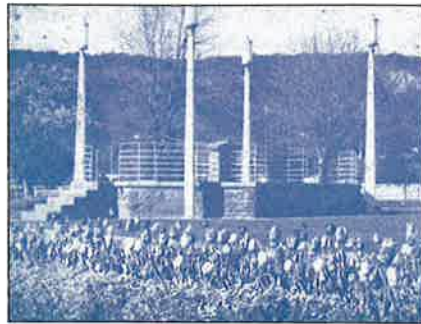


Changing Features in Corbett Gardens



Original Bandstand—opened 1914



Third Rotunda base—1964



First Water Feature—1967



Second Water Feature—1984



2010 - Rotunda, built 1996

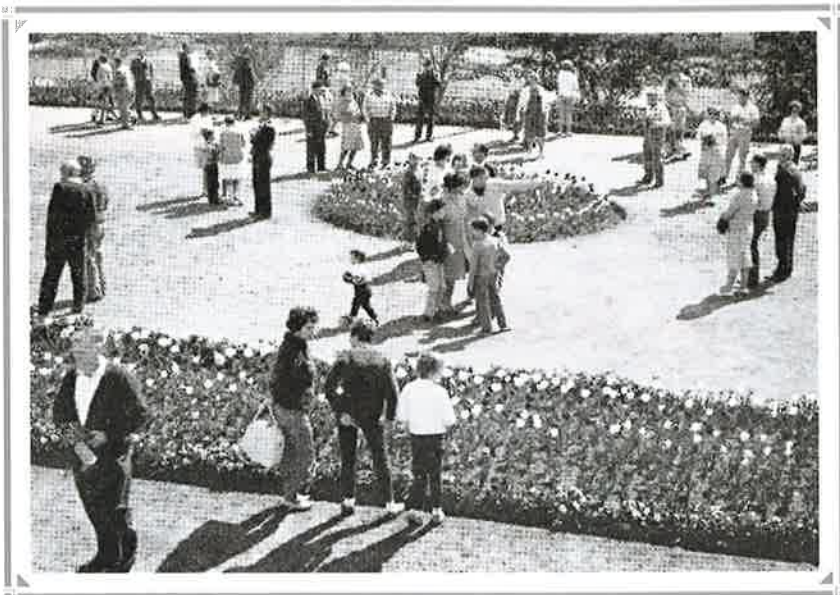
Production of this booklet kindly sponsored by the Springett Family
Printing supported by Hypercett Printing, Mittagong

A brief history



of Bowral's Tulip Time and Corbett Gardens

Compiled by Berrima District Historical & Family History Society Inc
PO Box 131 Mittagong 2575, Tel: (02) 4872 2169
Produced for Tulip Time 2010



1961



1990's

Corbett Gardens Centerpiece of Tulip Time

Corbett Gardens Bowral is the major site for the *Tulip Festival* and we begin this brief history of *Tulip Time* with a history of Corbett Gardens. For many years Ada Corbett worked, cleared and planted trees on the empty corner block near her home in Bowral. She pushed hard for the land, then known as 'Deadmeads or Denmeads Paddock (early history items show the name as either name) Paddock' to be turned into a public park. In October 1910 a letter was sent to the Mayor of Bowral asking for a meeting to discuss the purchasing of the land.

A committee was formed with Ada Corbett as the Honorary Secretary. She proposed that they acquire the ground in order to make it a 'carpet square', a beauty spot and a recreation resort and garden, with a bandstand in the centre.



Bowling Club at Corbett Gardens prior to the Gardens being transformed into a beautiful place for visitors.

Soon two hundred pounds was collected and offers of help came from many quarters, including manual labour and the use of horses and carts. By May 6 1911 a three hundred and fifty pound grant was received from the Department of Lands and soon the clearing of the land began with the removal of fruit trees and other materials.

Shrubs for the new garden were sent by the Botanical Gardens in Sydney and a bandstand was also erected. It wasn't long before the first stage of the garden was completed.

The garden was proclaimed in the Government Gazette of 20 December 1911 and named Corbett Gardens, in honour of the woman who was the prime mover behind the idea.

Ada knew that her little corner of paradise would make a lot of people happy, but she had no idea that it would one day be known around the country and its beauty drawing thousands of visitors every year to Corbett Gardens, Bowral and the district

The gardens were finally opened on December 16 1914 by Mr FA Badgery MLA and the band rotunda was opened by the Mayor of Bowral Municipal Council, Ald. E Boardman.

Bowral Council took over gardens from the Lands Department and this was gazetted on August 5 1920.

In 1922, houses in Merrigang Street were purchased and demolished by Council to expand the garden's grounds.

"Festival of Flowers" begins in 1958

The concept of a festival was taken up by local groups to publicize the town of Bowral. A committee was formed and a week long Floral Festival was staged in October of 1958. A Queen competition and street



Festival of Flowers float 1958

procession added to the festivities. During this time many varieties of flowers and plants were displayed and it was also during this period that local resident Mary

Morgan began to plant tulips in the street beds at her Bowral home. She decided to make a footpath garden and



Mary Morgan's garden—1958



Festival of Flowers float—1959

encourage others to do likewise. Tall yellow tulips were grown in beds with bright red anemones and pink and white Bellis perennis. The tulips thrived and the result was spectacular. Tourists came in large numbers (many had never seen tulips before) and

hundreds of photographs were taken of the rare blooms.

Tulips had been grown successfully in the district some years earlier by Mr. Baumann who supplied them in commercial quantities for the cut flower trade

Unfortunately in 1960 the "Festival of Flowers" lapsed through lack of support and finance.

"Tulip Time" begins in 1961

In 1961 the Rotary Club of Bowral felt that the celebrations should still take place. Keith Barcham, President of the Club, presented Bowral Municipal Council with 500 tulip bulbs, to plant in Corbett Gardens and this was done by the Council gardeners, headed by Mr Alf Stubbs.

They then had to find a name and emblem for the new Festival, preferably a flower. The Tulip was chosen and so the *Tulip Time Festival* was born. It was not long before the Rotary Club realised the potential of the Festival and asked other Service Clubs to form a Tulip Time Committee to promote the 1962 festival. A committee was formed from the following five local service clubs: Rotary, Apex, Lions, Quota and Soroptomists together with members of the public to promote and stage the festival each year. It was made up of ten members from the five clubs and a further ten from the community.

This committee was separate from the Tulip Time Management Committee and funds raised went to local charities.

Little did anyone realise that this festival would grow into such a well known event and eventually become a premier Floral festival in NSW.



“See the Tulips tread the gardens,
Row on row, with heads held high”

As today Tulips are the main theme of the Festival, organizers ensure that many varieties are planted and are of the highest quality.

Contrary to popular belief, tulips were not native to Holland, although, it was there that outrageous prices were paid. The craze known as Tulipomania

peaked in the 1630s however the market collapsed and many fortunes were lost.

Tulips had been introduced to Europe in the 1550s from the Ottoman Empire and became very popular in the Netherlands —the word tulip comes from *tulband*, meaning turban.

As part of *Tulip Time*, the adjacent towns of Moss Vale and Mittagong also have spectacular displays of tulips in *Leighton Gardens* and *Winifred West Park* respectively , adding to the overall picture of Spring beauty in the Highlands.

In 1990, Tulip Time was chosen as New South Wales leading Festival and received an award from Minister, Garry West at a function at the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre. Other nominations included the Festival of Sydney, the Country Music Awards, Tamworth, Hunter Valley Steam Fest at Maitland and Manly Jazz Festival.

The changing face of Corbett Gardens

Corbett Gardens has been maintained firstly by Bowral Municipal Council, then by Wingecarribee Shire Council after amalgamation and their Parks and Gardens staff, who over the years have maintained a very high standard.

This 50th Anniversary year of 2010 sees an increased events program, with many special activities taking place in Bowral. This year’s activities are being coordinated by Southern Highlands Tourism with many special events arranged, including a street parade, a fine food & wine street fair, breakfast in the park, tulips after dark, lantern street parade and open air cinema and fireworks display at Bradman Oval.



Corbett Gardens 1950's

***A blaze of tulips! Cups that brim fire
Top-full with sunshine, or with
molten gold,
That blush with pink, or blaze with
scarlet bold
And spread their wealth for Summer
to admire.***

***And not to hoard these riches,
Bowral sends
This message, “Come in Tulip Time,
and share
With us the treasurers glowing every-
where,
All who love gardens, here will find
their friends”.***

R.G.W. Cornforths

Reproduced from Tulip Time book 1969



Corbett Gardens—1980

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