

Wellingtonia



FRIENDS NEWSLETTER SPRING 2011

President's Report



MEETING TIMES 2011

Meetings are held in the George Longley Building at the rear of the Robert Clark Centre

Committee - 3rd Tuesday each month at 4.00pm

Growing Friends - Tuesday each week 1.00-4.00pm, 2nd Sunday each month 1.00-4.00pm.

Plant Sales at the above times and 9-5.00pm daily from the trolley outside the Robert Clark Conservatory.

Guiding Friends - 4th Tuesday each month 10am .

History Group 1st Tuesday each month 4p

Educating Friends - 1st Tuesday each month, late morning 11.30am, please bring lunch.

Plant Labelling - as required.
Botanical Artists ("BAGS") – Mondays 10.00-4.00pm.
School Terms

Where has this year gone? This will be our last newsletter for the year. I would like to thank our committee and Friends for their enthusiastic support in all our endeavours. It has been a great pleasure and a lot of fun to work with such talented and generous members. Thank you also to the BCC Staff who are always there with a smile to assist when needed. The floral displays and gardens have been spectacular.

Forebears and benefactors who endured and gave so much to our community, have been remembered on George Longley Day with the re dedication of the McDonald Gates; a memorable occasion to mark the Friends contribution to restore this wonderful art deco construction; an iconic component of our beautiful gardens. Afterwards invited guests and friends enjoyed refreshments, entertained by John Garner's jottings of his research into the life of George and Helen Longley, a stoic and dedicated couple, whose legacy we enjoy today.

Congratulations to The Educating Group who have had a great time with the stimulating programme, culminating with the Great Big Play Day, which I know will be a huge success. This and the Gardens in Spring, a "sell out", I am sure will have been wonderful events, although be past when you read this.

The Association of Friends, has a new Admin. officer Ro Noone. This has taken a great load off the committee. Ro will be representing at the BGANZ (Botanical Gardens Australia & New Zealand) conference in Albury. Friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens have sent a paper, thank you Julie Bradby, of our activities to be tabled for us by Peter Marquand. This same publication will be published in Campsis the Association Newsletter.

www.friendsbotanicgardens.org Have a look.

The Bi-annual conference will be held in Port Augusta August 2012, with the theme "Mangroves, Myalls & More". The keynote speaker is Professor Chris Daniels University of SA the title of his talk "Backyards The Most Important Room in the House" an exciting event I highly recommend, and hope a delegation from Ballarat will be able to enjoy.

Watch for the "Friends" new brochure, out soon. We hope this will boost our increasing membership. Enjoy the news of the groups throughout this newsletter.

We are looking forward to seeing as many as possible at the Christmas BBQ.

With my best wishes for the Festive Season and coming year. Enjoy your outdoor spaces.

The Botanical Artists Group (BAGS) continues to enjoy the experience of Botanical Illustration, a most rewarding art form. We were so grateful to have instructor, Jean Dennis conduct a 5 week workshop with 10 students. Jean was a keen student of Botany at school, which ultimately enabled her to develop the skills and discipline required to accurately portray botanical specimens. Jean has exhibited at the Royal Horticultural Society and Royal Botanic Artists Society of London and was presented with a Silver-Gilt Medal over a 13 year period. Jean travelled to remote areas of Australia for months at a time to document, record and paint all known species of the genus *Brachychiton* resulting in 45 exquisite life size watercolour illustrations. It has been an honour for the group to be invited by the History Group to join with Geraldine Roberts to produce some "line" drawings for the new pictorial history of the gardens. Geraldine will be conducting two workshops in the coming year.

Elizabeth Gilfillan

Growing Friends

The Growing Friends have survived the winter months doing maintenance work and now look forward to the wonderful re-generation of Spring through to Summer.

Plant sales have been very good. A new range of plants have been ordered and these should be ready for sale in early November.

Bromeliads are now available for purchase - \$10.

A range of plants will be on sale Sunday 30 October as part of SpringFest.

A warm welcome to our two new members: Beryl Plummer and Sandra Williams.

Pots, pots, pots. We always need your good, clean, empty pots.

Thanks

Carolyn Ptkowski

Guiding Friends

Requests for tours are picking up now that winter is over. We recently met volunteers from the Ballarat Information Centre, took them on a tour and explained our guiding services so that they are in a better position to inform visitors to Ballarat. We are working with Julie Bradby to assist with short tours for primary school children as part of her special day on 26th October.

At our September meeting, Sue Rhook showed us behind the scenes of the Conservatory and explained how it is controlled – it was most interesting ; thank you Sue.

This continues our custom at our monthly meetings of having a segment that adds to our knowledge of the Gardens.

We are always looking for new Guides to join us. We have interesting and informative meetings at 10.00 a.m on the fourth Tuesday of the month at our George Longley Building and would welcome other Friends to join us. You do not need a great knowledge of the Gardens – only an enthusiasm for them. We provide all necessary information to help new guides to conduct tours.

Beth Dixon

Engraving report

Terry & Joy O'Brien recently completed a small number of replacement labels for our gardens. It is good having others who are able to work independently.

We have received another order from the Macedon Ranges Shire for tree labels for the Malmsbury gardens and these will be completed shortly. They have some very old, mature trees in this Botanic Garden and it will enhance the garden experience for the many people who stop off here for a picnic, or a stroll around and look at the improvements that have been made by the shire over the past few years.

I have had contact with a Friend's group on the Gold Coast re possibility of FOBBG providing labels for them ,however after several contacts, and providing them with samples of our work there has been no further contact. This is often the case and sometimes it takes many months before an order is placed, so hopefully something will come from this contact.

Anyone is able to purchase labels ,and if you would like to label special plants in your own garden, please contact us and we will give you a quote. We can engrave any message onto the material, not only plant names.

Adele Thomas

Tenants Group Report

All groups continue to function well.

Planned alterations to the RCHC Meeting room, mentioned in the last Newsletter have now been completed. The concertina doors enabling the main room to be divided into two smaller sound proofed rooms are very effective.

The new ceiling mounted projector makes presentations simpler and safer, eliminating tangles of power cords!

Mike Sorrell

Lake Wendouree and Gardens Advisory Committee (LWAGAC)

Continued monitoring of the quality of water in the lake has given it a clean bill of health. There is an abundance of bird life; swans with cygnets, ducks with large broods of ducklings, crested grebes, musk ducks to name just a few.

The large number of trout (rainbows and browns) liberated over the last 12 months have been growing rapidly. Anglers of all persuasions should have great success over the next few years. At least two trout, each weighing more than 2kg, have been confirmed in the last month. These are more likely to have come into the lake through the draining of the Gong Gong reservoir than from trout recently liberated.

Dredging of the rowing course has not progressed as planned, and the completion date of late September has not been met. A second dredging company has been contracted to start work at the end of the course and work towards the start of the course. Completion of the dredging is now anticipated for end January 2012.

The weed cutting and harvesting has been effective. Some 3000 tonnes of compressed weed has been removed and made available as mulch for public access in council depots. Clear water now exists over the majority of the lake, with the channels off the main reed banks still to be cut and cleared. The re-growth is quite fast (3 feet in 6-9 weeks), and on-going maintenance will be necessary – the aquatic equivalent of our lawn mowing!!!

The Department of Primary Industries has announced the availability of funds to the tune of \$1.125M over 4 years for access and infrastructure for Victorian waters. Ballarat City Council, which has responsibility for three lakes (Burrumbeet, Learmonth and Wendouree), will bid for some of these funds.

Concept plans for a Sports Persons Walk project were tabled. This is proposed for the isthmus near the end of the rowing course in the Olympic precinct.

The IWAGAC has been assisting Council with a review of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens Masterplan and Management Strategy and the Lake Wendouree Landscape Masterplan. Ian Rossiter distributed a report on progress to date. This report identified 10 key issues, each requiring further analysis (Gillies Street interface; POW memorial expansion; Fish Hatchery, Tramways Museum and

POW memorial expansion; Fish Hatchery, Tramways Museum and South Conservatory. Roles of the RCHC, Conservatory, Nursery and Ballarat Horticultural Centre; decisions on plant species and collections; night access and use of the gardens; Use of the North Gardens as passive open space; fernery re-development; role and site of floral clock; appeal to children, youth, elderly and special needs groups).

David Lewis raised the issue of an events calendar to assess, schedule and control all the activities planned around the lake and on the lake.

The IWAGAC endorsed the installation of solar lighting on a trial basis on a section of the Moneghetti Track.

Mike Sorrell

Curators Report

As the current annual display draws to an end we continue to receive many positive comments on how good the gardens have looked over spring. October is a nice time of year with the annuals in flower; the trees coming back into leaf, the days are also longer and warmer.

On the 13th of October we celebrated the completion of conservation and repair works on the McDonald gateways stone column and eight column arbours. Works included the repair of damaged and crumbling mortar and treatment of the timber pergola. The Friends of the Gardens were able to fund these important works. In the next few weeks the steel gates will be removed for repair and repainting.

Over the last few weeks Jude Schahinger has undertaken cleaning and conservation works on the Stoddart, Thompson, bronze collections and cleaning of the Claxton fountain. It is fantastic to know that our statue collection is in such good hands.

Works coming up in the gardens include the application of fertilizer, gypsum and the broad leafing of lawns. Maintenance will be undertaken on all of the gates, timber sign posts, bollards and the rubbish bin screen at the back of the Robert Clark Centre.

The Friends of the gardens have a busy couple of months ahead with the great big gardens play day on the 26th of October, Springfest, Gardens in Spring and continuing research for the book on the gardens. I wonder where the year has gone with plans being made for Christmas already.

Peter Marquand

**SPRING IS
HERE !**



John's Jottings

TWO HEROS

Having acquired the Flight from Pompeii, Ruth, Susannah, Modesty and Naomi with the money of the Thomson Bequest, the trustees used the residual 1,000 pounds to commission Percival Ball, then working in Melbourne, to sculpture the statue of Wallace. Ball used as his model Donald Dinnie.

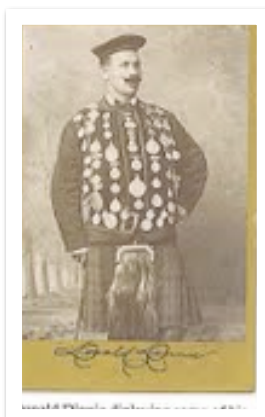
Dinnie was coming to the end of a long and successful athletic career. He was considered the greatest Scottish athlete of the 19th century, possibly of all time, and his activities included both track and field events, tossing the caber, hammer throwing, wrestling and weight lifting. He was immensely strong. By a strange coincidence, aged 60, he was touring New Zealand and Australia on his only visit here, so Ball was able to seize the opportunity to gain his services. He stood 6 ft 1 inch (1.85 metres) and weighed 210 pounds (95 Kilograms) and so was a very suitable model for a statue of Wallace. It was not the only time he acted as a model. He also did so to advertise "Barr's Iron Brew" a soft drink in 1903.

Wallace, too, was reputedly well over 6 feet tall (Blind Harry says 7 feet) and very strong – he would have to be considering the mighty sword that he holds. The supposed original sword is held at the National Wallace Monument near Stirling, "supposed" as doubts have been expressed, in view of the difficulty dating it, and restoration works in the early 16th century. There have been queries as to how it would be used in battle. With its length (5 feet 4 inches or 1.6 metres) and weight, it could have been used as a cudgel, but like many aspects of the Wallace saga, much remains a matter of conjecture. Ball's statue also depicts the baldric, a belt used to support a sword, said to have been worked from the hide of the treasurer of Scotland, Hugh Cressingham who was killed in the battle at Stirling Bridge. Not a nice story.

It is very suitable that a statue of a Scottish hero of the late 13th century was modelled by another Scottish hero 600 years later, to stand proudly at the entrance to the gardens, in its own way reminding us of the contributions to the gardens made by Scottish benefactors over the years.

"Scotland The story of a Nation" Magnus Magnusson.

John Garner DONALD DINNIE



History Report

As part of the proceedings in the re-dedication of the McDonald Gates, the History Group was requested to provide a short, informative talk. What follows is a brief précis of the life of one of our generous benefactors, and the gates erected in his memory.

John Young McDonald - born 1837 Leith, Died 7 Sept 1917

John Young McDonald was the eldest of 5 sons born to Margaret at Leith (now a suburb of Edinburgh) Scotland. When he was 15 his mother brought the family to Australia as unassisted migrants. Most travelled by the ship *Oliver Lang*, arriving in Australia on 31st July 1855, and finally Ballarat in September.

The family first tried for gold in the Inkerman Gully. They lived in Eyre Street.

Four years later, aged 19, John had sufficient capital to establish a plumbing and slating business, just in time for the building boom of the 1860s. He continued in this trade until retirement, at age 50, having amassed a fortune. He then speculated in a most successful way in the stock market, becoming a stockbroker and director of mining companies.

He was elected as MLC for the seat of Wellington in 1888, a position he held until shortly before his death. He was a minister in the Bent Government of 1908.

His community involvements included President of the Caledonian Society when that society presented Ballarat with the statue of Robbie Burns. He was President of the Ballarat Gas Company, as well as Director of Ballarat Trustees and Executors when the Thompson bequest was made. He was involved in all areas of society, including commerce, education, health, church and sport.

A genial man with a twinkle in his eye and a kind word for all, he never married.

On his death in 1917, his will gave benefactions to 28 individuals, as well as generous bequests to various charities. The largest part of his fortune was the remainder, divided between his 4 favourite institutions, with 2868 pounds each going to the Ballarat Hospital, St Andrew's Kirk, Ballarat College and the Mayor and Citizens of the City of Ballarat for the beautification of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens.

City Architect, George William Clegg was responsible for the design and installation of these gates, importing Karri beams from Western Australia. (These did not arrive in good time almost delaying the dedication in 1921, as the beams requested were not to a standard dimension and had to be milled especially.)

Enough money was left over to provide the JY McDonald Bandstand 12 months later.

Clegg also designed the Titanic bandstand and the Queen Alexandra bandstand in Sturt Street, the Sunshine Biscuit Factory, 'Killarney' the Loughlin mansion in Warrenheip as well as the Queen Victoria Annexe of the Ballarat Base Hospital. In these gardens he designed the pergola behind the Morey Gates and the entrance to the Zoo.

Following the re-dedicating these gates (and the colonnade behind), we proceeded to the GLB where John Garner spoke briefly on Helen, the brave and stoic wife of George Longley.

Lorraine Powell



Visitors pass beneath pergola 1955



FOBBG. pass beneath pergola 2011

BANONGILL GARDENS

Open garden at Banongill Station was held on 3-4th. Sept

The garden featured daffodills of many different kinds and other bulbs in bluestone terraces.

They employ three full time gardeners.

Events and Seminars

Our last General meeting in August was well attended and everyone thoroughly enjoyed the talk given by Lorraine Powell on the history of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens and the ongoing work to publish a book on our gardens.

Catering was also provided to the History Group on two Sundays in September, where members of the public were invited to provide photos and information on our gardens, in the hope that many new photos and information about the gardens could be used in the publication of the History Group Book. These days were very successful.

SCANNING DAY



**LtoR_ Tina Best, June Johnson
Kathleen Hobson, Noela Nicholl**

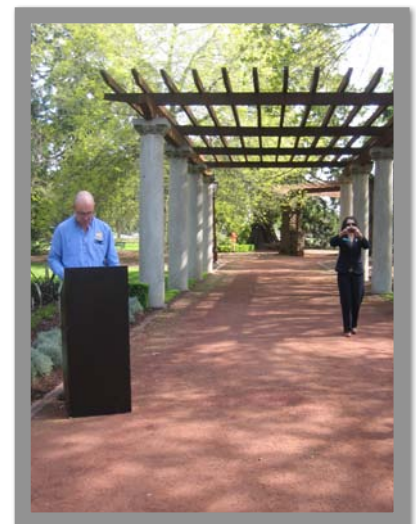
George Longley Day on the 13th October. Wine and nibbles to help celebrate the Curator, George Longley. History Group to give a brief talk on one aspect of our Garden History.



Group on George Longley Day



John Garner George Longley Day



Peter Marquand Curator

Our next event is our Christmas Barbecue on Thursday 17th November. 5.30p.m for 6.00p.m. All drinks will be provided, please bring your own meat and salad etc.

Look forward to seeing many of our new members joining in with other members at this relaxing evening.

Carol Haines

Educating Report



EDUCATING GROUP



MUMS & TODDLERS



Sept 1st : Coffee and Cake for Mums and toddlers was a wonderful afternoon of fun, music and craft! We had a packed house with 20 toddlers and 20 Mums . Peter Waugh our music man was superb. All left the Robert Clarke Centre with good vibes and the Mums all left wanting more.

Many little collaged daffodils were completed and were so well done too

Sept 27th Explore and Draw Holiday Activity: Geraldine Roberts led that event. 16 children attended with parents. The success was evident in the wonderful leaf printing, collage gift tags and decorated boxes that were produced. The children worked so creatively and loved working on the fine decorative artwork using botanical materials.



EXPLORE



DRAW



Great Big Gardens Play Day 26th Oct. We were successful in gaining our grant from BCC ! Great Big Gardens Play Day, on International Childrens Day has been devised to highlight the wonderful opportunities for quality play in the Gardens for young children 0yrs -8yrs and their families.

When this newsletter is published it will be all over and lets hope the weather was with us and the below organisation all worked!

Kindness and ready willingness of volunteers involved was wonderful! RADMAC has donated \$250 worth of clay for example for the Great Big Mud Pie!!!

We are up to posting final organising letter and booking sheets to schools and preschools; numbers limited to the amount of activities. We are almost at the stage of closing applications to attend already! We have 18 organised activities with four mini guided walks available in the afternoon.

Ballarat High School students will be involved with helping on the day, along with the University of Ballarat Early Childhood Education Students. Other organisations involved are-----CFA, WaterBoard, BlueEarth, Ballarat Childrens Librarian, Ballarat Craft Council, Sovereign Hill Education and FOSH, St Pete Floral Society, Eureka Community Kindergarten Association, Ballarat City Council, Bungaree Primary School.

All children will be with either parents or their teachers, and all activities will be organised and fully resourced. Tasks in particular we need help with on the day are first aid duty in the Robert Clark Centre, helping prepare volunteerslunch packs , collecting admission and supporting the floral saucer activity with contributions of flowers. Let friends and family know of this event. Morning from 10am -12 is especially for the 0-3yrs, playgroups and young families, and afternoon for organised school and preschool activities.

The Guiding Friends are helping with specially designed mini guided walks for the children from 1pm -3pm.

Our new BontaniKids logo will be launched at 10am with Carolyn Blackman, Vivid Design [774 ABC Radio Gardening expert] Free balloons and badges will be given out followed by a morning tea in RCC for special guests. Hoping for a good weather day!

Educating Friends Gp: Julie Bradby, Sue Beck, Geraldine Roberts, Heather Boyd, Di Fox, Kay Crawford.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR 2011

Please note all these dates in your diary

NOVEMBER - CHRISTMAS BARBECUE. Thursday 17th November, 2011.

5.30p.m. for 6.00p.m. B Y O Barbecue Food. Drinks will be provided.
All members welcome to come along and enjoy a great social evening.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR 2012

Please note all these dates in your diary

FEBRUARY – ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING -

Thursday February 16th 2012 at 10.00a.m.

MARCH - BEGONIA FESTIVAL – Sat-Mon 10th, 11th, 12th

APRIL - FRIENDS OPEN GARDENS – Sat-Mon 1st, 2nd & 3rd
- SPECIAL MORNING TEA - Thursday 13th. - 10.00a.m

MAY - GENERAL MEETING - Thursday 17th 10.00a.m.

AUGUST - ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS Botanical Gardens Conference -
Sat-Sun 18th, 19th at Port Augusta, South Australia.
- GENERAL MEETING– Thursday 16th, 10.00a.m

OCTOBER – GEORGE LONGLEY DAY – Thursday 11th at 4.00p.m.

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER – Spring Open Gardens and Special Luncheon (dates to be announced)

NOVEMBER - FRIENDS CHRISTMAS BARBECUE

Thursday 15th at 6.00p.m.

FBBG CONTACT DETAILS

info@fbbg.org.au

www.fbbg.org.au

P.O.Box Ballarat West 3350

Robert Clarke Conservatory

N.B.new phone number 53642764

Friends Open Gardens

Please note that the date of the Friends Open Gardens has been changed from November 19th and 20th this year to the 1st, 2nd April 2012.

The event is just for our members. We have an offer of seven gardens so far. There is no advertising to the public but members are welcome to bring friends.

Please contact me if you would like to add your garden to the list. Full details will be in our summer newsletter.

Joan Garner Tel No 53326461.