

Wellingtonia

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NEWSLETTER – SUMMER 2021

‘News from the President’



FRIENDS OF BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This is my final Wellingtonia President's report as my three year term draws to a close and I pass the baton onto Vice President **Terry O'Brien** at the AGM in February. As Terry is well known to all members, he really needs no introduction except to say, that he is very well positioned to take on the role, as I think the FBBG are part of his DNA.

Three years ago my wife Christine suggested I join her in attending the Spring Speakers Luncheon. During the lunch break we happened to be sitting with **Raoul & Beth Dixon** in the Conservatory, whom we were meeting for the first time.

After an interesting discussion about the dilapidated state of the Fernery, (although I wasn't a member of the FBBG) I offered to take up the issue with the Mayor at the time **Cr. Samantha McIntosh**. As these discussions continued little did I realise that I was being drawn into an on again off again 20 year old saga. Not only that, but I also soon realised I was rapidly going down the track to becoming a member of the FBBG, and subsequently being tapped on the shoulder to become President, just prior to the 2018 AGM!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Raoul for that "tap on the shoulder", it's been a pleasure and a privilege to work with the Friends in this capacity. Hopefully I've been able to make a meaningful contribution in some way during this period.

As I write my last report it's most heartening to see Stage 1 of the Fernery nearing completion. Design work and preliminary costing for Stage 2 have now been completed and ready to be submitted to Council. The challenge before us now will be to channel our energy into encouraging our newly elected Council to allocate sufficient funding to ensure the completion of Stage 2, including landscaping.

It is rather unfortunate that the redevelopment of the Fernery has commenced at the Wendouree Parade end, instead of starting at the western end and progressing in an easterly direction. This oversight will restrict construction access and add extra cost to the construction of Stage 2.

The importance of completing the Fernery cannot be over-estimated, as it's a vital adjunct to our world standard Botanical Gardens. Further to that many Ballarat residents have contributed financially to the FBBG and the FBBG Foundation, with the request that their contribution be used to support the Fernery. Our newly elected Councillors therefore have an obligation to keep the momentum going and allocate sufficient funds for its completion.

As this has been a year of cancellations, I've been advised that we don't need to add 2020 to our age! But there is one milestone event that wasn't cancelled this year, and I would like to congratulate **Julie Bradby** on being presented with the *Inaugural AAFBG Handbury Award*.

This Award has been named in honour of the late **Dr. Geoff Handbury AO**, who died in November 2019 aged 94. Geoff was a major benefactor of the Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens. The Award recognises the exceptional contribution to an Australian Botanic Garden by an individual from a member group, or by an AAFBG member group. Julie was officially presented with the Award by

continues page 2...

‘There are a couple of very significant Committee changes, as two long serving members have decided not to renominate.’

Why do melons have fancy weddings? Because they cantaloupe. (Sorry. Grandpa joke. Ed.)



The beginning of a new era for Ballarat will occur with the completion of the new Fernery at the Gardens. This follows years of planning and negotiation by the Friends.

You can see the transition that has taken place this year in a series of photographs on page 10.

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 6.

..from page 1

AAFBG Patron **Dr. Philip Moors**, via the AAFBG AGM Teleconference on October 19. This was a great way to recognise Julie's valuable contribution in establishing the BotaniKids and her passion for the advancement of children's education.

I would also like to acknowledge **Yvonne Curbach, Kim Nolan and the Growers** for a magnificent effort in achieving significant plant sales under very restrictive conditions during Covid-19 lock-down period. Their dedication in managing the Nursery during this period is greatly appreciated by all, as this was our only source of income during this time. Thanks also to **Peter Marquand** for making a second plant trolley available outside the Conservatory.

All being well, our Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday February 18. The venue and format will be confirmed as soon as we have some certainty around Covid-19 issues. **Included in this issue of the Wellingtonia is the 2021 nomination form for Committee positions.** Whilst some positions have already been filled, there are still some General Member vacancies. Joining the Committee is an excellent way of becoming fully involved in the FBBG and can be enjoyable and rewarding.

If you would like to take this opportunity of nominating please use the enclosed form and deliver it to either **Kim Nolan** or **Natalie Radomski** by Thursday January 21.

There are already a couple of very significant Committee changes, as two long serving members have decided not to renominate.

Firstly, after serving 22 years **Elizabeth Gilfillan** has decided to step down from the Committee. She has been a very passionate contributor throughout this period, having served as President and Projects Convenor and also establishing the FBBG Foundation.

She has also now relinquished her role as Acting Secretary for the AAFBG, which has been her responsibility for the last 12 months. Prior to that she was Secretary of the AAFBG for a period of seven years, which has been a great commitment and no doubt very time consuming. Well done Elizabeth and congratulations on a magnificent contribution.

Her position as AAFBG Representative on the Committee will be taken up by **Merrill Shulkes**, who has only recently moved to Ballarat with her husband Arthur and both have become members of the FBBG. I thank Merrill for her enthusiasm in taking on this position.

Secondly, after a 20 year period of handling Membership **Raoul Dixon** will be handing over the portfolio to **Warwick Sellens**. As members would know, Raoul has been a very dedicated contributor

and has always kept a watchful eye on the corporate aspect of the Friends. He has twice served as President and has been a valued source of wisdom and knowledge. I also thank Warwick for being prepared to take on this important role.

Congratulations to **Julie Chandler** who has offered to take over the demanding role of Guides Convenor from Terry O'Brien, when he becomes our next President.

I also advise that **Susan Pilbeam** has agreed to relinquish her position as Administration Assistant from January 12, 2021. Her paid position has been under consideration by the Committee for some time due to the impact of the Covid-19 lockdown period, which has had a significant impact on revenue from plant sales. Her position will be covered on a voluntary basis and initially spread between Committee Members Kim Nolan and Natalie Radomski. **The Committee would be pleased to hear from any member with computer skills who may be able to assist in this role on a part time basis.**

I thank Susan very much for her commitment to the position over the last five years, and for her understanding and acceptance in moving this role onto a voluntary basis. She has agreed to continue to assist Michael Bird in the production of the Wellingtonia on a voluntary basis, and will remain a member of the FBBG.

After all the cancellations for the year we managed to finish up on a good note with the annual Christmas function. The venue this year was in the Rotunda near the Cottage, which provided a suitable indoor/outdoor venue conforming to Covid-19 restrictions. Many thanks to **Carole Haines** and Kim Nolan for organising the event and the very successful raffle, with the many prizes. A special thanks to our caterers, **Doff Kemp, Helen Vincent** and **Heather Boyd** for a great effort in putting together nearly sixty boxes of Christmas sandwiches. Well done everybody.

As I sign off as your President, and given the strong Scottish influence in the development of our Botanical Gardens, I think it might be appropriate to leave you with the following wish:

"Lang may yer lum reek"

which literally means "Long may smoke blow up your chimney." In other words, I wish you a Happy New Year and a long and healthy Covid-free life.

Robert Selkirk, December 2020.

CHRISTMAS GATHERING:

What a pleasant occasion! Great food and service; interesting company and an opportunity to mix again without too much Covid interference. Due to restrictions though only about 50 could attend. 2021 will be even better! Well done organisers!



Seen at the
North
Gardens
Pavilion
Christmas
Break-up.



AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS OF BOTANIC GARDENS

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



Thank you, Warwick, for your contribution as the Ballarat Friends representative of the AAFBG For the past year.

The restrictions around Covid 19 led to the cancellation of several significant events including the 2020 AAFBG Biennial Conference in Brisbane that would have included this year's AGM. Consequently, the AGM was moved online and took place on Monday, October 19. The agenda included the presentation of annual reports and the election of new office bearers to the Management Committee – Elizabeth Gilfillan will now represent Friends of Buninyong Botanic Gardens and Merrill Shulkes is the Friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens representative.

A highlight of the AGM was the presentation of the inaugural Handbury Awards by Dr Phillip Moors, Patron of the AAFBG. The awards are funded by a most generous bequest from Geoff Handbury and recognise an exceptional contribution on a national level by groups and individuals. This year one group and six individuals were honoured, including **Julie Bradby** of the Ballarat Friends.



Merrill with husband Arthur at the Friends' Christmas break-up

Since joining the Friends Julie has worked tirelessly to establish a nature-based educational programme for children. Her foresight as an educator and her tenacity have culminated in the very successful **Botanikids**, now based in the relocated Gatekeeper's Cottage that has been beautifully restored under Julie's leadership. Congratulations and thank you, Julie, for your ongoing contribution to Ballarat Botanical Gardens.

Technology has enabled the Association's Management Committee to continue planning future events such as the 2021 AGM, intended to be held on the Waite Campus in Adelaide (*) next April. Also being planned for next October is a trip to selected gardens, parks and arboreta in Tasmania. Planning is well underway for the 2022 AAFBG Biennial Conference at **Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens**, Mogo, NSW (just north of Bateman's Bay).

We do hope that 2021 is a much more fulfilling year for the AAFBG and its members with a return to at least some face to face meetings and events.

Merrill Shulkes, Ballarat Friends representative

(* *WAITE CAMPUS: The University of Adelaide's Waite campus is home to the largest concentration of agriculture and wine research and teaching expertise in the Southern Hemisphere.*)

WHAT IS THE AAFBG?

The AAFBG is a not-for-profit incorporated association. It involves the community and supports the growth of Friends groups interested in the well-being and public appreciation of botanic gardens, through their conservation and development, scientific, educational, historical, cultural and recreational functions. Members represent a range of botanic gardens and parks in regional and metropolitan areas throughout Australia.



AAFBG membership currently consists of 59 Friends of Botanic Gardens groups from capital city, suburban and rural and regional botanic gardens and arboreta, and five affiliate members from overseas botanic gardens. Groups range in size and complexity from a membership of four to approximately 5000.

Coming Up? Annual General Meeting, 12 April 2021, Waite Arboretum, Adelaide

Further Ahead: The 2022 AAFBG Members' Biennial Conference April 29 to May 1, 2022. **Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Garden** is returning to life after the 2020 Black Summer fire that destroyed most of the Garden.

This recovery is only thanks to the heroic efforts of staff, Friends, volunteers and the whole community who have worked to rebuild and re-grow what was burnt. And Nature has done her own amazing thing as well. As a celebration of this resilience and renewal Eurobodalla is hosting the AAFBG Biennial Conference in May 2022.



Eurobodalla regional botanic garden

Ballarat Friends can read the Association's magazine 'Eucalypt' by following this link:

<https://friendsbotanicgardens.org/uploads/images/Eucalypt/Eucalypt%20No%2055%20November%202020.pdf>

or by going to: <https://friendsbotanicgardens.org>

BALLARAT FRIENDS' GUIDES REPORT:

When we take tours there are often wide-ranging conversations with our guests. Connections are made as we explain where the feature fits into the Gardens or a different context. One such example is when comparing the different plantings in the western bed. There is often talk about the staggering loss of plants through habitat loss resulting from land clearing and climate change. This is particularly relevant with the loss of habitat occurring as Ballarat grows with its 'greenfield developments'.



Victoria Park signage, Ballarat

In this exceptional year we have all had to stay **local**; and there has been a lot more reconnecting and appreciating with just what it is to be 'local'. For many this meant exploring 'locally', as well seeking out 'local' spring flowers which became a new or renewed area of interest. With interest comes concern and finding out how society can prevent their extinction.

There were stories about conservation programs here in this botanical garden, and talk about the reduced mowing and the burning program that occurs in Victoria Park. I might even report on one of my local discovery rambles that took me through Mount Egerton cemetery. My first impression was slack management with high unmown grass when there in November. But what I was seeing was another effort to try and conserve our local wildflowers and grasses. The management had a program of controlled mowing (no mowing until plants have flowered and seed set, mowing only on main pathways and mowing at the highest setting) and areas burnt on a three to five year basis.

There are many encouraging examples where public reserves like that cemetery and our Botanical gardens helping in the conservation of our wildflowers, so that we can continue to enjoy our native plants.

In this Covid year of **local focus** the Guides have moved away from our exotic trees in the Gardens and instead have focused on our native trees. The Guides will share some of the information and stories in a special garden tour on January 22 combining it with a BYO picnic in the Gardens. (See page 8). In this past year of regulated contact it will be an opportunity in the New Year for a relaxed social occasion for Friends and others to gather.

Over 4000 trees across the Ballarat municipality have made it on to the **Exceptional Tree Registry**(*). It is a site worth looking at and great to see the publicity and celebration given by COB to these assets. It aims to increase our awareness and appreciation. Many of the trees are exotic species but also listed are 15 Australian native tree species and also 17 remnant indigenous trees. A few native species are listed from BBG and they will naturally feature in the Guides tour on Jan 22.

Terry O'Brien, Guides Convenor

(*https://data.ballarat.vic.gov.au/pages/exceptional_tree_register/)



Mt Egerton cemetery

New Guides Convenor:

In 2021 we are delighted to have a new Convenor of the Guides. **Julie Chandler** will be taking on this role to lead the Guides to be an active support group for FBBG and BBG.

Julie joined the Guiding Group in 2018. She is much appreciated by the Guides not only because of her active participation but also because of her warm and considerate engaging manner. Julie has a keen interest in plants and gardens and like all of our Guides, keen to keep working up the learning curve of this complex and dynamic area of knowledge.

Our best wishes to Julie as she moves into this role in 2021. My wish for Julie is that she enjoys the role.

I have been Convenor of the Guides for many years and have enjoyed the knowledge gained, working with other guides and our achievements with tours and events and publications. **Jane Munro** taking on the organisation of booked tour groups certainly was appreciated and made the role more manageable. The Ballarat Friends' Guides work very well as a group, and all the individual contributions have made it a strong and happy group of volunteers. I will continue as a Guide and be part of the guiding support team that Julie can rely upon.

Guides need knowledge of current happenings in the gardens and we have appreciated input from Peter, Donna, Glenn and the other gardeners throughout the year to keep us informed.

Terry O'Brien, Guides Convenor 2020



Julie Chandler



A Nod to Nasturtiums: Julie Bradby is very fond of the **humble nasturtium**. We are probably telling you how to suck eggs when we tell you that: *'When planted in close proximity to sensitive crops, they will repel pests such as cabbage white butterflies, mites and aphids. In turn the flowers are highly attractive to beneficial insects such as hoverflies and pollinating bees.'*

Want more? <https://www.organicgardener.com.au/blogs/nod-nasturtiums>

Julie B

LOVE IT OR HATE IT? THE CLAXTON MONUMENT

Frederick Moses Claxton was born in Norwich, England in 1832. He arrived in Australia in 1853 and settled in Geelong before moving to Ballarat in 1856. He worked in, and later acquired, a licensed grocer store, then became an auctioneer and real estate agent.



from the
records of
John Garner



Cr Claxton atop his perch
looking over Lake
Wendouree

In 1863 he became a Councillor and was Mayor of Ballarat three times (1872, 1876 and 1882). He was a foundation Member of the City Fire Brigade, Water Commission, Hospital Board, Benevolent Home, the Orphanage Committee, the Anglican Cathedral Board, Trustee of the Mechanics Institute and President of the Ballarat Rowing Club. He was a very public spirited man.

Claxton was recognised by his contemporaries as being largely responsible for the development of the Lake and Gardens, and was said to have *"water and weeds on the brain"*.

In 1888 at the age of 55 he died of "English Cholera" in his mother's arms at his home in Webster St. He was much mourned and funds raised by public subscription saw the Claxton Memorial Fountain, sculpted by F.W. Commons and erected in 1890.

The fountain positioned outside the Fernery features a white marble bust of Claxton set onto a cement rendered base with pressed cement dolphins. The whole is set on a basalt plinth in a rendered brick pond which is surrounded by a low cast and wrought iron fence. It has had three restorations, the first in 1997 which the Friends contributed \$10,000 towards, the second in 2008 and finally 2017.



Restoration work on the
Claxton Fountain

English Cholera.

This term is not used today. In the *Illustrated Australian Medical Guide* by Muskett and Souter Vol 2 dated 1910, in pages 306-8 in the chapter headed **'VOMITING accompanied by PURGING'** it is stated :-

"In older children and in adults, attacks of vomiting - accompanied by diarrhea - are not at all infrequent, more particularly during our Australian hot weather. This is the ailment popularly spoken of as English Cholera. As a matter of fact, however, the symptoms in severe cases, are identical with those of Asiatic cholera itself - as described in connection with Cholera and Choleraic Attacks. There is the same continuous vomiting, the same voluminous and incessant watery diarrhea, the same agonizing cramps in the belly and limbs, and the same icy coldness - and shrinking - of the body, as in true cholera.

When these choleraic attacks are about, the question as to a case being true cholera or not may arise. A rough and ready rule used in the London Cholera Hospital was this - that when a man has diarrhea accompanied by griping pains in the belly, he has English Cholera, because in Asiatic Cholera the diarrhea will be painless although it will be connected with cramps in the calves of the legs. But the more exact differences are that, in English Cholera, the Cholera germ - the comma bacillus - is not present; the disease does not become epidemic; and, fortunately, it is not so usually fatal.

He goes on to explain how to treat the conditions in great detail including a flour and mustard poultice applied to the pit of the stomach, cold brandy orally and iced (from the outside of the bottle) champagne.

(This was also recommended for the treatment of typhoid fever by the medical officers of the Indian Army; presumably you departed a little happier!) JG

NEWSPAPER REPORT OF THE LAST DAYS.

'DEATH OF CR. CLAXTON, J.P.'

Seldom indeed does the death of a public man in any locality cause such a widespread feeling of regret throughout the community as was felt yesterday when it became known that Cr. F.M. Claxton, J.P. had ceased to breathe. The news was so unexpected, even to his friends, that it came with greater shock. During last week the deceased gentleman was suffering from diarrhea, but no serious results were feared, and the thought that it would lead to his decease was furthest from the minds of those who knew him. His cheery and hearty manner was never more apparent. He was present during the greater part of each sitting of the Church of England Assembly last week, and joined in the debates on Friday night, after which he took tea with Archdeacon Julius at the Vicarage. He was then suffering, but not to such an extent as to cause uneasiness in his own mind or in the minds of his friends. On Saturday morning he was down the city attending to his business as usual, but that afternoon was compelled to take to his bed. Dr Whitcombe was summoned, and pronounced the complaint from which Mr Claxton was suffering to be English Cholera. On Sunday the symptoms became more alarming, and the services of Dr Bradford were called into requisition. It was soon apparent, however, that the disease had obtained too firm a hold and that human aid was vain. At 2 o'clock yesterday morning inflammation set in, and at half past 1 o'clock in the afternoon Mr Claxton peacefully breathed his last. All his family with the exception of Mr F.M. Claxton (who arrived by afternoon train from Melbourne, having been summoned by telegram) were present at the mournful event. The deceased, at the last, placed his arm around his aged mother's neck and died in that position.'

(Ballarat Star, Mar 14, 1888).



SHEOAKS ARE GREAT BULOKEs

With leaves reduced to tiny scales (below), and petals disposed of almost entirely (female flowers above), the Sheoak must be one of the most thrifty plants around.

In the case of the four genera in the family *Casuarinaceae* - named (as is the genus *Casuarina* and *Allocasuarina*) after the similarity of the fine branches to the feathers of a cassowary, called *kasuari* in Malaysia - the flowers consist of either a single ovary with two chambers and no petals (the female flower) or a single stamen (the male flower; with one or two scale-like 'tepals' on the male flowers falling off early).



In this next picture the male flowers are immature, and unopened, but you can see how they are arranged in whorls, just like those bract-like leaves.

The flowers are gathered together in what looks like a narrow bottle-cleaner (male) or a tuft (female; see picture at top of post),



giving them a bit of visibility to animals like us. But that doesn't matter. These flowers are pollinated by wind, which means they don't have to attract bird nor bee.

In an evolutionary sense, the closest relatives to the *casuarina* family are the birches (*Betulaceae*) and an obscure South American tree called *Tichodendron incognitum*. The birches have flowers almost as reduced as those of the sheoaks, with at most a few scale-like bracts around the male or female floral parts. Like sheoaks, the male flowers are arranged around an elongate fine branch (catkin) and the females more clumped. Again the pollen is carried between flowers by the wind.

Their next closest relatives are things like cucumbers, roses and peas, all of which have big showy petals and more complicated flowers. And the 'first' flowers were most likely whorls of female bits, male bits and some petal-like outer layers. So the *Casuarinaceae* seems to have 'lost' those bits of its flowers unhelpful for their 'preferred' form of pollination. (You'll need to convert those words in inverted commas into proper scientific jargon to accurately reflect how evolution works but this blog post is already too long...)

The branches of some of the more well-known tree species swish around in the wind, hence the common name Sheoak, with the 'She' apparently the sound those branches make - sheeeeeee. At least that's

the story I've been told, but this topic is hotly debated, at least on the internet where almost anything is disputed by someone.

That wind though is presumably behind the reduced floral apparatus. With that swishing habit, wind would remain an efficient way to move pollen around, as it was and is in conifers with a not dissimilar look and feel, albeit constructed differently (with for example needle-like leaves).



As for the oak part of the name, that's due to a propensity for early settlers to link any new plant they found back to something from their 'old country', this time the genus *Quercus*. It's said the timber of the Sheoak is similar in appearance to that of the English Oak, but not as good for construction.

That's all good and well but what about She-oke or Sheoke. You'll see that used occasionally, such as by J.W. Audas in his charming 1950 book, *The Australian Bushland*. Audas uses River Oak as most people do for *Casuarina cunninghamiana*, but Drooping She-oke for what we now call *Allocasuarina verticillata* (and usually Drooping Sheoak).

Interestingly, Audas uses Bulloak for what is now known as *Allocasuarina luehmannii*, where many (e.g. our *VicFlora*) prefer Buloke for that one. I can't find the origins of 'oke', but note that is a slang term in South Africa for a man. A little like 'bloke' I guess.

I do wonder if 'buloke' is just a take on 'b-loke', as a deliberate mispronunciation of Bull-oak, and perhaps even a dig at the 'She' part of the usual common name for a species that is a bit 'thicker' and scrappier than other more elegant Sheoaks. But that is 100% conjecture, and why 'Sheoke' or 'She-oke'?

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

A Riddle: What is it?: There was a green house. Inside the green house there was a white house. Inside the white house, there was a red house. Inside the red house, there were lots of babies.

Answer: A Watermelon!



MEMBERSHIP REPORT: The Friends are pleased to welcome the following new members who have joined since the last issue of *Wellingtonia*: Alison von Bibra, Margaret Baker, Carole Greenwood, Jan Fisher, Catharine Van Dyke, Betty Boadle, Jane Harrison, June Auchettl, Bronwyn Lubeek, Heather Fairnie, Scarlett McLean, Jan Fisher and Nina Wallis.

Thank you to all those members who have renewed their membership so promptly, and I encourage everyone else who has received a renewal notice to attend to this at your earliest convenience.

Total Membership is currently 375.

Raoul Dixon – Membership Officer



The Ballarat Botanical Gardens Foundation held its second Annual General meeting in September and the Board was duly elected. Membership remains the same, Peter Wilson, Mark Shultz, Daina MacLeod, Robert Selkirk and Elizabeth Gilfillan, chair.

Business has continued as usual in this extraordinarily unusual year. The Board met several times with COB Fernery project manager, Anthony Schreenan.

Project funding within our Gardens is of high priority, the Fernery redevelopment being of major interest. The BBGF supported in principle the application to Botanic Gardens Victoria Grants program for Landscape funding of Fernery Stage one. Stage two development yet to be finalised and discussion with the City of Ballarat continues.

Visitors to the Gardens are once again showing their appreciation through the BBGF electronic donation facility, which having been idle during the Conservatory closure, is once more seeing funds flowing. **Tax deductible donations to the Gardens can be made through the BBG Foundation Info@ballaratbotanicalgardensfoundation.com.au.**

The BBGF Board can now announce the commencement of a new, additional Horticulture Apprentice, who will complete a Certificate III in Parks & Gardens commencing in 2021. This is being facilitated through Ballarat Group Training, Jobs & Training, discussion to finalise the appointment will take place first thing in the New Year. This has been made possible by two generous benefactors.

Another generous benefactor, Kevin Delmenico, will be recognised with the installation of a public use botanical digital microscope in the Gatekeepers Cottage. A television screen has been donated by Board member Mark Schultz. Looking forward to a productive year ahead in our Gardens.

Elizabeth Gilfillan, BBG Foundation Chair.

SIX LOCAL GARDENS TO BE OPEN FOR MEMBERS OF THE BALLARAT FRIENDS IN APRIL 2021

Our events organiser, Carole Haines, has been busy attempting to have half a dozen local gardeners to open up their gardens for a members only showing next April.

A description of each of the gardens will be a feature of the Autumn *Wellingtonia*. **Try to keep Saturday, April 17 free to join in this special event.**

FRIENDS OF THE BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS INC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2021

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens Inc. will be held on **Thursday, February 18, 2021** in the Robert Clark Horticultural Centre, commencing at **10.00 a.m.**

Business to be conducted:

1. Presentation of reports of activities for 2020;
2. Election of Committee for 2021;
3. Any other general business.

This will be followed by a General Meeting when we will enjoy a talk by Doug Bradby. **Robert Selkirk, President.**

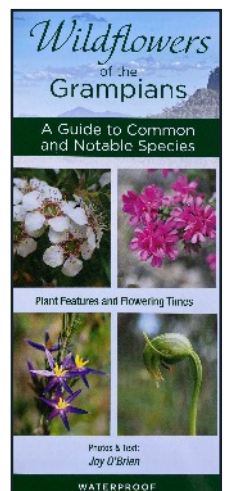


'Garden Cuttings' by Green Thumb

- It has been inspiring to see the extremely large number of people using the Gardens and the lake precinct for their exercise during and after the Covid-19 lock-down. Will it continue into 2021?
- The *Ballarat Courier* (December 26) carried a report by Roger Thomas about the recent bird count at Lake Wendouree. *'There were 136 swans counted .. Among the total of 1467 birds found...'*
- Members really rallied to get behind the *'Seeding The Future'* activity on Sunday, November 8. The event was aimed at giving something back to the community in line with the *'Be Kind Ballarat'* initiative which has run during the Covid-19 lock-down. Outstanding success with hundreds of locals queuing up for their choices.
- The Gillies Street boundary fence is undergoing a re-build. New posts to replace the rotting ones.
- Have you been watching the new fernery rise from the 'ruins'. President Robert's comments (see p.1) are very pertinent GT thinks.
- Have you heard any 'whispers' as to what the planting plan is for the new Fernery? Nothing doing here at Wellingtonia Headquarters either!
- Our retired Friends' labelling engraver, Joy O'Brien, has not let grass grow under her feet. In her 'retirement' she has produced a comprehensive pocket guide on common and notable wildflowers of the Grampians. Look out for it when next in the Grampians area.
- At the Christmas break-up there were nearly a dozen raffles. The donors of three \$50 vouchers were two local nurseries **Avalon** and **Growmaster**, plus local eatery **The Boatshed**. Friends members are asked to keep them in mind for their generous support.
- You will have noticed that the Friends Committee has gone through a major shake-up. Sad to see that Admin Assistant Susan Pilbeam has left that role! Do you have skills that could help run our organisation? Computer background? Administrative skills? Able to use Microsoft Access? If so, you should get in contact with our office.
- Two events which are yet to be scheduled in the future are the opening of the new Fernery and the unveiling of the P.M. Turnbull bust. Hopefully they will be open to all our members plus the general public.
- **Until next time, keep your secateurs sharp and sterilised! Green Thumb**



Lake Wendouree swans getting their daily exercise



Joy O'Brien's creation

WHAT'S COMING UP FOR THE BALLARAT FRIENDS?

JANUARY 21 (THURSDAY)	NOMINATIONS FOR 2021 COMMITTEE DUE (NOMINATION FORM ENCLOSED)
JANUARY 22 (FRIDAY)	AUSSIE TREE TALES AND BYO PICNIC. 5 PM. TURKEY OAK AT START OF PM'S AVENUE.
FEBRUARY 18 (THURSDAY)	BALLARAT FRIENDS' ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. 10 AM - 12 noon. Guest speaker: Doug Bradby, local author and historian. <i>'The Botanic Gardens, Botany and Ballarat – the Bigger Picture'</i> . (N.B. Social distancing rules may apply.)
SATURDAY 6 TO SUNDAY 28 MARCH	PROPOSED DATES FOR THE 2021 BALLARAT BEGONIA FESTIVAL.
SATURDAY, APRIL 17	OPEN GARDENS - Members' gardens to be open for viewing from 10.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m. Open for MEMBERS only. Not a public event. Bookings may be necessary due to COVID restrictions. Further information closer to the date.
THURSDAY, MAY 20, 2021.	GENERAL MEETING - 10.00 a.m. - 12 noon. Guest speaker to be confirmed.
THURSDAY, AUGUST 19, 2021.	GENERAL MEETING - 10.00 a.m. - 12 noon. Guest speaker to be confirmed.
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2021.	SPRING LUNCHEON - 9.45 a.m. - 3.00 p.m. Details of the Speakers will be advised in the Autumn and Winter editions of <i>Wellingtonia</i> .
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2021	CHRISTMAS DRINKS and NIBBLES. (This date and venue to be confirmed)

2021 PLANNING: This is proving to be somewhat problematic given our inability to foresee the future. However we have been lucky to have arranged for **Doug Bradby** to be our guest speaker at the AGM in February. At this stage we aren't sure of how many can attend yet!

Doug is well-known for his books especially the series focusing on the discovery of gold and the history of Ballarat. Rest assured, he is an engaging and entertaining speaker. You can find out more about Doug from his website: <https://www.seriouslyhistory.com.au/>

AGM Guest speaker Doug Bradby, local historian and author of numerous books on Ballarat's history.



COMING UP IN JANUARY

Aussie Tree Tales & BYO Picnic

Ballarat Botanical Gardens

Friday, January 22, 5 pm

A free event presented by Guiding Friends of BBG

Chill out on a summer's evening and hear about the significant native species in our Botanical Gardens

Gather at 5 pm at the start of the Prime Ministers' Walk under the canopy of the Turkey oak.

FBBG Friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens

info@fbbg.org.au

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"SEEDING THE FUTURE" EVENT IN NOVEMBER: Members will remember this free event organised by a small but enthusiastic group of the Friends under the leadership of Elizabeth Gilfillan and Wendy Taylor. All members were invited to add to the array of seedlings, cutting and mature plants. The response from the public was phenomenal! Long lines of people waited patiently to select from the range on offer which had been organised during the morning by a hard-working group of Friends. Well done everybody! This page displays what happened on the day.

Jenny Burrell observed: *'The original restriction of one vegetable seedling and three flower plants was soon lifted. By 3.00pm they had miraculously all but gone. My experience of talking to random people was that they were thrilled by the generosity of the Friends and were very excited to have new plants for their gardens for FREE.'*



Free-for-all at the Gardens

WHO doesn't like a free plant?

The Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens held a special giveaway day on Sunday, handing out hundreds of seedlings to eager green-thumbs to kickstart their own gardens.

With many of the gardens' regular activities suspended because of the pandemic, it was a good way to engage with people on a bright spring afternoon, Botanical Gardens Foundation chair

Elizabeth Gilfillan said, particularly as so many people had taken up gardening during lockdown.

"We had virtually nothing left over," she said. "I think there might have been a lot of people there who hadn't done much gardening before, and it was lovely to see the enthusiasm for taking plants home."

Ms Gilfillan said the committee had asked the 300 or so Friends of the gardens to grow a couple of spare seed-

lings for the giveaway, which "encouraged people who don't usually do these things to step out of their comfort zone", she said.

With the potential return of tourists from Melbourne in the summertime, Ms Gilfillan encouraged locals to check out the gardens, and become a Friend in the meantime. "The gardens are a huge tourist Mecca, and will be more so - it's all about sharing the joy of nature, really."

Report in Ballarat
Courier, 11 Nov 2020

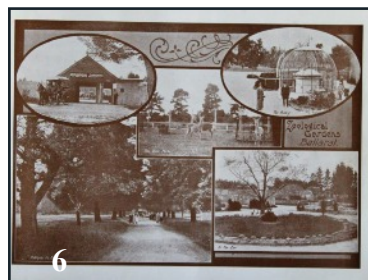




Brain Test

Ballarat Botanical Gardens Quiz (PART 3)

1. What act of bravery does the Almeida Pavilion commemorate? (Photo 1)
2. Which state of the art, concrete building was designed in 1962 as a venue for concerts? (Photo 2)
3. The Gardens Pavilion, built in 1890, is now a restaurant, named after its architect. Who was he? (Photo 3)
4. Which people and nation gathered at the wetland that became Lake Wendouree, and are celebrated by works in the Indigenous Sculpture Park?
5. When were Begonias first cultivated at the Ballarat Botanical Gardens and how many varieties are now grown each year as part of the Begonia Festival?
6. What did the first Europeans to settle the area call the wetland that became Lake Wendouree? (Photo 4)
7. Established in 1870 as part of the Fish Acclimatisation Society, what is still helping to stock the lake and local dams? (Photo 5)
8. When did the Wetlands Project and associated re-planting of native grass species begin?
9. Henry Ben Jahen donated what facility to the Ballarat Botanical Gardens in 1917? (Photo 6)
10. When was the Sequiodendron Avenue planted and how long is it?

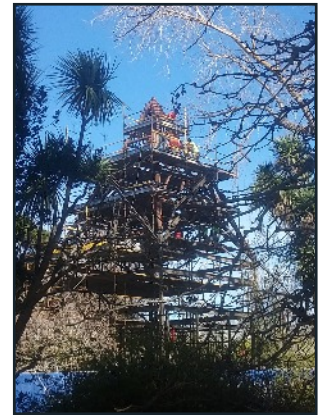


Answers (if you need them) on page 12

THE FERNERY AT BALLARAT



Once upon a time, the fernery looked like this (insert left above) and the tired old slatted rendition was demolished early in 2020. (Main picture above)



The four photos above show the progress of the new fernery starting in June 2020.



(Left): A photo of the nearly completed fernery (as at 30 December 2020) with the Claxton Memorial Fountain in front.

(Below): Closer look at the weather vane at the top of the Fernery.



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: **New** simpler prices for Members
\$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 plant trolley outside the Robert Clarke Conservatory. We now have **two!** The Growing Friends continue to stock them with a great variety of plants which you can buy at any time during the day with cash (honour system) or from our nursery.

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



Spotted recently: two random and excited plant buyers!
(Photo: Warwick Sellens)



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

A membership form is enclosed in this mail-out so you can introduce the Friends to a friend or relative. Ed.

"I'm a little hard of hearing, but I once heard that the most popular thing to download on the internet is corn." Anon.

Julie Bradby asked to remind you all that the Botanikids group has gone on despite Covid. Have a look at their **Christmas nature activity** at their *Facebook* page. Search for: BALLARAT BOTANIKIDS and then Look for their VIDEOS and the one on DECEMBER 8.



Friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens Information 2020

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

FRIENDS COMMITTEE MEETING TIMES 2021

Meetings are held in the George Longley Centre (rear of the Robert Clark Horticultural Centre):

Committee	3rd Tuesday of each month at 3:30 pm
Botanical Artists	Mondays 10 am to 3 pm during school terms.
Guiding Friends	4th Tuesday 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 the above times.
BotaniKids /Educating Friends	2nd Tuesday each month 10 am (plus special events)
History Group	1st Tuesday each month 4 pm.

DEADLINE FOR THE AUTUMN EDITION 2021 by MID-MARCH please

Submit articles to the Editor info@fbbg.org.au

How is your free time looking after Covid-19?

Interested in joining a Friends Group?

The Ambassadors, Guides, Growers and BotaniKids can **always** use extra volunteers, or you can join the Botanical artists! Contact the Friends at info@fbbg.org.au or leave a message on 5342 9354



Answers to the quiz on page 10:

1. Ballarat born William Almeida heroically captured a bank robber from Squizzy Taylor's gang, but later died of his gun-shot wounds.
2. Sound Shell the Gillies Street side of the North Gardens.
3. William Piper.
4. Wadawarrung of the Kulin nation.
5. The late 1800's and over 600 varieties.
6. Yuille's Swamp.
7. The Ballarat Fish Hatchery.
8. 1995.
9. Ballarat Little Zoo.
10. 1870's and 1.2 km.

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



Photo credits: Thanks to: Warwick Sellens, Jennifer Burrell, Elizabeth Gilfillan, Terry O'Brien, Tim Entwisle, Susan Pilbeam, Raoul Dixon, The Ballarat Courier and Michael Bird for providing the photographs and illustrations used. Apologies for any omissions. Ed.

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 Autumn Wellingtonia 2021 are due by MID-MARCH please. Michael Bird, Editor.

Editorial Committee: Robert Selkirk, Elizabeth Gilfillan, Susan Pilbeam and Michael Bird.