

Wellingtonia

ABN 32 346 573 092 ACN 3465 info@fbbg.org.au www.fbbg.org.au

Tel. George Longley Building 03 5342 9354 PO Box 33W BALLARAT WEST 3350PP Number 100020008



NEWSLETTER – SUMMER 2022-23

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK:



Our congratulations to Donna Thomas on her appointment as Curator of Ballarat Botanical Gardens and Nursery. We are pleased for the Gardens and for Donna herself. Significant changes have occurred in these Gardens since the COB implemented key recommendations of the Visionary Plan prepared by Mark Richardson in 2014. Donna has played a key role in these improvements of having better documented collections. Garden Explorer, the new native bed and “Care for the Rare” plantings and experimenting with

more environmentally sustainable practices are all ways that the gardens are positioning itself as one of Australia’s top regional botanic gardens. We have in Donna an energetic curator who is committed to these changes to meet our role



Curator Donna Thomas (right), with FBBG stalwart Pamela Thompson at a recent function

as a botanic garden in the 21st century. The Friends appreciate the good relationships that Donna has built up over the years with our various groups and we look forward to continuing to work together to support our common goals for these gardens.

Thank you to all who were involved in our 40th celebrations. It was memorable and used as a fitting

occasion to honour the members who have achieved so much. The \$200,000 contribution by the Friends towards the Fernery Project has been built up by the Friends in those years. The Foundation is now established for fundraising and as we move forward it will be the Foundation that will undertake the fundraising for major projects identified for the Gardens. Funds raised by the Friends will be for smaller projects, education and supporting other ways that the community connect to the gardens.

In the first 40 years the work for the Friends was to ensure the gardens were developed as a Botanical Garden and the Visionary statement that led to the COB appointment of a Collections Officer and investment in Garden Explorer are some of the pluses through this time.

Emphasis on its botanical role also has coincided with the increased demands and recognition of its significant role for Ballarat, given its central and accessible location. COVID has amplified the Gardens role as a haven for well-being and nature immersion. Environmental concerns about Climate change and decreasing bio-diversity also emphasizes its relevant role in today’s society. It is so well positioned with numerous on ground examples and activities to help educate the community on conservation and increase ecological understanding about our environment.

Considerable investment is being made in Botanic Gardens across Victoria and nearby Bendigo is a good example. The needs of more nature immersion,

continues page 2...

Please note: In this publication some abbreviations are used for simplicity sake: FBBG = Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens; COB = City of Ballarat; RCHC = Robert Clark Horticultural Centre; GLB = George Longley Building



THE BALLARAT FRIENDS CELEBRATED 40 YEARS IN OCTOBER

Pictured left is Joan Garner, inaugural president as featured on the front page of the ‘Ballarat Times’
Full report page 5; More photos on pages 8 and 9.

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



See what Tim is
planning on page 4.

environmental education and conservation have increased the role for Botanical Gardens in our cities.

Recent publicity was given to the range of sustainable gardening alternatives that the horticultural staff are trialling in the Ballarat gardens. Digging in oak leaves and green manure crops are being trialled. It is practices about helping to secure an environmentally sustainable future and the health of the natural environment that is of increasing interest to our community.

The setting up of the new Friends group, the bio-diversity group, aims to tap into this broad interest area and to play a role helping us understand our complex environment and its needs. The wetlands and fairyland



Friends at the recent Wetlands walk in the North Gardens

are fascinating parts of the Gardens but increasingly questions are being asked about their care and sustainability and their untapped potential.

At our FBBG AGM on Thursday, February 23

our guest speaker will be Emma Cutting from Heart gardening project. She will bring a positive and enthusiastic address about creating bio-diversity in cities. Emma says, "the more we help nature the more we are helping ourselves and our community".

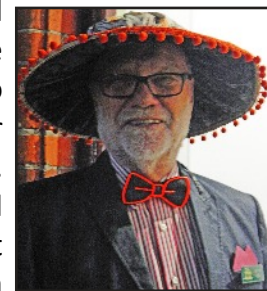
On Tuesday February 28 the focus continues with an update on the wetlands at a special meeting. The Friends see the wetlands as an integral part of the botanical gardens. The wetlands are man-made but have become a nature haven. There are opportunities here for more native flora landscaping, conservation, and interpretation. We can see increased benefits and opportunities for our Botanical Gardens here. Friends are striving through this February meeting to get a clearer picture about the North Garden Wetlands. Management involves cultural, technical, and ecological layers in this site. It is complex. Community interest in this area is high, but its the understanding of what is happening that is low.

The Friends hope to bring people together to clarify the needs of the wetlands in our Ballarat Botanical Gardens.

What is Ballarat's vision for this site? Can we hasten along some opportunities?

And, on a similar note, what progress has been made with the *North Gardens Indigenous Sculpture Landscape Master Plan* of 2019?

Ten years devoted service producing the *Wellingtonia* comes to an end for Michael Bird with this issue. Michael has been a pleasure to work with and looking back over the last 40 issues of the newsletter we can see the ongoing innovations and improvements in our newsletter. It is a proud part of the contribution FBBG makes to the community and keeps us informed and stimulated and an enjoyable read. His good humour is also evident and adds to our appreciation of the newsletter. As editor Michael has control over its presentation and layout and not once did we have a complaint about poor treatment of what was contributed. Neither did Michael not present an article even though it came in late and meant lots of readjustment. The newsletter has meant intensive work four times a year and Michael has willingly made this contribution. We are proud of the result and very thankful for the contribution made.



Michael 'Pancho' Bird at the 40th Gala

We will also miss Michael's input to our committee meetings – always considered input and respecting the range of views. Those witty one-liners to lighten the mood will be missed as well. Good luck Michael as you forge ahead with life.

There will be some vacancies on the committee and so please consider putting up your hand for this contribution. Nomination forms will be available in GLB in January. 2023 will hopefully have less Covid influence on our activities and so more confidence in forward planning. Fernery landscaping and refit will occur and already we are in discussions about the Begonia Festival.

Our many activities and involvements continue apace to help these gardens flourish and strengthen community connection.

Terry O'Brien, FBBG President

An addiction to gardening is not all bad when you consider all the other choices in life. Cora Lea Bell



MEMBERSHIP REPORT

The Ballarat Friends welcome the following members who have joined us since the Spring edition of *Wellingtonia*: Anne Munro, Anna Beesley, Nicole Van Gaans, Myra Norton, Angela Atkin and Neil Atkin.

Warwick Sellens, Membership Coordinator

January – June
2023

EVENTS



Please note: our events will abide by any COVID-19 restrictions at the time.

List of confirmed events for your diary. More in the pipeline that you will hear about as the year proceeds.

Australia, before the Gum Trees
Talk, Guided Tour & Picnic
A free event presented by the FBBG Guides

Thursday 19th January 2023
5:30pm, Ballarat Botanical Gardens

5:30pm Talk in Robert Clark Horticultural Centre
The Changing Australia as seen by our Gondwana Trees
5:45pm Tour in Gardens
Guided Tour of Gondwana trees – each tree has its own individual story
6:30 Picnic in Gardens
BYO Picnic – Relax and enjoy with live music by 'Sweet Harmonies' from 60/70/80's

FBBG
FRIENDS OF BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS
info@fbbg.org.au
53 429 354

Thursday, January 19, 5.30 pm:

'Talk, Guided Tour and Picnic' 'Australia before the Gum trees'

Thursday, January 26:

Australia Day on Lake Wendouree Working with other community groups the FBBG are contributing:

2 pm BotaniKids program

3.30 pm Prime Ministers Avenue Guided walk

Thursday, February 23:

FBBG Annual General Meeting. Emma Cutting from *Heart Gardening Project* will be our Guest speaker. Our patron, Tim Entwisle and CoB Mayor Des Hudson are also contributing.

Tuesday, February 28, 5.30 -7.30 pm:

Update – Focus on the Wetlands. Range of local speakers providing information about needs, progress and plans.

Wednesday, March 1, 10 am:

New Members morning tea

Thursday, March 2, 5 -6.30 pm:

Launch and first meeting of our new Bio-Diversity group.

March 11, 12, and 13. Ballarat Begonia Festival Volunteers will be required to help manage plant sales and crèche during this very busy time for FBBG. BotaniKids will be looking for volunteers too.

May 1- 28: ELMS Exhibition (FBBG Guides and Botanical Artists) in Statuary Pavilion.

Thursday, May 18 – FBBG May Quarterly meeting for all members.

May 19 – 28: Ballarat Heritage Festival

Sunday May 21, 2 pm: Guided tour of the BBG Elms collection.

Sunday May 28: World Botanic Gardens Day 2023 'Inspirational Plants and People'

Sunday May 28, 2 pm: Our Inspiring Elms. Learn more about managing these trees from a range of speakers.

SPECIAL EVENT:

Former Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull AC, visited the Ballarat Botanical Gardens in November to unveil his bust on the famed Prime Ministers Avenue.

Mr Turnbull has become the 29th Australian Prime Minister to have their bronze statues installed on the Avenue.

The bronze bust is the work of Sydney-based sculptor Linda Klarfeld, who was previously commissioned for the Julia Gillard and Tony Abbott busts.

A break in the wet weather was appreciated on the day, and the Garden staff are to be congratulated for minimising the impact of the sodden soil which was all about.

That's one down, and still two to go! Scott Morrison (and Anthony Albanese once he leaves office) will surely be added in the near future. In recent years CoB has requested federal government financial support for the continuation of the Avenue after the exhaustion of funds from the original Crouch Bequest. So far this has not happened. **MB**



Above: Linda Klarfeld, the new bust, and former PM Malcolm Turnbull

FBBG VISIT TO THE NORTH GARDENS WETLANDS

One of the important roles of members of the FBBG is supporting the growth and development of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens. The FBBG are also aware of adjacent precincts to the Gardens. These neighbouring areas play a direct and indirect role in the well-being of the gardens which is recognised as one of Australia's most significant cool climate gardens.

One of the adjacent precincts where the FBBG has recently been developing an interest is the North Gardens Wetlands (NGW) in the area immediately west of The Boulevard. The FBBG led a walking tour of the Wetlands for members and friends in early December. Lots of interesting informal discussion took place with notes and suggestions handed over to President Terry.

The NGW is one of a number of wetlands within the City of Ballarat. The primary role of this particular wetland area is to improve the quality of the urban stormwater before it enters Lake Wendouree, well known for its high urban wetland qualities and many passive and active recreational values.

Approximately twenty years ago the City of Ballarat recognised the need to improve the stormwater quality entering the Lake from urban areas to the north and commenced planning for the NGW. I had the privilege of overseeing the construction of the NGW for the Council.

The NGW was designed by specialists in wetland design and incorporated a litter trap at the wetland entry and then a series of ponds and filter walls to reduce nutrients and silts which are picked up by the water as it passes through the developed suburbs to the north. The naturally treated stormwater then flows under Wendouree Parade and enters the Lake at the eastern end of Fairyland.

A formalised wetland environment was constructed on what Friends may recall was previously an open grass reserve. The wetlands have over time transitioned into a very natural environment attracting special populations of birdlife, water-life and vegetation.



An important more recent addition to the NGW precinct was Murrup Laarr (ancestral stones) 2019, by artist Deanne Gilson. Using local basalt to tell Wathaurung stories of dreaming, memory and men and women's business.

Water quality monitoring by Council appears to indicate the wetland environment is largely serving its purpose. In addition the network of pathways attracts a strong interest from walkers and bird watchers. I'm also amazed at some of the unique fungi that can be seen intermittently throughout the wetlands!

There are several community groups who also share our interest in the NGW and have much to contribute to our understanding of this environment.

The FBBG looks forward to informal and formal discussions with City of Ballarat staff responsible for the NGW, to enhance the important natural filtration system, vegetation, bird-life, water-life, animals, insect life and the passive recreational values of the wetlands.

FBBG will also be asking for expressions of interest from FBBG members to participate in future discussions, planning and activities to support the NGW.

Andrew Miller, FBBG Member

Sign in local garden: *'Unruly children will be given hugs, sugar and a free puppy.'*

BOTANIKIDS REPORT: Thank you one and all from both the BotaniKids team and the Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens .

The *Under Fives* and *After Schoolies Nature Clubs* have been a delight this year as we embarked on a regular weekly session together. These involved all ages from babes to elders, and teens to fifties! A mixed bunch of people learning about plants and nature well as our part in it all.

It takes a village to raise a child and children to make a village! I think we made a village this year with more to come in 2023.

Merry Christmas have a great nature inspired holiday! See you on Australia Day as we explore the beautiful native plants of the Gardens.... **Julie Bradby and Team**



as

FRIENDS 40TH ANNIVERSARY GALA CELEBRATION AT THE BALLARAT MINING EXCHANGE

Following the deferral in February of our intended Celebration of 40 years of service by the FBBG to the Ballarat Botanical Gardens, the small Sub-committee formed for the event set to work to ensure that the occasion would be even more perfect on the new date of Thursday October 20. But, with COVID still on everyone's minds, the concern was '*would anyone come*'. We needn't have worried! Over 170 people turned out to share a truly sparkling, and dare I say it, glamorous, evening.

We were fortunate enough to be able to begin setting up the Ballarat Mining Exchange on the day before. Geoff Richardson of Formosa Gardens Nursery allowed us to borrow nearly \$4000 of plants to decorate the edges of the hall and Florist Guild members Anita Hinton and Bereniece McKenzie created the floral arrangements at the entry, mostly from their own gardens. The small FBBG sub-committee was able to rope in extra help in the form of other members as well as husbands, wives, and relatives to transform the Mining Exchange. Small but necessary last-minute details were attended to and two members got parking tickets. But the hall was finally ready for the occasion.

From the walk on the red carpet (thank you Buninyong Film Festival) to the welcome at the desk, to the trumpeter heralding our City of Ballarat Town Crier, the evening started with panache. MC Jock Gilbert did an excellent job of keeping to schedule and welcoming the various dignitaries including our patron Professor Tim Entwisle and of course our members. He also introduced the program for the night which began with a 'Welcome to Country' by Tammy Gilson. It was lovely to be joined by several of the Botanical Gardens team as well as the newly retired Curator Peter Marquand.

A theatrical piece especially commissioned for the night took us back to an imagined conversation between our first Curator, George Longley, and Director of RBG Melbourne, Ferdinand von Mueller. The presentation was based on information provided by the History Group and supplementary research by playwright Peter Freund (who played Mueller to Hedley Thomson's Longley).

Mayor Daniel Maloney gave a short speech, as did Tim Entwisle. Elizabeth Gilfillan, on behalf of the Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens, presented a congratulatory certificate. President Terry O'Brien rounded off the formal part with a brief historical overview of the FBBG while a visual presentation highlighting some of the FBBG activities and events played on the big screen. The celebration cake made by Maria Sozanski was cut by Janet Dale and Heather Fryer in memory of their mother Jessie Scott, a founding member of the Friends

The budget included a \$2000 grant from City of Ballarat and was supplemented by generous donations of hampers from Cheer Box and Wilson's Fruit and Vegetables. Raffle prizes included garden books from anonymous donors. Canapés and drink service was provided by Peter Ford's team. It was in fact Peter Ford's farewell to catering at the Mining Exchange. Where will we find another who can do this as well as Peter?

While the alcove displays showcased the massive amount of work done by the various speciality-groups in the FBBG over

the years, a big part of the reason for the Ruby Event was to say thank you to those members who have over the decades have made sustained, significant contributions to the FBBG. In this initial tranche, sixty seven members who joined before the end of 2012 were acknowledged with a special Certificate of Appreciation. Two people - Joan Garner (our inaugural President FBBG), and Robert Whitehead, on behalf of his father Bob Whitehead Foundation Member FBBG and past Director of Parks and Gardens of the City of Ballarat – were invited to accept their certificates and say a few words. It is intended to continue these certificate presentations at subsequent FBBG AGM's working our way through the years.

The ruby theme was captured in the attire of the assembled and Doff Kemp, ably assisted by Cr Samantha Macintosh, cruised the room chatting with people to find our Ruby Queen, who was duly crowned. Well done Jane Monro! Second prize was given to Rebecca, the partner of garden team leader Adam, and she sashayed stylishly down the room to collect it. A plethora of door prizes sourced by Carole Haines were distributed to some very lucky attendees by our Past President Robert Selkirk.

Our wonderful guest speaker, Caroline Blackman, introduced us to twenty-five years of her professional life as a Garden Designer with such enthusiasm and joy. *Vivid Design*, the company she runs with husband Joby, is an international practice, allowing her to share insights into the different ways ideas can be implemented across the world, as well as introducing us to simple solutions to design challenges. Her constant message was 'It's all about the plants!'



All big events require planning. This picture shows some of the FBBG committee meeting in the Mining Exchange a few days before the event.

Of course, all things must come to an end and eventually the guests went home and the packing up began. Chairs were stripped of their fancy covers and the tables were cleared. Next morning, oh joy of joys, over twenty Friends returned to help get everything to its rightful place.

At this point, thanks must go to Events Convenor Carol Haines who steered our little sub-committee through the vicissitudes of the year and got us to the end as a happy team.

**Lorraine Powell,
40th Anniversary Sub Committee**

FRIENDS' GUIDES REPORTS:

FROM JULIE: It's always a pleasure to share Guiding with new members and this year we have warmly welcomed Miriam Tonkin and Robert Barnes to the Guides.



New Guides: Above Robert Barnes. Below Miriam Tonkin.



I really appreciate and thank the Guides for the enthusiastic manner in which they always support the free Sunday morning tours, the booked guided tours and the special events during 2022.

A highlight this year was the Oaks Exhibition and Tour during Heritage Week. We look forward to sharing the Elms of the Ballarat Gardens in 2023. The November meeting took the Guides to Kirks Reservoir gardens where the sun shone briefly but brightly enough to show our shadows! Mark Lehne cheerfully shared his knowledge of the history, as well as the day to day workings and the task of tree maintenance in the grounds surrounding Kirks Reservoir.

Our first activity for 2023 will be sharing what we know of the Gondwana trees in our Ballarat Gardens on Thursday, January 19. A presentation in the courtyard behind the Robert Clark Horticultural Centre will be followed by a tour and concluding with a twilight picnic!I know the weather is going to be kinder for outdoor events next year!

Julie Chandler, Guides Convenor

FROM JANE: When Julie asked me to give a report on the Booked Guided Tours for 2022 I looked up the booking folder and was very surprised. There had been so many cancellations, and yet, over the year, we guided ten groups. On the whole these tours were small. Presumably the thought of a bus full of people was off-putting for those worried about Covid infection.

Sometimes with large groups we have the impression that many of the people aren't really interested in gardens; the Ballarat Botanic Gardens is just what's next on the list of places to stop arranged by the tourist people. But the small groups, who mostly came in their own cars, were very interested in looking at the features of our beautiful Garden.

One group came from the Malmsbury Gardens, another from the National Trust Society in Canberra, also a group of people who take people living with mental illness on day trips, some groups of friends and other neighbourhood groups. So in spite of the ever-present worry about Covid 19 the Guides had a good year. As the roster organiser, I thank all the Guides for their willingness to come out in the weather, fine or foul, and to engage with our guests with enthusiasm. **Jane Monro.**



ARE YOU INTO TWITTERING?

The recent Lake Wendouree bird count conducted by **BirdLife Ballarat** turned up some interesting 'bird facts':



Leading the bird count were:

Black Swans 137
Australian White Ibis 115
Cygnets 74
Australian Wood Duck 67
Magpie-lark 62

Total birds counted in the morning session: :982

So what has happened to our coots and our moorhens?

Do you remember just a few years back when the birds turned the lawns between the Conservatory and the Wallace statue into a mud-heap?

Gone! **MB**



This was nice to receive!

September 2022

Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens Inc.
PO Box 33 W
Ballarat West, VIC 3350

Dear Friends,

The Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens takes great pleasure in sending you our warmest congratulations and recognition of your achievements on the anniversary of 40 years of service to your wonderful Ballarat Botanical Gardens.

The Friends can be very proud of their 40 years of being the link between Council and the community, of support for improvements and for conserving historical elements of the Gardens.

Your commitment to the development of community education and programs for schools adds to the visitor enjoyment of the Gardens.

Your continuing contributions to the Association are very much appreciated and we look forward to many more years of our relationship,

Enjoy your celebrations on 20th October!

Kind regards,

Linda Beveridge
AAFBG President

So many weeds, so little Thyme!

PLANTS. PLANTS. PLANTS!

Due to the cancellation of the 2022 *Springfest* we have a great selection of plant stock for sale!

Salvias, fuchsias, pelargoniums hydrangeas, and many other unusual shrubs, perennials, ground covers and succulents.

This is a quote from a recent Melbourne shopper 'it's so hard to find these kind of plants anymore'.



So don't miss out, come on down to our Nursery Tue or 2nd and 4th Sundays in January and February, 1-4 pm (*SUMMER ONLY), or check out the trolley everyday outside the conservatory!



Don't forget: Members get \$2 off per plant!



BOTANICAL ART GROUP – OUR SPECIAL EVENT

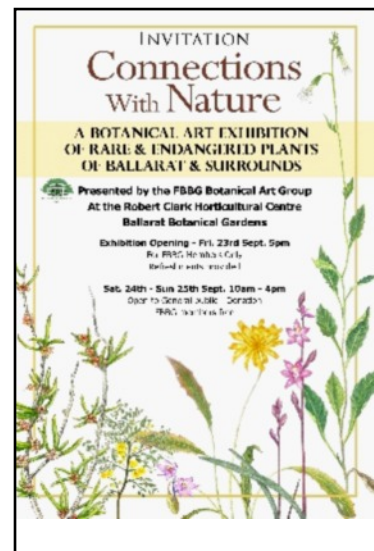
In September, the botanical artists group held their first exhibition of the Rare and Endangered plants chosen from specimens in the Ballarat area. This is an ongoing project, started in 2019, the list has 120 plants, 36 of which have so far been illustrated.

The decision was made to have an exhibition because the body of work had grown to a point in both skill and number that we felt the need to share our progress with others passionate about plants and local history.

The group welcomed 641 visitors over the two days of the exhibition. Feedback from visitors was overwhelmingly positive, with many commenting about the quality and detail of the works.

The botanical art group continues to meet to work on individual and groups projects. The next is scheduled for 2023. It will see ten members undertaking the drawing of individual elm trees in the gardens. This is a request of the Friends, as part of Heritage Week display in May.

The group's strengths include differing levels of skill, style and eye for detail. We work on a similar subject and capture its essence through many lenses. We are all working to a botanical illustration standard demonstrating the application of botanical art as both a scientific plant recording method, and a pleasing art form in its own right.



One of the best aspects of working with the group is the different perspectives from a group of talented and passionate artists.

Valerie Richards, Convenor



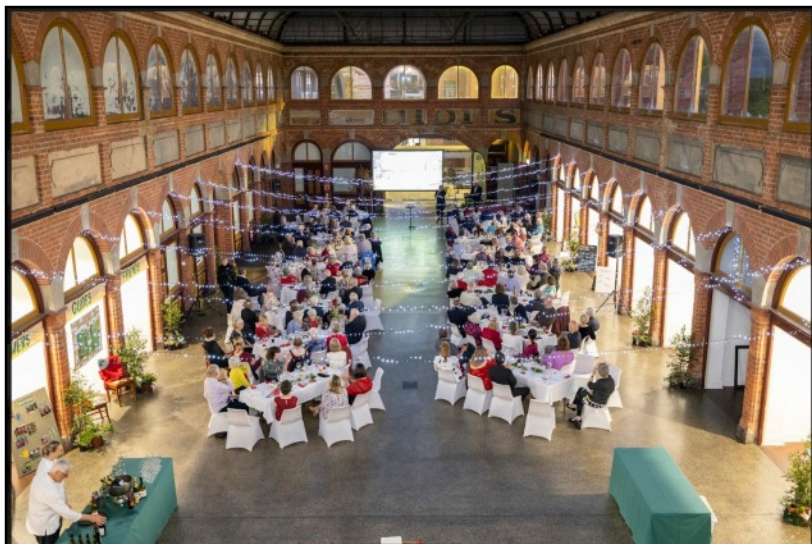
Garden Cuttings with Green Thumb!

- This is the last time that Green Thumb will be filling up space in the Wellingtonia. It has been fun to seek out a bit of news and to present it to you, but if the Editor is going, then so is GT! Thank you to the members who have taken the time to give some really nice feedback over recent times. Much appreciated.
- Peter Marquand has been seen around and about since his retirement from the position of Curator of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens. GT thinks he has a big future as a member of several of the Friends groups! Congratulations must go to Donna Thomas the newly appointed Garden's Curator. Well done Donna! It will be interesting to see who is appointed Gardens' Collections Officer, the position previously held by Donna.
- And, BIG congrats also to the organisers of the 40th bash and the Christmas get-together. GT believes that they can hardly wait for the 50th!
- If you read the sign about the guns from *HMVS Nelson* (page 8), you will have noted the ship took about 16 years to build. There is hope for our fernery!
- A small gathering of about 20 members of the Friends (and their friends too) met to walk the Wetlands of the north gardens early in December. There is a strong push for a new sub-group of the FBBG to concern itself with the bio-diversity of the wetlands, plus Fairyland on the lake edge. Some over-lap with existing groups has been pointed out, and hopefully this will not impede a new group forming. Big things planned for 2023 and beyond.
- The clock is ticking for the new fernery landscaping and planting to be completed by March.
- Is it just a co-incidence that Tim Entwisle has stopped writing his '*Talking Plants*' blog at the same time as Michael Bird is stepping down as editor of the Wellingtonia? Yes!
- Hercules is still caged!
- Interesting to know that in the recent bird count on Lake Wendouree, black swans were the most numerous species. On the other hand, coots which were in their thousands in recent years according to Tim S, only numbered THREE! Floods in northern parts of Australia must have been beckoning.

Time's up! Remember to keep your secateurs clean, well oiled and sharp – you just never know when you will need them! Green Thumb

THE 40TH GALA IN PIX! Oh what a night!

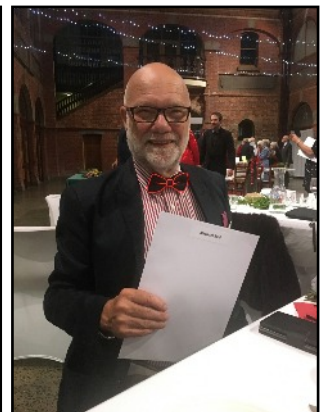
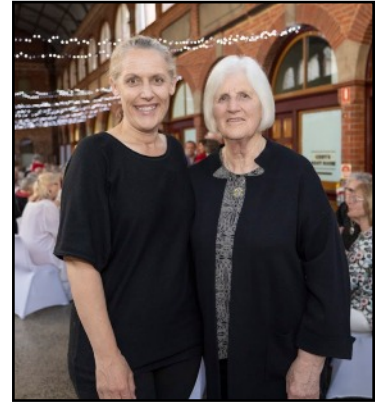
PHOTO CREDITS TO CHIPPY RIVERA/BALLARAT TIMES NEWS GROUP and SUSAN PILBEAM



The recognition of Friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens volunteers as part of the 40th anniversary project has been supported by the City of Ballarat through the Community Impact Grant Program.



SEEN AT THE 40TH GALA! A GREAT TIME WAS
HAD BY ALL! SOME CAN'T WAIT FOR THE 50TH!



A CHANCE MEETING BETWEEN

BARON von MUELLER AND GEORGE LONGLEY? MAYBE!

(Script by Peter Freund as used for the 40th Gala night)

Just in case you missed part of the dialogue between von Mueller and George Longley at the 40th

Longley: Dr Mueller, a minute of your time. I want a word about

Mueller: (interrupting) Ah, my friend from Ballarat, it is always a pleasure to see you but you are misinformed when you address me as Dr Mueller.

L: Oh, I beg pardon, Dr VON Mueller.

M: No, my friend you must now address me as Baron von Mueller. An honour conferred on me by the king of Württemberg – a minor German state but I am grateful for the recognition given to me in Europe, even if that recognition does not always come in Australia.

L: It is an honour richly deserved Baron.

M: But it has not prevented my removal as Director of the Melbourne Gardens.

L: You have always had respect in Ballarat. But I just wanted to say.....

M: I have always valued our dealings together, Mr Longley.

L: And we have always valued your gifts of trees and seeds – the trees, rare and exotic, not always suited to our climate, but always gratefully received, the seeds, the exotic grasses from India, the useful industrial plants which you have given us the chance to trial here.

M: It has always been my care, my mission, to improve, to make useful, the support the endeavours of my fellow colonists as they search for ways to improve their lot.

L: And Baron, you have been both generous and kind over the years – and not just to the Gardens, but also to the Water Supply Commission, the Hospital - the bounty you have bestowed on us has been extraordinary. As each new dispatch arrives, I give thanks to the Lord for the bounty he has bestowed on us, and that way you have helped us in our endeavour to make the wilderness blossom.

M: Ballarat has been just one of the many places it has been my humble duty to assist, to improve. But without your skill my efforts would have been fruitless – for the scientist may work and strive to make improvements but without the skill and dedication of the gardener, our efforts would be in vain, and the seeds I have sent may as well have been thrown for the four winds to scatter. I have always been impressed by your resourcefulness and skill.

L: But here's the thing Baron and what I wanted to discuss – your latest letter.

M: My letter?

L: We have just received a request to provide measurements of the trees you have given us for the last 14 years.

M: Well, without scientific recording...

L: Here's the thing Baron; you have been so generous to us that we now have a problem.

M: Problem?

L: Over the years, you have supplied us with thousands upon thousands of trees.

M: That is correct, and I trust they are flourishing under your care.

L: They are flourishing – they are tall - very tall.

M: You are to be congratulated.

L: My problem is this – you have now asked us to measure these trees in the interest of science.

M: It is essential that we are able to monitor, record and report back on our successes.

L: You want me to measure upwards of 10,000 trees in the Gardens, the hospital, the Water Supply reserves and elsewhere?

M: Mr Longley, as I said earlier, I have always been impressed by your resourcefulness – I am sure you will come up with a solution!



Peter Freund (von Mueller) and Hedley Thompson (George Longley, BBG's first curator) act out a meeting between the two for the 40th gala night

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS EVENT ON DECEMBER 8, 2022

This year's 'break-up' was a multi-faceted event. Fiona Tonkin, an ex-school principal, was our guest speaker. Her topic: 'Christmas in the Goldfields'. Fiona has been a Guide at both the Ballarat Art Gallery and at Sovereign Hill. Family history has it her great grandmother claimed to be hiding behind a bag of flour during the Eureka up-rising! She told an illuminating story.

Following on from this was the planting of a new tree (*Aesculus hippocastanum* - Common Horse Chestnut) to recognise the 40 years that the FBBG have contributed.

This is adjacent to the Prime Ministers' Walk, and will be a continuation (northwards) of the existing double row of horse chestnuts.

The final part of the evening (attended by over 70 members) saw us gather in the Conservatory for drinks and delicious food presented by the Friends Catering group.



The newly planted Friends 40th anniversary horse chestnut



Carole Haines deftly does the planting as Geoff Notman, Merrill Shulkes, Wendy Taylor and Lorraine Powell watch on



Just some of the large gathering for the Christmas event in the Conservatory

CURATOR'S REPORT:

Thank you to everyone for your kind words of congratulations and warm welcome to the role of Curator.

I am certainly looking forward to the challenge and being a part of this very exciting time across our gardens.

If I were to share my highlights of 2022, it would have to be the progress with the fernery landscape plans, with a deep appreciation for the very substantial donations from the Friends & Foundation to enable it to progress to this stage.

We saw the Begonia Festival successfully return to its pre-Covid format, our conservation work represented on the world stage at the BGCI Global Congress, and the final planting of the *Care for the Rare*.

And collectively as a team, we were delighted to share in several Friends celebrations - the wonderful gala 40th celebrations, Christmas party and the commemorative tree planting, and we were spoilt with a beautiful morning tea!

Already in 2023 we have planned, a new Conservation Plan, a greater focus on sustainability, and will welcome several new team members as we recruit to fill current vacancies – please do say hi!

Finally, from our team, we would like to wish you & your families a very special Christmas and we look forward to seeing you, and working with you, in 2023! **DONNA THOMAS, BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS CURATOR**

'Many gardeners will agree that hand-weeding is not the terrible drudgery that it is often made out to be. Some people find in it a kind of soothing monotony. It leaves their minds free to develop the plot for their next novel or to perfect the brilliant repartee with which they should have encountered a relative's latest example of unreasonableness.' quote by Christopher Lloyd

MORNING TEA FOR THE BOTANICAL GARDENS STAFF

In mid-December, the FBBG put on a special morning tea for the staff based at the gardens.

Feedback included: "What a lovely morning! So well thought out and arrayed. The food was great. Particular praise went to the Portuguese tarts! The rolls were so well filled and yummy. I thought the staff response was really positive, and the 'speeches' low key, fitting the occasion."

Hopefully this will become a permanent fixture on the Friends' schedule.



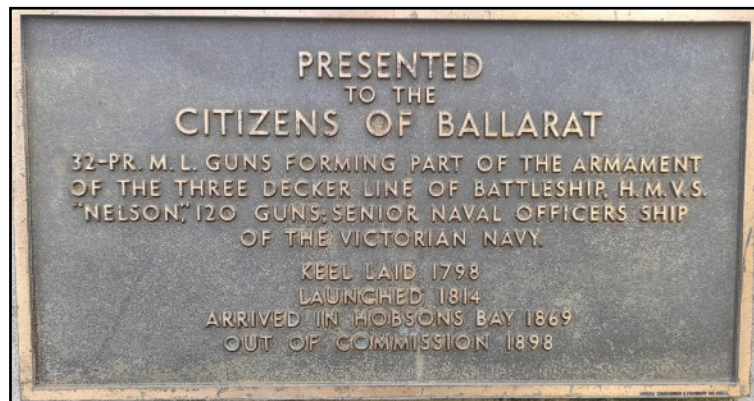
GUNS IN THE GARDENS

....from the
records of the
late John
Garner.



On July 19, 1949 the Town Clerk of the Ballarat Council received a letter from Lieutenant Commander George Prideaux (retd) for some tuberous or bulbous plants 'when your Gardens Curator has finished planting ... all his beds'. In his letter he recalled visiting Ballarat after the First World War and being taken around by the then Curator, Tom Toop. Tom asked him if he could provide any information concerning the four muzzle loading guns near the Gardens Pavilion (and 'Pipers'), which he had been told came from the Crimea and the "Big Gun" nearby which was said to have come from the Rock of Gibraltar.

He could not have asked a more knowledgeable person. George Prideaux had joined the then Victorian Navy in 1885. He then served for 45 years rising through the ranks to become a Lieutenant Commander. His father had come to Australia from England serving on the warship *Nelson* which had been transferred to the Victorian Navy.



HMS Nelson had been laid down in 1809 and launched in 1814 as a three-decker 120 gun ship of the line. In 1854 she was cut down to a two decker and fitted with a steam engine and her guns reduced to 46. The Victorian Government submitted a request for a vessel to train its local naval volunteers and she was transferred on a 'permanent loan' basis, arriving in Hobson's Bay 1868. When concern about a Russian attack was raised she was further reduced to a single-decker with her old muzzle loader guns replaced by new breech loading guns. She was sold in 1898 and became a coal lighter and later a coal storage vessel in Hobart and was broken up in 1920. Ballarat's four guns were part of her original armament and distributed around the state when they were dispensed with.

The Big Gun was from the aft turret of *HMVS Cerberus*. She was ordered by the Victorian Government in 1867 - the Russian scare again - and arrived in 1871. She was classed as a monitor and had a turret fore and aft with two 18 ton ten-inch rifled muzzle loading guns in each. When these guns were first introduced they were described as "the most magnificent guns in the world" but their record in practise was not all that marvellous, one needing to be replaced, and another, the left aft gun, was found to have its trunnion damaged after firing practice. George Prideaux was the armourer on the *Cerberus* at the time. He reported the problem and the gun was removed. *Cerberus* never fired her guns in action but, in attempting to intercept an unidentified craft she did fire and hit a chemist's shop in St Kilda with one shot and the Gellibrand lighthouse with the next!. When she fired a broadside it caused chaos through the ship.



What happened to the damaged gun that George Prideaux reported? It was sent to Ballarat for repair to the Phoenix Foundry but it was not possible to fix it. Accordingly the Council installed it on the Lake Foreshore near the Pavilion (and Piper's..Ed) at a cost of 77 pounds and there it stayed until 1987 to be climbed upon by successive generations when it was returned to the Navy. It now resides in the forecourt of *HMAS Cerberus* at the Flinders Naval Depot.

George Prideaux left telling Tom Toop that he would prepare a plaque for the four smaller guns. This he did and it can still be viewed on the gun pointing north west.

Prideaux was a keen gardener and was responsible for the planting and upkeep of the garden at Flinders – the Prideaux Rose garden.. On one occasion he arranged for a weeping ash to be brought down from Ballarat by one of his men on a motorcycle and apparently it did well. He was a founder of the West Australian National Rose Garden and remained an active gardener after his retirement.

I have no doubt that Tom Beaumont would have made sure that his request for plants was granted. JG

BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS FOUNDATION LTD.

3RD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. SEPTEMBER 2022.

CHAIRPERSON REPORT –

It is a great pleasure to present the third Annual Report of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens Foundation. The global pandemic has greatly affected our routine, but we have continued important business. Board Members Robert Selkirk, Mark Schultz, Daina McLeod, Peter Wilson and Terry O'Brien, plus Patron John Hawker, have continued to working together with the FBBG to support our common aims.

The past fledgling four years have seen the establishment of a Policy Statement and Strategic Plan, establishment of a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Ballarat, establishment of a Ballarat Botanical Gardens Apprenticeship Programme, and provided financial support to the Gatekeeper's Cottage home of the education programme BotaniKids.

The Board continues to work with the City of Ballarat toward the total completion of the Fernery.

Some Board members met with Evan King CEO and Mayor Daniel Maloney in March and were given the undertaking that the City would look forward to working together on future projects in the Gardens.

I would like to express appreciation to Arthur and Merrill Shulkes for their generous support of the BBGF Apprentice Troy Peddle who is nearly through the second year. At a recent meeting with Troy he said about attending weekly lectures "funny how it doesn't feel like school when you enjoy it so much."

Congratulations must go to the Friends on their growth and achievements over the past 40 years. Recognition must be given to the Gardens for the vital importance they provide to community health and well-being.

The Ballarat Botanical Garden is a world-class regional garden show-casing significant plant collections. Congratulations to the staff for the excellent presentation as we look forward to welcoming visitors to the Commonwealth Games in 2026.

Wordsworth Communicates continues to maintain the FBBG Website and give administrative assistance. My thanks to Barb Schriver and Adel Uri for their professional and willing support.

This will be my last report. It has been an honour to Chair the Foundation and my appreciation goes to Mark Shultz for nominating as next BBGF Chair. I look forward to being part of many future endeavours.

Elizabeth Gilfillan



TALKING PLANTS... every plant has a story to tell



November 29, 2022

TALKING PLANTS SHUT UP, FOR NOW

Last week was exactly 14 years since I began my Talking Plants blog (22 November 2008). I've posted at least weekly - and in the early years more often - with only a brief break while leading a tour to Spain a few years ago (when I still posted a few pictures each week in lieu of a full written plant portrait). In all, 1,119 blog posts, including this one.

I expect I'll return in a few months with more posts, but I'll see how things go. I do think we need social media that is more than a picture, a name and a quirky comment, but maybe I'm misreading that. In any case, my blog remains a useful resource for me at least when I want to check on the finer details of a particular plant or place, or to track down a reference.

In the meantime:

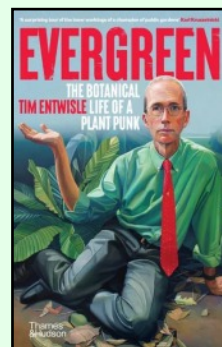
Read my latest book, *Evergreen: the Botanical Life of a Plant Punk*

Follow me on Instagram (@TimEntwisle) or Twitter (@TimEntwisle)

And look out for occasional articles in Gardening Australia Magazine and my chats on ABC RN Blueprint for Living.

An edited version of Tim's posting.

You can read more of Tim's offerings at:
<https://talkingplants.blogspot.com/> OR
just search on line for 'Talking Plants'



Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens (AAFBG):

The AAFBG Management Committee's last meeting for 2022 was on Thursday, December 1 via Zoom. Our first meeting in 2023 will be in February. A revised draft of the Management Plan for 2022-2023 was tabled and committee members were asked to nominate those areas they are willing to take responsibility for, individually or with others.

The 2023 AGM will be hosted by the Melbourne Friends at Mueller Hall in the National Herbarium of Victoria, Royal Botanic Gardens, Birdwood Avenue, Melbourne from 9am to 12 noon on Friday, May 5. The AGM will include a Guest Speaker, the presentation of the Handbury Awards and a celebration of the AAFBG's 30th Anniversary. Morning tea will be served by the Melbourne Friends and, following a lunch break, there will be guided walks in the Gardens. If there is sufficient demand we are also planning a pre AGM day trip to Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne and to Cruden Farm, Langwarrin on Thursday May 4. We are hoping that the program will encourage a significant number of Friends to attend, particularly those from suburban Melbourne and regional Victorian botanic gardens, including Ballarat and Buninyong. Registration details will be announced in early 2023.

A new **AAFBG Botanical Tour** is being arranged for October or November 2023. The likely destination is the Southern Highlands of NSW and Elizabeth Gilfillan, who has a close connection to the region, is working closely with Friends of Southern Highlands Botanic Garden on a six-day tour that departs from Sydney. As with the earlier Botanic Tour of Tasmania, the itinerary will include large historic gardens and private gardens that are rarely open for viewing, complemented by other attractions such as museum exhibitions and a historic town walk. More details will be advertised in early 2023. The **2024 AAFBG Biennial Conference** will be held from August 30 - September 1. Some of the program is already in place including the Keynote Speaker and other presenters and the organizing committee is currently investigating a theme for the conference.

We are also calling for expressions of interest from member gardens to host the 2026 AAFBG Biennial Conference.

An **AAFBG Achievement Certificate** with a congratulatory letter from President Linda Beveridge was presented to FBBG President Terry O'Brien by Elizabeth Gilfillan at the 40th Anniversary Gala evening on October 20. It now forms part of the record of the 40th Anniversary that has been assembled by Wendy Taylor. An interactive **Map** showing all AAFBG member gardens is being reviewed by committee members prior to being uploaded to the AAFBG website. This will be very helpful when planning visits to botanic gardens throughout Australia.

Report by Merrill Shulkes Committee Member and FBBG representative



SPEAKERS LUNCHEON IN SPRING AND ROTARY GARDEN DESIGNFEST

No sooner had the Celebrations for our 40th Anniversary been put to bed than the 2022 Spring Luncheon was upon us! Once again Carole Haines provided us with a pair of topical speakers – this year Lisa Ellis, Director of *'lisa ellis gardens'*, chose as a theme *'Landscapes in Focus'* showed how a good design brief shaped the creation of gardens and connected clients with their private spaces. Our second speaker Simon Trebilcock explored the theme of *'Potager Gardens, where ornamental and productive gardens meet'*.

These occasions don't happen without a lot of pre-planning and organising. 73 chairs needed to be cleaned before we could allow anyone to sit on them.

Our catering committee and wine waiters prepared the Robert Clark meeting room and the Conservatory with the minimum of fuss. Once again Peter Ford provided the luncheon (and said farewell to the Conservatory for the last time).



Above: Terry O'Brien, Lisa Ellis and Doff Kemp

It was lovely to see 88 people enjoying a remarkably fine day (the sun shone beautifully) catching up with pals or meeting new people in the most pleasant of spaces.

Even as that event was in progress 12 chairs, five tables and four gazebos were loaded into a ute for delivery to the seven Garden Designfest open garden gates across Ballarat, Buninyong and Scotsburn. This was a joint event between FBBG, Ballarat West Rotary and three Melbourne Rotary groups. It was one of the many held across Victoria over two weekends to support fund raising for youth mental health as well as local projects. Funds raised at our local event will supplement the donation we are making towards the Fernery Project. FBBG were also issued with 300 Rotary Raffle tickets which I am pleased to say sold out.

The weekend was very much umbrellas aloft and sometimes inside out, with wind and brief glimpses of sun. Thank you to the many who sat at the gates welcoming people, and blessed be the bakers who baked biscuits for the gatekeepers' morning and afternoon teas. And most especially, thanks to the gardeners and designers who shared their ideas and private spaces with us.

At 5pm Sunday the chairs, tables and gazebos were collected across Scotsburn, Buninyong and Ballarat and returned to the GLB, just beating the sleeting hail storm that poured down.

Lorraine Powell



We would love YOU to join US!

Your duties are simply to *'meet and greet'* visitors to the Conservatory on weekends.

Just leave a message on the Office phone or call in one Tuesday.



**The Ballarat
Botanical Gardens
Foundation Ltd**

The Ballarat Botanical Gardens Foundation's overriding purpose is to raise funds to provide a strong and sustainable financial basis to support the our Botanical Gardens.

In addition we aim at advancing the natural environment in the Botanical Gardens and, in so doing, advance and preserve the heritage of the Gardens as a horticultural museum.

DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE.

Ballarat Botanical Gardens Foundation Ltd.

Banking:

Direct deposit. BSB 633 000.

Account No. 165027434

Website:

www.BallaratBotanicalGardensFoundation.com.au



**Friends of Ballarat
Botanical Gardens Nursery**

*Specialising in rare groundcovers, perennials,
shrubs and succulents*

Nursery Open:

Tuesday 1-4 pm, and the second Sunday 1-4 pm

Trolley: Plants available outside the Conservatory during business hours;
plants updated daily - Cash honour system

Why not take a look at the plants we have for sale the next time
you are enjoying the Ballarat Gardens?

We have a range of named varieties including hardy
long flowering plants.

Members \$2 discount off each plant price of \$10.

BARON FERDINAND VON MUELLER, BOTANIST AND EXPLORER (1825-1896)

Baron Ferdinand von Mueller was arguably Australia's most prominent 19th century scientist. He was born in Schleswig-Holstein on 30 June 1825. At the age of 15 he began to pursue a life-long passion for botany by extensively researching the vegetation of the Schleswig-Holstein area, a project that would take seven years. After his parents both died he was apprenticed to a chemist in Husum, graduating in 1846. Shortly afterwards his impressive herbarium was noticed by Professor Nolte of the University of Keil, and the University later awarded him a PhD for his work on *Capsella Bursa-pastoris*.



Mueller suffered from ill health, and his doctor persuaded him to seek a warmer climate. At the age of 22 Mueller and his two sisters sailed to Adelaide, arriving on 15 December 1847. Here he found work as an assistant chemist, and used his spare time to investigate the local vegetation. He contributed papers to European and local newspapers. He tried farming, but found that it interfered with his botanical interests.

In 1852 Mueller went to Melbourne, where he was appointed government botanist in 1853. He began intensive work on the local flora, and began a series of expeditions to other parts of Victoria, including Mount Buffalo and Wilson's Promontory. He found that many species had potential for industrial and medical applications, such as acacia for its wood, tannin and gum.

In 1854 he was appointed a commissioner for the Melbourne Exhibition. He was also active in the amalgamation of the Victorian Institute for the Advancement of Science into the Philosophical Society. The following year he was appointed botanist to the North West Australia Expedition. The Expedition travelled nearly 5,000 miles in 16 months. Mueller observed some 2,000 species, of which about 800 were new to Australian botany.

On his return to Melbourne, Mueller was appointed director of the Botanical Gardens. He immediately arranged for the construction of a herbarium and contributed his own extensive collection. He contributed significantly to *Flora Australiensis*, the first comprehensive work on Australian flora, but never recovered from the disappointment of being unable to complete the work himself.

Mueller was one of the first people to take a scientific interest in Victorian forests, and argued against indiscriminate clearing of land. He encouraged the commercial distillation of eucalyptus oil and exported eucalyptus seeds to countries including India, Algeria and California, arguing



Hedley Thompson as George Longley
BBG curator and contemporary of
Baron von Mueller

they combated malaria. By 1868, at the age of 43, his directorship of the gardens was under criticism, in part because he was not installing sufficient works of art and 'plantations'.

He was replaced in 1873. He continued to prolifically publish papers and articles, and surveyed the forests and coastline of Western Australia.

He contributed to discussions on acclimatisation, and continued to introduce fauna and flora to Australia. He founded the Royal Society of Victoria and was president of the Geographical Society (Victorian Branch). He won many European honours and in 1861 was appointed a hereditary baron by the King of Wurttemberg. His German and European scientific contacts were of enormous value to Australian science.

Mueller never married - he was dedicated to his work and had little social life. He died on 10 October 1896 in South Yarra, at the age of 71, and was survived by one sister.

Baron Ferdinand von Mueller, Botanist & Explorer (1825-1896) (museumsvictoria.com.au)

Dear Member: HOW ABOUT *YOU* GET INVOLVED WITH THE FRIENDS BY PARTICIPATING IN ONE OF OUR MANY GROUPS or EVENTS?

YOU have a unique set of skills! **Just what the Ballarat Friends need!** We have regularly invited members to help with the BotaniKIDS group, the Growing Friends, the Ambassadors, the Guides and other groups.

Each group is **always looking to increase its numbers** and member participation levels. There is a veritable **kaleidoscope of jobs** you could help fill. Contact the Friends at info@fbbg.org.au or leave a message on (03) 5342 9354.



Friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens 2023

Friends of Ballarat Botanic Gardens Inc., P.O. Box 33W, Ballarat West 3350

Email: info@fbbg.org.au

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

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

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



Tel. Contact (George Longley Building) 03 5342 9354

FRIENDS GROUPS

Involvement in our groups brings rewarding social benefits and support for our organisation. Please contact Ann in the office if you would like more information about becoming involved. Most groups meet in the George Longley Building.

Ambassadors: Trish Twaits

On Weekends and other times - Conservatory

Botanical Artists: Valerie Richards

Mondays at 10 am during school terms - GLR

BotaniKIDS /Educating Friends: Julie Bradby As required in the Gatekeeper's Cottage.

Guiding: Julie Chandler

4th Wednesdays at 10 am

Growing/Nursery: Yvonne Curbach Every

Tuesday and the second Sunday each month

1 pm to 4 pm

History Group: Natalie Radomski (acting) 2nd

Thursday each month 2.30 pm

Other Groups to Participate in:

Admin: Kim Nolan

Catering: Doff Kemp

Events: Carole Haines

Library: Lorraine Powell

Membership: Warwick Sellens

Newsletter: Michael Bird

Plant Trolley: Sue Rattray

Publicity: Wendy Taylor

THE FRIENDS ARE PROUD TO RECOGNISE OUR CORPORATE MEMBERS FOR 2022-3



THE GULL GROUP

COUNTRY CLUB
LIVING

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

We gratefully acknowledge the assistance provided by Ballarat MailWorks, 521 Dowling Street, Wendouree



Chippy Rivera, Andrew Miller, Donna Thomas, Tim Entwisle, Julie Chandler, Susan Pilbeam, Lorraine Powell, Warwick Sellens, Wendy Taylor, Julie Bradby, Terry O'Brien and Michael Bird all provided photos. Thanks!



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 the Autumn Wellingtonia 2023 are due by mid MARCH please. Michael Bird, Editor.

Editorial Committee: Terry O'Brien, Merrill Shulkes, Wendy Taylor and Michael Bird.