Melbourne
Leader

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From sun, rain and toil, great gardens grow

THE Australian Garden History Society has been working painstakingly to restore the gardens of Bishopscourt, the official residence of Melbourne's Anglican Archbishops since 1853.

Libby Marsden (right), a volunteer with the society, has been helping with the last-minute clean up that will have to be finished before the weekend when the East Melbourne garden opens to the public.

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Picture: ANDREW HENSHAW N15ME722

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Volunteer Libby Marsden tends the gardens. N15ME901

Holy grounds open

By Maria Papasotiriou

NESTLED behind the swish Hilton Hotel and surrounded by bluestone walls, Bishopscourt is one of the oldest properties in East Melbourne.

The heritage-listed property is the last intact inner-city estate within the City of Melbourne and has been the official residence of the Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne since 1853.

But in recent times the focus of Bishopscourt has been its magnificent gardens. The Australian Garden History Society began a project last year to restore the gardens to their former grandeur. Professional gardener Shelly Wood, who has been working with the society on the project, said it had been time consuming because it involved searching historical reference books to find the type of plants that were used in the late 1800s, and looking for suppliers.

This weekend people will have a rare opportunity to take a peek around the gardens of Bishopscourt when it opens to the public as part of the Open Garden Scheme. Bishopscourt, 120 Clarendon St, East Melbourne, is open this Saturday and Sunday, 10am-4pm. Entry fee $6.50, children free.