

# NEWSLETTER

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## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

It's that time of the year again!!  
All members' annual subscription fees are due on July 1<sup>st</sup> every year. Now is the time to pay your membership fee.

Pay at the monthly meeting.

Single: \$15.00  
Family: \$25.00

### **OR by mail.**

Please make cheques payable to Preston Garden Club Inc, P.O. Box 1004, Preston, 3072.

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## CAMELLIA HOUSE

Quite incredible: some of world's rarest camellias discovered in Yorkshire. Shrubs dating from 1792 found during renovation of stately home Wentworth Woodhouse near Rotherham.

Horticultural experts have compared it to finding a wondrous and unknown library of rare first editions, said the head gardener of Wentworth Woodhouse, Scott Jamieson, recalling the discovery of camellias believed to be some of the oldest and rarest in the western world.



The camellia house at Wentworth Woodhouse, where the shrubs were found.

The important shrubs have been identified in a dilapidated glass and brick building on the estate of Wentworth Woodhouse, a spectacular Georgian palace near Rotherham in South Yorkshire, which is the subject of one of the UK's biggest heritage restoration projects.



The huge house and gardens are gradually revealing their secrets, one of the most eye-catching of which has been the discovery of the camellia house.

"It is quite incredible," said Jamieson, who has been at Wentworth Woodhouse for 17 years. "There are very few camellia houses left anywhere, certainly not one with a great collection of historic camellias."

For many years the building, with jagged glass likely to fall at any point, was too dangerous to go into. That glass roof has been removed, allowing access to the 200-year-old camellias.



The shrubs were imported for wealthy families in the 18th century on merchant ships belonging to the East India Company. The camellias were, wrongly, judged so precious and fragile that they needed to be pampered in a building with lots of light and a stove to heat the brick walls.



There are 19 camellia shrubs in total, with the oldest believed to have arrived in 1792. That makes it older than any in the nationally important camellia collection at

Chiswick House in London and a contender to be the oldest anywhere in the west.



With the help of Chiswick House and others, three varieties have been identified and the detective work continues to find out more.

It was about two years ago that Jamieson began trying to work out what the building was. He sent a plaintive callout to people who might know and a number of experts came in and were amazed. “They said it was almost like having a library of first editions ... it’s that important in gardening history. So it’s wonderful.”

The survival of the camellia house is all the more remarkable given it spent decades only feet away from an open cast mine, which began operating in the 1940s.

Main House



Camellia House

It was a lunar-like landscape, said Jamieson, who has recently led a project restoring the original pathways to the gardens. “It would have been a strange environment, I imagine, you would have had a hacking cough and stinging eyes with that amount of pollution in the air. And it would have been noisy.”



Two hundred years ago it would have been a very different story, with the ladies gathering in the camellia house to drink tea, gamble and smoke when the men were out hunting.

The plan now is to develop the site into a specialist tea house and a community cafe. It is hoped it will open in 2022.

Wentworth Woodhouse remains one of the nation’s most spectacular stately homes most people have never heard of.

To say that Wentworth Woodhouse is “over the top” is almost an understatement. It is twice as wide as Buckingham Palace, has 124,600 sq ft of living space, three acres of roofs, a room for every day of the year and is often described as Britain’s biggest house.

The entire house would once have screamed opulence and excess, the walls lined with important paintings – notably George Stubbs’s Whistlejacket, now a star of the National Gallery.

The volunteer guide Steve Ash says it hides in plain sight. “It’s lovely when you see young people come, because very often this is the first time they’ve been to a place like this. Then they realise it is on their doorstep. It is absolutely a proper hidden gem.”

The property was in a terrible state when it was bought for £7m in 2016 by the Wentworth Woodhouse Preservation Trust –

established after a campaign by a local business owner, Julie Kenny. It is now the subject of a restoration project that could easily cost more than £250m.

The house was given £4.6m of levelling up money by the chancellor, Rishi Sunak, in his October budget. That money will enable work to begin this year on the house’s vast stable block, a building so grand that some people assume it’s the main house.

### GOLDEN LEAVES.

1,400-Year-Old Ginkgo Tree Sheds a Spectacular Ocean of Golden Leaves.



Ginkgo trees are easily recognized from their leaves, and a 1,400-year-old ginkgo tree in the Zhongnan Mountain region of China offers a spectacular sight in Autumn. When transitioning to the cold season, this tree sheds its leaves, creating a brilliant rug of golden leaves. The tree is located in the yard of the Gu Guanyin Buddhist Temple and attracts a lot of tourists in the Autumn, as all of them want to witness the show. Legend says that the ginkgo tree was planted for Emperor Li Shimin who was the founding father of the Tang Dynasty and is one of the oldest trees in China.



The leaves of the ginkgo tree are also known for their use in various areas, such as food and even medicine, so it is no wonder that these trees are highly respected in Eastern culture. Since they are among the ancient trees in this region, they occupy a special place in the Chinese culture and are protected and cared for with great attention. The monks of this Buddhist Temple can call themselves very lucky to have such a stunning sight in their yard, one that offers a spectacular view every season.



## CONSERVATORY VISIT

On Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> of June a small group of members enjoyed the tropical plant display in the Fitzroy Gardens Conservatory.



With the cold weather this winter the trees in the gardens showed off their autumn colours.



There are 5 changeable displays in the Conservatory. The tropical is the longest running and the only one to be heated. It was very warm inside the building!!

From July 25<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> the Conservatory is closed for the installation of the next display, Cineraria and Cyclamen.

Here is a video link to the tropical display, goes for 8 minutes.

<https://youtu.be/8jkRPzFikhg>

## AUGUST CLUB OUTING

August 16<sup>th</sup> Tuesday 10am, Burnley Gardens Richmond. Guided tour 1-1½hr, cost \$10 per person. Book through Helen Shugg 0420 657 811.

Location: Burnley Campus, 500 Yarra Boulevard, Richmond.

Parking is available on Yarra Boulevard or FR Smith Drive.



The Burnley Gardens in Richmond date back to 1861 when the Horticulture Society of Victoria established experimental gardens. The aim was to introduce new plants to the colonies, and to promote botanical and horticultural science. The gardens were officially opened in 1863 when they were planted out with conifers and other ornamentals. One of the trees planted at that time exists today – an *Agathis robusta* (Queensland Kauri). By the end of 1863, the gardens had more than 1400 varieties of fruit trees. In 1891, the Royal Horticultural School was established – the first school of horticulture in Australia. Today the nine hectare gardens are home to nearly 1000 different species of plants, including some of the oldest trees in Melbourne.

## TRADITIONAL SPONGE CAKE

Difficulty: not too difficult.

Cooking time: less than 60 minutes.

Serves: serves 8.



Ingredients:

Cake.

2 heaped teaspoons plain flour.

½ teaspoon McKenzie's bi-carb soda.

1 teaspoon McKenzie's cream of tartar.

wheat cornflour (see recipe for quantity).

4 eggs, at room temperature.

½ cup caster sugar.

1 teaspoon vanilla essence.

Filling and topping.

300ml thickened cream.

1 tablespoon icing sugar.

½ teaspoon vanilla essence.

strawberry jam.

shaved chocolate to decorate.

fresh strawberries to decorate.

Method:

For the cake: preheat oven to 190°C. Grease and line 2 x 20cm round cake tins.

Put flour, bi-carb and cream of tartar into a 1 cup measuring cup. Fill the remainder of the cup with cornflour.

Beat eggs and sugar on high speed until light and fluffy, approximately 7 minutes. Add the vanilla and beat for a further 30 seconds to combine.

While eggs are beating, sift flour mixture three times.

Turn electric mixer to low speed and gently add flour mixture. Beat for 1 minute until smooth.

Divide mixture between the two greased cake tins. Place in oven and bake for approximately 20-25 minutes or until sponge springs back when touched.

Remove sponge from oven and allow to cool.

For the filling and topping: whip the cream, icing sugar and vanilla essence until smooth and fluffy. Place one sponge cake on a serving platter. Spoon strawberry jam on sponge and top with half the whipped cream. Place the second sponge on top and top with remainder of the cream. Decorate with strawberries and shaved chocolate.

## MEMBERS NEWS



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU

**July:** Angela Darbyshire, Kathy Zanini.

We wish you all a wonderful celebration.

## NEW MEMBER

Welcome a new member who recently joined our club, Carolyn from Strathmore.

## FIND THE WORD

Well, how did you go with finding the word in the last newsletter? The word is –

## **FIGURE**

The word this month has 6 letters. What could it be?

Look at the four pictures for the clue. Answer next newsletter.



## MONTHLY COMPETITION

**July 27th:** A Floral Arrangement Using Flowers and Foliage.

**August 24th:** Three Camellia Blooms, Shown Separately, N.N.D.

## MONTHLY MEETING

**July 27th:** Annual General Meeting. Plus short garden videos.

**August 24th:** Andrew - Wicked Wildlife of Borneo especially exotic plants.