.
 140. May Report, 9 June 1936.
 141. March Report, 12 April 1937.
 142. May Report, 5 June 1937.
 143. Brisbane City Council (hereafter BCC) Ann Rpt 1939-40, p. 14.
 144. BCC Ann Rpt 1940-1, p. 20.
 145. BCC Ann Rpt 1943-4, p. 12.
 146. *Ibid.*
 147. BCC Ann Rpt 1945-6, p. 13.

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Some things began to return to normal, others would never be the same again. In 1946 an air raid shelter in the gardens was demolished, but at least one of these wartime structures is still in the gardens today. In 1946 the RAN vacated the Domain¹⁴⁸, but full use of this area was not to be restored to the gardens' administration. The military had barely left the buildings when they were quickly occupied by the Technical College. What was supposed to be a temporary arrangement in fact dragged on for many years and it was not until the 1980s that some Domain land was restored to the Council's control.

In one significant respect there was a return to postwar normality, namely the appointment of a Curator. In October 1946 John Rare Bailey, son of a previous curator John Frederick Bailey, assumed responsibility for the gardens. He was to remain until his untimely death in 1956 cut short his administration of the gardens. The Bailey period saw some innovative practices at the gardens. For the first time chemical sprays were used extensively against both weeds and plant diseases¹⁴⁹. Bailey also began an ambitious re-labelling program, dividing the gardens into 27 administrative sections to facilitate this work¹⁵⁰. He also prepared a catalogue which was printed in May 1951 and compiled a graph showing the flowering periods of about 170 species which he thought would be useful in planning street and park plantings¹⁵¹. Other public duties fell to his lot. He was responsible for the provision of decorations for various events and venues including day-to-day beautification of the City Hall offices and council libraries. Floats in the annual Australia Day and Labor Day processions were decorated with products of the gardens. Foliage displays were also provided for the RNA show, the Chelsea Flower Show and for all Lord Mayoral receptions. Decorations were also organised for one-off events like the Coronation Ball in 1953, Tennis Championships at the Milton courts, the Royal Visit in 1954 and the openings of the Eagle Farm Pumping Station and the Tennyson Power Station during 1954-5.

Like Bick, Bailey was fond of Australian native plants and introduced collections of them into various areas of the gardens. He also vastly expanded the succulent collection begun by Bick. However he did not seem to have the same touch with animals, finding the zoo areas rather unsightly and in fact early plans were made to shift the animals to a new site¹⁵². Quite a few deaths were reported during the period¹⁵³. External conditions made Bailey's task more difficult; there was a severe drought during 1951-2 and a number of storms and cyclones occurred during his time. Probably the most troublesome problem was the complete ban on sprinklers which meant that staff were greatly occupied in hand watering. Bailey also complained several times about a shortage of properly trained staff - a problem exacerbated by higher wages being offered elsewhere and by a troubled period in council finances during 1952-3¹⁵⁴.

Public use of the gardens was still enormous, particularly on weekends and large audiences gathered for the regular Sunday afternoon band concerts. Frequent performances were also given by the Queensland Symphony Orchestra which attracted even greater crowds. A temporary orchestral shell was put up for each Queensland Symphony Orchestra (QSO) concert until a permanent structure was provided in June 1953¹⁵⁵. The gardens were open for concerts every evening during the royal visit in 1954¹⁵⁶. There were other less formal events too, like the Carols by Candlelight evenings

148. History of Domain Occupation from G. 39572/61 - manuscript in BCC Parks Department File - D0096 (3) held in Landscape Section; BCC Ann Rpt 1945-6, p. 19.

149. See for example BCC Ann Rpts 1948-9, p. 26; 1950-1, p. 26.

150. BCC Ann Rpt, p. 28.

151. BCC Ann Rpt 1950-1, p. 26.

152. BCC Ann Rpt 1946-7, p. 41.

153. See for example BCC Ann Rpts 1949-50, p. 28; 1951-2, p. 42.

154. BCC Annual Reports 1950-1, p. 26; 1951-2, p. 42; 1952-3, p. 11.

155. BCC Ann Rpt 1952-3, p. 13.

156. BCC Ann Rpt 1953-4, p. 39.

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held every Christmas or the Scottish festival held each New Years Day. In 1949 a most extraordinary display drew people by the thousands. In late winter that year a number of circus animals were held in the gardens under quarantine. Both adults and children flocked to the gardens to catch a glimpse of elephants, orangutans, gibbons, a wild cat, a honey bear and a panther. Unfortunately, disease killed three of the animals, including one of the elephants and their bodies were sent to the Museum which for decades had been the last resting place for many gardens' zoo animals¹⁵⁷.

Bailey oversaw several construction projects. During 1949-50 he had the lagoon in the animal enclosure cleaned out and concrete slabs laid as foundations for the lake. In the following financial year a large area near the Edward Street entrance was resumed for a bus turntable. This was finished and a new fence erected by July 1951¹⁵⁸. In the same year work began on the orchestral shell which was opened in a public ceremony on 14 June 1953¹⁵⁹. This was a significant addition to the gardens, a modernist-styled building which anchored the focus of community entertainment in this area of the gardens for about thirty years. The period 1954-5 saw the novel introduction of a building into the central area of the gardens near the area formerly occupied by Fern Island which had been demolished some time previously¹⁶⁰.

Significant planting projects included the extension of the succulent and Australian native collections. During 1951-2 Bailey set about building up the cacti and succulent collection which by 1955-6 numbered 400 species. These were housed in a rockery outside the large bush-house, the more tender specimens under a glassed skillion-roofed structure¹⁶¹. Like Bick before him Bailey continued to receive crotons from northern BGs, and during 1952-3 he spent his holidays in North Queensland, collecting many seeds and sending them back to the gardens¹⁶². A collection of *Callitris spp.* and *Casuarina spp.* was planted at the southern end of the river bank during 1954-5 and in the following year melaleucas were planted as the beginning of a plan to establish Australian natives along the entire length of Bunya Drive¹⁶³.

Routine maintenance saw the removal or thinning of some vegetation and climatic disturbances brought losses and damage. Bailey gave urgent attention to the trees, many of which had been attacked by borers. A great deal of deadwood was removed between 1947 and 1949¹⁶⁴. During 1949-50 some 'unsightly' dead mangroves were removed from the Edward Street ferry end of the river bank and several clumps of bamboo in the animal enclosure were cut out¹⁶⁵. The bamboos in front of the toilets met a similar fate during 1955-6, having long been considered a nuisance as a rat harbour and because their leaves regularly blocked nearby drains¹⁶⁶. Excellent rainfall throughout the late 1940s and into 1950 was arrested in a severe drought in 1951. This along with a very cold winter that year contributed to the death of some of the gardens' trees. One Red Cedar and five palms died and other trees suffered considerably, particularly a Jackfruit tree which almost died. Bailey saved many specimens by sinking pipes beside them, thus allowing water to be directed closer to their roots¹⁶⁷. Cyclones in 1950, 1954 and 1955 and a minor flood in February 1955 also caused damage, although no tree losses were reported¹⁶⁸.

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157. BCC Ann Rpt 1949-50, p. 28.
 158. BCC Ann Rpt 1951-2, p. 42.
 159. BCC Ann Rpt 1952-3, p. 13.
 160. BCC Ann Rpt 1953-4, p. 39.
 161. BCC Ann Rpts 1951-2, p. 42; 1955-6, p. 58.
 162. BCC Ann Rpts 1949-50, p. 42; 1952-3, p. 13.
 163. BCC Ann Rpts 1954-5, p. 14; 1955-6, p. 58.
 164. BCC Ann Rpts 1947-8, p. 42; 1948-9, p. 26.
 165. BCC Ann Rpt 1949-50, p. 28.
 166. BCC Ann Rpt 1955-6, p. 58.
 167. BCC Ann Rpt 1951-2, p. 42.
 168. BCC Ann Rpts 1953-4, p. 37; 1954-5, p. 14.

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However, a gale in February 1956 killed the only specimen of the palm *Beitcha joannis* and damaged many other trees¹⁶⁹.

1956-1985 : Caulfield's Curatorship & Beyond

For several months after Bailey's unexpected death, the Foreman of the BG acted in his place, but on 1 October 1956 Harold William Caulfield became the new Curator. He was to remain in the position until transferred to the Mt Coot-tha BG in April 1980 - a period of 23 years, second only to Hill's lengthy stewardship. Caulfield's curatorship spanned a time of great changes for the gardens. Early in the period the zoo was closed and the BG remodelled. Significant changes were wrought in several areas of the gardens, in particular the section between the Albert Street entrance and the fence opposite Parliament House, the central area, the Bunya Drive and the riverside area adjacent to the propagating yards. The impact of a rapidly expanding QIT was to be felt during the period, particularly through the late 1960s and the 1970s when the pressures of space had the institution casting about for any opportunity to acquire more land. The introduction of high rise buildings on the boundaries of the gardens and the unauthorised but unchecked use of parts of the Domain were notable features of the period. Another significant change affecting the Domain was the construction of the Captain Cook Bridge which, as the terminal section of a busy freeway, introduced considerable traffic noise as well as a visual intrusion into a once quiet area of the gardens. But probably the most significant development of the period was the establishment of a new BG on a more extensive site outside the central city area. Henceforth most research and educational functions were to be transferred to the new gardens.

Other events of a more dramatic nature mark the period. The late 1950s brought drought, then floods and storms followed in the 1960s. Both extremes were experienced in the 1970s with the worst flood for 80 years in 1974 and a severe drought a few years later.

Like his predecessors, Caulfield brought his own particular interests to the gardens but he also continued some established traditions. From his first year he prepared annual seed lists which were distributed to over 100 botanical institutions in Australia and overseas. Another early project was the preparation of a catalogue of established plants which was printed and distributed during 1962-3¹⁷⁰. Contact with the international botanical world was maintained¹⁷¹. As a recipient of a Churchill Fellowship, Caulfield visited BGs in the USA, Britain and Singapore in 1970¹⁷². At a local level, the educational role of the gardens was also maintained. Caulfield paid particular attention to horticultural enquiries from the public and gave frequent talks on radio and television. Plants were supplied to schools and to the University for demonstrations and experiments, and Caulfield instituted guided tours of the gardens for school and horticultural groups. He also gave at least one course of lectures to Parks Department staff¹⁷³.

If some sections of the public were disappointed at the closure of the zoo in 1958, they might have found some consolation in the elaborate rockery and waterfall area that was installed on the site of the former animal enclosure. At least Caulfield reported a three-fold increase in visitor numbers after the new area was finished in December 1959¹⁷⁴. Other parts of the grounds served for community gatherings. The Orchestral Shell area for example was the venue for Naturalisation Ceremonies, ABC Concerts and band

169. BCC Ann Rpt 1955-6, p. 58.

170. BCC Ann Rpt 1962-3, p. 40.

171. See BCC Ann Rpts 1959-60, p. 66; 1960-1, p. 51.

172. BCC Ann Rpt 1970-1, p. 43.

173. BCC Ann Rpt 1962-3, p. 40.

174. BCC Ann Rpt 1959-60, p. 64.

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recitals¹⁷⁵. Towards the end of the 1970s, less restrained audiences occasionally gathered in the area to sing, dance and shout their way through rock concerts. A new annual event was added to the gardens' calendar in 1962 with the inaugural Warana festival¹⁷⁶. Ever increasing numbers of people at these events led to periodic references to the loss of the Domain as a public area. By 1961 the Department of Public Instruction still had not returned the Domain to the Council¹⁷⁷. The loss of such a large and relatively sturdy area was keenly felt in December 1959 when great crowds assembled in the more sensitive gardens area to celebrate a re-enactment of Governor Bowen's arrival one hundred years before. The Lord Mayor rued the damage, remarking bitterly on the non-availability of the Domain for such events¹⁷⁸.

Construction and landscaping works between 1956 and 1970 were numerous. In fact this was the peak period during Caulfield's time; very few projects of this nature were carried out between 1970 and 1980. There are a couple of reasons for this. Firstly this was a time when the parks function of BCC achieved its greatest significance relative to other council functions. On 7 May 1956 control of the city's parks was transferred from the Department of Works to a newly established Parks Department. Secondly, the first manager of this new department was Harry Oakman, a landscape architect and the first one to be employed by any level of government in Queensland. His designs skills ultimately reformed most major parks in Brisbane and the BCBG was among these. His concepts for improving the gardens introduced some modern landscape design theory and forms while respecting much of what already existed. Oakman's plan focused on the former Queen's Park area and is described fully in Section 3B.2

Late in 1958 work began on the redesigned Edward Street entrance section and in May 1959 the huge task of converting the animal yard into a rock and pool garden was started¹⁷⁹. The latter project took several months to complete but by October it was far enough advanced for planting to begin¹⁸⁰. Within a few months, the new formal garden area was laid out. However the Oakman plan for the former Queens Park area was not completed until the 1962-3 financial year with the installation of a new recessed stairway in the main entrance opposite Parliament House. A new water spout was installed in the main lake nearby¹⁸¹.

Oakman resigned in 1963 and through the remainder of the 1960s construction work involved merely routine maintenance on buildings, ongoing attention to water pipes, kerbing and resurfacing of roads and paths and other minor improvements.

During the 1972-3 financial year work began on the new Mt Coot-tha Botanic Gardens (MCBG) and the City BG were henceforth relegated to a position of secondary importance. Understandably there were only a few construction projects at the City BG between 1970 and 1980. In fact the period saw the removal of some buildings. The 60-year old Kiosk had deteriorated so much by 1971 that, despite the pleas of the lessee, the Chief Health Inspector recommended no extension of the lease and by mid 1973 the building had been removed¹⁸². The only significant new building erected was a toilet block built adjacent to the old kiosk site during 1975-6¹⁸³.

175. BCC Ann Rpt 1963-4, p. 41.

176. *Courier Mail*, 29 September 1962, pp. 1,3; 1 October 1962, p. 11.

177. History of Domain Occupation from G. 39572/61 - manuscript in BCC Parks Department File - D0096 (3) held in Landscape Section - this document refers to a letter from Lord Mayor to Minister of Education dated 6 February 1961 which indicates that Department still in occupation of Domain.

178. *Courier Mail*, 14 December 1959.

179. BCC Ann Rpt 1958-9, p. 64.

180. BCC Ann Rpt 1959-60, p. 64.

181. BCC Ann Rpt 1962-3, p. 39.

182. BCC Minutes 1,066/1972-73 - copy in BCC Parks Department file D0096(6) - held in Landscape Section.

183. BCC Ann Rpt 1975-6, p. 25.

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Meantime, construction activity on QIT grounds was in direct contrast to the removals program evident in the gardens. In 1974 a new Conservatorium of Music building was erected on land previously occupied by the Botanical Museum and Herbarium. The event caused considerable controversy with criticism of the intrusive character of the high rise building and some public fears for the future of nearby gardens land. Whilst the land housing the new building had been excised from the gardens before the hand-over to the BCC, public perceptions of its contiguity with the gardens and wide-spread suspicions of a 'whittling away' of gardens land were highlighted by the issue.

Planting activity between 1956 and 1970 followed the same pattern as construction works ie. intense effort over the years from 1956 to 1964, thence less rapid change. When Caulfield assumed the position of Curator in 1956, he inherited responsibility for an area that had been actively planted for over 100 years. There was not much space left in the gardens proper for the planting of large species and the Domain area was still occupied by the Department of Education. But there were some areas that had not been much planted - like the ground between the Curator's residence and the river. Caulfield's predecessor, J R Bailey, had planted some Australian natives there; Caulfield was to vastly expand the collection into a rainforest area. He also had ample scope for new plantings in the rockery/waterfall area that was part of the Oakman redevelopment, along Bunya Drive where J R Bailey had begun an Australian native collection, and along the Alice, George and Edward Street boundaries. Between 1957 and 1965 over 6500 new permanent plantings were established, mostly in the areas mentioned¹⁸⁴. Caulfield adopted innovative practices in what he called the 'Australian border'. It was a 'no dig' garden which was just lightly hoed and mulched with wood shavings¹⁸⁵.

Other planting projects were undertaken between 1956 and 1970. In August 1957 a Hibiscus border was planted with 38 varieties from Ceylon¹⁸⁶. The croton and succulent collections were increased; by the middle of 1960 there were 300 varieties of the former and over 2000 of the latter. A bromeliad collection had also been established and was proving of great interest to visitors. The Formal Garden was a popular innovation, attracting many visitors and providing an appropriate setting for events such as the Garden Party for the Governor, Sir Henry Able Smith, in November 1963¹⁸⁷.

All this planting activity was off-set by losses, damage and removal of vegetation through drought, storms, diseases, pests and human intervention. The two years between July 1956 and June 1958 were so exceedingly dry that Caulfield grassed-over the annual beds. He preferred not to spend too many man hours on hand watering - the only irrigation allowed since a total sprinkler ban had been imposed in the early 1950s¹⁸⁸. Lawn grubs created a nuisance and although the Ichneumon fly appeared to be controlling the problem during 1957-8, DDT spraying was later considered necessary¹⁸⁹. A water shortage problem in the 1950s became a problem of surplus from the mid 1960s. In January and February 1964 intense storms hit the gardens killing several specimen trees, damaging others and scouring shrubberies¹⁹⁰. Caulfield periodically pruned trees and removed vegetation. During 1956-7 he cut down a bunya and a *Ficus macrophylla* which had been attacked by termites and dry rot, removed some palms, pruned other trees and thinned shrubberies¹⁹¹. Several trees which had been damaged by storms were

184. BCC Ann Rpts 1957-8, p. 70; 1958-9, p. 64; 1959-60, p. 64; 1960-1, p. 51; 1961-2, p. 37; 1962-3, p. 39; 1964-5, p. 40.

185. BCC Ann Rpt 1959-60, p. 64.

186. BCC Ann Rpt 1957-8, p. 70.

187. Caulfield, Harold, Botanic Gardens Facts and Figures - requested by the Lord Mayor, Friday, 19.11.1963 - copy of typescript in BCC Parks Department file D0096(8) - held in Landscape Section; BCC Ann Rpt 1963-4, pp. 40-1.

188. BCC Ann Rpts 1956-7, p. 58; 1957-8, p. 70.

189. BCC Ann Rpts 1957-8, p. 70; 1958-9, p. 64.

190. BCC Ann Rpt 1964-5, p. 40.

191. BCC Ann Rpt 1956-7, p. 58.

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removed during 1960-1, including a *Quercus nigra* considered one of the gardens' earliest plantings¹⁹². Some existing gardens were removed, like the flower beds on Kiosk Hill (probably the rose beds mentioned by MacMahon & J R Bailey) which were filled and grassed during 1961-2 and the rose beds near the Edward Street gates, removed before July 1957¹⁹³. Visitors also caused damage either by theft, especially from the new rockery and the rainforest¹⁹⁴ or by entering the beds as they did during crowded community events like Warana¹⁹⁵.

Planting activity had fallen off considerably by the early 1970s, with only 78 new permanent plantings during 1970-1 compared with a peak of 1,586 for the 1959-60 financial year¹⁹⁶. However, gardens staff were busily engaged in propagating and raising plants for the new gardens at Mt Coot-tha¹⁹⁷. A long period of abnormally heavy rains in January 1974 caused major flooding in Brisbane with the highest levels occurring on 28, 29 & 30 of that month. Water in the centre of the gardens stood at five metres. About 10 hectares of the grounds were inundated. This flood was not quite as high as the one in 1893, but its impact on the gardens was severe. Many valuable specimens were lost, especially bromeliads, hibiscus, azaleas, camellias and soft-wooded shrubs. Apparently no trees were killed. When order was restored, donations of replacement plants flowed in from the Bromeliad Society of Queensland, the Adelaide BG, the Royal Sydney BG, the Royal Horticultural Society of Queensland and from many members of the public¹⁹⁸. By July 1975 over 500 new permanent items had been planted¹⁹⁹. Refer to Figure 5G.15

During 1975-6 two new projects were underway, both rockeries - one, a free standing structure to house plants of the Mediterranean region, the other, on the former kiosk site, for dryland species²⁰⁰. By July 1977 both these had been planted out and the gardens also boasted a new palm garden containing 33 different species²⁰¹. Very low rainfall from 1976 to early 1978 caused what Caulfield considered to be the worst drought of the century. But a sprinkler ban was not re-imposed until April 1978 and good rains in the previous month protected new plantings which by July numbered about 370, including herbaceous plants, succulents and palms. A collection of the genus *Cotoneaster* was put into an area previously used to display fibre and succulent plants²⁰².

Early in 1980 the position of Curator at the MCBG became vacant and Caulfield was transferred to fill the vacancy. There would be no appointment to replace him at the city gardens. The scientific function of the gardens officially ceased. Henceforth the gardens were administered by a Superintendent. The first incumbent was Ross W McKinnon who, like Bick and Caulfield before him, was vitally interested in the history of the gardens. His research unearthed many previously obscure but valuable sources and he prepared historical articles and developed interpretive brochures for greater public appreciation of the place. The educational value of the gardens was undiminished and the area was still a major recreational venue. In December 1980 more than 3000 people gathered in the gardens for the first FREEPS concert (Free Entertainment for Everyone in Parks)²⁰³. The FREEPS project was a major recreational initiative of the BCC in the 1980s, attracting thousands of people to Sunday programs in the City Gardens and Albert Park and, from

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192. BCC Ann Rpt 1960-1, p. 51.
 193. BCC Ann Rpts 1961-2, p. 38; 1956-7, p. 58.
 194. BCC Ann Rpt 1906-1, p. 51.
 195. BCC Ann Rpt 1962-3, p. 40.
 196. BCC Ann Rpt 1970-1, p. 43.
 197. BCC Ann Rpt 1971-2, p. 51.
 198. BCC Ann Rpt 1973-4, pp. 26-7.
 199. BCC Ann Rpt 1974-5, p. 37.
 200. BCC Ann Rpt 1975-6, p. 25.
 201. BCC Ann Rpt 1976-7, p. 38.
 202. BCC Ann Rpt 1977-8, p. 37.
 203. BCC Ann Rpt 1980-1, p. 43.

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the mid 1980s, in suburban parks. In the first eighteen months of the project more than 250,000 people attended FREEPS concerts in the City Gardens²⁰⁴.

1985-1994 : Gardens Point Redevelopment & Beyond

In 1983 there were significant moves within BCC and QIT to reassess the use of the Gardens Point area. Each body was driven by its own agenda. For QIT, severe overcrowding of the site was exacerbated by 'uncertain' tenure of 'peripheral' land of which it had defacto use²⁰⁵. For its part the BCC had already launched an inner city development control plan, so it was sensitised to the need for a review of any CBD space. In addition, there was some irritation within BCC over the damaging and unlawful use of the Domain as a QIT carpark and also a desire to 'reclaim' Domain land because of concern over the impact of FREEPS concerts on the gardens proper. The view of the Domain from the South East freeway, a major entry to the city, was exceedingly ugly and Brisbane's hosting of the recent (1982) Commonwealth Games and the forthcoming Expo 1988 provided crucial impetus towards a reassessment of the whole area.

Throughout 1984, staff and students of QIT and BCC representatives co-operated in a broadly based study of the Gardens Point Peninsula (excluding the Parliament House area). Topographical, geological, horticultural, entertainment, public opinion and traffic surveys were carried out and an historical summary was prepared. The outcome of the study was a redesign of the area as a more integrated whole with provision for the diverse needs of the institutions and individuals using it. The redevelopment plan was publicly launched in July 1985 amidst requests for public comment. There was considerable feedback about the plan, including warnings about gradual loss of gardens land, considerable resistance to the introduction of new structures into the grounds, and an extraordinarily common injunction to relocate QIT²⁰⁶. Following a review period it was decided to carry out the redevelopment in two stages. Work on Stage I began in 1987.

A somewhat modified version of the original plan saw the introduction of some new features, alterations to the layout of the gardens and the restoration of some structures. A pavilion incorporating an information area, toilets and office space was built about 100 metres inside the Albert Street entrance (about on the site of MacMahon's coralstone fountain). Other work included: a thorough overhaul of the stone and iron boundary fence from George Street along Alice and into Edward Street; a rearrangement of the pathway system with the major thoroughfares widened and paved; more access ways between QIT and the gardens; a lookout bay in the riverside drive; extensive work on the lighting and plumbing systems; renovation of the formal garden; and installation of numerous interpretive signs and information boards throughout the gardens. Some significant planned demolitions did not occur. For example, the Curator's residence, originally earmarked for removal was instead renovated and converted for use as a cafeteria/kiosk. In addition, the original 1878 band stand remained despite a plan for its demolition. (Apparently its true identity was not suspected at the time - it seems its retention was a fortunate accident.) The redeveloped area was opened by the Lord Mayor, Sallyanne Atkinson, on 19 November 1987.

User access to the gardens, now open 24 hours a day, was further enhanced in the following year with the construction of a bikeway linking a section along Coronation Drive with the riverside walkway around Gardens Point. However this access was somewhat interrupted towards the end of the year when work began on Stage II - a sound shell and

204. BCC Ann Rpt 1981-2, p. 3.

205. Submission from Director of QIT to Buildings & Grounds Committee QIT, dated 21 February 1984 - copy in BCC Recreation & Health Department file 'Redesign of the Botanic Gardens and Neighbouring Areas' - held in Landscape Section.

206. BCC, 'Gardens Point Study', [n.d.] - the report of the Gardens Point Study Committee, pp. 6, 43.

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amphitheatre in the Domain. This new concert area in a sound-buffered section of the domain, was opened in September 1989. It has since been used for major community concerts but it also houses the offices of the Superintendent of Central City Parks, John Daly, and his staff. The area was made more user-friendly in 1991 with the installation of a permanent toilet block.

In 1992 Daly supervised the construction of a lengthy section of mangrove boardwalk at the tip of Gardens Point peninsula. The project occupied the energies of fifteen job-seekers for twelve months and was in fact an extension of a much smaller boardwalk masterminded by Daly in 1985-6. Mangroves had been colonising the area very slowly prior to the 1970s - a process greatly accelerated by the 1974 floods. *Refer to Figure 5G.16* The boardwalk gives visitors access to a habitat which in relatively recent times has been widely recognised as a vital component in marine ecology. Other recent or current projects include the release of frogs into the gardens, additions to the rainforest and palm collections, the removal of the hibiscus collection and the installation of a camellia collection in its place²⁰⁷.

The heritage value of the gardens was officially recognised when in 1988, the Brisbane City Council listed the BCBG as a Heritage Area under its new Town Plan and again in 1990 when the area was included in a list of sites to be protected by new state heritage legislation. Generations of attachment to the gardens, of research into its past and current forms, of concern for its future, were rekindled by this evidence of a new commitment by government to the retention of heritage places. Moves were instituted within BCC to prepare this conservation study of the gardens in November 1993. Additional funding was made available in December that year under the National Estate Grants Program for a separate condition report on the Walter Hill Fountain.



207. Interview with John Daly 30 March 1994.

FIGURES FOR SECTION 5G

Figure 5G:1 - PLAN OF BRISBANE TOWN

[source: BCC PHF D0096-Part 13, EX C.C. Petrie "Tom Petrie's Reminiscences" (1904)]

Figure 5G:2 - SURVEY PLAN, 1855

[source: QSA, Misc. 84]

Figure 5G:3a- PARLIAMENT HOUSE, after 1886

[source: BCC-A708]

Figure 5G.3b - THE LAST COOK'S PINE ON GEORGE ST BOUNDARY, 1959]

[source: BCC-B54/12528]

Figure 5G:4 - SURVEY PLAN OF CITY OF BRISBANE, 1893

[source: QSA Ann. Rpt. Of Public Lands Dept, 1896]

Figure 5G:5a- QUEEN'S PARK LAGOON & RUSTIC FENCE, c. 1880s

[source: JOL 24062]

Figure 5G.5b - QUEEN'S PARK LAGOON, c. 1890s

[source: JOL 100871]

Figure 5G:6a - BOATS AGROUND, 1893

[source: BCC-A285]

Figure 5G.6b - 'PALUMA' AGROUND, 1893

[source: BCC-A326]

Figure 5G:7a- CORAL-STONE FOUNTAIN, FLOWING, c. 1905

[source: JOL 171225

Figure 5G.7b - RUSTIC SHELTER, ST MARY'S CHURCH BEYOND, c. 1905

[source: JOL 168880]

Figure 5G:8 - BRIDGE & FERN ISLAND ROCKWORK

[source: BCC-A415]

Figure 5G:9 - GEORGE STREET ENTRY TO GOVERNMENT HOUSE, 1890

[source: JOL 151006]

Figure 5G.10 - ALICE STREET ENTRY NEAR GEORGE STREET CORNER, 1890

[source: JOL 101313]

Figure 5G:11- PART PLAN OF GOVERNMENT DOMAIN, 1924

[source: QSA, PD.89.6]

Figure 5G:12a - 'ALLIES CITY' CELEBRATIONS, 1917-1918

[source: JOL 24269]

Figure 5G.12b - MONKEY CAGES, 1928

[source: JOL 105244]

Figure 5G:13 - RAINFOREST AREA DURING BICK'S TIME

[source: BCC-A295]

Figure 5G.14 - RUSTIC SHELTER, ST MARY'S CHURCH BEYOND, c. 1905

[source: JOL 168880]

Figure 5G:14- VICTORY DAY IN THE GARDENS, 1945

[source: JOL 94125]

Figure 5G:15 - EXTENT OF FLOOD COVER OVER GARDENS, 1974

[source: BCC FLOOD CONTOUR MAP (PART), 1975]

Figure 5G:16 - GARDENS PRIOR TO 1987 REDEVELOPMENT

[source: BCC Works, Qld Aerial Survey 526, Run 17, 1972]

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5G - HISTORICAL REVIEW 1

5G.1 INTRODUCTION 2

5G.2 HISTORICAL REVIEW 2

 1828-1855 : *Government Garden* 2

 1855-1881 : *Walter Hill's Curatorship* 3

 1881-1886 : *James Pink* 5

 1886-1889 : *Alexander M. Cowan* 6

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