

President's Report

FBBG 31st Annual General Meeting

FEB 2014

Welcome

Our patron, Prof Tim Entwisle RBGM
Crs, John Burt, Vicki Coltman,
Invited guests, members & new members.

Once again it is a great privilege to present the FBBG Annual Report, this being the 31st year. At this point I would like to pay tribute to our founding members one of whom, Eleanor Chisholm recently passed away, their vision & belief in the importance of these wonderful Gardens, was that they are nurtured for future generations. This is continued today with the promotion of natural science & beauty.

The FBBG were thrilled that Prof. Tim Entwisle has agreed to be our patron, we sincerely thank him & look forward to his friendship & mentorship in years to come. You will find Tim's Blog spot most interesting reading.

Another diverse & memorable year has been enjoyed by the Friends.

Enjoyable opportunities and interesting events, visits to other inspiring locations, CloudeHill Garden in Autumn was an amazing display of colour & in Spring Mt Macedon gardens were a delight.

FBBG visited RBG Melbourne Herbarium Library not generally open, a special display curated by Librarian Sally Stewart, was observed with many interesting items including Herbals from the 17th century brought to Australia by Baron Von Mueller as text books!

Congratulations to members as finalists in The Ballarat Heritage Awards, entries being the restoration of the McDonald Gates & the production of the history book "An Eden of Loveliness". Also

to the History Group for their commendation in the State History Awards.

The FBBG is always enthusiastic in support of the Ballarat Begonia Festival, being involved in 4 initiatives, the FBBG Nursery with Plant Sales, Guided Tours, FBBG promotion & information & the well loved children's activities. The Education Group planned, resourced & designed 3 BotaniKids activities with the assistance of the City of Ballarat Events Dpt. the extremely popular Super Sandpit will be a feature again this year, as well as a fun Potting Activity. Rosters on the table. The FBBG will be located in the Conservatory this year.

The FBBG held 2 general meetings with entertaining guest Speakers, in May it was Kate Roud who started her career at Sissinghurst in England, in August it was Patrice O'Shae secretary of Wombat Hill Botanic Garden whose members are doing extraordinary work of restoration in their Gardens.

In September the FBBG had the pleasure of hosting a Convention for Garden Clubs Australia, 200 members from across the country enjoyed Ballarat over 5 days with a range of tours & activities, our sincere thanks to Michael Sorrell for his capable administration of the happy but somewhat wet event.

Following on, it was a busy October, we celebrated Spring, the Speakers Luncheon with inspiring speakers, delicious lunch served in the Conservatory followed by the always enjoyable Open Garden weekend, with our thanks to the owners who willingly shared their gardens, record numbers attended. Special thanks to the sub committee Helen Todd, Wendy Taylor, Kylie Blake.

October 17 is always George Longley Day, when the contribution of founding Curator George Longley is celebrated, always interesting to hear snippets, compiled by the History group, of this amazing man's story, spanning his years from 1858 to 1895 as valued custodian. In Longleys memory, his great grandson Reginald Jones, has generously donated to the FBBG the Longley Family Bible.

The History Group under the cheerful guidance of Lorraine Powell, continues its valuable work in researching, collecting &

archiving & the FBBG was the major recipient of the Ballarat Foundation Telstra Countrywide Grant Award of \$4,000 which has enabled the purchase of equipment.

650 children revelled in the outstanding Great Big Gardens Play Day activities on a cool, dampish 23rd October, my huge thanks to Julie Bradbury & her team, Educating Friends & Botanikids. Julie has co-ordinated a marvellous programme for young people, bringing families, teachers & supporters to the Gardens to have fun whilst learning. It is timely now to review the programme for 2014 & beyond, the production of a BotaniKids self-guided brochure & work kits are in the pipeline, education links are being formed with RBG Melb. & Federation University Ballarat.

The City of Ballarat is assisting with the formation of a Nature Based Playgroup, & the exciting possibility of the appointment of an Education Officer.

Our grateful thanks to Julie for leading the group with such imaginative initiatives.

Our sincere thanks to Terry O'Brien for the interesting initiatives of The Guides Group. The 1st U3A 6 week Course on Ballarat Botanical gardens was a great success & is to be followed by another 8 week course this year. The group has now completed 3 attractive brochures, Significant Trees, Statues in the gardens & now the Prime Ministers Avenue.

Meanwhile Autumn & then Spring Sunday Tours are about to begin.

Members have been enjoying the new format Newsletter compiled by our editor Michael Bird, thank you Michael for collating all our extraneous entries & thanks to CoB for financing our Newsletter.

Healthy plants "walk out the gates" of the FBBG Nursery conscientiously tended to by Yvonne Curbach & the happy team who have been kept very busy with watering over the past weeks. A new watering system being installed by CoB will hopefully alleviate the situation.

There has been the exciting formation of a new group called the Western Beds group, with the guidance of Beryl Plummer the group is eager to get involved in planning, rejuvenation trimming & propagating plants in the Western beds.

The present membership is 309, our thanks to Raoul Dixon for his expert management of this database now integrated with the FBBG Website which is evolving into an up to date communication resource with relevant information & helpful links.

Ballarat Friends are represented on the National Committee of the Association of Friends, our umbrella organisation who have this year formed a Memorandum of Understanding with BGANZ which now identifies the parallel nature of our 2 organisations in the pursuit of closely related goals, sharing resources & participation in events, the next being at the Gold Coast Botanical Garden in August, the conference " Growing Matters, Growing gardens, Growing friends" will demonstrate the Gold Coast is not just golden sand & bright lights! Registration forms available & from the website, always a most enjoyable event.

Several members also attended the 5th global Botanic Gardens Conference in Dunedin NZ, this event highlighted the extraordinary achievements of Botanic Gardens Globally.

During the year many causes for concern were being expressed by members, this led to an Extra Ordinary Meeting, the members who resoundingly supported the need for issues to be resolved resulted in discussions with the Council & CoB administration. The happy outcome has been a Memorandum Of Understanding being developed between the FBBG & CoB copies are available.

FBBG thanks the CoB for the professional & harmonious negotiations which took place.

It has been recognised, the need for New Interpretive Signage in the Gardens which is a Priority Project for FBBG support in 2014.

The Gardens ReDevelopment plans are making progress with the design of structural elements of The Fernery, being

produced by Tim Grace from CoB who is giving a presentation today. Andrew Laidlaw from RGBM has submitted the 1st stage of the internal landscape proposals for consideration.

The FBBG has formed a Project Group who will work closely with CoB on this exciting development. The Public Awareness will begin at the Begonia Festival time.

Our thanks to Peter Marquand & The Conservatory staff who happily assist the FBBG. The Gardens are looking fantastic in readiness for the Begonia Festival, the season being unkind in recent weeks the gardeners have done a great job! thanks to them all.

Three years have flown & this is my last report, & at this point I have many more thanks to many more people, nothing can be achieved without the combined support of all concerned.....

Genevieve Lowe, ever patient, efficient & friendly thank you Genevieve, what would we have done without you. Beryl Plummer has been our efficient minute Secretary over the past 12 months & is retiring to lead the Western Beds Group. To Carole Haines & her team who keep us well refreshed on all occasions, Joy O'Brien who endeavours to produce much needed labels for Ballarat & other Gardens, the equipment is near retirement age so we are considering options for the future.

The committee what a wonderful group of true friends they are, always dedicated & enthusiastically contributing to our Gardens, I sincerely thank them all. You the members for your continued support of our Gardens & me whilst your president. My non garden friends who are still my friends after 3 years of neglect. Tim at home, who has always ensured "that there is milk in the fridge" among a myriad of other things!

As we look forward to exciting times ahead, with interesting proposals for our Gardens in the future, I will have much pleasure in taking a more active roll with a couple of groups, my thanks to you all.

Elizabeth Gilfillan