

Keeping the spirit of Fletcher Jones alive



Pleasant Hill in its prime in the 1970s. Image: Corangamite Regional Library Corporation. Copyright 2004.

It says a lot about the importance of the **Fletcher Jones gardens** to Warrnambool that even though the Raglan Parade factory has fallen silent and into disrepair, the gardens continue to hold on.

“Pleasant Hill” was once a major tourist attraction for the city, with busloads of visitors pulling up to the kerb and pouring out to take photographs, while locals all have their favourite memories of the beautifully landscaped gardens: the fish pond, the stepping stones, the wishing well, the sun-warmed cement turtle, the archways, the mosaic ‘basket’ garden bed, the tall man in the white trousers who advertised Fletcher Jones menswear.

The gardens were established over a period of years after Fletcher Jones first selected the site – a disused quarry – for his factory in 1948. And while they are a shadow of what they were in their prime, when up to eight full-time gardeners were employed, the fact they are maintained at all is quite incredible.



Fletcher Jones gardens volunteers: Lester Campbell (left), Philomena Headen, Don McLean and Lex Caldwell.

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[/dropcap]or this we can thank our **Quiet Heroes** for the week: **Lex Caldwell**, who oversees the gardens in exchange for living in a cottage on site, and a small, rotating team of volunteers who turn up each Tuesday morning to weed, mulch, mow or do whatever else needs to be done.

When we visited, the volunteer crew included **Don McLean**, **Lester Campbell** and **Philomena Headen** who were hard at work

weeding one of the garden beds and picking up bits of broken glass.

Imagine how the place would look without them?

[box]The FJ gardens crew will receive a coffee and cake voucher from [Lozzar's Lounge Cafe, 52a Kepler St Warrnambool](#). Thankyou to owners Loretta and Phil for supporting this week's Quiet Heroes.[/box]



Meet some of our other quiet heroes...

[Tackling a hidden terror: Pat McLaren](#)

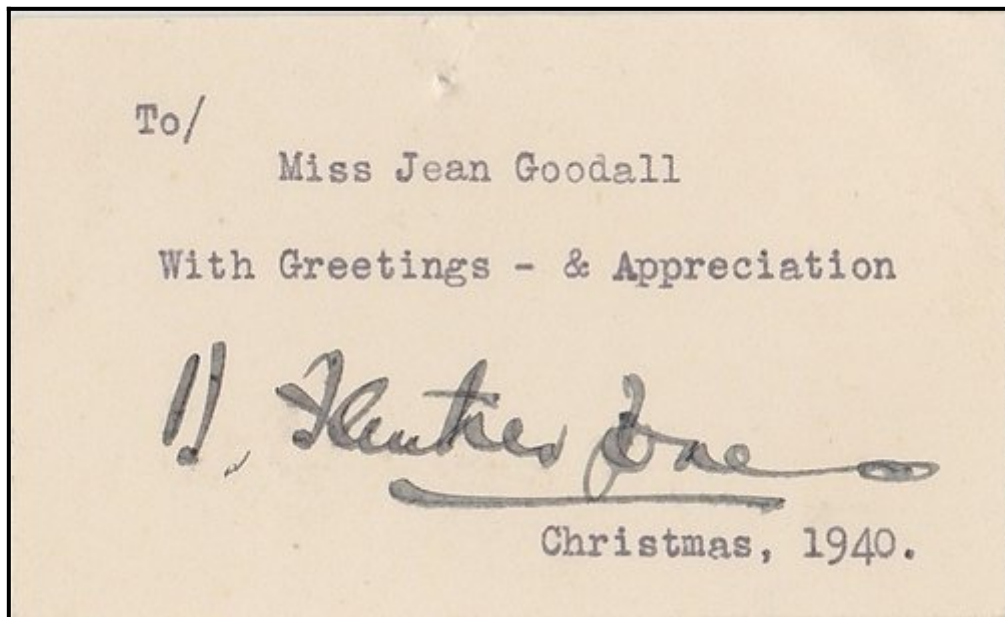
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[A winner for Woodford: Tania Ferris](#)

[United we stand – Wbool Uniting Church](#)

[Kylie Thulborn – pushing boundaries](#)

signed, Fletcher Jones



My mother kept everything...and I mean everything. This used to be a source of great embarrassment, but now I am grateful.

Each week, I will upload something from Mum's drawer – bits and pieces from Warrnambool's past.

This week is a hand-signed Christmas note from the late Sir Fletcher Jones, given during the height of the Second World War.

Despite the rationing and hardships of the time, Sir Fletcher always made sure his staff still received a Christmas gift and a gift card.

This small card epitomises his famous generosity and respectful attitude toward staff who were treated as part of a big family, rather than as mere workers.

Like many of Sir Fletcher's former employees, my Mum has long forgotten the gift, but never the gesture.

