

Wellingtonia

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

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



NEWSLETTER – SUMMER 2021-2

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK:



We are appreciating planning our activities with more confidence with the retreat of some COVID regulations and lockdowns. We were lucky to hold as many events as we did in 2021 given the circumstances. There was a positive attitude to work through the hurdles as best we could and it meant we had the Spring luncheon and the Sunday Bird Walk.

COVID with its accompanying focus on our own home space has helped our plant sales and this injection into our funds is very important for Friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens' (FBBG) finances.

Membership continues to steadily increase and now has moved past the 400 mark. There are probably lots of reason for the increase, but I hope central to it is that it reflects community recognition that the Friends is an active group working to help people in the community find ways to connect and to support these wonderful gardens. FBBG have an excellent committee and all are powering away in their chosen area of contribution. Forward planning has kept many of the committee very busy. 40th milestone for FBBG next year, 70th milestone for Begonia Festival, Ballarat Heritage Festival in May all require lots of planning work.

Next year the Friends will clock up 40 years of support for these Heritage gardens that are now 162 years old. Our History records are so important in informing us. The **History group** has been very active over the years and have led the way in building our collections to support our projects, events and exhibitions. We are now at a stage where we need more attention to preserving our collections for the future. Part of this process is the digitisation of our records and some progress has been made with this. The main work underway currently is developing a clear organisational structure for our archives to expedite the work of the group as it moves forward. We are very fortunate that some newer members are contributing to working through the complexity involved in this process. Their past experience

'I hope central to it is that it reflects community recognition that the FBBG is an active group working to help people in the community find ways to connect and support these wonderful gardens...'

working in Museum Victoria and University Systems is of huge benefit for FBBG with this task.

Some very interesting collections from members have been contributed recently and as we move into next year there will be more about ways that members can help to investigate and preserve our history. It is not only history of the Friends but history of the BBG as well. Bringing some of that history alive through research and storytelling is part of the article by Michael in the interview with Helen Robarts. (See page 6)

Our tallest tree in the gardens went in the storm and a reminder that what we have is always vulnerable. Next year will be about honouring and celebrating 40 years of FBBG. This is important as we have much to celebrate with a strong membership base, active volunteers and enthusiastic hardworking committee and significant contributions to a range of projects over the years. Is the FBBG vulnerable? – No, not now but we are moving into a different world. What do we do to help us navigate the future so our organisation thrives. We will do some soul searching during our 40th year to ensure FBBG is here for its future milestones. So in the coming year we celebrate and honour, and we also put energy into thinking about the road ahead.

We need to use this 40th year opportunity for publicity as well to attract new members. Our future is predicated on a strong membership base.

Storm damage in November was so disappointing. At the very time when our gardens are at their Spring peak and a time when we hear so many appreciative comments by visitors about these gardens and the work of the staff, we had to close the gardens for repair work. Fortunately priority was given to this work by the COB and every effort made to get the gardens open as soon as they could. The main focus

after the storm was on the tree loss, but statues were also impacted. You will find out more in the article contributed by **Katie Smith**, Conservation Manager of International Conservation Services. (See page 5)

Elizabeth Gilfillan and myself representing FBBG and BBG Foundation have attended Fernery Project consultation meetings. Concept plans produced by **Andrea Proctor** remain

continues page 2...



THE BALLARAT FRIENDS WILL
CELEBRATE 40 YEARS ON
FEBRUARY 3, 2022, IN THE
BALLARAT MINING EXCHANGE
LYDIARD STREET, AT 6 PM.



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



See what Tim's been
up to recently on page 5.

..from page 1

confidential until further decisions and approvals from Heritage Victoria and City of Ballarat. Suffice to say at this point that it will be staged development and work on **Stage 1** (that includes the Eastern Forecourt entrance from Wendouree Parade and inside of the new Fernery) is still expected to be completed by mid-2022.

The conceptual design plans presented by **Andrea Proctor** does address landscaping around the entire Ballarat Botanical Gardens Fernery and does provide the vision. The challenge as we are all well aware is securing the funding to create a wondrous landscape that provides new experiences for visitors. Botanical gardens are increasingly a sought experience by visitors. Several Councils have secured large funding boosts through grants to extend and rejuvenate these spaces to attract more tourism. FBBG and the Ballarat Botanical Gardens Foundation look forward to supporting the City of Ballarat's efforts in these endeavours.

As one of the oldest Botanical Gardens in Victoria we have a range of infrastructures built over time. Patching up and ongoing maintenance can be expected but at some point renewal is what is required. This is the case with irrigation in the gardens. I have asked **Peter Marquand**, BBG Curator, to be our Guest Speaker at our AGM and to give us an overview of the current situation and needs. Capital injection in the basics is required to maintain the quality

of these gardens. As gardeners we can all appreciate how important the timing and the quantity delivery of that precious water resource.

February will be a catch up time for Friends with both our 40th celebrations and a few weeks later our annual general meeting. We look forward to seeing you at these events.

We also look forward to the launch of a new publication by the Friends. It is a small booklet promoting these gardens and will be launched at the February 3 event by Tim Entwisle.

This small souvenir type booklet by the Friends has come about because of the strong commitment to this task by Wendy Taylor, Elizabeth Gilfillan, Warwick Sellens and myself working through the stop and start interruptions of Covid restrictions this year. We have worked with **Adel Urie** from '*Wordsworthcommunicating*' and **Pam** from '*Words by Pam Kershaw*' in this. We all hope that you find highlighted in this publication the joys and values to be found in a BBG visit.

40 years of FBBG is a fitting time to launch this booklet. Booklets at the launch will also have their own 40th logo poster jacket.

Terry O'Brien, President FBBG

Q. Why do trees have so many friends? A. They branch out.

GUIDING REPORT:

When Guiding Activity had been almost dormant in the Ballarat Gardens due to winter weather and closures, it was disappointing to have to delay and cancel tours due to storm damage. Much has been achieved in a short time and thankfully as Guides we can again share the Gardens with visitors. During winter I visited Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne (RBGV) and I'm keen to share with you an amazing project:

HONOURING A FALLEN GIANT – THE WHITE OAK PROJECT:

On December 27, 2019 at the RBGV a much loved 150 year old white oak (*Quercus Alba*) collapsed. This tree was a standout specimen growing in the Oak Lawn in the Melbourne Gardens. It was most probably planted by **von Mueller** in the 1860's, and possibly later moved to its current position by **William Guilfoyle**. For some years it has sheltered and shaded picnics, many children have climbed its magnificent limbs, and shuffled and kicked its autumn leaves. It was one of the largest Oaks on the Oak Lawn.....but even the grandest of trees eventually die! (See image right)

Why did it fall? Likely a mixture of old age, droughts, strong winds and the cumulative effects of climate change.

Much time and thought was given as to what should happen next.

The White Oak Project that ensued was the brainchild of RBGV Landscape Architect, **Andrew Laidlaw** who collaborated with **Alistair Boell** and Gardens' Arborist, **Charlie Carroll** In recognising the tree as a fallen giant the plan was to transform it into a meeting place, a sitting place and a sculptural piece that, in Andrew's words, '*... would allow the tree to keep giving*'.



The limbs remain where they fell, a circular pattern radiating from the trunk, modestly reshaped into safe and comfortable seating with low gardens planted and paths for walking. To quote Professor **Tim Entwisle** '*The idea is for people to gather to sit on its branches while the replacement, a valley oak more suitable for Melbourne's relatively warm winters, slowly emerges from where the old tree had cast a shadow since the 1860's.*' (See image left)

Unfortunately, I was unable to revisit this special space again before writing this article so have included some photos borrowed from sites from which I gathered the above information. I trust all may find the nature of the above project an inspiration and hope that many have the opportunity to see this special space in RBGV.

Julie Chandler, Guides Convener

2022

EVENTS

40th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS - February 3, 2022. 6.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m.

This is going to be a wonderful night where we present Certificates to many members who have given great contributions to the Friends over 40 years. **Please reply as soon as possible to attend** this event as we would like as many members as possible to enjoy this wonderful evening.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. Thursday, February 17, 2022. 10.00 a.m.

GUEST SPEAKER - Our speaker is Peter Marquand, Curator of Ballarat Botanical Gardens. He will take us through the challenges in more recent times of water delivery in these gardens. Peter's topic is *'Watering the Gardens - Too Much, Too Little, Just Right!'* He will be presenting an insight into the irrigation of our gardens from the time they were planted to the present day. Lorraine Powell, FBBG committee member, will introduce the topic with some historical anecdotes about past water management in the Ballarat Gardens.

All welcome to attend to enjoy an enjoyable social event with our speakers followed by morning tea.

OPEN GARDENS - The postponed open garden event will now be on the **Saturday 2nd and Sunday 3rd April, 2022**. Three gardens open each day. Further details closer to the event.

GENERAL MEETING - Thursday, May 19, 2022. 10.00 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. The Topic is- *'What is happening in our nearby natural resources regions – Wetlands and Fairyland'*. An update.

GENERAL MEETING - Thursday, August 18, 2022. 10.00 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. Guest Speaker to be confirmed. Further details in Autumn *Wellingtonia*.

WORKSHOP - September 2022. *'How to build a Home for our Native Bees.'* Robert Clark Centre. Date to be confirmed.

EXCURSION - Wednesday, October 12, 2022. We have been unwilling to plan excursions by bus because of COVID. This excursion is to **Roraima Nursery in Lara** and then a visit to the **Geelong Botanic Gardens** has been arranged. This excursion is to be only by members' cars. Meet at the Morey Gates at 8.30 a.m. BYO Lunch. We haven't visited the Geelong Gardens for some years and it will be interesting to members to see the changes over the years.

OPEN GARDENS - SPRING - Saturday and Sunday, October 28 and 29, 2022. Further details in the Autumn *Wellingtonia*.

SPRING SPEAKERS' LUNCHEON. - Friday, November 18, 2022. 9.45 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. Venue: Robert Clark Centre and Conservatory. Further details in the next *Wellingtonia*.

CHRISTMAS NIBBLES AND DRINKS. - Thursday, December 1, 2022. 5.30 p.m. in the Conservatory in the Ballarat Botanical Gardens.

Carole Haines, Events Convenor

"He made two or three peculiar observations; as when shewn the botanical garden: 'Is not every garden a botanical garden?'" James Boswell, on Samuel Johnson

40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS!

For the Friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens

Come Celebrate in Style!

Don't forget to reply to your invitation to the Friends 40th Anniversary Cocktail Party!

Held at the Mining Exchange with catering by Peter Ford and a line up of VIPs, it's sure to be a night to enjoy!

RSVP due by January 18, 2022



AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS OF BOTANIC GARDENS:

The AAFBG's Botanical Tour of Tasmania successfully went ahead in October but without participants from Victoria and New South Wales because of COVID restrictions. Several people transferred to the second tour that is scheduled for February 27 to March 5, 2022.

Highlights of the October tour included the high standard and variety of the gardens visited, with special mention of the sublime perennial garden at Old Wesleydale, Mole Creek; the consistently warm welcome and excellent tours conducted by all garden owners; the unique botanical story at Inala Jurassic Garden on South Bruny Island and the highly regarded food and wine tasting experience at Josef Chromy Wines, just south of Launceston.

The second tour promises to be just as interesting and enjoyable with only a few changes to the itinerary because of seasonal differences. These include a new visit to the Native Plants Nursery at Windsor Community Precinct, Riverside and the National Rose Garden at Woolmers Estate, Longford. One of the finest collections of roses in the Southern Hemisphere, the 5000+ roses will delight rose and garden fanciers with their beautiful colours and fragrant perfumes. Our President Kate Heffernan will once again lead the tour.

*Book now on www.friendsbotanicgardens.org or www.jonbainestours.com.au

The 2022 AAFBG Biennial Conference will take place at Eurobodalla Botanic Garden near Batemans Bay on the spectacular NSW coast from April 29 - May 1. Registration packs have been sent to all members Australia wide, including FBBG, and the response is strong. For those unable to attend in person there is a virtual option with most of the sessions being live streamed.

The theme of the weekend's conference "THRIVING TOGETHER Resilience and Renewal in a Changing World" will be explored against the backdrop of a successfully regenerating Eurobodalla Botanic Garden that was devastated by the Black Summer bushfires. The program is carefully structured to include engaging speakers such as Professor Tim Entwistle who will deliver the keynote address and plentiful opportunities for socialising and the exchange of ideas with old friends and new acquaintances. The Skill Builder Workshops will encourage member participation with presentations by Friends Groups that address issues that are currently challenging most botanic gardens. This includes attracting new and younger members, relationships with local authorities and climate change. For instance, Roger Permezel, President of Buninyong Botanical Gardens Inc will conduct a workshop that examines how Friends organizations can re-focus on a future confronted by climate change and shifting societal values.

*Register now on www.friendsbotanicgardens.org or www.erbg.org.au

Three AAFBG members will celebrate their 40th Anniversaries in 2022 – Friends of RBG Melbourne and Friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens in February and Friends of RBG Sydney in July.

Report by Merrill Shulkes AAFBG Management Committee Member and FBBG Representative.



BALLARAT FRIENDS AMBASSADORS:

The Ambassadors will recommence in the Conservatory in January. We are looking forward to being back in the gardens and hoping that we are going to be able to sustain the role without any more changes in the Covid-19 rules.

Trish Twaits, Convenor

While you can get a wonderful plant at a reasonable price at the Friend's Nursery, there are bargains to be had elsewhere!

**FORMOSA NURSERY 5% OFF ALL
GROW MASTER 5% OFF PLANTS
EXCLUDING ADVANCED TREES
SPOT ON POTS 10% OFF ALL
PURCHASES**

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Despite the negative effects of the dreaded Covid-19, the Friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens has seen its membership grow throughout the year.



We welcome the following new members: Daniel Cronin, Kevin Lee, Valerie Thwaite, Cathy Ezard, Irene Castleman, Amanda Collins, Sandra Middleton, Matthew Allanby, Raymond Leong, Soo Mei Leong, Lyn Mayne, Lisa Paterson, Rose Dean, Ingrid Unger, Claire McKenna, Rod Greenaway, John Curwen-Walker, Liz Curwen-Walker, Gary Leyden, Chris Gardiner, Anne Bunting, Andrew Miller, Karin Miller, Allyson Hankin, Jane Boadle, Peter Boadle and Lynne Collins.

We now have 408 members in the Friends.

We recently sent out reminders for membership renewal to those who had paid up to the end of 2021 and are hoping to hear from about 60 who have yet to confirm their ongoing status.

Warwick Sellens, Membership Officer

FBBG ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING IS THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 17 AT 10AM

The rapidly approaching AGM means we have the annual call for nominations for Committee positions for 2022. **There are some vacancies to fill.** Venue: Robert Clark Horticultural Centre.

Our committee meets once a month to guide all the issues and make decisions that involve the Ballarat Friends. All of the committee members contribute actively to ensure FBBG has success and impact from their efforts to help these gardens thrive as well as involving the community. Members are encouraged to consider for themselves or to encourage others to contribute in this way.

Nomination forms can be obtained from the central table in the George Longley Building during January and February. Forward completed form to the FBBG Office by Monday Feb 14.

Please contact me if you want to discuss or seek more information about these nominations. **Terry O'Brien**

RECENT CONSERVATION WORK ON THE STODDART STATUES:

The marble statuary of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens have their origin in the English landscape movement of the 18th century when statues were used as focal points of vistas and as things of beauty. Statues became an important part of public parks and gardens in the Victorian era, promoted strongly by Prince Albert who was keen on the so-called uplifting of the lower orders. Those who could not afford a grand tour were provided with a classical education by the introduction of copies of archetypal statues in the public gardens where people could stroll in a pleasant environment and learn at the same time. These statues were almost all imported from Italy, where an Australian sculptor resident in Rome, Charles Summers, did a roaring trade in marble statuary for Australian public gardens. Statues of the four seasons were particularly popular.

The Ballarat Botanical Gardens are home to a large collection of Carrara marble statues which is unrivalled in Australia. Over the years the statues have steadily deteriorated, and some have suffered extensive damage at the hands of vandals. To slow down this deterioration, the City of Ballarat have engaged conservators to look after the statues on a regular basis. In 2020, **International Conservation Services (ICS)** were appointed to carry out annual cleaning and essential conservation works to the statuary, with the aim of preserving these heritage assets for Ballarat residents and visitors alike.



'Spring' is one of twelve three-quarter human size Carrara marble statues donated to the Gardens by Thomas Stoddart in 1884. She has endured considerable damage over the years with extensive breaks and cracks occurring to her neck, legs and the trunk which supports her weight. In a recent storm, *Spring* was struck in multiple places by a falling tree branch, leaving her in urgent need of repair. It seems the force of the falling branch caused a previously repaired break in her neck to reopen, leaving her head incorrectly oriented and unstable. The impact also caused the loss of a floret from her headpiece. (N.B. see the Curator's report on page 11 for more on this damage)

Fortunately, ICS were onsite in December to undertake conservation works on the statuary and recognised that *Spring* required prompt intervention. We noticed that other previous repairs were beginning to fail and, as a result, water ingress was occurring. This was a concerning discovery since most decay processes in stone can be linked to water. Given our findings, we must now intervene and repair these damages before they progress any further. Until such a time when *Spring* can undergo conservation, she will remain behind temporary fencing for the safety of visitors to the Gardens.

Katie Smith, Conservation Manager of International Conservation Services.



I feel sorry for wheelbarrows. They're always getting pushed around.

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

December 14, 2021

My second *Dampiera* this year, and again from the Australian Garden collection at Cranbourne Gardens. The genus, as noted last time, was named after explorer William Dampier.

This species, with its flattened stems, is called *alata*, Latin for winged. It's one of the easily recognised Australian plants due to these distinct stems and that vivid blue flower. *Dampiera alata* caught my attention in the Australian Garden because of its vigorous growth and success as a ground cover. It is equally attractive, and rather common, where it grows naturally in the south-west corner of Western Australia.

Claire Farrell and John Rayner from the University of Melbourne included the Wing-stemmed *Dampiera* in their tough woody meadow mix for Birrarung Marr in Central Melbourne (and later in plant lists for woody meadow trials after the removal of level crossings in suburban Melbourne - where lack of stock meant it wasn't part of the final planting).



In the woody meadows Wing-stemmed *Dampiera* is used as an establishing plant to be sacrificed as the canopy plants overshadow it. In the first year, though, it does its job beautifully. Although in some settings this species can be difficult to cultivate, once established it suckers easily, making it good for early succession in woody meadows and here in the Australian Garden.

A minor irritation in this setting is the propensity for it to flower at the edges and below the new growth. Maybe some timely slashing?

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



A SPECIAL FEATURE: As you walk from Wendouree Parade past the Wallace statue heading towards the Conservatory, you will be walking past the Tom Beaumont Lawn. Tom was the Superintendent of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens for many years. Recently, his daughter visited the Gardens and provided some wonderful insights into her memories of Tom and of living in the Gardens.

GUESS WHO RE-VISITED THE BALLARAT GARDENS RECENTLY?

Helen Beaumont!

Helen (Mrs Roberts) is the daughter of long-term Ballarat Botanical Gardens curator, Tom Beaumont. Tom was apprenticed to Tom Toop in 1924 at age 13. He was appointed as Superintendent (Curator) in 1947 after war service. He retired in 1978.

We were lucky enough to spend an hour or so with Helen early in November. Now a resident of Torquay, Helen was happy to share her memories of her father and her experiences as a child living in the gardens.

The Beaumont family lived for many years in the house set aside for the curator. It was located where the Robert Clark Horticultural Centre now stands. Many will remember the house. Helen is the youngest of three children, and has a surviving older brother, Ian, now living in Queensland.

Tom Beaumont was a very generous man, and was happy to share his knowledge of the Gardens and of horticulture in general. He was curator when the Begonia Festival was established in 1953, and Helen spoke glowingly of visits to the festival by various members of the Royal Family, including Queen Elizabeth in 1954.

Helen reminisced about how the wreaths for ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day on November 11 were made by the Beaumont family using material from the magnolia tree near the Fernery.

She also remembers only having one holiday due to the heavy and continual nature of Tom's duties. When Tom went out in an evening, the children were expected to step up and move hoses around the gardens (no automatic watering in those days!). As well they helped with cleaning the fish pond and even retrieving items from Lake Wendouree, including the busts of Prime Ministers and even parts of the marble statues broken off by vandals.

Tom served his apprenticeship at the Ballarat Botanical Gardens, and became the curator, serving in that position for over 30 years. As you walk from Wendouree Parade towards the Conservatory, you will be passing the Tom Beaumont Lawn, an impressive lawn area with an array of grand trees.

Helen remembers some aspects of the gardens which are now just a memory. The Rotary Wishing Well (near where Hercules resides today); the Keel House conservatory and the Quarantine House. The latter was used to allow the begonias imported from the UK by Tom to be kept isolated until it was safe to incorporate them into the botanical collection.

Grey squirrels in the Gardens were remembered with mixed feelings. Tom brought them into the gardens in 1937. Helen told us that she had recently read that Tom accidentally cut off the tail of one as he tried to catch it prior to its release. It bit him for his efforts. Helen believes that they were more of a pest than a useful addition. While these squirrels were very cute, they caused big problems, and nested in the tops of the sequoias where they did inappropriate pruning, as well as killing many smaller plants. Overall, “..very annoying to the garden's staff.” said Helen.

Helen concluded by saying that she ‘loved the new Fernery’, but has some misgivings about the original project not being completed.

Michael Bird.



Helen Roberts (nee Beaumont) in the Friends Nursery recently



A little Helen Beaumont presenting the royal bouquet



Above: Tom Beaumont at work



Part of the huge crowd in the Ballarat Gardens for the Queen Mother's visit in 1958

ONE FOR THE DIARY

DON'T FORGET: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - THURSDAY, February 17, 2022.

Robert Clark Horticultural Centre, 10 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.

GUEST SPEAKER - Peter Marquand, Curator Ballarat Botanical Gardens

"I have a few dates here, these are incidents and changes that have happened and the dates or around about the time they happened. Now in the first place there had to be a start, and I started from school in 1924, so if I make December this year that will complete 54 years working for the City Council starting as a lad gardener. And I might state that I have enjoyed every minute, possibly being blessed with good health as in those 54 years I have had two weeks off due to ill-health.

In 1924 when I started naturally the trees ... were much smaller. Also in 1924 the Gardens were split in two. There were two nurseries, two sets of glasshouses - one in the south and one in the north. The one in the south was located where some ponds of the fish hatcheries now are located. The plants for the southern area were grown there. There were two curators between 1899 and 1912 and during that period there was keen competition among the two branches of the staff. In 1927 the southern nursery was demolished and new glasshouses were built in the nursery that is there today. The fernery in the early days was considered to be a feature of the Gardens. It was locked every evening at sunset and re-opened the next morning. It was much larger than the one there now but was on the same site. I can remember helping to pull the old one down in 1926

Another feature at one stage was cages of birds before the zoo was opened. The parrot cage was located where the Gordon cottage is now. It was one of my jobs to feed the parrots until Tom Toop's son who was doing a veterinary course came home on leave and was trying his hand at chloroform, got into the cage and laid all the parrots down. When I went to feed them the next morning they were all dead. Probably rats got into the cage when all the birds were doped! About 1934 the Adam Lindsay Gordon Cottage was brought into the Gardens.

The greatest change came into the Gardens in the 1930's when the whole Gardens were fenced. There were about 10 gates that were to be opened in the morning and closed at night. That was my first job of a morning and in winter they were closed at 5 P.M. and in the summer it was later. It was quite an effort on a nice summer evening to stir up the couples and to tell them nicely that we were closing the gates! When the fences were removed naturally the status of the place changed as it was open parklands and people could be there all the time. At the same time they drained the place with gutters, widened the road and the tramline was put closer to the lake. There was a row of big pine trees that had to be removed for this work. These were grubbed out by hand by myself and two older men. This improved the place considerably and no way am I suggesting that a fence be put back around the Gardens.

I suppose you can remember the squirrels that used to be at the Gardens? Well they were a pair that was released- it was a Saturday morning, 1st November 1937. The pair came from (..Ripponlea..) which is where Channel 2 now stands. They came up by rail and I had to go to the station on the Friday evening to pick them up. I carried them on my bike in a box. Whilst we were releasing them one of them would not come out, so the boss put his hand in and grabbed hold of it. Unfortunately their teeth are just like needles and it went right through his finger. He tried again and this time and grabbed its tail and the next thing that came out was its tail! So one of the first pair did not have a tail.



Tom Beaumont, AOM, BEM
Superintendent 1947 - 1978



The numbers increased and you could see up to thirty feeding at one time. They were fed every second morning with maize and they became quite tame but you would not pat them as they would bite. Unfortunately there are no squirrels now. They did a little damage and did eat the buds on the trees but there was never such numbers that they damaged the Gardens in any way. I would say that wild cats were the main reason why they disappeared from the Gardens. Every morning we would see a half-eaten squirrel in the glasshouse most likely from feral cat attacks.

In 1938 another big change occurred when the area was sewered. The toilet blocks were built which added greatly to the amenity of the Gardens.



Ballarat turned out in force in 1954 for the Royal Visit

In 1953 the Begonia festival was inaugurated. I can remember attending the first meeting and being asked to comment on the proposal. It went ahead and you can see what it grew into. During the second Festival (1954) the Queen visited Ballarat. The Gardens were the only place that she visited. Her reception was at the Gardens. It was arranged that she only visit a stand of the begonias located between the Statuary pavilion and the road as she did not have time to visit the glasshouse. There were lots of people many had slept overnight all over the lawns. After the Queen left the people were not keen to leave so to avoid further damage. Hoses were rolled out to encourage them to move on. As regards the Queen's visit I had full responsibility for preparing the Gardens and I think it was a great honour to have that responsibility to be able to have it right for the people. I would not only have embarrassed myself I would have embarrassed the whole town if I'd fallen down on the job."

To be continued in the Autumn Wellingtonia. Don't miss it!

Educating Friends Report – BotaniKids Happenings

The last three months has seen a fair amount of activity as we are slowly adjusting to a new normal. We opened the Cottage for 'business' when we could running various activities for the children and their families.

Education within our program is not just for the children: Even though the focus for BotaniKids activities is for the young we cannot under estimate the spin-off effect. The adult carers, parents, teachers and grandparents invariably comment on how much they learn about the plants in the Gardens and the heritage of the Gardens in coming along to our sessions with their children. It is hoped as the year unfolds in 2022 many more opportunities to include all age groups into our program will be possible.



The Spring activities have been all about partnerships and collaborations. BotaniKids were invited by Sovereign Hill to resource and provide ideas for a two week school holiday program based on our typical nature based crafts.

We were given a great indoor space right in the main street of 'The Hill' and we worked with families for the two weeks. This was strongly supported with two, sometimes three, staff allocated to us each day. This meant we were not expected to fully staff the activity and the partnership was most enjoyable.

Susan Pilbeam's theatre group, *The Bard of Buninyong* worked with us in developing an outdoor show based closely on the epic children's classic **The Magic Pudding** by Norman Lindsay. The portrayal of the story was true to the original, and judging by the BotaniKids' delighted reactions and engagement in both Buninyong and Ballarat Botanical Gardens was very well received. The partnership was most successful with more plans for 2022. Both sessions were supported and followed by BotaniKids conducting the Q and A session with the actors. Activities included making seed and soil 'magic pies' for the garden, and a 'gum leaves and gum nut sachet' for the Christmas tree at home.

Estimated little muddy hands happily making 'mud seed pies': 240 (Buninyong) + 176 (School group) + 100 (Ballarat Gardens) = 516 A good outcome for a BotaniKids festive December!

Gatekeepers Cottage: As you may have noticed the work has started on the east approach of the Cottage at last. The foundations are being dug for an approach 'bridge' to the Cottage that has long been planned by the CoB. This garden will include the etched rocks project utilising images from our *Evolution* poster, with plantings by the Friends in consultation with Garden staff.

Ikebana Workshop: There was a very enjoyable and well attended Ikebana Workshop organised by Carole Haines and Julie Bradby conducted on Sunday, November 28 in the Cottage. Carole did a sterling job engaging Anita Hinton as the tutor who is the President of the Floral Art Society and judging by the beautiful floral art the participants had a lovely time. The session was an example of a series of Sunday mornings workshops planned on various botanical and horticultural topics in the Cottage in 2022.

Big thanks to Carole and the Friends' catering group who although very busy still found time to support the Cottage and BotaniKids. Working with other groups within the Friends enriches and enhance all we do. More details of further workshops later via emails and newsletters.

BotaniKids in Vancouver! I was charmed to meet a delightful BotaniKids parent last week in Buninyong as we were making mud pies together following the Magic Pudding show (120 children attended over three sessions). The lady introduced herself and we began chatting about the simplicity of the nature-based activities within the BotaniKids programs.

Her mother, sister and family live in Vancouver Canada and they make and do the BotaniKids activities too as she shares the ideas in emails and videos. And now apparently other families are catching the BotaniKids' bug with pine cone bird feeders and mud pie seed cakes all appearing across Vancouver! We hope for some photos soon to share. I was further pleasantly surprised to receive an email from this kind lady informing me that she wished to donate a significant sum to our program. That was a lovely Christmas present!

I would sincerely like to thank my wonderful team who always support, encourage, help and amaze me with their time, ideas, talents, common sense, kindness and skills!

Julie Bradby



GARDEN CUTTINGS WITH GREEN THUMB!



- Phew - what a year! How did you go with the '**Big Blow**' on Oct 28/29? There is a lot of information about the devastation which occurred in the Gardens in some of the reports in this issue. Whilst everything has been cleared up, there are 'gaps' to fill. The damage extended to the watering system in the gardens; major work required to rectify.

- You may not be aware that the **Friends have an 'Induction' process** due to the increasing number of new members. Stay tuned!
- February 3 is going to be BIG at the **Mining Exchange**. Fortieth anniversaries are not to be sneezed at in the COVID era! The night will celebrate the achievements of many hardworking, talented and generous members of the Friends! A big night!
- The **George Longley Building relocation project** continues with Robert Selkirk at the helm. Discussion about the actual location and building size continue. Some of the Growers are a little apprehensive GT believes. A long way to go however; early days in the process.
- Two successful **New Member Morning Teas** were held a month or so ago. It would be good if all new members were able to attend just so they can learn about the various activities that the Friends are involved with. Groups are always looking for extra bodies!
- Summer edition of **Ballarat Living** magazine (free at your newsagent) included a massive write-up on the Ballarat Friends! Excellent!
- The **Christmas break-up** for the Friends was a roaring success, as was the **Spring Luncheon**! Well done to the organisers.
- It has been suggested the Friends Committee visit the **Royal Melbourne Botanic Gardens** in 2022. A good idea!

Until Next Time; keep your secateurs clean and sharp! Green Thumb

DESIGNING THE CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION FOR THE FRIENDS 40TH

Earlier this year the Friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens (FBBG) initiated a project to recognize members who have made a significant contribution to the activities of the Friends over many years. The Committee chose to show its appreciation by commissioning a specially designed certificate that will also commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the founding of the Ballarat Friends on February 3, 1982.

In 2009 the FBBG Botanical Art Group was formed to provide artists with the opportunity to practice in the traditional style of this very old art form, where the details of flora and fauna are rendered in a scientifically accurate but artistic manner. Working independently and sometimes on group projects, they are inspired by the abundant plant life within the Ballarat Botanical Gardens and Ballarat environs to produce work of a consistently high standard in a variety of mediums.

Through their current Convenor, **Valerie Richards**, the Botanical artists were approached to provide a variety of images that would lend themselves to being incorporated into the design of the certificate as well as giving it a distinctive character. They responded most generously by allowing access to botanical images from two group projects - *Significant Trees in Ballarat Botanical Gardens* and *Rare and Endangered Plants from around Ballarat*.



Above: the Botanical Artists at work.
Below two of the botanical images



Andrew Thomas was appointed to design and produce the certificates. It was felt that Andrew's considerable expertise as a Graphic Designer and his involvement in many different FBBG projects for at least twenty years would result in a design that is both distinctive and reflective of the Friends and Ballarat Botanical Gardens. He approached the design of the certificates by combining the text and botanical images in different layouts until the desired effect was reached. Once the final design was approved, the certificates were printed so that Andrew could use his skills as a calligrapher to add the recipients' names.



The Certificates of Appreciation will be presented for the first time during the 40th Anniversary celebrations at the Ballarat Mining Exchange on Thursday, February 3, 2022. They will continue to be awarded on a regular basis as more members become eligible. Andrew designed the invitation to the Anniversary celebrations, also featuring a botanical motif.

Merrill Shulkes

What would be the gardener's favourite Beatles song? Lettuce Be! (Sorry, Ed.)

Ballarat Gardens Collections Officer -

The storm in late October devastated all of us!

On arrival that morning, the team were silent and ashen, and our wonderful botanical world resembled a war zone – it was hard to absorb the magnitude of destruction we were looking at.

After the initial shock, there was also so much to be thankful for - as the timing of the storm during the night fortunately meant no-one was hurt.

The storm saw the loss of 18 trees throughout the botanical precincts, three of which were National Trust Registered including our fabulous Eastern Cottonwood near the new fernery. They've largely been cleaned up by the amazing tree crews, and sites over sown with grass – in fact where several trees stood - you would hardly know a tree had existed.



Glen inspecting the fallen Sitka Spruce



Two *Cedrus deodara* blown over near Wendouree Parade.

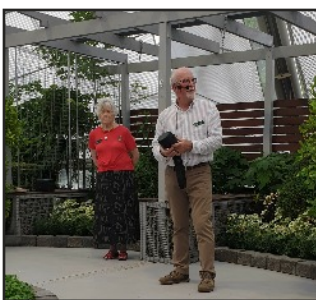
What happens now?

This is where our **Living Collections Strategy**, the **Visionary Plan** and our **Masterplan** in combination, guide us forward.

The loss of trees can provide opportunities too. Whilst many trees will be replaced 'like-with-like', it may also provide opportunities to increase species diversity, include more threatened species, consider more 'future-climate' ready choices, and overall provide the chance to renew existing tree collections with young trees, to ensure on-going collection persistence and resilience.

We'll keep you posted. Wishing everyone a wonderful Christmas, and a truly special New Year ahead.

Donna Thomas



Ballarat Botanical Gardens Care for the Rare plant list (Some species not yet planted in indigenous beds).

| <i>Scientific Name</i> | <i>Common Name</i> | <i>Local Occurrence</i> |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>Acacia aspera</i> | Rough Wattle | Brisbane Ranges, Beaufort |
| <i>Acacia nanodealbata</i> | Dwarf Silver Wattle | Near Creswick |
| <i>Austrostipa breviglumis</i> | Bamboo Spear-grass | Bacchus Marsh |
| <i>Bossiaea cordigera</i> | Wiry Bossiaea | Goldfields |
| <i>Bossiaea vomkata</i> | Wombat Leafless Bossiaea | Wombat Forest |
| <i>Correa aemula</i> | Hairy Correa | Mt Buangor |
| <i>Dianella amoena</i> | Matted Flax Lily | Victoria Park, Mullawallah |
| <i>Discaria pubescens</i> | Australian Anchor Plant | Lal Lal, Clunes, |
| <i>E. brookeriana</i> | Brooker's Gum | Bullarto |
| <i>Grevillea bedgoodiana</i> | Enfield Grevillea | Enfield |
| <i>Grevillea dryophylla</i> | Goldfields Grevillea | Beaufort |
| <i>Luecchrysom albicans</i> | Hoary Sunray | Streatham, Creswick |
| <i>Nicotiana suaveolens</i> | Austral Tobacco | You Yangs |
| <i>Olearia asterotricha</i> | Rough Daisy Bush | Langi Ghiran |
| <i>Prostanthera decussata</i> | Dense Mint-bush | Brisbane Ranges |
| <i>Pultenaea graveolens</i> | Scented Bush-pea | Lerderderg Gorge |
| <i>Rutidosis leptorhynchoides</i> | Button Wrinklewort | Rokewood |
| <i>Senecio behrianus</i> | Stiff Groundsel | Miners Rest Swamp |
| <i>Westringia glabra</i> | Violet Westringia | Lerderderg Gorge |

ABOVE: Seen at the Friends Spring Luncheon at Central Wendouree Bowling Club and the Christmas get-together in the Gardens' Conservatory, including the U3A ukulele group - top right.

BELOW: One of the groups at the recent Bird-Watch event at the Lake Wendouree precinct. This included a visit to the newly installed 'Care for the Rare' garden along the Western Walk. The full list of Ballarat's plants is shown at the left. The Walk then continued in the Wetlands of the North Gardens and Lake Wendouree.





Friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens Nursery

Specialising in rare groundcovers, perennials, shrubs and succulents

Nursery Open: Tuesday 1-4 pm, and the second Sunday 1-4 pm

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

Why not take a look at the plants we have for sale the next time you are enjoying the Gardens? We have a range of named varieties including hardy long flowering plants.

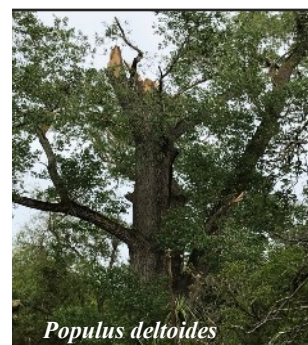
Members \$1 discount off each plant!



A recent photo of the Friends Growing group

CURATOR'S REPORT

I can remember being awake early on the morning of October 29 listening to the ferocity of the wind and wondering how much damage there was going to be at work. The gardens and all they represent are never from my mind, most of the time anyway! On my drive to work that morning I noted trees down around the Lake and on the approaches to the gardens. The first tree I saw in the gardens was the recent heritage listed *Populus deltoides* to the north of the fernery and then the *Picea pinsapo* and the *Cedrus deodara* laying on the road near the playgrounds. In total we lost 18 trees within the gardens reserve, and extensive damage was experienced throughout Ballarat.



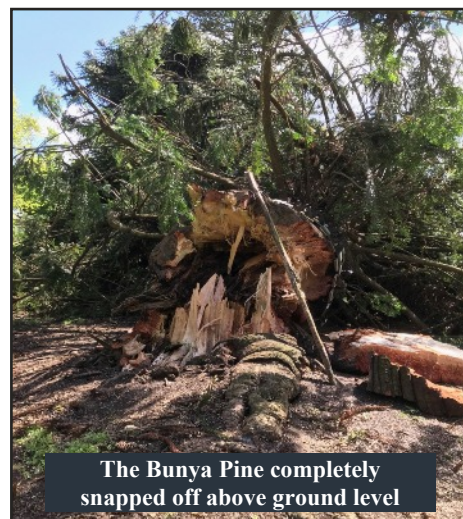
Populus deltoides



Bunya bidwillii (Bunya Bunya Pine)

The loss of the *Bunya bidwillii* probably affected me the most particularly considering the measures we put in place to save the tree a number of years ago. The photograph I took of the statue of Spring surrounded by the debris of the bunya (see image at left) seems to encapsulate the storm damage, whilst the statue was damaged here, she still stands after the impact.

When we made the decision that we couldn't open the gardens until the site was largely cleaned up it was heartening how the local and broader community responded when they heard about the damage at "our gardens".



The Bunya Pine completely snapped off above ground level



More of the storm's aftermath

We received offers of support from the Botanic gardens network BGANZ, local residents, the Friends of the Gardens and also the Ballarat Botanical Gardens Foundation.

The City of Ballarat customer service were inundated with enquiries regarding the reopening of the gardens. The staff and I who get to call the gardens our workplace can easily forget how much loved the gardens are by locals and visitors alike.

Behind the scenes we have been working with **Andrea Proctor Designs** in the development of landscape designs and concepts for the fernery precinct. We recently had an online meeting with **Heritage Vic** and have a site meeting planned with Heritage Vic mid-

January. We look forward to further development of the concepts, public engagement in due course and ultimately construction.



Arborist team taking down the cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*) behind the fernery

Peter Marquand, Botanical Gardens Curator

Friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens 2022

Friends of Ballarat Botanic Gardens Inc.

P.O. Box 33W, Ballarat West 3350

Email: info@fbbg.org.au Website: <https://fbbg.org.au/>

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

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



Tel. George Longley Building 03 5342 9354

FBBG COMMITTEE

| POSITION | NAME |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| President | Terry O'Brien |
| Vice President | Vacant |
| Past President | Robert Selkirk |
| Minute Secretary | Natalie Radomski |
| Treasurer | Kim Nolan |
| BotaniKids/ Education | Julie Bradby |
| Events and Speakers | Carole Haines |
| Foundation Rep. | Terry O'Brien |
| PR/Promotions | Wendy Taylor |
| General member | Jock Gilbert |
| General member | Lorraine Powell |
| General member | Geoff Notman |
| General member | (1 vacancy) |
| AAFBG rep | Merrill Shulkes |
| Growing Friends | Yvonne Curbach |
| Guides | Julie Chandler |
| History | Vacant |
| Hospitality | Doff Kemp |
| Membership | Warwick Sellens |
| Newsletter Editor | Michael Bird |
| Western Bed | Vacant |
| Ambassadors * | Trish Twaits |
| Botanical Art * | Val Richards |

(* non-Committee positions)

FRIENDS COMMITTEE MEETING TIMES 2022

Meetings are held in the George Longley Building subject to Covid-19 regulations (rear of the Robert Clark Horticultural Centre). The BotaniKids/Educating Friends meet in the Gatekeeper's Cottage.

Committee:

3rd Tuesday of each month at 4 pm.

Botanical Artists:

Mondays at 10 am during school terms.

Guiding Friends:

4th Wednesdays at 10 am.

Growing Friends:

Tuesdays each week 1 pm to 4 pm, and the second Sunday of each month 1 pm to 4 pm. **Plant Sales** at these times AND everyday from the plant trolleys outside the Conservatory.

BotaniKids /Educating Friends:

As required. No set time or day.

History Group:

2nd Thursday each month 2.30 pm.

THE BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS FOUNDATION LTD

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

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

Tax deductible donations. Ballarat Botanical Gardens Foundation Ltd.

Banking direct deposit. BSB 633 000. **Account No.** 165027434

Website: www.BallarotBotanicalGardensFoundation.com.au



Guest speaker at our AGM Feb 17 - BBG Curator,
Peter Marquand.

Topic: *'Watering the Gardens -
Too Much, Too Little, Just Right!'*

TO PAY INTO OUR ACCOUNT:

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**

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



Julie Chandler, Terry O'Brien, Tim Entwisle, Merrill Shulkes, Raoul Dixon, Kim Nolan, Warwick Sellens, Wendy Taylor, Lorraine Powell, Peter Marquand, Donna Thomas, victoriancollections.net.au and Michael Bird all provided photos.

Disclaimer: The views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens. The Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens does not accept responsibility for statements made or opinions expressed, although every effort will be made to publish reliable and accurate information. **Contributions for Autumn Wellingtonia 2022 are due by early March please.** Michael Bird, Editor.

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