

# Wellingtonia

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PP Number 100020008



## NEWSLETTER – SPRING 2020

### 'News from the President'



### FRIENDS OF BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS PRESIDENT'S REPORT

WOW, what a year! 2020 will go down in the history books as one of the most testing years in our living memory. Just as the last of the flames of the most horrendous Summer bushfire of all time were being extinguished, the Coronavirus Pandemic took the World by surprise.

As we struggle with lockdown and social distancing and try to adapt to the mandatory wearing of masks, we are also having to adjust to all events of the Friends being cancelled for the year. Worse still has been the closure of the Nursery and the subsequent loss of our regular income. But all this pales into insignificance in comparison to the decimation of the broader economy, the many businesses being declared bankrupt and the subsequent massive unemployment. Fortunately we are in a strong financial position thanks to prudent financial management over many years.

How lucky we are to be able to seek solace in our world standard Botanical Gardens enjoying the start of Spring, as we try to make sense of it all. We are indeed living in one of the better parts of the World.

With Council elections coming up in October, we've been faced with the most unfortunate situation of the Gatekeeper's Cottage being caught in the crossfire, and used as a political punching bag. Some have taken the opportunity to discredit the Cottage on the basis of cost overruns. These accusations have since been shown to be largely false, and based more on confusion and a lack of understanding of how the project was costed.

The whole scenario has attracted much media attention, the most recent contribution being from **Roland Rocchiccioli**, published in the *Ballarat Times* on the 27th August. For those who might have missed it I quote the following:

*"To argue that restoring the Cottage was financially wasteful, is a spurious hoary old chestnut. The Gardens and its glorious environs, will be there long after we have departed this mortal coil. Those who follow will salute its being spared from destruction. Thanks to Julie Bradby and her dedicated team, the Cottage has returned home."*

Interestingly, in the same article, Roland suggests that the historic Lydiard St. railway gates should be restored and moved to the Botanical Gardens. Perhaps they could be used to create a new entrance to the Fernery. Now that would really make front page news!

I wish to advise members that our long standing Treasurer, **Bruce Holland**, has retired from the position. Bruce has been an outstanding and very dedicated Treasurer for the last 12 years or so, and we thank him most sincerely for his contribution. The Committee will be arranging a function for Bruce as soon as we can reconvene.

**Kim Nolan** has very kindly offered to take up the position, and we thank her for being such a willing volunteer. Kim has a strong background in mathematics, is very computer literate and well positioned to take on the role. During the transition period Kim will be supported by Bruce and Susan Rattray, although she has already adapted to the position with great gusto.

No doubt members have been watching with much excitement the construction of **Stage 1 of the Fernery**, which is now expected to be completed before the end of the year. A lot of work continues to be done off-site, which involves a huge amount of detailing with the construction of the fretwork and the many finials, not to mention the Cumaru slats, which will be installed over the steel frame.

Meanwhile Stage 2, continues to go through the design process. This stage consists of the main structure, and provides North-South linkages from the Gardens, through to the Adam Lindsay Gordon Cottage. It is anticipated Stage 2 will be a public document prior to the end of the year.

continues page 2...



**WAR OF THE WORDS:** Members may be surprised that there is little in this edition about the verbal stoush which erupted recently in a series of articles in the *Ballarat Courier*. The furor essentially concerned the cost of restoring the Gatekeeper's Cottage (left) after its removal from a few blocks away. The restoration was not a matter the Friends could control or oversee. We are just happy that the cottage now stands as a testament to what went before and will serve as a community resource for years to come. Ed.

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



A recent snippet from Tim's Blog, 'Talking Plants' can be read on page 4.

..from page 1

I would like to thank Senior Projects Officer, **Anthony Schreenan** for his valued commentary and for keeping us informed on progress.

With a bit of luck we might still be able to hold the **Christmas function**, which could potentially be pushed back into December. I'm still hoping we will be able to hold this in the new Fernery, with an invitation being issued to our newly elected Councillors.

So, until we meet again I trust you're all getting out and about and I wish you well in adjusting to life under lockdown, and the difficulties of communicating through a mask.

**Robert Selkirk, September 2020**



**BBG Foundation:** The Foundation Board was recently pleased to have a virtual meeting with newly appointed City of Ballarat representatives, to discuss funding future projects in the Gardens, stage two of the Fernery and landscaping a main priority.

Discussions continue, to hopefully establish the position for additional adolescent Horticulture Apprentice in the Gardens for the term of four years, sponsored by donation of a generous Friends member.

The second BBGF Annual General Meeting will soon be held and focus continues to support our Gardens.

**Elizabeth Gilfillan, BBGF Chair**



#### MEMBERSHIP REPORT

The Friends are pleased to welcome the following new members who have joined since the last issue of Wellingtonia: Colin Hiatt, Jessica Gilbert, Kay Preston and Helen Roberts.  
Total Membership is currently 365.

**Raoul Dixon – Membership Officer**

*Laws of Gardening 1: 'If nobody uses it, there's a reason.'*



## AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS OF BOTANIC GARDENS

Report by Warwick Sellens,  
Member of the AAFBG and  
Ballarat Friends.

The activities of the Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens this year have been very much controlled by matters beyond control: bush fires and the plague.

However, thanks to Zoom, the committee has been having regular meetings and we are trying to keep our members in touch via the *Eucalypt* hard copy magazine and the *e-Ucalypt news* digital version.

We were all disappointed that the Annual Conference to be held earlier in the year at Brisbane had to be cancelled and there was also some fear that the proposed 2022 Conference scheduled to be held in Eurobodalla might also have to be cancelled. Despite their severe loss of natural habitat from last year's bush fires, the Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Garden will proceed with its plan to host the 2022 conference with the theme "*Thriving together, resilience in a changing world*".

No one has been unaffected by the Coronavirus but with optimism and the preparedness to rethink our goals and essential needs, we can all move on with hope and determination.

**Warwick Sellens**



## GROWING FRIENDS:



Even though the nursery has been closed for a number of weeks we are still able to sell plants from our trolley. We are only \$50 down in total sales from last year's figures for the trolley. So, not bad. We have had no revenue from our nursery though hopefully that will open as soon as restrictions ease. We are all looking forward to that day. In the meantime the CoB gardeners are looking after our plants in the nursery for which are very grateful. .

**Yvonne Curbach, Convenor**



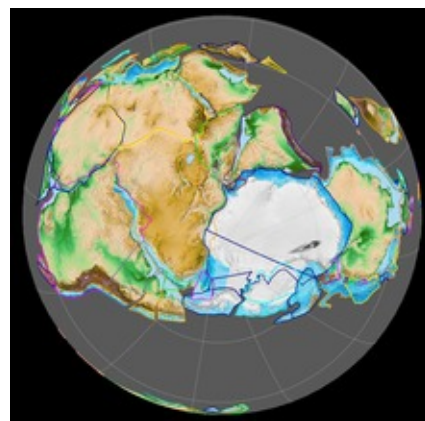
## FRIENDS' GUIDES REPORT:

The Guides met at the Gardens on 28 July to trial a new themed tour on *Gondwana*. Our tours of trees in the Ballarat gardens gives the opportunity to incorporate information on plant evolution, the theory of continental drift involving tectonic plates and conservation in general. It worked well. We intend to offer it as an event using a range of presenters once public gatherings are permitted.

Since then some of the guides have produced more topic material. We now have detailed notes on the life-cycle of *Gondwana* trees found in our gardens. This included illustrated drawings of fertilization and seed development. Another themed tour with accompanying notes has also been produced on Australian native plants. *(More on page 6)*

Some of the Guides have also been involved in the new booklet preparation (see below), as well as contacting members re "*Seeding the Future*" (see page 11). The 'hibernating' Guides have had numerous opportunities to keep active their interests in the Gardens during this odd year.

**Terry O'Brien, Convener**



Gondwana 420 million years ago. This view is centred on the South Pole.  
Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gondwana>

### A NEW FRIENDS BOOKLET ON BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS:

**What have cooking and a booklet in common?** Probably not a lot, but the analogy sprung to mind when describing our progress on the new booklet.

Since all copies of "*Eden of Loveliness*" were sold there has been discussion about another revised and updated version. Suggestions for its structure such as breaking it up into 50-year segments and possible titles such as "*Approaching Paradise*" were considered. However this would be a costly undertaking requiring considerable research work and professional support.

In the mean time there is the need to support our visitors with a lower cost promotional publication that can be kept as a souvenir. In spite of the strong move for us all to access information digitally, it is the experience of the Friends over a long period of time, that visitors benefit from being able to take away a printed publication as a memento.

The FBBG Committee set up a small group to move this along at the June meeting. There was plenty of interest and enthusiasm and very soon the planning group had agreed on an approach and structure. A 16-page draft emerged comprising text and photos.

The project has been taken off the boil temporarily and simmering as we await some more text support and other input from City of Ballarat Garden staff and the Communications Team at Town Hall.

The next step we hope will be the icing on the cake. We hand our raw product onto the professionals for them to re-work the text and photo selection, before coming up with the final layout.

The impact of COVID-19 restrictions is obviously affecting production.

**Terry O'Brien on behalf of the Booklet Team**

### THE BALLARAT GONDWANA TREES

**GONDWANA IN THE GARDENS:** We all know that our Botanical Gardens are historic. However how far back does this history stretch? One hundred and fifty years to the gold rush years? Or do a few of the trees hark even further – back to when Australia was part of Gondwana some 200 million years ago.

During this time the forests of the southern super continent were dominated by *Nathofagus* (the Southern Beeches) and the *Araucariacia* (*Agathis*, *Araucaria* and *Wollemia*).

Our Guides group was treated to a tour of the trees of the Gondwana period. This opened many eyes to another largely unknown aspect of our gardens. It was thought then that it would be of interest if people knew a little of the life cycle these trees shared and where these trees are located in the Ballarat garden.

The Ballarat trees in question are:

- *Agathis robusta* -Queensland kauri
- *Agathis microstachya* – Bull kauri
- *Agathis australis*-New Zealand kauri
- *Araucaria angustifolia*- Parana pine
- *Araucaria columnaris*- Cook pine / New Caledonian pine
- *Araucaria heterophylla* – Norfolk Island pine
- *Araucaria bidwillii*- Bunya pine
- *Wollemi nobilis* – Wollemi pine
- *Afrocarpus* (formerly *Podocarpus*) *falcatus*- Common Yellow wood

More on the life cycle of these fabulous trees in the next edition of *Wellingtonia*.

**Wendy Sandiford, Ballarat Guides member.**



Top left: male Bunya cone; below: One of the Ballarat Bunyas



**HERE'S AN IDEA!** Carole Haines, who organises speakers for our Friends' events, has put forward a suggestion that you might be interested in.

She receives a newsletter from '*The Planthunter*' and recommends that members join this as it is a labour of love and commitment by a few people to make our lives and our digital worlds greener, richer and more connected. Georgina Reid is the founder of the Planthunter. She is a well known journalist. Carole says: "*I find every newsletter I receive is full of so much information about sustainable gardens and using Australian Plants. Many different types of gardens from around Australia are often featured.*"

You can go to: <https://theplanthunter.com.au/>



## TREASURER'S POSITION ON THE FRIENDS COMMITTEE:

You will have read in President Robert's report that Bruce Holland has decided to stand down from the position of Treasurer. Bruce has performed this duty for some twelve years.

Bruce joined the Friends back in the early 1990's after going to a well-attended public meeting in the Town Hall.

Rest assured he is not finished with us yet, and he intends to continue being actively involved with the Growing Friends!

Kim Nolan is our new Treasurer.

Well done Bruce for a job beautifully managed! Welcome Kim!



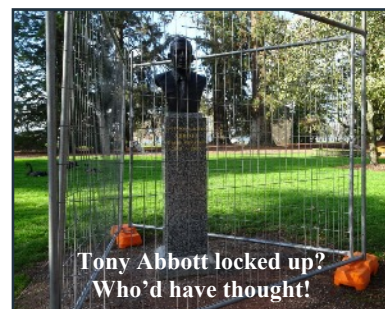
*Laws of Gardening 2: 'You get the most of what you need the least.'*

**ABBOTT, HOWARD BUSTS VANDALISM:** The vandalism of Abbott and Howard busts a few months ago came amidst the global Black Lives Matter protests and the attacks and questions raised about Australia's commemorative statues and monuments.

Richard Crouch, the benefactor responsible for bringing the PM busts collection into BBG in 1940, wanted to increase the interest in our political history. He would have had in mind a reflective engagement with our leaders as people wandered down the Avenue. We have harmless additions such as onions, red scarves, footy team beanies and floral tributes and more recently on the death of Hawke a nicely placed bottle of beer. In a robust democracy we don't need to get too precious about these pointed individual expressions. Political expression through vandalism and costly clean-up however does seem so unproductive and is unclear how it moves us forward as a nation in coming to terms with the issues that makes for this anger.

These Prime Minister statues should not be seen in the same light as some others that are now under discussion in Australia – James Cook and Angus McMillan. It is not hard to appreciate how the text that accompanies these statues ignores so much of our history when they are described as "Discoverer of Australia" or "First to cross the river". Many constructive suggestions have been made how a fuller recognition of our history can be made at these monuments. It will be interesting to see how over time this is resolved. Ballarat is so fortunate to have this unique outdoor art collection. As a community we need to strive for these more positive and creative uses of this icon.

**Terry O'Brien Convenor of the Guides for FBBG**



# Talking Plants September 2020

## A SHAGGY PLANT STORY

"I'm not sure which cultivar name best reflects the attributes of this rather mournful yet alluring she-oak. I think of it as the 'little weeping she-oak'. But that wouldn't sell.

Smarter marketing minds have settled on Cousin It, Kattang Karpel and Shagpile. More prosaically, and very tentatively, we use 'prostrate fine form' on our garden labels at Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria.

Whatever you call it, we grow this low hung Casuarina at Cranbourne Gardens, draping over a dividing wall, and at Melbourne Gardens, flanking the entrance path to Guilfoyle's Volcano.

I first saw it at the Australian Botanic Garden at Mount Annan, just south of Sydney. I was told then that the Australian Botanic Garden was the source of most, if not all, prostrate cultivars in cultivation. The name used there is 'Kattang Karpel'.

The parent species, Casuarina glauca, or Swamp Oak, grows at the side of coastal streams and river valleys in New South Wales and Queensland (and occasionally established in Victorian bushland).

It can be a tree up to 20 or so metres tall, or a stumpy shrub to a couple of metres.

Want more? Search for **Talking Plants**, or go to <https://talkingplants.blogspot.com>

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



In 1998, a horticulturist from Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust in Sydney, which includes the Australian Botanic Garden, found a prostrate growth form hanging off the edge of a cliff in Kattang Nature Reserve, near Port Macquarie.

Get it? Kattang Karpel..."



Above: Australian Gardens, Cranbourne Gardens,  
Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria

*Laws of Gardening 3: Fancy gizmos don't work.*

## BALLARAT GARDEN DISCOUNTS FOR MEMBERS

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

You will need to show your FBBG membership card

## How is your free time looking after Covid-19?

*Interested in joining a Friends Group?*

The Ambassadors, Guides, Growers and BotaniKids can always use extra volunteers, or you can join the Botanical artists!

Contact Susan at [info@fbbg.org.au](mailto:info@fbbg.org.au) or 5342 9354





## RARE OAK TREE: (From the Archives of John Garner)

In October 1995 the Sisters of St John of God Hospital in Ballarat celebrated the centenary of their arrival in Ballarat by planting a tree in the Ballarat Botanical Gardens. Sister Assumption, who was present at the dedication, says that the Sisters were told that this was a very rare tree, that only two were in Australia and that they must take good care of it.

The tree is a **Delavay's Oak**, (*Quercus delavayi*), and it is indeed a rare tree. It does not appear in the usual reference books but a description of the tree has been obtained from the *Journal de Botanique* supplied by the staff of the Kew Gardens. Interestingly they do not have a specimen.



**Above:** Hebe is located just on the lake side of the Prime Ministers' Avenue.

**Below:** The Delavay's Oak at the end of winter 2020.



The only garden that has so far been found to have one growing is the Sir Harold Hillier Garden in the U.K. and possibly one in Edinburgh. Pictures of the leaves have been obtained from the Hillier Garden and the Ghent University Botanical Garden.

The tree has relevance to the celebration for the Sisters. The association is that it was a Catholic Missionary priest who became an important botanist with prolific finds on his journeys who discovered this tree.

Father Jean Delavay (1834 – 1895) first visited China in 1867. Travelled extensively in China particularly Yunnan Province.

He was persuaded to collect for the Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle when he returned to France in 1881. Delevay returned to China in 1882; alone and on foot he traversed around Tapintze, north West Yunnan.

He searched for alpine plant species acceptable to western gardens. He was methodical and meticulous collecting over 200,000 specimens, 4,000 species of which 1500 were new discoveries!

David Grant, who was Senior arborist of the Ballarat Council remembers sending the tree to the Gardens for the Sisters. It was one of two contained in a consignment of 20 oaks forwarded from the Melbourne Herbarium in 1995. At the time he did not realize the significance of his action, providing a tree named after one of the great Catholic Missionary botanists in China of the 19th century. One thing is certain; this is indeed a rare tree out of its original habitat and deserves recognition.

*The remaining three Sisters of the St John of God Order that founded the Hospital left Ballarat for Perth in May, 2014. They left behind a great hospital after 119 years of service to the Ballarat community. This tree is another significant reminder of their dedicated work overall that time.*

**J O H N  
GARNER**

(Editor's note: The tree is located north-west of the Hebe statue not far from the PM avenue.)



**Left:** Curator Peter Marquand mentions the birds from the Lake visiting the gardens during recent months.



With a happy grin and a strong arm Joy O'Brien bids the Friends' old engraving equipment a 'fond' farewell at the recycle station! It has been replaced by a new machine purchased by the City of Ballarat for the Botanical Gardens staff to use.

### WHEN YOU NEED TO PAY US SOME MONEY:

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

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

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

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

### Some Garden Laughs:





## CURATOR'S REPORT:

At the start of spring the gardens team have removed the nets which have protected the plants from the birds during winter.



We have found over the last few years that if we protect the plants during winter the plants are big enough to survive unprotected in spring. We have also found over the last few years the birds return to the lake once the weather warms up.

Late last week I received notification that the *Populus deltoides*, which is located to the north of the fernery is accepted into the National Trust Heritage Tree register.

The tree was nominated in the categories of location in an historic garden and for its outstanding size and contribution to the landscape.

This tree is a monster with a height of 38.2 metres and a spread of 34.6 metres. The tree's nomination adds to our already impressive list of trees on the register.

Over the last few weeks, the gardens team have been assisted by redeployed staff from the Ballarat Aquatic and Lifestyle Centre mulching trees on the lake foreshore and at the Prisoner of War Memorial. This adds to the many cubic metres of mulch used to top up mulched areas throughout the gardens.



**Peter Marquand**

**Top left:** The gardens were well netted this year.

**Left:** part of the current floral display in the Conservatory which remains closed.

**Right:** The *Populus deltoides* (the eastern cottonwood or necklace poplar) towers over the new fernery

## PLANT COLLECTIONS UPDATE:

Our Begonias were heading to Chelsea...almost!

In exciting news, we have belatedly found out that the Tuberous Begonias we sent back to Blackmore & Langdon's nursery in the UK late last year, not only made it safely, but one was successfully grown to show standard and heading to the **Chelsea Flower Show in 2020**... until the show was cancelled!

It's been an exciting journey! In our collection of tuberous Begonias, we have 80 cultivars that were originally bred by Blackmore & Langdon's UK Nursery but that they no longer have and thought were lost forever!

Blackmore & Langdon are a fourth-generation business and some of the Begonias had been named after the Langdon family members, so it is wonderful to not only return the tubers to them, but continue our much-valued connection with the family established in 1901.

We are intending to send another box this year, in the hope that even more might make it to Chelsea in 2021!

Stay safe everyone!

**Donna Thomas, Plant Collections Officer**



Matt and Erin from the Gardens staff with the parcel of begonias



## NEW FERNERY



The new fernery goes up:  
**Above,** Elizabeth Gilfillan with Mayor Ben Taylor at the sod turning.

**Right:** three stages of the work.  
Will it be finished by Xmas?







## BOTANIKIDS REPORT :

### PART 1

#### ALL ABOUT THIS YEAR'S PLANS

### ONE WORD SUMS IT UP: **POSTPONED!**

This report is about **what we were intending to do** in 2020 and now what we have adapted and changed due to the pandemic.

As we settled into our new home, The Gatekeeper's Cottage, the focus for our educational and community programs for 2020 was all about expansion as we became better resourced and well established.

Our goal was to extend our reach to include our neighbouring schools develop a Gardens Interpretative Program for adults linking with the Guiding and History Groups in particular. We wanted to use our deck for selling plants from time to time at the Farmers Market. **Postponed.**

**Schools:** In strengthening connections to our closer schools, we planned to further utilise the Wetlands of the north gardens. For example 'sustainable practice in public green spaces' for upper primary classes, studying indigenous plantings with future connections to another volunteer group the Gardens for Wildlife.

**Postponed**



**Community:** Last year our linkages and supporting networks included a broad scope in the Ballarat community. With groups such as Probus, U3A, Sing Australia Choir, Ballarat Craft Council, Ballarat International Photo Biennale, Bupa Aged Care, Lake Gardens Childcare, Jubilee Preschool, and CoB Home Child Educators Groups. All the groups above were intending to include the Gatekeepers Cottage as part of their programs in 2020! **Postponed.**

This year we were all set to support and stage nature-based craft workshops and provide meeting space for The Craft Cottage members. This would have been such an exciting step into adult learning. **Postponed**



As other childcare group contacted us with program requests we intended to partner and resource such activities for the children planting and potting but specifically encouraging greater use of the Gardens for nature playing exploring and discovering. **Postponed**

As part of our **Young Peoples Group** it was intended to develop a small adult education and interpretative series of lunchtime one hour talks 'About Plants'. **Postponed**

An **Artist in Residence** program was being investigated and based at the Cottage as a working studio. A selected artist would work for a set time creating a work or works interpretative of the plants within the Gardens. This was to be in partnership with regional or State arts programs. (Talks are still in the pipeline). **Postponed**

We wanted more formal linking with our 'neighbours' in the precinct (Tramway Museum, Craft Cottage, Hatchery and POW memorial). As well, we wanted to incorporate user groups on the eastern shores of the Lake to establish a shared educational program for schools and perhaps visitors.

This would mainly have an online focus sharing information and programs but coordination and time-tabling with schools could be developed. Meetings were informal. However Botanikids, Tramway Museum and Fish Hatchery have all worked together on many occasions to provide a program for visiting schools and community groups.

**Postponed**

The Nature Lab: **Botany After School** for Years 9-12 was planned during the Winter term. This was to be with advice from the Junior Field Naturalists and include botanical journaling and the study of plants.

**Postponed**

Our iconic BotaniKids Under-Fives Family 'Nurturing Nature' program was to continue on the deck for potting and activities. **Postponed**

**Cottage Open Days:** included two open weekends Heritage 2019 and Begonia Festival 2020 Heritage weekend 2020 **Postponed.**

**More were planned :** Garden Tools Exhibition., Botanical Wreaths, **Postponed!!!**

**Julie Bradby, Convenor**

#### A LETTER SENT FROM OVERSEAS FROM A BOTANIKIDS MOTHER who is at present unable to return home to Ballarat

"After moving from Melbourne to Ballarat with my husband to start our family a couple of years ago, I was keen to make some new friends in our new home town. I was searching for family-friendly activities to enjoy with my two children on social media when I found Ballarat Botanikids.

I knew of the botanical gardens, but I was wondering what Botanikids is. So I brought my children (3 and 1 year old) there to have a look. There were so many children, parents and even grandparents. The organizers were all volunteers. They took kids walking around in the beautiful botanical garden, showing them the trees, plants, talking about the histories and the stories. While walking, kids might find sticks, leaves, pinecones or flowers and use them to make nature art and craft. They also read books and play games with kids.

I still remember the first time we came along. My son had a fantastic time. He saw a huge tree, probably 20 kids holding hands around it. He made his first Christmas tree with pinecone and clay. He was so happy and running around with his new friends there.

The volunteers shared the home made cakes, snacks and drinks with us. I was talking to one of the volunteers, she is very friendly and nice. Made us feel very welcome.

Every time we returned, the kids saw and learned different things with different themes. I've never known how important it was for kids to play in a natural environment. I enjoyed seeing kids jumping in the puddles, running around on and rolling on the grass and really get amongst nature!

Some weekends for our family day, we will jump in the mud puddle, walk up the creek bed, pick up the stone and look at the insects. Use nature for art, experience the fresh air and muddy boots make everything better! The mud can be washed, but the happy will stay in your heart forever!"

## BOTANIKIDS REPORT :

### PART 2 The Gift of Time !

Every cloud has a silver lining so they say and 'Covid-19' has given us time to consolidate links and provide more time to plan, connect and refine. When we eventually 'come out to play' it will be different and a lot will change. However, the Gardens continue to add beauty and enrich our lives and that is well worth preserving!



### LATEST NEWS!

Below is a part snapshot of a recent application to Bendigo Bank for a grant to support aspects of our programming during Covid restrictions. I've included it does give an insight into how we go about our core business.



### So what have we achieved this year so far?

**Social Media:** Ballarat Botanikids Facebook page continues to drive our support and community; often posts achieving a reach of 2000+.

As 2020 rolled on we like many other groups in Ballarat have had to revise rethink and review our program.

The new innovation has been our version of the *Click and Collect* concept.

Although we have worked hard to keep in contact with our families through social media. We support home-based learning about the plants in the Gardens, the natural world and gardening through our Facebook page. However the lack of actual contact has made it all very challenging.

### Our very own Click and Collect program:

*Nature Learning Kit 1: 'Bee Kind'* was handed out from the Cottage in July. This was organised through Facebook where families indicated their interest, and times and days for pickups were allocated. One hundred were distributed.

Our *'Plant a Plant' kids kit* was given out to 57 families at the Farmers Market. Although we provided these kits and activities for free some families responded with donations.

It is planned to continue with a further three kits: *More Trees Please, Give Peas [and Beans] a Chance!*, and *'Ponds and Puddles'*.

Farmers Market Children's activities will be in packed in noodle boxes for children to do at home, or tables will be set out on the deck for families to do the activity at the Market. These will continue when there is a relaxation of restrictions

The response to the first of these we ran was strong with 57 families involved at the July market.

We envisage this activity will become more popular as it becomes known as a monthly program linked to the Farmers Market. We are aiming to reach 60 families per market.

### Social Media Development:

It is planned to extend Botanikids social media by establishing small videos, and perhaps podcasts, plus a regular newsletter through subscription linked to our Facebook page and a blog.

This will extend and consolidate our strong Facebook base and further reach new contacts, especially schools and visitors.

"The Friends of the Gardens Ballarat Botanikids Nature Connections Program [Pre Covid] at the Gatekeepers Cottage endeavoured to link to wider community in Ballarat through five strategic connective outreach programs.

We felt it was important to list all of these below so it can be seen how the selected programs fit into our whole program. Now because of 'Covid' we have had to focus on and extend and strengthen the areas we can still with precautions, proceed with.

The programs marked with \* listed below (items '2' and '4') are the aspects of our community linkages programs we are focusing on during Covid as they are low or nil personal contact and are the key areas that form the projects for this grant.

1. Art, Artisans and Heritage Exhibitions and special days

**2. Nature Quests Under Fives, families and groups: Take Home Nature Family Kits. \***

3. The Ballarat Botanical Gardens Learning and Visitor Interpretative Program

**4. Botanikids Digital Nature Network (Videos, Instagram, Blog, Newsletter and Facebook educational materials online) \***

5. Community Linkages : Farmers Market, U3A Probus, Field Naturalists, Permaculture Group and other community gardening and nature based programs ....".

*We were granted \$300 under Item 2 . This will fund production of one kit.*

**Julie Bradby, Convenor**

**Please note: a number of items in this edition had to be severely edited due to the larger than expected contributions received. Held over as well was *Green Thumb's Cuttings* because of a lack of gossip to report! Ed.**

The real meaning of plant catalogue terminology:

"A favourite of birds" means to avoid planting near cars, sidewalks, or clothes lines.

"Carefree" refers more to the plant's attitude than to your workload.

"Vigorous" is code for "has a Napoleonic compulsion to take over the world."



*A SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION: Earlier in the year I asked Geoff Wallis to contribute to a session on the Statues in our gardens in our U3A "Delving into Ballarat Botanical Gardens" course. Geoff, former university art lecturer, is well known for his passion for art. Unfortunately this session did not eventuate because of the impact of the coronavirus. During hibernation I approached Geoff to see if he would drag himself away from his painting and write down some of his thoughts on Public Art in the Ballarat Botanical Gardens. He now share these with you: Terry O'Brien*

## SOME VERY LOOSELY CONNECTED THOUGHTS ON PUBLIC ART:

In July English sculptor Marc Quinn enhanced his reputation for controversy when he produced a black resin statue of *Black Lives Matter* (BLM) protestor Jen Reid and, undercover of darkness, had it installed in Bristol. Sited on the same pedestal where a statue of slave trader Edward Colston had stood before being dumped in the river, *A Surge of Power* was not intended to be permanent. I assume however, that the artist and subject imagined it would last longer than the single day the council gave it.

Quinn would have known only too well how art attracts a broad range of opinions once it goes public. His *Alison Lapper Pregnant*, a giant nude marble image of the disabled artist, was the focus of extraordinary debate when it was placed atop a plinth in Trafalgar Square from 2005 to 2007.

The BLM movement as we have seen, prompted a rethink about the hundreds of statues of prominent figures that populate cities across the world. Many statues of dead white men - such as politician and philanthropist Edward Colston - have been removed or vandalised. John Cassidy's 1895 bronze statue of Colston appears to be an artistically lively work. It shows Colston leaning on his walking stick in an attitude of contemplation. (Was he thinking about all the deaths he was responsible for?)

The question arises - does artistic merit override the less than savoury character of the subject, or for that matter, of the artist? Picasso, for example, has come in for a great deal of criticism because of his chauvinistic attitude to the women in his life. What seems to me to be undeniable is that, at times, immoral artists have produced great art.

In Ballarat, once known as *The City of Statues*, there have been a few occasions when public works have faced controversy. Two works that prompted both public condemnation and applause are George Allen's *Earth - Mining and Agriculture* (1952) in Sturt Street and Akio Makigawa's *Point to the Sky* (2001) at the entrance to Camp Street. They represent the huge changes that have taken place in both the nature of public art and the response to it over that fifty-year period. When Allen's so-called Pinkerton Statue was installed in 1952 its personifications of mining and agriculture were easily assimilated, but its smooth stylised modernist forms were considered by some to be far too radical.

By the time Makigawa set to work on his commission the situation had largely reversed. The problem now was not the aesthetic innovations but the opacity of the symbolism. In the past the symbolism adopted in public statuary was generally easily understood, being a well-established part of the cultural vocabulary. Allen's work marked the end of this long-established trend. In other significant ways these two works represent broader changes in art - figuration versus abstraction, carving in natural materials versus fabrication with industrial materials.

In our own time public art has embraced a multitude of approaches and it is generally acknowledged that there can be no single 'correct' form of public expression. One widely held view is that public art should acknowledge its setting - not simply in terms of the built environment, but also in respect of the history of the site and the needs of the people who are going to use it. The term 'site-specific' was coined to identify public art that took its cues from the place it was installed.

The 3.5 metre tall marble image of Alison Lapper referred to above wasn't actually carved by Marc Quinn. Like many prominent - and busy - international artists today, Quinn had his work made by skilled specialists. In this case Italian master marble carvers produced the sculpture under his supervision. The marble statues in the BBG representing Winter, Spring, Flora and so on exemplify this trend as practiced in the 19th century. These are relatively anodyne, aesthetically speaking. They were produced according to academic formulas that allowed for little personal expression and were made in editions. Carving workshops in Italy turned out copies to order, much as Chinese craftspeople do today.

I came across a familiar figure at The White Hart Inn in Exeter - you may recognise it as identical to the figure of Susannah in the Sculpture Pavilion. Interestingly, the original models for these works, the statues of Ancient Greece, were coloured. By the time classical art was 'rediscovered' in the Renaissance period the original marble works had long lost their colours. The academies, which were established in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries, demanded the convention of unadorned marble.

Most of the busts that make up the Prime Ministers Avenue are reasonably straight-forward and realistic. As a whole the Prime Ministers Avenue reflects changing artistic styles over time as well as the mannerisms and proclivities of individual artists. Most of the artists recognise that in this instance a good likeness is important. They would also hope to capture something of the subject's spirit, their inner life.

In some instances the sculptor has drawn attention to the clay medium (which was then cast in bronze) by leaving the knobs and depressions made by the artist's hands. Peter Nicholson came close to caricature in his portrait of Bob Hawke and it reveals his profession of newspaper cartoonist. (I remember Hawke opening Nicholson's exhibition at the Art Gallery of Ballarat the day before he pushed Bill Hayden aside.)

In other busts however, Nicholson tempered his natural inclination to caricature. His Malcolm Fraser - which replaced an awkward and lifeless portrait by Vic Greenhalgh - is one of the finest busts in the Avenue - and his Julia Gillard is a strong work. It would appear however that Kevin Rudd didn't inspire Nicholson, and his bust of Rudd appears both under-scaled and hesitant. (With Rudd, and John Howard, you can see the dilemma faced by sculptors working with clay when their subjects wear spectacles.)



Geoff Wallis author of *Peril in the Square - the sculpture that challenged a city*. Published by Indra 2004. This book explores the controversy about Ron Robertson-Swann's sculpture *Vault* - known to all as 'Yellow Peril' - after it was installed in Melbourne's new City Square in 1980.



Brain  
Test

## Ballarat Botanical Gardens Quiz

1. John Russell Thomson was born in Stirling, site of a famous battle in 1297. As part of his 1886 Bequest, a statue of which Scottish leader was commissioned? (Photo 1)  
"Who dared to nobly stem tyrannical pride, or nobly die"  
Robert Burns.
2. Donated by Hon. David Ham in 1894, a marble pair of which animal guard the main entry to the Gardens? (Photo 2)
3. There are two entry gates on Wendouree Parade, named for their donors. What is each called and when was each opened? (Photo 3)
4. Constructed under the advice of the Government astronomer, what feature was presented by Mayor Holloway to the gardens in 1912?
5. A Memorial Garden was established in her honour in 1959. She was awarded an MBE in recognition of her work in the establishment of the Arch of Victory and Avenue of Honour. (Photo 4)
6. Originally in Sturt Street from 1954, which feature was moved to the gardens in 1980 and recently renovated?
7. The FBBG contributed to the renovation of this fountain, erected by public subscription in 1890 to recognize the work of which Mayor of Ballarat, who was 'devoted to beautifying the Lake and Gardens'?
8. The Reflection Pool (1938) commemorates the 70th anniversary of the founding of the City of Ballarat. The fountain bowl was replaced by what in 1969? (Photo 5)
9. Which Fountain and Garden, designed as an interactive space, was opened in 1987? Later The Friends Western Beds Group assisted in its replanting.
10. An impressive tree in our Botanical Gardens, it grows to a height of 35-40 meters, produces enormous edible cones and originated in the Mesozoic period. What is the common name of *Araucaria bidwillii*? (Photo 6)
11. We are all familiar with the Prime Ministers' Avenue. How many PMs have died while in office?
12. Which PM had "Christmas" as a second Christian name?

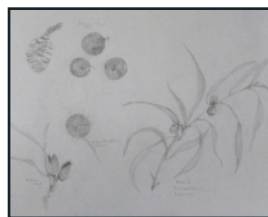


Answers on  
page 12

## BOTANICAL ARTISTS GROUP:

Some of the group have reported on how they have kept busy during 'social isolation':

**Susan Walther** - "I have been doing some painting during our little break, I had a great deal of fun doing the case moth I found in the driveway. There are a few more things like shells and bugs. And some knitting. I have finished the Leadbeater's possum after many months. He is an Activist Knitting kit and fund raiser from the Knitting Nanas of Toolangi on Facebook."



**Jill Salathiel** - "I have been drawing a few little subjects. not up to a great standard yet. Still enjoying the process and will persist to improve."

**Ro Bancroft** -

"I haven't actually been doing a lot of botanical art lately. A couple of dog portraits and some paper sculpture. Also, Virtual architecture, Here's my latest sketch of Mont Saint-Michel - France".

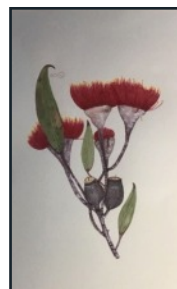


**Emily Ballerin** - "I am struggling with staying motivated.

I have been looking at lots of websites and trying to learn from them and I've been avidly reading all the art books I've collected. I haven't put paint to paper now for many

weeks. Reading and walking in the gardens have been my 'go to place'."

**Christina Nevistic** - "Staying healthy is my key, going for walks most days, gardening when the weather allows, reading, painting a little."



**Connie Venn** - "I have done these two citrus studies from plants in my garden. With spring approaching, there are lots of flower buds and shoots poking their heads up, so there are plenty of painting options coming up."



**Valerie Richards** - "My main activity has been in the garden, my other form of botanical refuge. I have been painting large studies on black background



and also tried my hand at architectural Ink and Watercolour. Sewing, knitting and reading, have been filling my time.'



**Val Richards, Convenor**

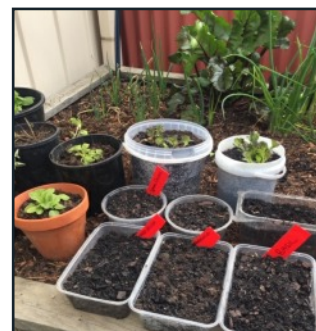


**A SPECIAL EVENT:** Members are probably aware of this free event organised by a small but enthusiastic group of the Friends under the leadership of Elizabeth Gilfillan. Telephone or e-mail contact has been attempted to all members during August or September.

“Thank you everyone of our Members and Gardens staff Daryl Wallis and Peter Marquand for your fabulous response to this venture. Our Seeding team meets via Zoom fortnightly to plan our next steps, it is great to be connecting with you Friends, we will keep you up to date with progress and please give us your feedback.

As Stage 3 lock down eases we will have a better idea how things will work on the day. Enjoy your growing endeavours”.

**Elizabeth Gilfillan**



Elizabeth is setting the pace with her seed planting



## FRIENDS OF THE BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS

We need *your* assistance!

# SEEDING THE FUTURE



**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2020**

**GATEKEEPERS' COTTAGE REAR DECK 9 -11 am**

The Friends Committee invite all members and their friends to take part in a community outreach event in line with the *'Be Kind Ballarat'* initiative.

We want Friends to grow the seedlings, vegetables, herbs, flowers and plants at home in recycled containers, label and bring for free distribution.

Plants need to be brought to the site on the morning of the event and then distributed to the public, free of charge, in the afternoon.

The nearby Gardens Pavilion will be used in event of bad weather.

For further information please contact the Friends via email: [Info@fbbg.org.au](mailto:Info@fbbg.org.au)

Pandemic precautions and restrictions at the time must be followed.



### WHAT'S COMING UP FOR THE BALLARAT FRIENDS

NOVEMBER 8, SUNDAY	"Seeding the future" – rear of Cottage.
DECEMBER SOMETIME? (COVID-19 PERMITTING!)	Christmas Nibbles and Drinks. Possibly in the new fernery? 5.30 (time, venue and cost to be confirmed). (I THINK WE WILL BE REALLY DESERVING OF THIS EVENT! Ed.)

"Time is something everyone runs short on and finally runs out of. "

# Friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens Information 2020

Email: [info@fbbg.org.au](mailto:info@fbbg.org.au)  
 Website: <https://fbbg.org.au/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/FriendsBBG>

Friends of Ballarat Botanic Gardens Inc.  
 P.O. Box 33W, Ballarat West 3350  
<https://www.facebook.com/ballaratbotaniKIDS/>

Tel. George Longley Building 03 5342 9354

## 2020 FBBG COMMITTEE AND AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

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

## FRIENDS COMMITTEE MEETING TIMES 2020 (most on hold at present)

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

**Botanical Artists** Mondays 10 am to 3 pm during school terms.

**Guiding Friends** 4th Tuesday each month 10 am.

**Growing Friends** Tuesday each week 1 pm - 4 pm, and  
the 2nd Sunday every month, 1 pm - 4 pm.

**Plant Sales** at the above times.

**BotaniKids /Educating Friends** 2nd Tuesday each month 10 am (plus  
special events)

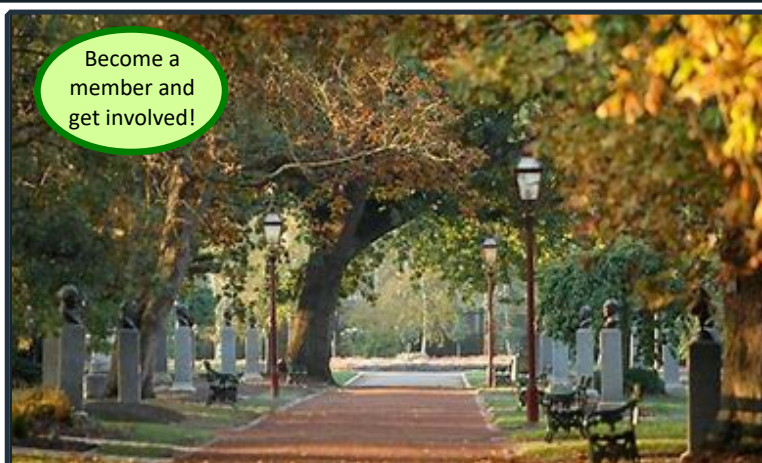
**History Group** 1st Tuesday each month 4 pm.

### DEADLINE FOR THE SUMMER EDITION 2020-1

by mid-DECEMBER 2020 please

Submit articles to the Editor [info@fbbg.org.au](mailto:info@fbbg.org.au)

**Quiz Answers:** 1. William Wallace (Half a point if you said Mal Gibson); 2. Lions; 3. Morey Gates (1894) and McDonald Gates (1921); 4. Sun dial behind the Statuary; 5. Matilda Louisa (Tilly) Thompson; 6. Floral clock; 7. Claxton Fountain; 8. Orb; 9. Sensory Garden; 10. Bunya Bunya; 11. Three (Lyons, Curtin, Holt); 12. Earle Christmas Grafton Page (PM for 20 days in 1939)



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

Membership gives you -

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

Tel. George Longley Building 03 5342 9354  
 Email: [info@fbbg.org.au](mailto:info@fbbg.org.au)



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



**Photo credits:** Thanks to: Warwick Sellens, Jennifer Burrell, Elizabeth Gilfillan, Terry O'Brien, Tim Entwisle, Julie Bradby, Susan Pilbeam, Raoul Dixon, Tim & Wendy Sandiford, Peter Marquand, Robert Selkirk, Donna Thomas and Michael Bird for providing the photographs and illustrations used. Apologies for any omissions. Ed.

**Disclaimer:** The views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens. The Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens does not accept responsibility for statements made or opinions expressed, although every effort will be made to publish reliable and accurate information.

**Contributions for Summer Wellingtonia 2020-1 are due by MID-DECEMBER please.**

Michael Bird, Editor.

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