

Wellingtonia

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PP Number 100020008



NEWSLETTER – AUTUMN 2021

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK:



I appreciated the good wishes I received on taking on this position.

This time of the year is always busy but this year made more so because of changes as a result of COVID. No AGM in the usual meeting space, no one weekend for Begonia festival and all of this brings extra layers to administering our activities.

Our Zoom AGM did not attract large numbers but pleased with the support for the Special Meeting held as a twilight event at Wendouree Bowling club. **Doug Bradby** was our guest speaker and put us in the mindset of those early Ballarat arrivals from far away in the 1850's who very early made establishing a Botanic Garden a priority for this city. Thanks Doug for such a wonderful presentation. Doug's presentation also rekindled the reasons why so many of us have made a commitment to promoting the Gardens through our participation in the Ballarat Friends.

Last year's lockdown has brought some positives for FBBG. Gardening and localism became so more important in people's lives and an organization like FBBG is well placed to connect with this change.

There is an urge to get out and get involved again. Seek out purpose beyond the self and contribute to the community. What better community asset to get involved in than Ballarat Botanical Gardens?

So many of us are so appreciative of the restorative and uplifting experience that this Ballarat icon gives its citizens. It

is endlessly interesting. It is a place where young and old can wonder and enjoy its beauty and complexity. It is a learning space in so many ways.

New members and helpers are emerging and we have a new committee to help steer the road ahead and look for opportunities for the Friends to grow.

The 2021 committee combines experienced members as well as new members. It brings a diverse spread of interests and life experiences to the committee. **Welcome to Julie Chandler, Stephanie de Boer and Merrill Shulkes.** (see page 7 for Pen Portraits)

At our AGM and Special Meeting we acknowledged the contributions of **Elizabeth Gilfillan and Raoul Dixon**

who have decided to step down from the committee. Tributes appear elsewhere in this newsletter. Their depth and range of experience and input to committee will be sorely missed.

Robert Selkirk steps down from the Presidency as our constitution lays down and continues on as committee member. Robert took on the role of President as he was motivated to do something about the dilapidated state of the Fernery as it was in 2018. Robert has steered the Committee very successfully through its challenges, COVID last year being one of them. The Fernery, Gatekeeper's Cottage and the Foundation have all progressed in his time as President. Robert is a key driver of the relocation of the

George Longley Building and our Nursery. The motion was unanimously passed at our March Special Meeting.

This is an important new direction and we will continue to have Robert's experience and involvement to keep this project progressing.

*'Last year's
lockdown
has brought
some
positives
for FBBG.'*

continues page 2...

**Four Open Gardens
for Friends
Members!**



**Saturday April 17 and Sunday April 18.
Not a public event. FREE ENTRY (See page 3)**

**New Friends Members
gathering in
Robert Clark
Horticultural Centre at
5pm on Thursday,
April 15
Drinks and nibbles**

**Patron of the Ballarat
Friends:** Prof. Tim Entwistle,
Director and Chief Executive,
Royal Botanic Gardens,
Melbourne.



A recent extract from Tim's Blog,
'Talking Plants' can be read on page 10.

As a new President I am optimistic of the road ahead. A growing city and a city that attracts tourists means our Gardens will continue to attract and be a central gathering point for the city. The Friends will continue to play a very purposeful role in helping to ensure that the botanical perspective is promoted and we develop activities to this end involving the community and where we can, contribute to the development of the gardens. There will be plenty to occupy our attention.

As President I know there will be challenges and also rewards and I also know that little is achieved by one individual as it is collective action that mostly brings results. I hope members where they can support the work of the Friends.

This year we have manned three sites on the weekends for Begonia Festival. We have relied on volunteers at the nursery, the welcoming tent and at the Gatekeeper's Cottage.

Nursery sales were most impressive. Nursery sales are an important contributor to our finances. Last year was a challenge for the nursery to chart a way forward through the restrictions to safely operate. It can be a problem when you identify individuals in a team where many contribute but successes with the nursery last year were clearly driven by 3 key people. At the Special Meeting a small presentation was made to **Yvonne Curbach, Kim Nolan and Sue Rattray** to acknowledge this work.

Many took the opportunity during the Begonia Festival to view our advertised activity in the **Gatekeeper's Cottage**. Many that did were also pleased to be able to see inside and understand how the Cottage is used. A mini-exhibition on past Begonia Festivals (set up by **Lorraine Powell**) started what we hope we can continue to build on.

The **History Group** as part of their efforts to archive and manage their collection are involved in a **Digitisation Workshop**. I am hoping that as the group works on the collection there will be more items and artefacts that will be made accessible to us all via these exhibitions. Potential is there but they would welcome more volunteers.

Likewise there is great potential at the Gatekeeper's Cottage. **Julie Bradby and her team** have organized a range of activities and new programs and as Julie said "looking forward to a big beautiful year ahead". Monthly exhibitions are part of what is planned as well.

The **new digital microscope** and the **installation showing the evolution of plants** will impact on the interpretative work within the cottage. Our Foundation has funded these two additions and it will broaden the role the Gatekeeper's Cottage plays in the Gardens.

We talk about potential with both the History Group and Botanikids but this can't be achieved without more hands on deck. Please respond and contact the Convenors if this is for you.

Loreto VCAL students have been part of the "hands on deck" helping with Botanikids program. We are benefiting by their involvement and the girls are learning as well.

New people coming into new roles in FBBG are adding their own energy and fresh eyes as well and changes are being made.

Many activities have been planned for the **Ballarat Heritage festival in May**. Our Groups (Guides, History, Botanical Artists, Catering and Botanikids) as well as Garden staff are all involved in its development. Also not too far away is a new Friends booklet on the Ballarat Gardens.

One of our new members stated that he was joining FBBG because it was an active organisation. I think reading the *Wellingtonia* provides the examples he was drawing on for this statement. Thanks Michael Bird for the work involved in assembling all our efforts in our newsletter and showing the range of involvements in making FBBG an active, productive and welcoming organisation.

Terry O'Brien

MEMBERSHIP REPORT: At the February and March Committee meetings the following membership applications were endorsed:



February: Betty Boadle, Jane Harrison, Heather Fairnie, Jane Auchettl, Nina Wallis, Michael Nichols, Cassandra Bawden, Nick Danatzis, Tania Sernia, Leeanne Bursle, Ann Brach, Christina Nevistic, Cassandra Lilly and Scarlett Mclean.

March: Cassandra Bawden, Michael Nichols, Nick Danatzis, Tania Sernia, Leeanne Bursle, Cassandra Lilly, Chris Charleson and Christina Nevistic, Bevan McKenzie, Michael Cuttle, Joyce Cuttle, Lidia Aitken, Deborah Martin, Phil Rabl

Total Membership is currently 384.

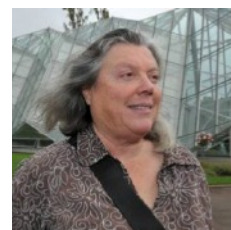
Warwick Sellens – Membership Officer

LORRAINE POWELL AWARDED OAM

Lorraine was awarded an Order of Australia Medal in January for her services to the Ballarat community.

Not that as an individual honour the award seems to sit well with her.

"I'm not a very remarkable person, so I was a bit gobsmacked," she said. She is honestly humble about the achievement, but it's well deserved since Lorraine has made significant contributions to the wider Ballarat region.



"Along with holding office with the Friends of Buninyong Botanic Gardens, the Friends of Ballarat Botanic Gardens, Keep Ballarat Beautiful, and the Victorian branch of Australian Garden History Society, she's also volunteer guide at the Art Gallery of Ballarat, works with Buninyong Film Festival, a volunteer for Tidy Towns Victoria, and a volunteer at the Ballarat International Foto Biennale". (Ballarat Times). Congrats Lorraine!



Open Gardens

Exclusively for Friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens Members

Saturday, April 17 and Sunday, April 18, 2021

We are pleased to announce four of our 'Friends' gardens open to FBBG members and their families and friends.

It has been a tough time for FBBG during 2020 with all our social events, tours, face-to-face meetings and get-togethers cancelled or put on hold due to COVID.

The opening of these private gardens is a way to celebrate our gardens once again!

Entry to all four gardens is free of charge.

(Many 'Friends' offered their gardens and so we will plan to highlight another set of open gardens in Spring 2021)

Saturday 17 April 2021 10am to 4pm.

1. Robyn and John Gilbert's Garden

217 Daylesford Road, Brown Hill

With the bush in the distance, the Yarrowee Walking Trail in between, the garden meanders up beyond a Portuguese Laurel hedge creating an environment of peace and beauty.

Set on one acre around a disused quarry the garden design is built on the beauty of the curve. There are elements of Japanese design as well as a pottery sculpture garden.

Together with donated bulbs and cuttings from friends and purchased mature trees, the garden has flourished in the five years since starting from a blank canvas. There is a surprise around every corner!



2. Chris Dickinson's and Pauline Moody's Garden

114 Silverwattle Drive, Invermay

Tanewah Gardens covers approximately six acres (2.4 hectares) and is nestled into a sheltered small valley looking back south-west to Ballarat. Bordered by Manchurian pears, Portuguese laurels and a traditional conifer hedge, it has gradually become an enclosed garden with tall eucalypts framing a garden of exotics.

It consists of sloping lawns with retaining brick walls that create separate rooms that overlook a lake of about an acre with a couple of quirky buildings.



Behind the hedge is an extensive vegetable garden and orchard. The lawns are graced with oaks, elms, ashes, acers, chestnuts and willows.

Sunday 18 April 2021 10am to 4pm.

1. Anne and Berry King's Garden

264 Wiggins Road, Scotsburn

Designed to reflect its time and place, 'Back Lake' was conceived as a complete 'landscape' rather than a garden. Designed and largely constructed by architect owners, the layout was developed at the house design stage and detailed landscaping and plant selection decided before any work commenced.

The dry-stone walls, ponds, raised vegetable beds, orchards and general planting and mulching were mostly completed in 2010. Set on eight hectares including four hectares of lake. Strong winds limit plant selection. Swathes of grasses and perennials combine with great effect. Bird life is prolific on and around the water and views are magical.



2. Jane and Russell Luckock's Garden

80 Granny White Lane, Mt Buninyong

'Anembinya' on the slopes of Mt Buninyong is a rambling garden on rich volcanic soil set against a backdrop of breathtaking views over the surrounding countryside.

Solely dependent on their own water supply and with unsolicited help from rabbits, possums and parrots, Jane and Russell have managed to develop a note-worthy garden.

Planting has been adapted to cope with dry conditions and gale force winds and provides inviting sheltered areas contrasting with the vastness of the location.



We hope you can visit these unique gardens in Autumn and join in celebrating our love of gardens!

Contact: Carole Haines (0437 462 731) and Wendy Taylor (0407 554 306)

All COVID requirements at the time will be adhered to.

THE BALLARAT GUIDES SPECIAL EVENT: For Australia Day this year, the Ballarat Guides conducted a special evening event focusing on some of the Australian trees in the Gardens. Well attended with an audience of about 70 people, the first stop was the Wollemi pines where we were provided with an introduction to Gondwana and Gymnosperms, before the Wollemi pine was described in more detail.

Subsequent trees covered were the kauri pine, bunya bunya pine, a remnant Tasmanian blue gum, the Sydney red gum (*angophora costata*) and one of the many lilly pilli trees.

The tour finished with a picnic for some, and several general observations about the other Australian trees in the BBG and the Lake environs, and how the City of Ballarat has developed a significant tree register as well as a major tree-scaping policy for newer suburbs like Lucas.

Amazingly the **City of Ballarat's Exceptional Tree Register includes 4,298 trees from across the municipality. (*)**

Guides who presented during the evening were Wendy Sandiford, Marg Towers, Julie Chandler, Terry O'Brien, Sandie De Groot, Brian Hay, Warrick Sellens, Jane Monro and Michael Bird.

See: https://data.ballarat.vic.gov.au/pages/exceptional_tree_register/



Top: Guides awaiting! L to r: Julie, Sandie, Jane, Wendy and Michael;

Middle: Wendy and some of the crowd;

Right: Jane tells all about lilly pillis



AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS OF BOTANIC GARDENS

Report by Merrill Shulkes, Member of the AAFBG and Ballarat Friends

The AAFBG's first committee meeting for 2021 took place via Zoom on Monday, February 8; the next meeting on Monday, March 15, will also be held online. The planning of several events for 2021 and 2022 has continued and we hope that they take place with member participation.

The first of these events is the 2021 AAFBG Annual General Meeting on Monday, April 12. The venue is the Conference Centre at the Waite Campus, University of Adelaide, that is south-east of the CBD, about 15 minutes by road. The Waite Campus is a world-renowned teaching and research site that supports innovation in the Australian agriculture, food and wine industries. It is also the home of the Waite Arboretum that was founded in 1928.

The AGM will be part of a day long program and the agenda will include the announcement of the winners of the 2020 Handbury Awards by the AAFBG Patron, Dr. Phillip Moors. The AGM will precede a series of short presentations on topics of interest to our members – for example Challenges to Parks and Gardens from Climate Change; The Miyawaki Mini Forest Concept and Attracting Bees, Butterflies and Birds to Enhance the Bio-diversity of Parks and Gardens. There may also be visits to research facilities and a guided tour of the Waite Arboretum. The program is currently being finalised.

Much thought has gone into the selection of parks and gardens to be visited on the AAFBG's six-day Gardens of Tasmania tour from October 24 to October 29 this year. The first three days will be spent in and around Launceston, visiting well known parks and gardens such as Wychwood Garden and Nursery at Mole



A view of the private garden of designer Susan McKinnon

Creek, Culzean Gardens at Westbury and the Tasmanian Arboretum near Devonport, a botanic garden for trees.

We will also visit lesser-known private gardens like Strathmore at Evandale. We will then move south to Hobart where the itinerary will include a guided tour of the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens by their Friends President and a visit to the private garden of designer Susan McKinnon that recently featured on the ABC's Gardening Australia. A day trip to Bruny Island will enable us to visit Inala Jurassic Garden and Nature Museum and nearby Sprockelwood Art Garden. A distinguishing feature of the trip will be the opportunity to interact with other Friends from different parts of Australia and to meet Tasmanian members of the AAFBG who will host visits to their gardens. The itinerary for the tour has been finalised and the marketing brochure will be available online shortly on the AAFBG website www.friendsbotanicgardens.org

Due to unforeseen circumstances, changes may be required to the proposed program for the 2022 AAFBG Biennial Conference at Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens, Mogo, NSW (near Batemans Bay). Plans are already underway to accommodate those changes.

The AAFBG looks forward to continuing to serve its members and to attract new ones in 2021. Its exposure to a much wider audience was significantly boosted by the publication of an article about nationwide Friends Groups in the March 2021 edition of the ABC Gardening Australia magazine. (See page 9).



COWARDLY LIONS?



‘..from the records of
John Garner’

MARBLE LIONS PRESENTED TO GARDENS BY DAVID HAM MLC

“And now we come to two of the most loved features of the Gardens, the marble lions”. The lions were commissioned and donated by the Hon. **David Ham MLC** in 1883.

David Ham was born in 1830 in Launcells, Cornwall. He arrived in Port Phillip on July 1, 1849 when he was 19 years old. He found employment in a grocer's shop in July of that year. In the early gold rush days he proceeded to Ballarat but then returned to Geelong to farm at Indented Head for one year.

After various moves he settled down in Ballarat and soon had success in alluvial mining, one of his first claims giving him and his mates good returns. He mined in Little Bendigo, Canadian Gully and Brown's Hill.

In 1854 he started a butcher's shop – his surname being the perfect name for a butcher's shop – and brought the first sausage machine on the diggings.

He was subsequently a sawmiller at Carngham and an agent and sharebroker at Smythesdale.

In the 1860s he went to NZ with Edward Morey but on his return to Ballarat he found he had lost his money due to bad management by the man he left in charge. However he did recover from that financial disaster.

In 1876 he became a Justice of the Peace. He was elected a member of the Victorian Legislative Council in 1886. He was also the great grandfather of Ted Ballieu former premier of Victoria. He died from pneumonia at Queenscliff aged 78.

A formal ceremony for the handover of these marble lions was held simultaneously with the opening of the Entrance Gates presented by his friend the Hon. Edward Morey MLC and Cr William Little.

Some considered that the lions should be outside the Gates, but it has been said that **the Gates guard the lions and the lions guard the Gardens.**

It should be noted that if you look into the lions' mouths you will see that they have human teeth. These lions are much loved by children who visit the gardens hence their shiny backs where many children over the years have climbed up and sat on these two magnificent creatures.



BALLARAT BOTANIKIDS REPORT:

This year brings a huge change in the way we deliver our program to families visitors and schools. We are setting up a booking system linked to our *BotaniKids* Facebook page, so children can register, pay and attend with a carer or parent (\$5 per child). Each month will have a focus, with a paid presenter from the community. For details and confirmation of programs, check *BotaniKids* Facebook page.



2021 is **THE YEAR OF THE BOTANICALS**™. We are still planning, but here are some of our programs so far:

- **April 7:** Open Air Theatre with Mr Badger from *Wind the Willows*.
- **May:** Cooking Outside using Botanicals with Sara Kittelty, including a cake raffle.
- **June:** Weaving workshop with Jodie. (More next time....)

Julie Bradby, Botanikids and Education Group

SEEN RECENTLY IN THE GARDENS' PRECINCT:

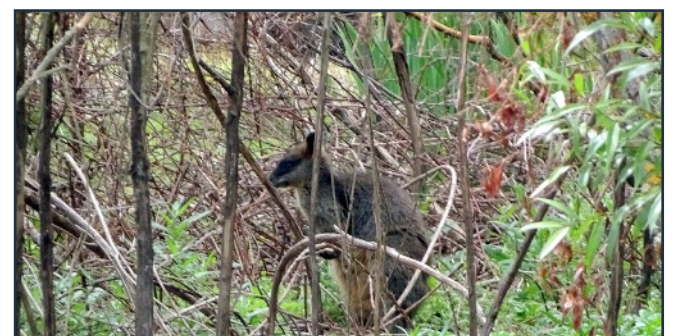


Top left: The Friends gazebo and trolleys at the Begonia Festival;

Bottom left: part of the queue for the begonia display in the Conservatory;

Top right: You may need to look twice but that is a pet sheep being walked near Pipers!;

Bottom right: wallaby right at home on the Fairyland island.



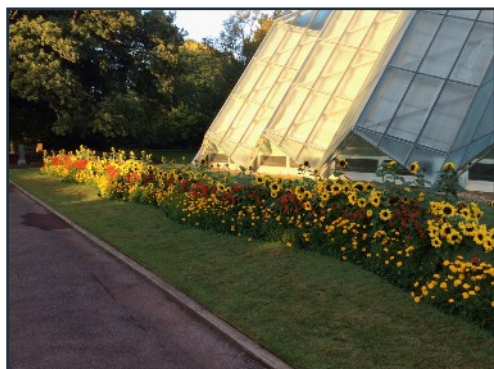
GARDENS CURATOR'S REPORT:

With changes to the Begonia Festival 2021 program due to Covid restrictions we have experienced a very different festival this year. The festival has run over three weeks and included four weekends and was held over several locations across the city.



The Begonia display (above) proved popular even with the challenges of registering attendees and a limits to fifty at a time.

At times on the long weekend we had people lined up back to start of the Prime Ministers' avenue.



It is hard to believe that the Conservatory was closed one week after last year's festival and remained closed for the majority of 2020. Begonia 2020 was one of the last festivals held before the close down.

Garden visitors will notice the installation of some new plant labels on many of the trees within the gardens. The labels have been produced on the gardens laser printer which was purchased last year. Replacement tree and plant labels will eventually be installed throughout the site and will include the North and South Gardens and the Lake foreshore opposite the gardens.

March in the gardens this year has been about sunflowers and dahlias with both plants proving very popular with the visitors.

As part of this years upgraded festival web site photographs of the tuberous and non-tuberous begonias have been included. The web site below is a great opportunity to get an idea of the size and diversity of both begonia collections held here at the gardens.

<https://ballaratbegoniafestival.com/begonias/begonia-collection/>

Peter Marquand, Curator

PLANT COLLECTIONS OFFICER:

Garden Explorer goes live!

You may have heard me talking about **Iris BG** our botanical database – I just love it and it's where we record all the details about our plant collections.

I'm excited to say that the public version – Garden Explorer - is now live!

You can now explore both the Ballarat Botanical Gardens (and Lake precinct), and the Buninyong Botanic Gardens in detail from home, or whilst in the gardens from your marathoner or IT device.

Find out more about our plants, upcoming events in the gardens, self-guided tours, what's flowering in the annual beds, floral display in the Conservatory & more (even some of the wildlife make an appearance!).

A big thank you to the Guiding Friends who have provided invaluable feedback in the trial of the program for us. I continue to welcome feedback on improvements, errors to correct, suggestions for future inclusion.

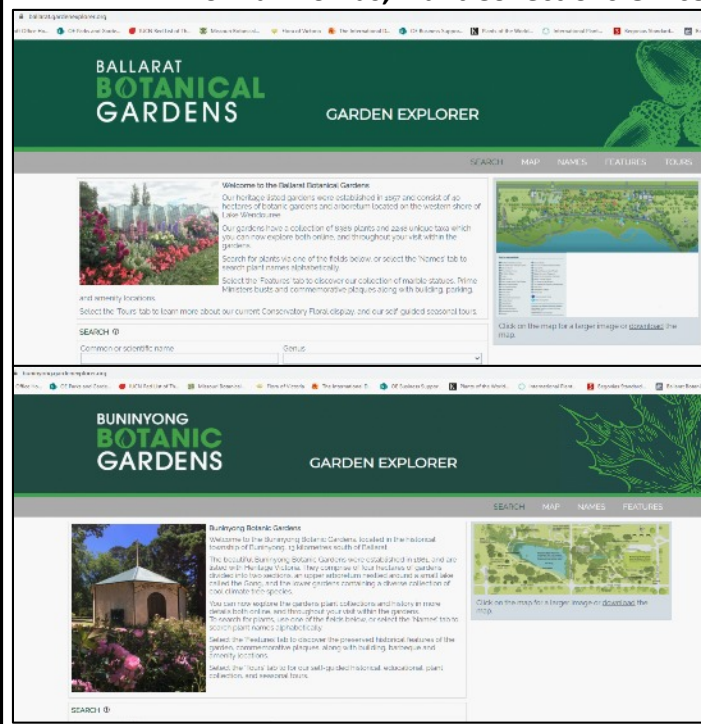
Keep revisiting the site as we continue to add more plants, features, tours & fun facts. If you have been to the site before, please remember to 'refresh' the site each time to see the new additions.

Garden Explorer can be found at:

<https://ballarat.gardenexplorer.org/>

<https://buninyong.gardenexplorer.org/>

Donna Thomas, Plant Collections Officer



DON'T FORGET: Outside the conservatory daily, plants are available for sale from our two Plant Trolleys. \$1 off the marked price of all pots for members. Honesty box applies. New plants are added daily, so don't hesitate to take a look! We have a regularly changing plant selection!

PUTTING A FACE TO THE BALLARAT FRIENDS COMMITTEE 2021

I worked as a teacher and researcher in the Monash University School of Rural Health and have a background in health professional education and community-based learning. With more free time over the past year, I have turned my home garden into a more productive and sustainable green space which has been great fun ... with plenty yet to do! I am looking forward to being part of the FBBG Committee in 2121.



Natalie Radomski, (Minute Secretary)



From Guides Convenor to the Friends Presidency! A lot of learning within the gardens and its many links has taken place and more ahead I hope. I enjoy this "growing" and involvement in a community asset that I value". **Terry O'Brien, (President)**

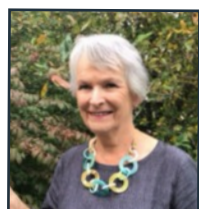


I love gardening and nature and so it is a privilege to be able to share this with others whether it's encouraging someone to buy a plant! - or helping with other activities. **Kim Nolan, (Treasurer)**

As a lifelong learner of all things botanical and a retiree from teaching it was time to fulfill a secret promise I made myself, to spend time encouraging especially the young to appreciate the joys and wonder of plants in the beautifully unique Botanical Gardens. With many years as a Committee member with my first four as secretary I've been lucky to find like souls in my quest within the Friends of BBG.



Julie Bradby, (BotaniKids)



My love for these gardens grows each year, and my respect for the people who have worked to maintain their botanical significance inspires me. Why the Hospitality role? Not sure really, except that I like sharing company and food with other people. **Doff Kemp, (Catering/Hospitality)**



I happened to sit next to Raoul and Beth Dixon at a Spring luncheon and we discussed the dilapidated fernery, and I offered to take up the issue with the Mayor. And here I am now four years later as Past President!



More than a quarter of century ago, with children gone, a sense of 'what shall I do now?' came on me. A trip to see the Friends at work evolved into me now looking back on the wonderful benefits provided from that opportunity. **Lorraine Powell OAM**
(See p. 2 for more on Lorraine. Ed)



A chance phone call from Elizabeth Gilfillan "Are you interested in joining the Guides? I'm on my way to the monthly meeting, I'll pick you up!" To have the opportunity to learn about and share the joys of our historically significant and beautiful gardens is a privilege. **Julie Chandler (Guides)**

I was persuaded to join the Friends by Jane, another member. I love gardening and meeting like minded people. That is why I joined. I have been a member for 28 years and convenor for a number of years.



Yvonne Curbach (Growing Friends)

There is much to discover about the history of the BBG and the Friends have a rich collection of materials to investigate. And then, with the Ambassadors, there are many opportunities to learn about plants, as the seasons change and to talk with other Friends and visitors to the Conservatory. **Stephanie de Boer (History)**

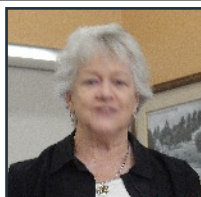


Having been a Friend and volunteer of the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne for many years, it was only natural to join the FBBG when we moved to Ballarat four years ago. I represent the FBBG on the Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens, an association that supports the growth and well-being of Friends groups.



Merrill Shulkes, Ballarat AAFBG rep.

'I love our Botanical Gardens! I have been involved with the Friends for over 23 years. As Event Convenor I have enjoyed the planning and the catering for many functions. Being a Guide for a few years taught me a lot about the garden history. I feel passionately about our historical gardens'.



Carole Haines (Events)



My professional interests lie in community engagement, regenerative practice and Indigenous-led landscape architectural design research, focused around the development of green infrastructure. I have great joy in contributing to the future direction of the Ballarat Botanic Gardens and learning more in the process.

Jock Gilbert (General Member)

After moving three years ago from seven acres in Scotsburn to a small block across from Gillies Street, I have adopted the Gardens as "my own backyard". As a former teacher I have found the Guiding Friends the perfect group to join. **Warwick Sellens**



I have been a Guide for nearly ten years and Wellingtonia Editor for about eight. The Gardens are unique and I love to talk about their merits. Another ex-teacher, I have a keen interest in desktop publishing hence my role as newsletter Editor. **Michael Bird**

I have been involved in promoting the annual FBBG "Gardens in Spring" event for about seven years. As the publicity person on the Committee I hope that with my marketing skills from a career in tourism, that I can help lift the profile of the Friends group. **Wendy Taylor (Promotions/PR)**



'A committee is a group that keeps minutes and loses hours'. ~Milton Berle

A SPECIAL THANK YOU FROM THE BALLARAT FRIENDS



Above: (l to r: Elizabeth Gilfillan,
Beth Dixon and Raoul Dixon)

Elizabeth Gilfillan: Elizabeth has stepped down from the Ballarat Friends Committee after 22 years. She intends to continue her involvement with the Friends and as chair of our Foundation. She looks forward to working on shared projects and interests.

Elizabeth has many close friends and cherished relationships, formed through her work and interests with the Friends. She has also built up a strong network of people directly involved in Botanic Gardens administration and garden projects - at individual Botanic gardens and with the national body, AAFBG. Linking our local Friends groups to the wider movement has helped the progressive development of our group. Elizabeth has always been supportive of change and a more professional approach. During Elizabeth's Presidency a lot of work was undertaken to put administrative processes in place to help the efficiency of a volunteer run group. IT equipment and accounting procedures were updated and an Administrative assistant employed. Elizabeth's input to the committee with her wealth of understanding, experience and contacts will be sorely missed. There are so many aspects of the Friends that largely occurred because Elizabeth worked so hard.

The Fernery Project continues. There have been disappointments and frustrations, but it is progressing to the near completion of Stage 1. Elizabeth was fully immersed in the project and a strong and persistent advocate for the Friends. She was on top of all the detail and fully committed to it and persisted to keep the project moving. We are proud and thankful for this. This strong advocacy and work by Elizabeth means the following largely have her imprint on their development.

She was the key driver of:

- Visionary Plan
- The George Longley Building
- Memorandum of understanding for George Longley Building and Gatekeeper's Cottage
- Gardens in Spring Program
- FBBG Botanical Artists
- The BBG Foundation
- Seeding the Future Day

There are many other initiatives during these 22 years not so personally linked to Elizabeth, but her encouragement and support was vital.

Elizabeth's active participation in Friends means she leaves a very proud legacy and foundation for the FBBG Committee. The high regard in the community for the FBBG is strongly reflective of her drive and commitment over the years.

We have enjoyed your friendship Elizabeth and will miss your presence and input to our committee. Our best wishes for the change of pace and new directions ahead.

Terry O'Brien

Raoul and Beth Dixon: Since its foundation in 1982, the FBBG has been fortunate to have many volunteers who have distinguished themselves by their thoughtful and generous service. Two who have made outstanding contributions, over many years, are Beth and Raoul Dixon.

Moving to Ballarat in 1998, they joined the Friends after enjoying a guided walk with the President, Joan Garner. They felt that membership would enable them to meet like-minded citizens and provide the opportunity to contribute to the Ballarat community through an organization that reflected their love of gardens and the natural environment. The hallmark of Beth and Raoul's twenty plus years of volunteering has been their willingness to turn their hand to whatever needed doing. They could always be relied upon to attend and assist with Friends' functions, from housekeeping tasks, such as arranging chairs and setting up audio-visual equipment for meetings and to innovative changes to the running of the organisation. When Raoul became Treasurer and Membership Officer in 2002 he set about computerising all financial and membership records (previously paper based). He continued in both positions until his first term as President (2006-2008) when he ceased being Treasurer. He was Membership Officer until 2021 and under his stewardship the membership grew from less than 200 to more than 380. Raoul's skills as an administrator and commitment to good governance are reflected in his adaptation in 2012 of the Government's Model Rules for Incorporated Associations to suit the Friends needs and he also set up the Friends By-Laws.

In his second term as President (2016-2018) there were significant achievements, including the relocation of the original Gatekeepers Cottage and its refurbishment as the home of Botanikids. However, the protracted negotiations with City of Ballarat over the redevelopment of the Fernery were quite difficult and very time consuming. Finally, the construction of Stage 1 of the Fernery commenced in 2020 and the building works are scheduled for completion in May.

Beth recently completed more than 10 years as the 'greet and sign in person' for all Friends functions, extending a very warm welcome to all. This role also allowed her to surreptitiously observe new members who might be persuaded to take on a more active role. Beth's concern about a lack of interaction with weekend visitors to BBG led to her establishing the very successful Ambassadors Program in 2017, that she convened until 2019. She also enjoyed her involvement with many Springfests, Spring Lunches and every Begonia Festival from 1999 to 2018.

Both Beth and Raoul began a long and productive association with the Friends Guides in 2008. Beth soon started collating information from individual Guides into a comprehensive manual and set about broadening the knowledge base of the Guides, by inviting guest speakers to monthly meetings and doing in-depth tours of parts of the BBG. Beth and Raoul led many tours of the Gardens and Beth was Guides Convenor for three years before Terry O'Brien took over. Beth and Raoul were involved in the production of various Guides' publications and contributed to the joint FBBG/U3A course that attracts many participants. Raoul produced a slide show with music and commentary which is often used to introduce new groups to the Gardens.

Even though Beth and Raoul's official duties ended with Raoul's recent resignation as Membership Officer, their accumulated wisdom and knowledge of BBG will ensure that they remain an integral part of the Friends. It is gratifying to know that their combined contributions over many years not only helped achieve a vibrant and resilient FBBG but gave them much personal satisfaction and enjoyment through the creation of many friendships and shared experiences – one of the great benefits of FBBG membership.

Merrill Shulkes

The real meaning of plant catalogue terminology:

"Cool Temperate with protection" is a variation on the phrase "Russian roulette".

"Grows more beautiful each year" means "Looks like road kill for the foreseeable future".

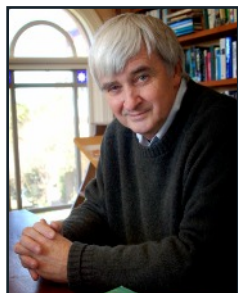
"Grandma's Favourite" — until she discovered free-flowering, disease-resistant hybrids.

SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING: March 11

As a result of the February AGM being on Zoom it was decided to hold a Special GM to put forward the following motion: *'The Friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens investigate the concept of relocating the Nursery and the construction of a new George Longley Building to a suitable site within the gardens'* – moved Robert Selkirk; seconded Stephanie de Boer. Carried without dissent.

The 70 or so in attendance were then treated to an entertaining and amusing presentation by local author and historian, Doug Bradby. His topic: *'The Ballarat Botanical gardens. Diggers, Democracy and Science on the Ballarat Goldfields.'*

Michael Bird



Guest speaker
Doug Bradby

MAY GENERAL MEETING: May 20 at 10a.m.

Our Guest Speaker for this meeting is Peter Voterakis.

Peter is a Ballarat resident and businessman. He has travelled extensively with botanists and like-minded travellers to the Antarctic to observe flora and fauna. Peter has a collection of fabulous images from his journey and his presentation - *'The Unique Environment of the Sub Antarctic Islands'*.

Carole Haines, Events & Speakers Convenor

GROWING FRIENDS:

We had a lot of customers visiting our nursery the first two weekends of the Begonia Festival month. During that time we sold at least 1,100 plants bringing in an amazing \$9,000!

Many thanks to all the helpers that gave their assistance. We are busy restocking and will have more plants available over the coming weeks. Hopefully the next two weekends in this month will be just as busy!

Yvonne Curbach, Convenor

you've got a FRIEND

Expand your horticultural horizons by joining the Friends group at your local botanic garden, where a whole new world of plants, people and activities awaits, as AB BISHOP reports

For some, it's the growing or planting days, where they get to play in the dirt – someone else's dirt – while yakking to like-minded people. For others, it's access to special talks and tours, or to parts of the Garden, normally closed to the public. Everyone has their own reasons for joining the Friends group at their local botanic garden, but one thing unites them – a love of plants. There are at least 70 Friends groups throughout Australia, and all play an

integral role in developing, maintaining, supporting and promoting their affiliated Garden. The oldest group, founded in 1977, is the Friends of the Botanic Gardens of Adelaide. Some groups have thousands of members and are connected to historical institutions, such as the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney, established in 1816. Others, such as the Friends of Lismore Rainforest Botanic Gardens, which opened in 2013, have a more modest membership. But what they lack in numbers, they make up for in drive. The Lismore group of

The March edition of *Gardening Australia* magazine carried an interesting article on Friends groups and their importance to maintaining Botanical Gardens.



'Garden Cuttings' by Green Thumb

- No date for installation and opening of the **Malcolm Turnbull Prime Minister bust** has been set as yet **but** Council has received the bronze sculpture.
- A full inspection and restoration of the **art and sculpture collections in the Gardens** is planned as part of ongoing maintenance of statues. Due to the retirement of the previous restoration expert, a Melbourne firm has been employed.
- Interesting points made by out-going President Robert at the recent Special Meeting about the **proposal to relocate** the Friends Nursery and construction of a new George Longley Building *'there was strong support for the project'* in discussion with CoB power-brokers and that *'a timeline of three years for the project'* is likely.
- The **fernery re-build** is now in its ninth month. Opening scheduled for May is looming closer!
- What did you think of the **re-vamped presentation of the Begonia Festival** under Covid-19 conditions? One comment heard many times by GT was, *"where can I buy begonias?"*
- **NEW members of the Friends** (and you know who you are if you have joined in the past 18 months or so!) are to have a special afternoon tea on **APRIL 15** in the Robert Clark Horticultural Centre. Chance to meet the Committee and Convenors of the Friends groups.
- **Heritage events in May** look interesting. A major focus will be on the **BIG trees** of the Gardens, especially the sequoiadendrons and sequoia sempervirens. Lots of events planned for May 8 and 30. There will be an exhibition in the Conservatory on the tallest and biggest trees from California which are in our Gardens. Runs from May 7 to 30.
- **Some safety concerns** have been raised apparently about the narrow rear ramps and height of the front steps at the Gatekeeper's Cottage?

Until Next Time; keep your secateurs clean and sharp! Green Thumb

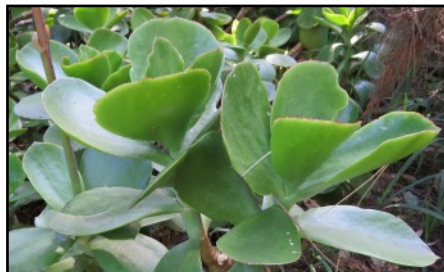
PSSST: The Friends intend to hold a SPECIAL EVENT for our NEW members . April 15 (see p.12)





TRYING NOT TO MAKE A PIG'S EAR OF NAMING IT

"Six years ago I was diverted by a glaucous succulent called *Cotyledon orbiculata*. It was February 2015 and it seemed to be everywhere. Last year, my head was turned by the same species, but not the dusty grey variant. For while, near where I live now in Glen Iris, *Cotyledon orbiculata* var. *oblonga* - probably cultivar 'Macrantha' - seemed to be everywhere.



When flowering, you do notice this plant. The porcelain-(or plastic-)like red flowers are very elegant. While peak flowering in my home neighbourhood and at Burnley Gardens seemed to be August, they were at their glossy best in early September in the Southern African Collection at Melbourne Gardens. And, as it turned out, further afield near where I live (I later found a few in full bloom in mid-September).

They seem to be increasingly popular in home gardens, as we plant more xerophytic, or xerophilic, species. They have become established in my local park (creeping under a fence I think) and a few varieties of this species are considered environmental weeds of natural areas in Victoria.



I'm a bit vague about the name and a little wary of getting into the taxonomy of what is also called Green Pig's Ear, knowing there are lots of cultivated varieties (cultivars) and as much variation where it grows naturally in South Africa. The variety *oblonga*, for example, can also include plants with pencil-like, grey leaves.

Let's just say the fine red line around the leaf margin, along with the general habit and flower structure, is what you get in most forms of *Cotyledon orbiculata*. The rest of the colour and leaf shape are up for grabs.

The species as a whole is used medicinally in South Africa, with the fleshy leaf used to remove corns and warts (as we might use an extract of willow, found in the callus strips sold at chemists), and when heated, boils. Extracts from the leaf have been used to purge worms, to treat epilepsy and (as drops) for treating tooth- and ear-ache. Clearly you would need expert advice before exposing any part of your body to the insides of this plant. More safely, the dried leaf is used as a 'plaything' and even a protective charm for an orphan boy."

You can read more of Tim's offerings at: <https://talkingplants.blogspot.com/>

AT THIS YEAR'S BEGONIA FESTIVAL:

With no stalls and events happening on the lawns in the Gardens this year due to Covid-19, things looked much less crowded and more open to all.



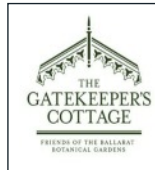
GATEKEEPERS COTTAGE: A new year and a new open approach to how the Cottage will be utilised within the Friends and the community.

Each month there will be exhibitions, activities for visitors and general public. We hope to open on every Craft Market. The Botanikids team will be offering simple family type activities.

However we need help! We need a band of people who are willing to pitch in and help with a role similar to that of the ambassadors at the Conservatory. Every time Cottage is open (and it should be as often as we can) we need people to oversee the visitors, interact with them and provide them information. This may require a coordinator in the future. Something that has become obvious is that we need an A4 double-sided handout that includes photos.

Monthly programs: **April:** Anzac Day; **May:** Heritage weekends; **June:** Craft Cottage mini workshops.

Julie Bradby





Friend's Nursery:

**Specialising in rare shrubs, perennials,
ground covers and succulents**

If you need a new plant, a gift or a small indulgence
why not stop by and take a look?

Prices: \$1 off the marked price of all pots.
(\$8 pot will be discounted to \$7)

Plant Trolley: While strolling through the Botanical Gardens you may have seen our
two plant trolleys outside the Robert Clarke Conservatory. Honesty box applies.

Opening Hours: Tues: 1-4 pm, Sundays: (2nd & 4th) 1-4 pm



GET INVOLVED ... BY VOLUNTEERING!: You probably have a unique set of life skills. Just what
the Friends need! Every recent edition of the *Wellingtonia* has included an advertisement asking for
additional help with the Education group, the Growing Friends, the Ambassadors and the Guides. Each group
is **always** looking to increase its numbers and member participation levels. There is a veritable **kaleidoscope**
of jobs you could help fill. For instance: This is a list suggested by Kim Nolan, (Treasurer):

Administrative tasks - Tuesdays

Writing Grant submissions

Nursery set up Tuesdays 12pm

Meet & Greet (Tues. & weekends)

Computer network skills

Plant label assistant

Regular person one day a week to fill the plant trolley with plants

Cleaning, filing and tidying up Tuesday mornings

Nursery Clean-up

Computer skills (History/Admin)

Food preparation (events)

Contact the Friends at info@fbbg.org.au or leave a message on (03) 5342 9354

Become an involved
member!



The Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens promote and support the
development and conservation of our historic Gardens.

Membership gives you -

- access to special guest speakers
- day tours to significant houses and gardens
- discounts from local nurseries
- special prices on plants from our Friends Nursery
- four editions of the *Wellingtonia* newsletter
- free membership of sub-committees of your choice

Tel. George Longley Building 03 5342 9354
Email: info@fbbg.org.au



WHEN YOU NEED TO PAY US SOME MONEY:

Please remember to identify yourself,
when paying into our bank
account and **what the payment is for**.
A good method is to use your surname
and initial/s as your ID.*

Please **state what the payment is for**,
e.g. membership, bus trip, etc.

The Friends' bank details are:
BSB 633 000 Acc. No. 125334615

* make sure that you clearly
identify yourself when making an
electronic payment.

BALLARAT GARDEN DISCOUNTS FOR MEMBERS

- **Formosa Gardens Nursery** 5% off all stock
- **Grow Master** 5% off plant purchases excl. adv. trees
- **Spot on Pots** 10% off all purchases.

You will need to show your FBBG membership card

Friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens Information 2021

Email: info@fbbg.org.au

Website: <https://fbbg.org.au/>

<https://www.facebook.com/FriendsBBG>

Friends of Ballarat Botanic Gardens Inc.

P.O. Box 33W, Ballarat West 3350

<https://www.facebook.com/ballaratbotaniKIDS/>

Tel. George Longley Centre 03 5342 9354

FBBG COMMITTEE AND AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

POSITION	NAME	POSITION	NAME
President	Terry O'Brien	AAFBG rep	Merrill Shulkes
Vice President	(vacant)	Growing Friends	Yvonne Curbach
Past President	Robert Selkirk	Guides	Julie Chandler
Minute Secretary	Natalie Radomski	History	Stephanie de Boer
Treasurer	Kim Nolan	Hospitality	Doff Kemp
BotaniKids/ Education	Julie Bradby	Membership	Warwick Sellens
Events and Speakers	Carole Haines	Newsletter Editor	Michael Bird
Foundation Rep.	Terry O'Brien	Western Bed	Vacant
PR/Promotions	Wendy Taylor		
General member	Jock Gilbert	Ambassadors	Trish Twaits (non-Committee)
General member	Lorraine Powell	Botanical Art	Val Richards (non-Committee)
General member	(2 vacancies)		

FRIENDS COMMITTEE MEETING TIMES 2021

Meetings are held in the George Longley Centre subject to Covid-19 regulations (rear of the Robert Clark Horticultural Centre):

Committee	3rd Tuesday of each month at 4 pm. <i>(Please note the change in time)</i>
Botanical Artists	Mondays 10 am to 3 pm during school terms.
Guiding Friends	4th Wednesday each month 10 am.
Growing Friends	Tuesday each week 1 pm-4 pm, and the 2nd Sunday every month, 1 pm -4 pm. Plant Sales at these times.
BotaniKids /Educating Friends	2nd Tuesday each month 10 am (plus special events)
History Group	1st Thursday each month 4 pm.

WHAT'S COMING UP FOR THE BALLARAT FRIENDS?

THURSDAY, APRIL 15	New Members gathering in Robert Clark Horticultural Centre at 5 pm. An opportunity to meet member of the Committee and Convenors. Drinks and nibbles provided. If you joined in last 18 months come along! RSVP email info@fbbg.org.au or ring Carole 0437 462 731
SATURDAY, APRIL 17	OPEN GARDENS Day 1 - Two gardens to be open for viewing from 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. Open for MEMBERS and their friends only. Not a public event. FREE EVENT.
SUNDAY, APRIL 18	OPEN GARDENS Day 2 - Two other gardens open for viewing from 10.00 to 4.00 p.m. Open for MEMBERS and their friends only. Not a public event. FREE EVENT.
THURSDAY, MAY 20	GENERAL MEETING - 10.00 a.m. - 12 noon. Wendouree Bowling Club; Guest speaker Peter Voterakis, local Ballarat resident and Antarctic traveller. His topic: <i>"The Unique Environment of the Sub Antarctic Islands"</i>
THURSDAY, AUGUST 19	GENERAL MEETING - 10.00 a.m. - 12 noon. Guest speaker to be confirmed.
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 19	SPRING LUNCHEON - 11.45 a.m. - 3.00 p.m. Guest Speakers to be confirmed.
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 6 & SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 7	OPEN GARDENS' Six local gardens to be open for members of the Friends. FREE ENTRY. Only Members and their Friends can attend. NOT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. Further details in Winter Wellingtonia.
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 25	CHRISTMAS DRINKS and NIBBLES. (This date and venue to be confirmed)

This Newsletter is distributed with the financial assistance of the City of Ballarat.



Photo credits: Thanks to: Warwick Sellens, Peter Marquand, Terry O'Brien, Tim Entwisle, Susan Pilbeam, Donna Thomas, Kim Nolan and Michael Bird for providing the photographs and illustrations used. Apologies for any omissions.

Disclaimer: The views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens. The Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens does not accept responsibility for statements made or opinions expressed, although every effort will be made to publish reliable and accurate information.
Contributions for Winter Wellingtonia 2021 are due by early June please. Michael Bird, Editor.
Editorial Committee: Terry O'Brien, Merrill Shulkes, Wendy Taylor and Michael Bird.