

Wellingtonia



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NEWSLETTER – Autumn 2016

From the President's Desk...



FRIENDS OF BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Quite a busy and interesting start to the year. First off was our AGM in February with a few changes to Committee. **Beryl Plummer** and **Glen Lake** did not stand for re-election and I take this opportunity to thank them both for their valued contributions during their time on Committee. We now welcome two new Committee members, **Cherry Schultz** and **Doff Kemp** and thank them for agreeing to accept nomination.

Our guest speaker at the AGM was **Dr Greg Moore** who gave a fascinating talk on the dollar value of trees in the urban environment, opening our eyes (and ears) to values which we were not aware of – such as extending the life of road pavements. Greg's talk will be reported on in more detail elsewhere in *Wellingtonia* (see page 6).

Next item on the calendar was the official launch of the *Fernery Redevelopment Project* on Friday, 4 March. This was a major milestone in the progress of the re-development with guest speaker (**Toby Musgrove**) and lunch, followed by the official launch at a late afternoon function, all meticulously organised by Elizabeth Gilfillan.

The following weekend was the annual **Begonia Festival** which involved many of the Friends in either or both Julie's BotaniKIDS activity or selling plants from our own nursery as well as a marquee. The BotaniKIDS activity was to create hanging pots with succulents and over

3,000 children participated! This was a tremendous effort by all who were involved and we thank them for their help. Nursery sales were a record high at just over \$6,000. This figure includes about \$600 in donations to our plant crèche adjoining the marquee where we looked after plants which had been purchased by visitors. A total of about 60 members helped in one way or another before, during and after the Festival and we thank them very much for their assistance.

Immediately following the Festival the Committee had its monthly meeting followed by a symposium where we planned the year ahead. At the symposium we were pleased to welcome **Councillor Glen Crompton**, who maintains a keen interest in the Friends and the Botanical Gardens. Along with **Curator Peter Marquand** we were able to have some constructive discussions on relevant matters.

Our next social activity will be the **Special Morning Tea** for new members on Thursday, 28 April, 10.00 a.m. in our George Longley Building. This is an annual event to welcome new members giving them an opportunity to meet committee members and learn more about what we do. It is very informal with no long speeches and I encourage all members who have joined in the past twelve months to come along. RSVP's are appreciated to help with catering.

In May we have our next general meeting, (Thursday 19). Our guest speaker will be **Ann Vale**, a well known speaker on topics related to gardens.

Shortly after this meeting will be our first outing for the year, this time to Melton Botanical Gardens, on Monday 23 May. For this trip we will car pool instead of arranging a bus, and will meet at the main gates to our Gardens at 9.30 a.m.

So – much happening and I look forward to catching up with many of you at some of these events.

Raoul Dixon, President

"Covetousness is the greatest misfortune. One who does not know what is enough will never have enough." – Lao Tzu



FBBG Patron:

Prof. Tim Entwisle,
Director and Chief
Executive, Royal
Botanic Gardens
Melbourne.

See page 3 for Tim's Blog ...

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GUIDING NOTES:



Inaugural Event: Tree Tales and a Picnic in the Shade held on Friday January 15, 2016 at 5pm. This event was well supported, and given the portable amplification equipment available to us at the time we would have had difficulty communicating to a larger crowd. The Friends

have since invested in a portable PA system which will make these events more comfortable – speakers won't have to shout to reach all and people will not have to strain to hear.



Keen interest shown during the poetry readings at Tree Tales Picnic in January

Several people commented on the night how they appreciated the coming together of the information about the trees provided by the guides and the poems by local writers inspired by these trees. We were fortunate to have the poems read by **Peter Freund**; his delivery certainly achieved the inspirational and celebratory tone for the evening. We will include some of these poems and the information about the trees in this and future issues of *Wellingtonia*. (See p.8)

Group Tours: We have some very large groups for guiding so far this year – Buninyong Probus group, Canberra Bridge Club, Scenic Horizon Tours and Superb Tours.



Bill and Sue Harrison

An American couple, Bill and Sue Harrison from Virginia who built their own two-seater plane, flew across the Pacific and made the priority for their Ballarat visit our famous Botanic Gardens. They enjoyed their visit so much that they changed their itinerary and made time for a second visit to Ballarat! They were also keen bird watchers and it was a reminder that our Guides need to brush up on the bird species that visit the gardens and so be helpful with bird and plant identification.

Sunday morning Autumn Tours: Free Autumn Sunday morning tours started on 6 March. There is no need to book for these; just meet up with a guide at the Conservatory at 11am. It is not easy getting the message out about these tours. Friends know about it through this publication but often it is visitors from out of town who use the service and need to know about it. The Ballarat Information Centre lists it on their events. We have joined Ballarat Regional Tourism in the hope that this will be a way to reach out to visitors to Ballarat. There is something a bit odd about having to pay for membership of a commercial body in order for the events of a voluntary service to be better known. However the FBBG Committee have decided to proceed down this path and take up membership in the hope that this will be an effective way to help promote the gardens and the Friends.

Oaks and meetings and training

Autumn is a great time to explore garden colour. One of the guides, thinking about autumn spectacular leaf displays, queried as to what had happened to the Scarlet oaks in our Gardens. We know that amongst the exotic collection of trees planted by 1863 Scarlet oaks were among them. (Some regard the Scarlet oak as the most brilliant in autumn.) The Gardens no longer have any Scarlet oaks although a new one was recently planted close to the gardens - in the north end of Fairyland near the bluestone entrance pillar and close to the lake foreshore.



"Baby" Scarlet!

At the February Guides meeting Beth Dixon took us on a tour to locate the twelve different species of oaks in our Gardens. Comprehensive notes on these oaks prepared by Beth were very much appreciated:

Quercus cerris – Turkey Oak	Q. suber- Cork Oak
Q. delavayi - an Asian oak	Q. robur – English Oak (*)
Q. robur x Q.toza	Q. canariensis – Algerian Oak
Q. palustris – Pin Oak or Swamp Spanish Oak	
Q. rubra – Northern Red Oak	Q. ilex- Holly Oak or Holm Oak
Q. macrocarpa - Bur Oak or Mossycup Oak	
Q. glandulifera - Konara Oak;	Q. wislizenii - Interior Live Oak

We certainly have enough oaks to warrant having a specially themed walk. Let us know if you would like the Guides to organize this. In the meanwhile go on your own to try and find the 12 different oaks in the gardens.

You can't help but be struck by the range of oak trees. Some are deciduous and some are evergreen! Oaks are found in diverse countries of the Northern hemisphere and include a wide variation in shape of leaves and acorns.

The first day of the training session for Guides at RBGV, Melbourne Botanic gardens (see page), I was on the Oak Lawn to see some of the 40 oak species. I noticed a tree label (see right) **Cyclobalanopsis glauca** (Ring-cupped oak).



This mystified me as I thought all oaks belonged to the genus **Quercus**.

However there are **two** oak genera – genus *Quercus* and genus *Cyclobalanopsis*. In fact there are 600 different oak species widespread across the globe. The genus *Cyclobalanopsis* makes up about 150 of these species and are largely found in eastern and south-eastern Asia.

U3A/FBBG Course: The Guides are currently busy running the fourth Ballarat U3A FBBG course. This year it runs for 12 weeks on the first, third and fifth Thursdays (Feb 4 to June 30).

Traditionally when looking at the history of the BBG we have focused on the 1850's. This year we have also focused on the Gardens' pre-European environment.



The totem poles currently along the western side of the Gardens

There are few reminders of this earlier time in the Ballarat gardens apart from the Totem poles along the Western Beds (see above). Julie Collins, Public Art Coordinator City of Ballarat, told the group about the planned trail in the north gardens Wetlands involving sculptural installations of the 29 Victorian clans to give long term recognition of the First people in Victoria.

Ballarat Botanical Gardens were developed at a time where there was little interest in the native vegetation. The excitement in gardens at that time was to bring in exotic plants and see how they would acclimatize as well as be reminders of the gardens they loved in the world they came from.

Our representation of Australian flora is very lacking in the gardens and reflects the values at the time of its establishment.

Botanic Gardens are changing and reflecting now the increasing interest in our native flora. The nearby **Melton Botanic Garden** showcases and conserves local Australian plants and has more than 90 eucalypt species

(Cont'd next page...)



FROM TIM ENTWISLE'S BLOG

Tuesday,
15 March 2016

<http://talkingplants.blogspot.com.au/>

One-petalled flower not really...

Begonia guru [Peter Sharp](#) says the so-called 'Rex Begonias' are usually grown indoors although he has seen them grown successfully in gardens (Peter wrote the book from Sydney and is now in Tasmania, offering up two quite different prospects for these plants I'd suggest). We have one of them, growing sort of outdoors in Melbourne, in a pot.



It's a few weeks since our plant flowered but talk of the [Begonia](#)

[Festival](#) at Ballarat Botanical Gardens over the (Labour Day) weekend, reminded me of its odd flowers. As mentioned [last time](#) I was diverted by a Begonia, the genus is usually split into eight informal groups.

One of these groups contains begonias with an underground stem (rhizome) rather than a tuber, and with a recent ancestor (prior to breeding) called *Begonia rex* from India. The cultivar we are growing (photographed here) may have a little of another species, *Begonia mesoniana* (the Iron Cross Begonia), in its family history but this post is not about taxonomy (that is, I haven't confirmed its identity...). With its distinctive habit and coarse hairy leaves I'm presuming it nestles somewhere near *Begonia rex*. and is therefore a member of the rather sinisterly named **Rex Cultorum Group**.

With a light sprinkle of water each morning our Rex devotee grows quite nicely on our front porch, flowering happily in January and February.

Most growers don't grow begonias for their flowers. In fact the [usual](#) advice is something like 'cut the flowers and allow the plants energy to go into growing the leaves'. If you ignore this advice you'll be at least mildly intrigued by what looks like a single petal in some flowers. Which is very odd.

Begonias have separate male and female flowers, both on the same plant and mostly both within each terminal cluster. In our plant there



were only female flowers open when I took the first photographs (11 January; above and top of post), and the male flowers (without the large deep red ridged structure so apparent in this picture) only in bud.

Two weeks later (below) it was all about the male flowers, although with a few females still waiting to open later (see the bud heading downwards to bottom left).

The flowers are described as having four or five sepals and no petals. Not one or two, none. But...although the sepals in most plants are usually the outer ring of greenish bits, in begonias they usually more colourful and look pretty much like petals. This is why they are often described as **petaloid sepals**.

In those blousy blooms you see on tuberous begonias at places like Ballarat Botanical Gardens, I'm presuming the anthers are all converted into petal-like bits as they are in **Hellebores**. This gives the impression of a profusion of petals.

In nature and in many other species there are just four or five of those colourful floral bits. Sometimes they look the same as each other but you can also get two plate-like petaloid sepals, and two narrower and smaller segments. Oddly, in this particular case the female flowers have two big ones and just one of the second tier. So that's three in total unless one is very tiny (which it may be). That's almost as odd as having one petal!

The male flowers are more conventional, having two outer parts and two of the petaloid sepals inside. The yellow pom pom is of course a cluster of stamens tipped with yellow anthers (full of pollen).

Searching the web I see there are other examples (but not many) of the female flower morphology. One example is the **Chinese species** *Begonia fimbriatipula*, whose leaves are used for making a tea-like drink. So it's not just a odd reaction by the plant to the Melbourne porch climate.



(more from Tim at: <http://talkingplants.blogspot.com.au/>)



Sue Beck: Members were saddened to hear the news that Sue had passed away in January after a long battle with cancer. Sue had been an active and enthusiastic member of the Friends, participating in many activities with a tremendous exuberance. Her great sense of humour was always a delight.

Amongst her many contributions to our activities, Sue will be particularly remembered for her brilliant organisation of the 150th celebrations of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens which she did with particular flair and skill. We shall miss her greatly.



(...continued from page 2)

in their arboretum. In the Melbourne gardens you will find a lot of inter planting of natives amongst their exotic displays. Melbourne also has Cranbourne and Sydney Mount Annan and Mount Tomah to explore Australian plants. The *Visionary Plan for Ballarat Botanical Gardens* has the northern wetlands earmarked as the area to have the Gardens' native vegetation collection.

Many of us look forward to the renewal that can occur in the Northern wetlands to focus on indigenous culture and native vegetation.

In the U3A/ FBBG session taken by **Roger Thomas** we focused on what the flora was like pre-European times. Roger took us on a wonderful tour up through the North Gardens and surprisingly to many

of us we discovered lots of examples of remnant vegetation – grasses, daisies and lilies.



U3A participants and Guides during their North Gardens jaunt with Roger Thomas

Australian flora has such diverse flora and need for conservation and it would seem important that regional gardens have a role to play to help maintain our species diversity.

Terry O'Brien

VERY IMPORTANT MATTERS FOR YOU....

Membership Matters:

We welcome the following new members who have joined since the last edition of *Wellingtonia*:

Sue Akers, June Cheetham, Ina Baird, Emily Ballerin, Terese Burke, John Maguire & Dot Carpenter, Susan Crook, Cynthia Dennett, Moira Everist, Wendy Graham, Wes Howlett, Chris Kiss, Marion Littlejohn, Analie Lowe, Don & Sharon Moss, Robin Phillips, David Radcliffe, Janice Ray, Felicity Ryan, Cherry Schultz and John & Jeanette Wild.
Also another Corporate Member, Gays Mitre 10.

Our current membership is now 358 plus 4 Corporate.

However we still have about 60 members who have not renewed their membership this year. It is easy to overlook such matters. If anyone is unsure as to whether they have paid or not, please call me directly on 5335 9052 or email rdixon578@gmail.com. I would very much like to receive renewals **as soon as possible please**. Just send your payment directly to our Treasurer, PO Box 33W Ballarat West 3350, or drop in to our George Longley Building any Tuesday afternoon or the second Sunday in the month.

Raoul Dixon – Membership Secretary.



RESPONSE TO HELP WANTED IN SUMMER *Wellingtonia*:

Carole Haines reports that she now has four members to assist with the catering. Thank you to Friends Claire Heinz, Heather Boyd, Anne Reynolds and Jenny Forbes for their generosity.

If you can help Carole would be more than happy to add your name to her list.

Please call Carole direct by phone 5338 8175 or by email at: cr_haines@bigpond.com

Thank you. **Raoul Dixon, President.**



Plants for Scotsburn Fire Victims:

As a small gesture to assist those who have suffered from the recent fires in the Scotsburn area, the Committee has agreed to offer plants from our Friends nursery to help in garden recovery.

If any member has any plants or bulbs that they would also like to donate to this worthy cause, we invite you to drop them in to our Nursery and Yvonne will look after them for you. We anticipate handing them over in late Autumn.

Raoul Dixon.



Special Morning Tea

If you have joined the Friends in the last twelve months, we would very much like you to come to our **Special Morning Tea**, an informal event to let you meet our Committee and learn more about our various activities.

It will be held in our own building, the George Longley Building behind our nursery. The date is **Thursday, April 28** commencing at **10.00 a.m.**

Please accept this notice as **your personal invitation** and RSVP to our office either by phone 5342 9354 (leave a message) or by email to info@fbbg.org.au to assist with catering.

Come Join Me For
Morning Tea



HAVE YOU GOT SOME
SPARE TIME?

INTERESTED IN HELPING
WITH PLANT LABEL
PRINTING FOR THE GROWING
FRIENDS?

They are seeking members who might be interested helping out. Currently two Friends are sharing the job.

Further assistance would be greatly appreciated. All training provided.

Contact via 53429354 or email
info@fbbg.org.au

Growing Friends:

During the **2016 Begonia Festival** we raised **\$6104.85** from plant sales and the plant nursery; a fantastic result. The weather was kind to us and we had a great time with a tremendous amount of help from volunteers. So, now we are faced with a lot of empty tables which will soon be filled again with plants to be potted up and grown on in time for **Springfest**.

Yvonne Curbach, Growing Friends Convenor

BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS Fernery Redevelopment Project:

The Group has been working very hard with COB to keep things moving. The first Tender process finalised and the Tenderer is Laidlaw and Laidlaw, Landscape Designer together with Bower Architecture, award winning architects from Prahran. Architects Jade Vidal and Anna Dutton attended the launch event and mingled with guests. The luncheon on the day of the launch event went off very smoothly as did the 'cocktail event' in the evening.

The proposed building design should be developed by end of March 2016. New signage has been installed at the Wendouree Parade end of the existing structure, new brochures produced and website up-dated.

The Group is currently working on Finance submissions and making appointments for linkages with key Ballarat partners.

Dr Toby Musgrave was the guest speaker at the official launch of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens Fernery Re-development Program in March 2016. Dr Musgrave is one of the UK's leading authorities in garden history and design. With a degree in horticulture and a Ph.D. in garden history, he has, since 1994 been an independent scholar, author, lecturer, television and radio presenter and consultant, photographer and garden designer.

The next step is working with Regional Development Victoria to source funding. Donations from members of the Friends and the wider community are also being sought.

Elizabeth Gilfillan Convenor



Pictured on Launch Day: (1) Dr Musgrave presents; (2) David Glenn (Lambley Nursery at Ascot) officially opens the Project; (3) Guides member Jane Munro and Beth Dixon; (4) Friends Treasurer Bruce Holland, President Raoul Dixon, Michael Bird Wellingtonia editor and Vice President John King; (5) David Glenn, Adam Parrott and Buninyong MLA Geoff Howard; (6) Guides Convenor Terry O'Brien and Glenice Warner; (7) Friends Pam Coghlan and Janet Dale.



GUIDE TRAINING: The Guides at RBGV, Melbourne Botanic gardens, have provided Ballarat Guides with the opportunity to participate in, and learn from, their volunteer training program this year. Some of our guides are attending each Wednesday for the morning sessions.

Local Guides Convenor, Terry O'Brien, believes it is a fantastic chance to up-date or modify our Guide induction program as well as learn new approaches with some ideas already being implemented at Ballarat (*Photo held over until next Wellingtonia*).

History News

The History Group rounded off a productive year with a convivial pre-Christmas lunch together, and a small discussion re the current zoo project. Provisionally titled 'Zoo Tales; the Little Zoo in Ballarat', our project on Ballarat's Henry Ben Jahn Zoological Gardens is starting to take shape. Along with other resources, the Spielvogel papers are being trawled and a timeline created.

"The largest bequest of its time was for the Ballarat Zoological Gardens, made by gold-rich bachelor Henry Ben Jahn (£11,000 in 1911). The zoo opened in 1917 and lasted for fifty years. The Ballarat Botanical Gardens are of scientific significance for the close link with the acclimatisation and zoological gardens movement demonstrated by the earlier menagerie and zoo sections, of which remnant cages remain".

See : <http://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/1761#sthash.W64UaOwT.dpuf>

The zoo actually replaced an earlier menagerie. If you have photos and stories about the zoo please try to get them to us, as soon as possible. The History Group continues to research the archive at the PROV in the Glasshouse basement on a Tuesday morning, and meet on the first Tuesdays at 4:00pm.

Lorraine Powell, History Convenor

ATTENTION ZOO VISITORS

DO NOT stand, sit, climb or lean on zoo fences.
If you fall, animals could eat you and that might make them sick.
Thank You!

**Never happened at Ballarat
zoological gardens!**



This financial crisis is forcing councils and business at all levels to make some tough decisions. If things continue like this for much longer, there's a real risk that we may have to lay off Fred.

AGM Guest Speaker, Dr Greg Moore.

Greg Moore was Principal of Burnley College of the Institute of Land Food Resources at Melbourne University from 1988 to 2007. Prior to this he was a Senior Lecturer and Lecturer in Plant Science and Arboriculture at Burnley from 1979.

Apart from a general interest in horticultural plant science, revegetation and ecology, Greg has a specific interest in all aspects of arboriculture, which is the scientific study of the cultivation and management of trees. He has been a regular on Melbourne radio, particularly with ABC 774 and 3AW.

Mature trees reduce wind speed, help reduce stress on buildings, and help control air pollution by acting as filters. But trees can also help prolong the life of roads and other asphalt surfaces in towns and cities.

According to Dr Moore the shade provided by trees is really important. "It prolongs, by three or four times, the life of materials like asphalt. But most people focus on the problems that trees cause - for example cracking asphalt and disrupting concrete. Everybody understands the damage that root systems can do, but people fail to appreciate the value of the shade in preserving our paintwork on houses and prolonging the life of our roads and footpaths," Dr Moore said.

Dr Moore believes it is absolutely essential to ascribe a monetary value to trees because then they have value in terms of the decision-makers. "If you don't put a dollar value on trees, then people think, if they die, we can replace them. They don't realise that to maintain our trees is much better value, because we've spent millions of dollars, often over hundreds of years, and so it's important to manage them like real assets," he said.

A key idea to emerge from Dr Moore's research is that preserving trees is essential to our successful management of carbon emissions. Trees are significant users of carbon dioxide and their large structures store tonnes of carbon.

Greg's address was well received by the Friends in attendance and he fielded a wide range of questions. (Michael Bird)

(If you are interested, search for Dr Greg Moore, Burnley on the www or look at the following web site:
http://www.futureleaders.com.au/book_chapters/pdf/Climate_Change/Greg_Moore.pdf)

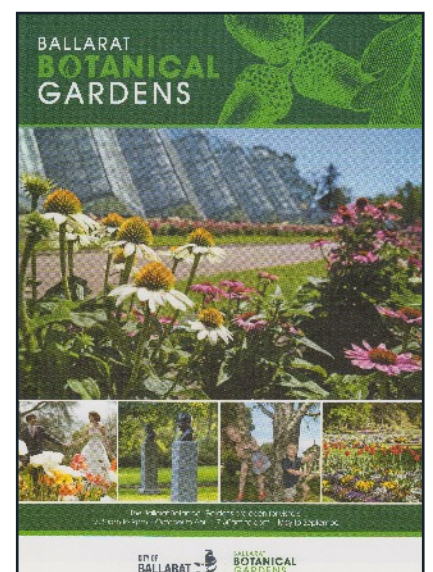


Q: What do you call a country where the people drive only pink cars? **A:** A pink carnation.



'Garden Cuttings' by Green-Thumb

- You might have noticed that there was significant tree lopping for safety and botanical reasons in the weeks leading up to the Festival. Trees look better for the work too. Some very skilled operators and big equipment at work. (See the man in the sequoia at right!).
- Green Thumb was literally 'awash' when told that the Gardens use about 50ML of water per annum! That's a lot of baths. And, apparently the irrigation system installed under the sequoias as a 'spin-off from the drought' is now substantially out-dated. In fact the Gardens are currently under-going a review of watering.
- On the subject of watering, did you know that Peter Marquand (BBG Curator) controls the watering for the Bot Gardens, the Lake foreshore, the Eureka gardens plus Buninyong Botanic Gardens all from a computer in his office?
- The Gardens have looked great for the whole of Summer, and after the heavy traffic of the Begonia Festival the whole gardens area will undergo aeration in April.
- Green Thumb cannot believe that there isn't a technical person reading this who cannot resolve once and for all the disputed heights of the Cottonwood and Ponderosa. He may have to provide a prize?
- Terry O'Brien (Guiding Friends convenor) is very pleased to have recruited a number of new Guides in the past six months or so. They include: Brian Hay, Marg Towers, Sue Akers, Trudie Dickinson and Bill O'Driscoll! TO'B says 'more please'!
- Did you know the copper water pipes in the Fernery were stolen on three occasions last year!
- The Western Bedders are hoping to start a new project soon -- maybe the Sensory Garden?
- There is a lot of work going into planning and designing new signage for the Gardens. A new 'Ballarat Botanical Gardens' publication (A4 size, and four pages long) has been prepared by the City of Ballarat and is available from the Conservatory. (See right) It was released just before Begonia Festival.
- Something Green Thumb didn't know – that from 1889 tuberous begonias were introduced into displays, beginning a tradition highlighted by the annual begonia festival from 1953 until the present. How about that? (Source: PROV)
- Peter Marquand told Green Thumb that over 60,000 people attended the 2016 Begonia Festival, including 25,000 who went through the Conservatory to see the begonia display.



TILL NEXT TIME – GREEN THUMB

PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 25 FEBRUARY 2016

It is my pleasure to present this Annual Report on the Friends for this, our 33rd year. 2015 was again a busy year for the Friends with several notable achievements as well as the successful continuation of our regular activities.

Firstly, the Gardens – after all, that is what we are all about. I congratulate Peter and his dedicated team for consistently maintaining our Gardens in such great condition despite the unfavourable weather that we have been experiencing for so many months. The Conservatory displays have also been well set up and attract much favourable comment from visitors.

Now to report on our various interest groups.

The **Growing Friends** continue to be the principal source of funds through their nursery sales. Ably led by Yvonne, the work of this dedicated team resulted in sales of \$25,000 for the year including excellent sales at the Begonia Festival and Springfest. The Plant Trolley had been discontinued once the Conservatory was no longer staffed. However we have since resurrected these sales using an honesty box system, as originally proposed by Past President Mike Sorell. To our great satisfaction, this has been most successful and has raised \$4,064 as part of the nursery sales. We are grateful to Gardens' staff for the physical task of moving the trolley in and out of the Conservatory.

Guiding Group: The number of tours conducted remained steady, at 42 (22 Free Sunday tours, 20 Group tours). The numbers for the Autumn and Spring tours on a Sunday morning range from 0 to 12. More consistent patronage this year has encouraged the Guides to continue offering these free public tours.

The third **U3A/FBBG course** run over ten weeks in the first part of the year was successful. 40 enrolled and classes maintained high numbers all the way through. Two Guides attended the Volunteer Guides Conference in Sydney in September.

Julie Bradby continues to amaze us with her ideas and enthusiasm in running the **Education and BotaniKIDS** programs. 2015 was another full year for her group. Their activities included two self-guided weeks with a total of 530 Nature Kits distributed to children, an Under Five children's session involving potting activity, a second Education Hub event with 80 children from Buninyong and Scotsburn schools, and a Christmas party for under 5's. On top of all this was of course the hugely successful event at the Begonia Festival where 4,000 pots, donated by Bunnings, were decorated, filled and planted by visiting children. We are most grateful to Bunnings for their continued support and provision of materials as well as staff at the Begonia Festival. Julie also has a very constructive working relationship with Donna Thomas in developing these programs and we appreciate Donna's assistance and support.

The **History Group** continues to research Gardens' history at the Public Records Office of Victoria. A notable event for 2015 was the invitation to Lorraine to present a paper on the theme "Garden to Table" at the Australian Garden History Symposium as part of their annual conference in Adelaide. This was a great credit to Lorraine and acknowledgement of her depth of knowledge about Botanical Gardens.

The **Western Beds Group** has not been very active this year, mostly due to Beryl's health issues. Beryl has now handed over to Bill O'Driscoll as Convenor.

Our quarterly newsletter, **Wellingtonia**, continues to be professionally edited and prepared by Michael Bird and has received critical acclaim from various sources

The **Botanical Art group** is a small one with six members. They held their first ever exhibition in 2015, in the Conservatory to coincide with the Archibald Prize. It was very successful – much interest and some sales. This group was started by Elizabeth Gilfillan who has convened it until this year but has now handed over to Valerie Richards.

The Ballarat **Gardens in Spring** group, led by Helen Todd, again staged a very successful weekend, starting with the annual Speaker's

Luncheon and followed by a weekend of selected Open Gardens where attendance numbers exceeded previous years.

Joy O'Brien is a quiet worker behind the scenes, printing out **plant labels** as required. We are grateful for her reliable attention to this facet of our activities.

The big news this year of course was the decision by the City of Ballarat to allocate \$1.4 million of their capital works programs towards the redevelopment of our derelict **Fernery**. This decision would not have come about had it not been for the excellent and persistent lobbying by the Friends through the person of Elizabeth Gilfillan. In order to make progress on this major redevelopment, a Project Working Group has been set up with representatives from the City of Ballarat and four members of the Friends, led by Elizabeth.

Carole Haines continues to do an excellent job arranging **catering** for our various functions as well as organising guest speakers for our quarterly meetings. We had two bus trip for the year, firstly to Wombat Hill Gardens and Blackwood Ridge Nursery, then to the Mawalok and Eurambeen properties in October. Both were most successful and enjoyable.

Our **Treasurer**, Bruce Holland, continues to meticulously and accurately record all financial transactions. He has been assisted by Tim Gilfillan in preparing the monthly computer printouts. Tim has now handed over this task to Sue Rattray who is now, in effect, Assistant Treasurer. We are grateful to Tim for his valuable help and thank Sue for agreeing to take on this aspect of the Treasurer's role.

Membership reached 339 at the end of 2015. We also reactivated the Corporate Membership category in 2015, in order to involve Ballarat companies in the Friends' interests and activities. Four Companies have accepted our invitation to join, Haymes Paints, Gull & Co., Heinz & Partners, and Gays Mitre 10 and we thank them for their patronage.

We have now appointed Susan Pilbeam to the role of **Administration Assistant**. Susan is adapting well to this role and showing great initiative.

Apart from those convenors and others named in this report, we have many members – too many to name – who back the Friends through their support, as members of the different groups, or assisting when called on to help at such events as Springfest and the Begonia Festival, as well as those who quietly assist behind the scenes such as in watering the nursery plants or attending to the plant trolley.

We have made an estimate of the total hours put in throughout the year by members with all our various activities. This has added up to 4,950 hours. If we use a very conservative figure of \$20 per hour, it could be said that we have contributed \$99,000 to the people of Ballarat in promoting and supporting our magnificent Botanical Gardens.

Finally, in carrying out the various duties associated with the office of President, I have two ladies to thank, whose support and assistance has been invaluable and greatly appreciated.

Firstly, Elizabeth Gilfillan. When asked to take on the role of President for a second time, Elizabeth promised to support me in this role. She has certainly done this most capably and I have relied heavily on her experience and knowledge. Secondly is my wife, Beth. Beth has an intense interest in seeing that the Friends succeed in their various projects, and in particular in my performance as President. She jogs my memory when necessary and often comes up with constructive ideas and suggestions. So to conclude this report, I again thank one and all for helping us to support the Gardens.

Raoul Dixon President

Hospitality Report and Events

SPECIAL MORNING Tea for new members of the Friends is on the **28 April at 10.30 am** in the **George Longley building** (behind the Robert Clark Horticultural Centre)

Upcoming Events:

General Meeting on the 19 May, 2016. Anne Vale is to be our Guest Speaker. Anne's Topic - *The Evolution of the Arts and Crafts garden from Architects to Edna Walling.* **PLEASE NOTE.** Anne will be giving her talk at 10.00am **BEFORE** the General Meeting. *"Historian, lecturer and author Dr Anne Vale records and assesses gardens with history through her consulting practice Heriscapes. She has published garden guides and histories on significant heritage gardens".*



VISIT TO THE MELTON BOTANICAL GARDENS - Monday, 23 May, 2016. This will be by **car convoy** and members wishing to join the visit please contact Susan 5342 9354 -OR info@fbbg.org.au. Meet at the Morey Gates - front entrance of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens - at 9.30am. All car drivers going will need to collect a map from the George Longley building or on the morning of the trip at 9.30am. Members wishing to go directly to the Melton Gardens can meet the convoy there at 10.30am. We will have a cuppa before setting off on our tour. The Gardens have a nursery too. Members can bring their own picnic lunch or go into Melton for lunch. The tour should be finished by 2.00pm (including lunch time). Members can leave at any time to travel back to Ballarat.

Carole Haines. Convenor

Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens 2016 Conference: GEELONG Friday, 29 April to Sunday 1 May



We look forward to welcoming members of Friends groups as we continue with our planning for the 2016 Association Conference. Our website www.friendsqbg.org.au provides all the details (regularly up-dated). It includes the Registration Form, Program outline and information about some of the speakers.

• Registration cut off Friday April 15

Registrations are coming in and it appears that the **Tours** will be very popular – another reason to register as soon as possible as there is a maximum number for each.

Ballarat Gardens in Spring 11 – 13 November 2016

The Committee have recently met to get this year's event up and running, aiming to delight all who attend the 2016 program in November. We again have the support of Ballarat Regional Tourism and are working on other partnerships too.

Dates have been set for this year's Ballarat Gardens in Spring program – 11 -13 November 2016.

Be sure to mark in your diary now with the **Speakers Luncheon** on Friday, 11 November and the **Open Gardens** on the weekend - 12 and 13.

Brochures will be available late August. Helen Todd

"A nation that destroys its soils destroys itself." – Theodore Roosevelt

The Botanical Art Group has a few places left for our upcoming Botanical Art Workshop with **Mali Moir** on **Wednesday 6th and Thursday 7th April**. Mali has a keen interest for artistic interpretation of natural history themes in the Accurate Realism style, approaching her work with traditional techniques whilst developing a fresh contemporary look. Mali "...executes works on paper with the consummate skill of a dedicated artist as she combines her fascination for science and nature with an active desire to render works of art with beauty, character and scientific merit."

Autumn Theme and use of masking fluid, **10am-4pm** at the *George Longley Building, Ballarat Botanical Gardens*

\$140 (\$50 deposit required).

Inquiries: info@fbbg.org.au

Friends Of Ballarat Botanical Gardens
33W Ballarat West 3350

Phone: 03 5342 9354

Office hours Tuesday 10.00am-4.00pm



TREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

Bunya Bunya Pine
Wind and traffic argue
among your spindly branches

Alone,
you watch the path divert pedestrians
to other
trees
my arms around your earth-baked trunk,
rough
as a father's cheek - prickling tender skin
with
morning
kisses

Stretched
to my limits
trying to grasp
your ancient solitude



Nadine Cranenburgh

(Above) One of the poems used in the *Tree Tales* event in January – see Terry O'Brien's Guides Report on page 2.

CURATOR'S REPORT

This year's Begonia display consisted of approximately 1000 begonias from the City of Ballarat tuberous and non-tuberous collections. (See right)

Whilst most people know the tuberous begonias the City also holds a collection of over 300 non- tuberous begonias. Both collections are registered with the Garden Plant Conservation association of Australia Inc. (GPCAA).

The Lego flower that was seen at last year's festival also made a welcome return this year and formed part of the conservatory display. Over 60,000 people attended the festival with 25,000 viewing the begonias over the weekend.

Ballarat's Begonias were also seen in a Ballarat themed display which was coordinated by Kevin Moneghetti at this year's Melbourne International Flower and Gardens Show.



The City of Ballarat Parks and Gardens team has six Parks and Gardens apprentices who created a special floral display for the Begonia festival. (See above) This year the team explored alternatives for container growing including the use of recycled car tyres, carved logs, a vertical wall and alternative uses of traditional baskets.

In February specialist arborists undertook extensive dead wooding of the Sequoiadendrons within the gardens. Staff and visitors were treated to the spectacle of contractors using ropes and a massive travel tower to access the trees. (right) The deadwood was removed primarily as a safety measure but also aesthetic.



Peter Marquand



Recent events: (Above left) Cr Samantha McIntosh and (above right) President Raoul Dixon address the audience at the official Launch of the Fernery Re-Development Project. (Right) Dr Greg Moore provided a wonderful address at Friends AGM



**BotaniKids
Events
were a
major part
of the**

2016 Begonia Festival



Friends plant sales and 'Nursery' at Begonia Festival



**FREE
Guided
Tours**

**EVERY
SUNDAY IN
AUTUMN:**

The Guiding Friends will conduct **FREE** guided tours starting from the Conservatory at 11 am.

The tour takes approximately one hour.

Learn more about the Gardens.

Friend, relatives and visitors are all welcome.

Dates: April 3, 10, 17 and 24;
May 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29.

- The **Growing Friends** are **always** in need of plastic pots, preferably five inch or less. Please leave at the George Longley Building.
- The **BotaniKIDS** team still need lots of coloured wool.
- **Treasurer Bruce** wants you to be **VERY** careful when transferring money into our account!

BALLARAT DISCOUNTS FOR MEMBERS

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

You will need to show your FBBG membership card

OUR "JEWEL IN THE CROWN" OMISSION

"Visit Ballarat" has printed a very attractive new Visitor Guide which was being distributed free of charge at the Begonia Festival. It is a very comprehensive and useful booklet for visitors, listing all of Ballarat's attractions and places of interest, but with one astonishing omission. Nowhere in this 112 page book is there any mention of our magnificent Botanical Gardens. Ballarat's Botanical Gardens rank amongst the finest regional Botanical Gardens in Australia.

They have been referred to as a jewel in Ballarat's crown and we should all be proud to have such a beautiful facility in our city. It is nothing short of deplorable that they should be so completely overlooked in this manner.

Raoul Dixon, President, Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens

Above: Letter to the Editor printed in *Ballarat Courier*, 19 March 2016

A man driven by greed could probably afford a chauffeur. — Mitchell Hegman

CHAPTER 6. JAMES CURTIS, PIONEER & SPIRITUALIST:

*“Newspapers of the period give glimpses²⁸ of the Ballarat citizen James Curtis - as a businessman, successful printer,²⁹ employer,³⁰ adopter of new technologies,³¹ director and shareholder of goldmining companies,³² as the director a real-estate firm, as a director of boards of charitable organisations, debater, patron of the arts, temperance advocate, chess enthusiast, and tricyclist, a man with a role in local government,³³ supporter of a ‘homoeopathic free dispensary, for the poor of Ballarat and surrounding districts’,³⁴ **accidental trespasser of public gardens**,³⁵ **indignant businessman**³⁶”*

The passage is quoted in Anne Beggs Sunter: “An Eminent Victorian: James Oddie and his contribution to Ballarat”. In: Victorian Historical Journal 72.1–2 (Sept. 2001), pp. 105–116, at p. 106.

28 Some mentioned above, at p. 7.

29 Curtis was awarded many medals for the high quality of his printing. (*Argus*, Wednesday 20 February 1884, p. 5; *Ballarat Star*, Thursday 6 April 1882, p. 3.)

30 Curtis regretted that he could not take on more apprentices. (*Ballarat Star*, Saturday 2 September 1865, p. 1S.)

31 Curtis’s Caxton Press employed very modern machinery. In 1872 he imported and installed a ‘patent Atmospheric Gas Engine’—very up-to-date equipment—in his print works. ‘The atmospheric gas engine—although only at work during the last four days—has already been visited and inspected by a large number, of our engineers and those connected with our foundries, and seems to have excited not only curiosity but admiration for its compact form and economical principles.’ (*Ballarat Star*, Friday 2 February 1872, p. 2; *Melbourne Leader*, Saturday 10 February 1872, p. 20.) Curtis seems to have been very willing to give new ideas a try. He experimented with firing one of the boilers at his printery with Lal Lal lignite, for example, and recommended this fuel very strongly in letters to the press. (*Ballarat Star*, Thursday 9 February 1871, p. 2.)

32 Curtis had an interest in quite a number of gold-mining companies, most in Ballarat, one as far afield as Landsborough. (*Ballarat Star*, Tuesday 25 July 1865, p. 4.)

33 ‘Mr Curtis has been nominated for a seat on the board of advice for the City of Ballarat.’ (*Ballarat Star*, Friday 6 June 1873, p. 2.)

34 *Ballarat Star*, Friday 3 July 1874, p. 2.

35 ‘The gardener stated that Mr James Curtis had, contrary to bylaw, plucked a flower and walked on the borders in the garden. We recommend that Mr Longley [George Longley, curator of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens] be instructed to issue a summons against Mr Curtis for the offence. Mr Curtis attended the council and said that he had stepped on the borders by accident and had touched a magnolia, when a leaf fell off on his hand. He was sorry for what had been done, and his explanation was considered quite satisfactory.’ *Ballarat Star*, Tuesday 10 October 1871, p. 4.)

36 ‘This committee’, added the speaker [James Curtis, addressing the committee of the Benevolent Society], ‘has hawked prices about from one office to another until the different printing firms have so cut down rates as to lose money by the transaction. It’s a beggarly way of doing business, gentlemen’. (*Ballarat Star*, Tuesday 25 February 1879, p. 2.)

Educating Friends: Ballarat BotaniKIDS

The recently completed Begonia Festival was a huge success for our group of Friends. It shows that good preparations ensured that the thousands of children who attended had a fulfilling time. Bunnings once again were exceptionally kind and so helpful for the three days!

Kindness was in evidence everywhere on this event as the Cactus and Succulent Society donated 1500 succulents to our activity along with the thousands of little pots from Bunnings.

Thank you to those of the members of the Friends who donated little suckers and cuttings as did the Gardens staff as well.

Heidi is a pleasure to work with in preparing with me making sure all the details are sorted. Donna from the Gardens staff was also a huge help with planning combined activities.

In March we assisted the Deaf Society in providing nature activities for children within their Society.

Coming up: On April 6 School Holiday Programme: **Slugs Bugs and Butterflies** Sessions for under-five

11-12.30 and 1-30-3.00pm (6yrs-12yr) \$5 per child. 20 maximum in each session

Booking and paying online with Susan Pilbeam at Friends Office.

Combined presentation with Donna at Gardens on teaching children about sustainable gardening practices.

Next term: We are establishing a Focus Group consisting of teachers and tertiary students to help with writing of resources and materials that teachers can access and utilise online: previsit, during visit and post visit.

We have been invited to participate by **Sustainable Living and Education** also next Term. **Julie Bradby, Convenor**

Friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens Information 2016

Email: info@fbbg.org.au
Website: www.fbbg.org.au

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

Tel. George Longley Building 03 5342 9354

2016 FBBG Committee and Areas of Responsibility

POSITION	NAME	POSITION	NAME
President & Membership	Raoul Dixon	History Convener	Lorraine Powell
Vice president	John King	Hospitality	Carole Haines
Secretary	Susan Rattray	General member	Cherry Schultz
Treasurer	Bruce Holland	General member	Helen Vincent
Convenor Fernery Project	Elizabeth Gilfillan	Western Bed Convener	Bill O'Driscoll
Education Convener	Julie Bradby	General member	Kathleen Hobson
General member	Doff Kemp	Newsletter Editor	Michael Bird
Growers Convener	Yvonne Curbach	Botanical Art Convener	Valerie Richards
Guides Convener	Terry O'Brien	Engraving Convener	Joy O'Brien (non-Committee)

Meetings and Events: (see page 8 for details)

28 April at 10.30 am **SPECIAL MORNING** Tea for new members in the George Longley building.

19 May, 2016 **General Meeting.** Anne Vale Guest Speaker.

23 May, 2016. VISIT TO THE MELTON BOTANICAL GARDENS.

BotaniKIDS 2016

Dates will be announced on our website

More details : <https://www.facebook.com/ballaratbotanikids>
Info@fbbg.org.au

If you wish to help at any of our activities please contact us on the above email address.

April 6: School Holiday Programme "**Slugs Bugs and Butterflies**"
Sessions 11am-12.30 [under-5s;] 1-30-3.00pm [6yr-12yr]. \$5 per child

MEETING TIMES 2016

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

Committee - 3rd Tuesday of each month at 3:30 pm

Growing Friends - Tuesday each week 1 pm-4 pm,
and the 2nd Sunday every month, 1 pm-4 pm.
(During summer also open on 4th Sunday as well.)

Plant Sales at the above times.

Guiding Friends - 4th Tuesday each month 10 am.

History Group - 1st Tuesday each month 4 pm.

Educating Friends - 2nd Tuesday each month 10am

Plant Labelling - as required.

WANT TO PAY US SOME MONEY?

If you are paying into our bank account **please remember to identify yourself**, and even **what the payment is for**. A good method is to use your surname and initial/s as your ID. It makes it easier for our Treasurer if you **state what the payment is for**, e.g. membership renewal, bus trip, etc.

The Friends' bank details are:

BSB 633 000 Acc. No. 125334615

Guess what?the wooden fence erected between the Friends Nursery (plant sales area) and the driveway leading to the Gardens' Workshop area is there for a reason!

Members and visitors MUST NOT access the Friends' area via the driveway!

Please use the single wooden gate at the rear of the Robert Clark Horticultural Centre.

**This is an on-going safety issue.
Please use the small gate.**



Photo credits: Thanks to Raoul and Beth Dixon, Terry O'Brien, Peter Marquand, Michael Bird and the Ballarat Courier for providing photographs used in this edition. Ed.

Disclaimer: The views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens or those of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens. Neither the Friends nor the Ballarat Botanical Gardens accepts responsibility for statements made or opinions expressed, although every effort will be made to publish reliable and accurate information. **Contributions for Winter Wellingtonia 2016 are due by early-June please.** Michael Bird, Editor. **Editorial Committee** Raoul Dixon, Elizabeth Gilfillan, Helen Vincent and Michael Bird.

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