

Wellingtonia

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NEWSLETTER – SUMMER 2019-20

'News from the President'



FRIENDS OF BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Succession Planning. During my final year as President I would like to make succession planning a key focal point of our discussions. I think it's vital for the continuation of the Friends to have a well thought-out structured plan for the future. There is no guarantee that succeeding generations will have the volunteer spirit and commitment of this generation, in fact there are clear signs already emerging that understandably younger generations are more preoccupied with family matters and the development of their careers.

Added to this is the reality that some of the Friends groups are struggling to maintain membership and financial viability, e.g. Benalla and Tamworth.

I have identified three key issues which I believe are vital for the successful continuation of the Friends:

- Financial stability
- Strong volunteer membership base
- Maintaining a good working relationship with the City of Ballarat

Firstly, I believe we have a very sound and financially viable organisation, which I'm sure we would all like to see continue on for generations to come. In this regard I would like to compliment Elizabeth Gilfillan for her foresight and enthusiasm in establishing the Foundation, which will ensure

the continued financial viability of the Friends over successive generations. In this context I also compliment Yvonne Curbach and the Growers for their dedication in generating a strong cash flow through plant sales.

Secondly, even though we have a membership base of approximately 390, we still need a stronger base of willing volunteers, and younger members. To this end Julie Bradby through *Botanikids* is developing a strategy to encourage younger members, which will be further developed during the year. I would encourage all members to be constantly on the look-out for potential younger people to become members. **A function to welcome new members will be held on Thursday, March 5 2020**, more details on page 6.

Thirdly, the enormous effort put in by the volunteers of the Friends would not be effective without having a good working relationship with the **City of Ballarat**. Throughout the development of the Foundation, Board Members have been meeting with representatives of the City on numerous occasions. This process has provided the opportunity for the City to gain an understanding of the purpose and the benefits of the Foundation, in upholding the excellent standard of our Botanical gardens. I commend the City for their co-operation in working with the Friends, which has been clearly demonstrated with the Gate Keepers Cottage project.

*... I commend
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Prime Minister's Avenue. Another topic in discussions with the City of Ballarat has been the on-going funding for the sculpturing of Prime Minister's Busts. We have been recently advised that sufficient funding has now been allocated by Council for the Bust of Malcolm Turnbull, and that work has already commenced. He will no doubt be invited for the unveiling and hopefully will be able to attend.

Fernery Update. No doubt members have been wondering what's happening behind the scenes with the Fernery after a Champagne celebration at the May Quarterly Meeting, to mark the commencement of the project. Seeing the erection

Continues page 2...

Special Summer Garden Tour:

The Guides of FBBG have organised a twilight tour along the Prime Ministers Avenue as a prelude to Australia Day.

How has Australia changed since Federation?

TWILIGHT TOUR
5pm Friday Jan 24, 2020



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

See page 7 for new extracts
from Tim's Blog this time
about Hamilton's
Botanic Gardens

of the construction fence, followed by the demolition of the old structure caused much excitement at the time, and in hindsight gave us a false hope of commencement.

To take any guess work out of the current situation I had a discussion with Terry Demeo, Director Infrastructure and Environment City of Ballarat, who has kindly offered to contribute the following report on the Fernery:

"The Council has been working with Heritage Victoria for a number of months following the issue of a planning permit for the reconstruction of the Fernery originally issued on 9 January 2019 and amended on 29 April 2019 to facilitate the demolition of the existing structure. Since this time, Council has been working very proactively with Heritage Victoria and has undertaken extensive work in relation to design detail given that the approval is for a replica of the original turn of the century gothic fernery structure. As the membership would appreciate the necessity to be true to the original form of the building is paramount".

"Council's commitment which has been led by former Mayor, Cr Samantha McIntosh, has at no point waned, with the City of Ballarat welcoming the meticulous care that Heritage Victoria has taken to deliver the best possible result for a replacement Fernery which will serve Ballarat and indeed Australia for many decades. The Council's latest meeting with Heritage Victoria has confirmed their agreement and support for the architectural design and detail of the final submissions from Council".

"Heritage Victoria have further taken significant interest in the internal landscape treatment of the Fernery and as a result Council has undertaken extensive in house research around the ferns that were originally housed within the Fernery at the time of its inception. Further, Council Officers have worked with Rippon Lea Estate to provide the external research in relation to turn of the century ferneries in particular".

"The theme which Council is pursuing for this Fernery is for the establishment of ferns with provenance from South Eastern Australia / Victoria, which is a theme that Heritage Victoria is very supportive of".

"Council has engaged both a Heritage Architect who has been responsible for the overall design work and documentation (Andrew Fedorowicz) and a Heritage Consultant to work directly with Heritage Victoria (John Briggs) to deliver the best possible outcome for the Ballarat Botanical Gardens Fernery with the aim that this structure and the landscaping

will be an exemplar for ferneries both nationally and internationally".

"The Council is looking forward to delivering a project which will be a source of pride for generations to come".

"Having worked closely with Heritage Victoria, the formal approval will be issued either pre-Christmas or immediately thereafter. The next steps in the process is a report to Council in relation to a variation for Resicare Builders who have been contracted to deliver the facility, with this to take place in January and construction to commence thereafter".

I thank Terry for providing this summary and look forward to the commencement of the project in the early part of 2020. It is anticipated that the Friends will have the opportunity to contribute to the landscaping during the development of stage 2.

November Activities. Apart from **special Guided Tours** under the leadership of Guides Convener Terry O'Brien, activities for November also included another successful **Spring Speakers Luncheon** with three presentations, organised by Events Convener, Carole Haines, with Terry O'Brien as MC.

This was followed by the **Official Opening of the Gate Keepers Cottage** and the annual Christmas break-up function. Events for the year finished off with Springfest which generated the sum of \$2,095 from plant sales. Thanks to Yvonne and her volunteers for a great result.

Annual General Meeting for 2020 will be held on Thursday February 20 at 10am. The notice of meeting together with a nomination form for Committee positions is included in this issue of Wellingtonia. **I would encourage members who have an interest in joining the Committee to think about nominating.**

Patron Professor Tim Entwisle. For those who missed it *The Age* published a most interesting article on December 4 about our Patron Tim, Director and Chief Executive of Melbourne's Royal Botanical Gardens, which have just won the major tourist attraction category at the Victorian Tourism Awards. Congratulations Tim, hopefully we might see you at the AGM.

Robert Selkirk, Dec.2019

MEMBERSHIP REPORT: The Ballarat Friends are pleased to welcome the following new members who have joined since the last issue of *Wellingtonia*:

Carolyn Vasey,
Carman Knight,
Lisa Moore,
Kay Violini,

Andrew Krausgrill,
Jennifer Greenhalgh,
Kate Tol,
and John & Bec Brandon

Janet Oliver,
Lois Curnow,
Peter Doube,

Andrew Straker,
Judy Blake,
Angela Smith

Robyn Fisher,
Jill Taylor,
Barry & Christine Hutton,

Total Membership is currently 389.

Raoul Dixon – Membership Officer



A friend dug a hole in the garden and filled it with water. I think he meant well.

GUIDING FRIENDS –

The success of our tours, as they are outside events, is dependent to a large extent on the vagaries of the weather. The Guides remember well the first event for 2019 on January 25 when the temp was 44 degrees, a challenge for both the presenters and the audience.

A wet cold September did reduce the uptake of our free Sunday morning tours but generally in November we were lucky and had pleasant weather days for our guiding events. As you would expect there is a strong link between numbers who participate and the weather on the day.

Lorraine Powell's **Remembrance tour on the 10 November** was well appreciated by all who attended and the inclusion with morning tea at the Cottage with Julie Bradby topped it off. Plenty of interaction amongst the group made it enjoyable, informative and because of the nature of the activity also moving and reflective at times as wartime connection accounts were told. Thank you Lorraine for leading this tour and also Julie Bradby for the Cottage hospitality.

What has been encouraging for the guides is the new people attracted to our events. This was especially evident in the **Western Bed tour on November 17**. Over 50 attended this ticketed twilight event. This event was successful because many different parts of BBG contributed. It was great having Donna Thomas from the COB staff as a presenter. Susan Pilbeam and Michael Bird and myself worked on the publicity. Carol Haines, Doff Kemp and Helen Vincent set such a high standard for what we called "nibbles" and was warmly appreciated by all. The event would not have occurred unless eight people volunteered to be presenters – Lorraine Powell, Elizabeth Gilfillan, Sue Rattray, Jane Munro, Donna Thomas, Sue Akers, Marg Towers and Julie Chandler – and those who attended are very appreciative of their commitment to the activity and the interesting and useful information conveyed.

This event showed there is the demand to know more about gardening. The BBG staff and FBBG can play a part in meeting this need. Many of the plants highlighted in this Western Bed tour are tough plants, well suited for drier conditions, and there is increasing interest in our native plants as people work out how to transition their gardens to changing climatic conditions. Notes were provided to participants in this tour but many were keen to write down the names of plants that attracted them and were relevant for their own garden.

Thank you to all who helped make this event a very useful and enjoyable opportunity to explore plants.

Guides now have a tear-drop banner to advertise where tours start. We also have a new speaker system. We are appreciative of this investment by the Committee as it all helps to make our guiding work more professional.

Terry O'Brien, Convenor



Ballarat Botanical Gardens

TWILIGHT TOUR

Friday, Jan 24, 2020 5pm

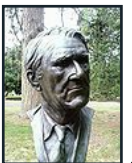
The busts of all of our Prime Ministers in the Prime Ministers Avenue in Ballarat Botanical Gardens take us on an historical journey as well as being visual reminders of our changing times.

The Guides of FBBG have organised a twilight tour amongst this unique outdoor art collection as a prelude to Australia day. It is a space where we can wander down and reflect on the changes in Australia since 1901.

The tour will highlight how the changing events and times of our Prime Ministers have impacted on us. How has Australia changed and how has our sense of identity changed over time?

This free event will last about an hour.

Meet at 5 pm near the Conservatory at the start of the Prime Ministers Avenue – under the shade of the canopy provided by the Turkey Oak.



WANTED: for the Cottage

We are in desperate need of an upright stick cordless vacuum cleaner. If you are upgrading and have one that still is in working order the BotaniKids team would love it.



GROWING FRIENDS: We had a very successful day on the foreshore of Lake Wendouree for our annual Springfest plant sale. Over \$2090 worth of plants were sold. Thank you to all the volunteers who gave their time to help us. We are currently working on potting up plants for the Begonia Festival (March 7-9).

Yvonne Curbach, Convenor

Pictured left: Yvonne Curbach and (right) Bruce Holland at the Springfest Plant stall.



I used to make loads of money clearing leaves from gardens. I was raking it in.

HIGH DAYS AND HOLIDAYS

Summer is traditionally a time for relaxation with family and friends, as we settle down after a frantic festive season filled with food and frivolity. Since its very beginning, the Ballarat Botanical Gardens has always been the special place where our community would meet together during *'high days and holidays'*.

All manner of groups began to meet at the Gardens on Boxing Day, and would present a letter to Mr Longley, informing him they were permitted. The Council allowed that the Gardens were a public space, however an early arrival would ensure a spot, and *'nobody was likely to interfere'*. The Butchers, the Bakers, the Fire Brigade as well as Sabbath Schools and Sunday Schools were making the Gardens their annual destination.

Very soon, the Council became very aware that some precautionary measures and regulation would be required. So it was that the 1870 Boxing Day Fete Committee were informed that their event was permitted and the maze open to them (they were even permitted to charge a small fee to people for entry to the maze) – provided they supplied: - *"...20 men on horseback to supervise the outer Gardens, and 7 men for the Maze (one at the entrance, one at each corner and two at the tower)"*.



Above: 1910 picnic (unfortunately NOT Ballarat!)

Also included in the permit was the warning that any damage to plants or trees would incur a 10/6 (ten shillings and sixpence) fine. For some reason the street water cart was made available. No information is to hand as to its function at the event, but in my imagination it was used to spray the children.

By the mid-20th century, the Gardeners themselves became concerned about lost children, and advocated a tent be provided to accommodate them all until they were reclaimed.

Today family groups continue the holiday tradition, and organised events such as the *Red Hot Summer Tour* and the free *Summer Sunday's music performances* are enjoyed by today's community.

Lorraine Powell, HISTORY GROUP CONVENOR

'Yet again, someone has added more soil to my allotment. The plot thickens...'

THE LYCH GATE (from the files of John Garner)

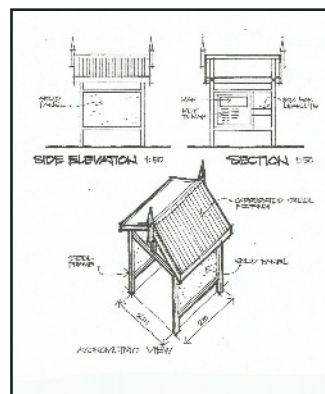
Walking from the North Gardens into the fernery area one passes through the Lych Gate. This was erected in the Gardens in 1997 as a joint project by the City of Ballarat and the then Y's Men's Club of Ballarat to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the Y's men's International in Toledo. The sign on the side wall was presented by the Ballarat Y's Menettes Club in 1999.

It is essentially an entrance gate to the central area of the Gardens. The Gordon cottage, just inside, had previously been refurbished by the School of Mines Building section with the support of the Y's Men's Club. It resembles the old Lych Gates seen in the village churches of England and many in Australia.



"Lych" is the ancient English name for "corpse" and it was to the Lych Gate that corpses were taken prior to their internment maybe several days later. Originally the corpses were contained in a shroud then later in coffins. It might lie for one or two days inside the gate before the burial took place and then carried up to the church with the clergyman. There were seats in many for the friends and relatives to keep an eye on the coffins, particularly so when bodies were sought after for dissection in the 18th and early 19th centuries. In some a raised stone was placed on which to rest the deceased.

Our Lych Gate was built by the School of Mines and presumably named as such being an interpretation of the old design but without seats. Fortunately, it has not been used in the same way as its predecessors. Apart from the ashes of Tom Toop there has been no history of internments in the Gardens. Whilst there are three other entrance gates to the Gardens of a similar design, the one near the Gordon Cottage is the only one to have received this distinctive funeral title.



Above: original lych gate drawings

(Thanks to Lee Ditchfield for input re. the Y's Men's Club.)

It is interesting that the Melbourne Botanical Gardens also have a Lych Gate. When we next have a visit from our patron, Prof. Tim Entwisle, he may be able to tell us how many bodies he has in his bailiwick!

John Garner, History Group member



The Australian Association of Friends of Botanic Gardens Biennial Conference will be held in Brisbane, May 22 to 24, 2020.

'Banks and Solander-Celebrating 250 years of Botanical Friends.'

It would be fantastic to have representatives from the Ballarat Friends attend.

Further info from the AAFBG website (especially: <https://friendsbotanicgardens.org/events-activities/events>) or contact the Friends office on 03-5342 9354



MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL FLOWER AND GARDEN SHOW
PRESENTED BY **LANE SOLUTIONS**

In 2019 some of the Ballarat Friends volunteered at the Melbourne International Flower Show.

The 2020 MIFS will be held March 25 -29. Would you be interested to be a volunteer for a day?

More info from our office.

CONSERVATION PROJECTS IN THE BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS – DECEMBER UPDATE

Christmas is such a wonderful time to catch up with family and old friends - I just love it, and as we welcome in the 20's, I thought it might be a great time to catch up with just a few of our garden additions over the past six years (*whilst enjoying calorie-free butterscotch!*) and see how they are travelling?

2014 – Addition of 'wedges' to Rose Cross gardens and new heritage rose collections.



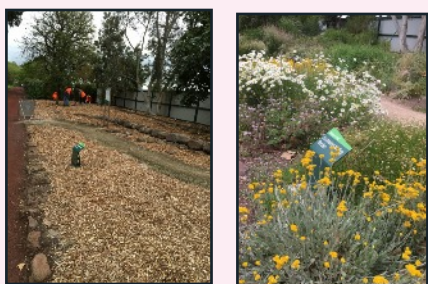
2015 – Monocot bed renovation



2016 - Renovation and full replanting of the Sensory Garden (*with terrific help from the western bedders*)



2017 – Renovation of Australia Garden and introduction of Ballarat Indigenous Collection (*the 'Friends' in the orange vests were a wonderful help!*)



2018 – New garden beds and a new Dahlia collection which now features 160 unique Dahlia cultivars.



2019 – McDonald Gate entrance garden extension and new herbaceous perennial borders



2019 – Renovation and new annual bed plantings created in central roundabout and surrounding gardens



Not forgetting our '**begonia hugging**' nursery team who grow all the plants for the Conservatory displays



And the annual Christmas Displays in the Conservatory forecourt.



And on that note - **Wishing you all a wonderful Christmas, and a safe new 'decade,' full of joy and of course all your favourite plants!**

Oh and the **Christmas Butterscotch**?!!!.....

That would be *pinus ponderosa* – the **Western Yellow Pine!** (*See right*) (*My favourite tree ... Ed.*)

On a warm day, the fabulous bark smells just like vanilla or butterscotch – one of my favourite calorie free treats!

Donna Thomas, Plant Collections Officer, Ballarat



The beautiful bark of the ponderosa pine



Do you recognise the logo at the right?

It is the **Ballarat Botanical Gardens Foundation** logo.

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

Go to: ballaratbotanicalgardensfoundation.com.au for information and access to tax deductible donations.



Bickleigh Vale and Candlebark Nursery: Spring Bus Trip

It was an early start and a quiet trip to the Dandenong Ranges on Sunday, October 13. However a delicious morning tea at Lilydale Lake got us ready for a busy and delightful day. This large lake, with its extensive conservation wetlands, islands and parkland, including part of the Olinda Creek, was a surprise to many. The considered development of boating, fishing and play areas, trails, raised walkways, fountains and facilities, makes for a popular destination.

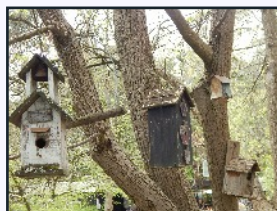


Lilydale Lake

It is also a reminder of how this area would have looked when Edna Walling purchased three acres of paddocks a century ago, which would evolve into the 21 acre site which she named *Bickleigh Vale*. Today it is surrounded by suburbia, but that is soon forgotten, as you walk up the dirt entry road, with enormous trees, early 20th century houses and established gardens all relating harmoniously.

Walling's aim was to create an environment within which like-minded people could appreciate this concept. The residents aim is to preserve her vision and her *Heritage Village*, which is one of a kind, for future generations.

Walling built the oldest house, *Sonning*, using local stone, timbers and recycled materials. This was while she was working on Dame Nellie Melba's *Coombe Cottage* in Lilydale. She oversaw the construction of 16 cottages and interconnected gardens between the 1920s and 40s.



Above & below: seen at Bickleigh Vale



Bickleigh Vale is now a 'Classified Landscape' and recognised as an area of special significance. The Friends enjoyed a picnic lunch in various gardens, and refreshments, plants and produce were available in others.

Our final stop was *Candlebark Indigenous Nursery*, a self-supporting, not-for-profit organisation established in 1994. This community initiative is dedicated to helping local people improve the natural environment. They offer a wide range of attractive, low cost, native plants, grown from seed collected from the Yarra Ranges. Today their clients also include local councils and developers.



Candlebark Seedbank

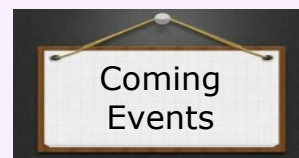
We were shown through the green houses and the saw the various methods required to germinate indigenous seeds. We saw the extensive seed bank and then had the nursery to ourselves for last minute refreshments and purchases.

Thanks to Carole Haines and the Catering team for making such a special day.

Susan Pilbeam

More info:

<https://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Experience/Parks-Recreation/Lillydale-Lake>
<https://www.bickleighvalevillage.com.au/>
<http://candlebark.org.au/>



1. SPECIAL GUIDED TOUR OF PRIME MINISTER WALK.
FRIDAY, JANUARY 24, 5 PM FREE EVENT. (See p.3 story).

2. BALLARAT FRIENDS 2020 AGM - Thursday February 20. 10 am. (Robert Clark Horticultural Centre)

RSVP by February 18

GUEST SPEAKER - Michèle Adler -
'There's no other place like Galápagos'.

Michèle will be speaking about her time at Burnley Gardens, plus her passion for gardens and her visits to Galapagos. (Free event)

3. GATHERING OF 'NEW MEMBERS' OF THE FRIENDS.
Thursday, March 5, 5.30-7.30. President Robert Selkirk warmly invites those who have become members of the Friends over the last few years, to a **"WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS"** function This will be a great opportunity to meet Convenors of the Friends groups over drinks and nibbles, and gain an understanding of the their work.

The venue will be our newly opened Gatekeepers Cottage; ample parking outside.

RSVP: February 28 to Susan Pilbeam text or phone
5342 9354; email: info@fbbg.org.au (Free event)

4. FRIENDS' EXCURSION - April 22. Tour of Musk Farm

Following on from Stuart Rattle, the new owners of Musk Farm have maintained the original garden as well as adding a rose arboretum and a heritage clock tower. Cathy and Michael have invited us to enjoy our **BYO lunch** in the garden.

Ray Robinson is a leading landscape gardener in Daylesford. With over 40 years experience both locally and internationally he will be our tour guide through the 14 garden rooms. A visit to **Frogmore Nursery** (not the gardens) will be an interesting stop on the day.

Cost \$50.00 (including our private tour of Musk Farm)

Depart : 9.30 am. Meet near the Morey Gates, in Wendouree Parade. Return to Ballarat by 4.40 pm.

To book: www.trybooking.com/BHPLF

5. MAY 21. GENERAL MEETING: 10 am GUEST SPEAKER - SHELLEY WOOD - Curator Warrnambool Botanic Gardens.

Shelley will present a *'History of the Warrnambool BG, the current master plan and future projects.'*

An exciting time for the Warrnambool Botanic Gardens. RSVP by May 19

Carole Haines, Events & Speakers Convenor

CURATOR'S REPORT SUMMER 2020

The gardens have been looking great this Spring and the staff have been busy planting up the Summer/Autumn annual display. This year they have planted out Bedding Begonias Megawatts, Salvias, Geraniums, Delphiniums, Dianthus, Vinca, Stachys and Cineraria. We also have some tall growing Dahlias backing the beds down the main walk. We have had new steel edging put in some of the annuals beds and are hoping to extend this to other beds next year.

In November the staff planted out our 150 cultivars of Dahlias in the beds down the Prime Ministers Walk and we are anticipating another great display in 2020.



..and that makes 150! Garden staff finishing off the dahlia planting

In October the gardens team replanted and extended the McDonald gateway gardens beds with a collection of perennials. The plants are looking fantastic already and will add interest to the south end of the gardens.

The conservatory has undergone some maintenance works this November, with the building being cleaned inside and out and the roof vents have been inspected and fixed. The evaporative cooler in the conservatory also has been replaced. We have also had works done in the nursery glasshouses with new shade screens and general maintenance on the houses themselves.

Our famous tuberous Begonias have been potted and are looking amazing. The nursery staff have been taking cuttings and preparing them for their next pot. The non-tuberous Begonias are also coming into their own with the warmer weather promoting new growth.

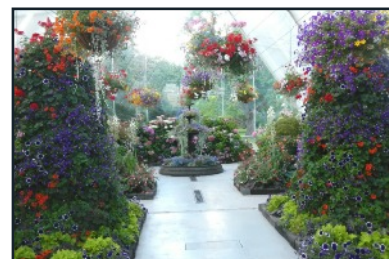
This year's summer conservatory display consists of our Pelargonium, Fuchsia, and Hydrangea collections, with Liliums, Heuchera and Coleus adding colour through their foliage. The nursery staff have also added some of our topiary animals to add interest to the display. The over 40 hanging baskets add height to the display with plantings of Geranium, Petunias, Verbena and Fuchsias.

It has been a busy and productive year in the gardens, and we look forward to a new and exciting year ahead. On behalf of the staff at the gardens we wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Glen Fisher (Acting Curator)



Garden staff at the newly renovated McDonald Gate entry



Yet another brilliant display in the Conservatory

A friend perfected his garden flower beds through a process of trowel and error.

Talking Plants

December 10, 2019

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



Hamilton's Guilfoylean creation is the State's fourth oldest



"The Hamilton tourism site proclaims its 4-hectare botanic gardens is the fourth oldest in Victoria. That's probably true, with land set aside in 1852 according to Gwen Pascoe in her *'Long Views and Short Vistas: Victoria's Nineteenth-century Public Botanic Gardens'*. Earlier ones would have been Melbourne (1846), Geelong (1851) and Portland (1851).

Like many of Victoria's 40 or so botanic gardens remaining today, Hamilton Botanic Gardens is included on the Victorian Heritage Register, acknowledgement of its historical, scientific and aesthetic significance....

...As I heard at the Friends of Hamilton Botanic Gardens annual general meeting, in September, Hamilton Botanic Gardens has a new plan, again led by a Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria designer. This time Andrew Laidlaw.

As with many regional botanic gardens in Victoria, they exist today and have a future thanks to the enthusiasm of their Friends."



(You can continue to read this story - and others - in Tim's blog at: talkingplants.blogspot.com)

WESTERN BED TOUR:



Sue Rattray discoursing on Western Bed grasses.



Part of the attentive crowd at the Western Bed event.



The Western Bed (440 yards/400 metres). It was used by runners training for the 1956 Olympics, and is still used by runners today.



Guide Jane Monro explains all about rockeries.



John Garner ponders the gems of garden wisdom on offer, while fellow Guides Sue Akers and Margaret Towers keep watch.



Guide Jane Monro takes in the crowd before continuing her presentation.



Ex-Friends' President, Joan Garner and City of Ballarat's Donna Thomas exchange pleasantries.



Donna Thomas from the Botanical Gardens staff spoke about the native bed.

*You will have read about the success of this special guided tour of the Western Bed in the Gardens. (See **Guides report p. 3**). Of course you know that a picture is worth 'a thousand words', so here are eight thousand words (above) for you to ponder (another weak joke)! Read on to discover a bit more about the history of the Western Bed:*

From Jane Monro's Notes: 'In the 1870s the Western Bed was simply the edge of the gardens facing Gillies St, which was then the dirt track that led to the saleyards. There was some expectation that the Gardens would extend across the track into the common land on the other side, but an Asylum for the mentally ill was built there. So that did not happen.

There must have been some sort of fence or the gardeners would have been rounding up straying cattle instead of attending to their duties. But wire fences couldn't stop the strong western winds sweeping across the plain which played havoc with the early planting. George Longley was friendly with the brilliant and energetic Von Mueller of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens, who suggested Tasmanian Blue Gums as a windbreak and provided some seeds. Those trees lasted as a windbreak till 1903, but we still have two left. One at the entrance to the Sensory Garden, kept together with the constant care of the city arborist, and another right at the end of the Western Bed near the George Longley building.

Over the years there have been many different plantings in the Western Bed. It seems to have always been the ugly sister of the gardens. Shortages of manpower and money caused by wars and Depressions allowed it to become a rather wild place, with alder, ivy, agapanthus and day lilies used to fill it up.

Some key events:

1860s George Longley went about planting Tasmanian Blue Gums Sturt Street. Probably here too.

1903 removal of old gums, replanting with acacias and creepers.

1914 – 18 War. Few men, and little money to be developing gardens.

1937 Ground on the Western Boundary cleared and prepared for "the best of foliage and flowering shrubs." We don't have a record of what happened to them, but of course the War intervened.

1939 World War II commenced. Again no gardeners, no money. Plan lay in the drawer for years.

1995 New fence, rose garden and lych gate from the Horticulture Society; Friends drew up a program to clear the Western Bed.

2001 Renovations commenced in line with the Botanical Gardens Masterplan largely funded by the Friends. The renovation continued until 2007'. (Courtesy of Jane Monro)



IF YOU NEED TO PAY US SOME MONEY:

Please remember to identify yourself, when paying into our bank account and even **what the payment is for**.

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.**

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?

Can you find a bit of time to help out a Friends Group? Ambassadors, Guides, Growers and BotaniKids can always use extra volunteers.

Contact Susan at info@fbbg.org.au or 5342 9354



A PLEASANT WALK:

Friends member, Elspeth Murray, has provided a vivid description of a memorable walk in London.

"A pleasant walk along London's *Embankment* starts at *Westminster Bridge*, across the river from the *Houses of Parliament*, and following it gives good views of the *Pugin Building*.

At the next bridge – *Lambeth Bridge*– immediately left at the traffic lights, is a redundant church on which is centred the **National Garden Museum**. Originally the site was in memory of the Tradescants, father and son, one of whom is buried here. The Church has a tower which gives a good view of London, but is not for the fainthearted; it also contains one of only two baptismal pools (as distinct from fonts) in England. As well as lovely stained glass windows, the café is a good place to eat. Exhibitions, events and a silent space are other attractions.

Open 10.30-5 weekdays, to 4 pm Saturdays. <https://gardenmuseum.org.uk/>

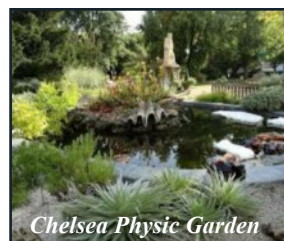
Behind is **Lambeth Palace**, a working palace and the family home of the Archbishop of Canterbury. As well as the garden, you may find both the Chapel and Library open. Guided tours are available and the palace is also open for fetes and special events.

Open monthly May to September, usually the first Friday, check the website: [ps://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/lambeth-palace/visit-lambeth-palace](https://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/lambeth-palace/visit-lambeth-palace)

Over *Lambeth Bridge* turn left, bus/taxi/walk along this road and after two bridges, the *Royal Chelsea Hospital* will appear and very quickly the gates of the **Chelsea Physic Garden**. Established in 1673, it is the oldest Botanic Garden in London. This garden is very structured, as befits herbs and scientific gardening and has many rare plants and good signage. It also has a café and shop and runs various courses and events. Open Weekdays, 11-4.

<https://www.chelseaphysicgarden.co.uk/>

Elspeth Murray



Chelsea Physic Garden



National Garden Museum



Lambeth Palace Garden



'Garden Cuttings' by GreenThumb

- The engraving machine used by Joy O'Brien looks likely to go to the recycling depot. A decision about a replacement is pending or so GT believes.
- Green Thumb sends best wishes to Botanical Gardens Curator Peter Marquand who is recuperating from a recent hospitalisation. Hope to see you back fit and well in 2020 Peter.
- The Wellingtonia editor has apologised to Green Thumb concerning the quality of the 'jokes' (?) used in this issue. Ed believes that he has had too much of a good time at Christmas pulling too many crackers containing 'dad jokes', and it shows!
- Feedback from some groups which have recently toured the Gardens seems to always include one major concern. Why are some of the sequoias looking so poorly? It has generated much discussion.
- A positive note...the proposal by Julie Bradby to develop a Young Friends of the BBG has tremendous merit and deserves our full support.
- Have you seen (and preferably used) the new electronic 'Donation Point Tap' which is incorporated into the Friends stand in the Conservatory?
- Are the Friends aware that this year the Growing Friends have raised around \$30,000 from their plant sales through the nursery and the conservatory trolley? A fantastic effort and one to be applauded. Well done Yvonne and her cohort!
- The Friends are hoping to see the Botanical Gardens incorporated in some way into the 2020 Ballarat Heritage Weekend in May. Any ideas?
- The end of year activities of the Friends got off to a grand start with the official opening of the Gatekeeper's Cottage followed by the soiree in the Robert Clarke Horticultural Centre. Well done by all concerned!
- The Ballarat Friends website has been updated; you should check it out and provide feedback if you want to do so. <https://fbbg.org.au/> until next time...Green Thumb



Seen Recently in the Gardens:

(Top left): Tree maintenance is a regular thing but takes a large crew.



(Lower left): Not a bamboo forest in the making but the recent planting of the rejuvenated dahlia beds adjacent to the P.M.s' Walk.

SPRING SPEAKERS' LUNCHEON:

Below are pictured (left) John Burrell and Hayden Vincent busily cleaning up after serving the 200-plus attendees refreshments; (right), Helen Vincent, Doff Kemp and Vivienne Martinich look pleased



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

A: A pink carnation.

GATEKEEPER'S COTTAGE/ EDUCATING FRIENDS REPORT

We still pinch ourselves when we unlock the Gatekeeper's Cottages door and get ready for another group of under-fives, a kindergarten visit, school group, Probus, U3A group or simply an open morning or afternoon. The absolute convenience of having ready access to program and resource management is immeasurable. The Cottage's ambience, story and journey back to its home in the Gardens is ever present and embodied in the doors, the floors (so beautifully restored), the delicate windows and original 1860's glass with all its lovely oldness and imperfections; ... it all matches perfectly the Botanikids team (.....shhh!)



The 2019 highlight (and it seems there have been many already), has been our official opening on November 21. Amid a hot steamy stormy day that seemed to all just fade away, we were so wonderfully reminded of the story the Cottage and its restoration. A sizeable crowd assembled on the marvelous deck by Heritage Architect Wendy Jacobs. With not a seat to spare, we listened, clapped and marveled while sipping bubbly! A strongly supported toast promised to the people of the past, the present and indeed the future, that we will treasure the Cottage making sure it is full of life and learning.

We now are excited about the specially designed interior features of deep green matting, our brand new bentwood chairs and the stunning resting bench in our reception room. The newly installed cupboards in the heritage room and the office are designed by a former BotaniKids parent and near-by resident Zoe McMahon. Redfern Joinery have worked their magic! It seems this new furniture has always been there hiding in the corners from a long time ago.

It's become so easy and delightful to host an afternoon tea, to arrange a vase of flowers, and to provide spaces for meetings, workshops and small gatherings. A bit of simple hospitality and a genuine wish to share this special cottage with the community has reinforced the need for such a place.

The immediate future sees the Cottage opened for part of our Friends Guides U3A course, while showcasing the History Group's *Zoo Information panels* in the Heritage room. During the Begonia Festival we will be linking our partnership with the Friends Botanical Artists group with posters created depicting six trees in scientific botanical style for display in our Interpretation room.



Above: one of Caroline Keys illustrations

A specially painted map of the Gardens by children book illustrator, Caroline Keys, has been created and will also be on display. Caroline will also begin to create little vignettes of nature and animals in the children rooms in the Cottage.

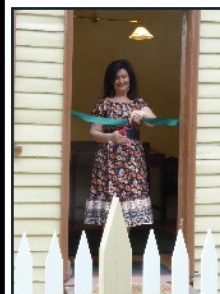
The new year will see the Friends installing timber fretwork on the verandah in line with restoration guidelines as well as continuing to build a strong vibrant and interpretation space and education program.



Above: the Statuary by Caroline Keys

Thank you to the Board members of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens Foundation, especially their Chair, Elizabeth Gilfillan, for their ongoing support and funding the on-going development.

Julie Bradby, Convenor Gatekeepers Cottage, Educating Friends (BotaniKids)



Pictured left from top:
Friends supporter and out-going Mayor, Samantha McIntosh cuts the ribbon;
Elizabeth Gilfillan at the opening;
Julie Bradby detailing the work that has been done.



Main picture shows a panoramic view of the opening gathering

WANTED

Stewards needed for the Gatekeepers Cottage proposed open days

We are proposing to open the Cottage on Tuesdays.

Are you interested in helping the BotaniKids team in being a Steward for the Gatekeepers Cottage to open to the public?

We hope to open most Tuesdays from 11-2.30

Most the of the guidelines for being a steward would be similar to being a Friends' **Ambassador** with an hour of extra training if you so desire on the cottage history and programs on offer.

The Cottage is well cooled and heated with our own kitchenette so conditions would be quite comfortable with public toilets nearby

We will always work in pairs.

Please let Susan know at the Friends' office or email info@fbbg.org.au if you are interested and able to help.

'DELVE INTO OUR BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS'

This is the seventh time that this course has been offered to members of U3A and Friends of BBG. It will be conducted on Tuesday mornings from 10am – 12 noon from February 4 to April 7. There are a variety of presenters and excursions and it provides a great opportunity for those who want to gain greater understanding of the gardens and its development.

The summary below will give you an idea of what the course covers: -

1. Wadawurrung and Lake Wendouree environment pre white settlement and the interest now in our native vegetation
2. Botanic gardens – early world history examples, early 19th Century Australian regional examples and the importance of botanic gardens in the world today
3. Ballarat BG – tour familiarisation of its many aspects. Cottage, Fernery and Zoo history included
4. Management of our senescent Trees. Special stories on special trees
5. Excursions to Melton BG and Buninyong BG
6. Connecting with the lake precinct ; Begonias and its festival; Trams; Fish Hatchery; POW memorial and Lake transport.
7. Plant collections. Conservatory displays, and the Western Bed
8. Art in our gardens and changes over time. Role of conservator. Appreciating the finer points to these statues
9. PM Avenue . Find out about its use and importance, the benefactor and the different sculptors

Please leave your details with Susan if you intend joining the class. The full program will be forwarded to you later in January. Some cannot commit to all the Tuesdays and this is OK. The program forwarded to you will allow you to select the parts that are of particular interest to you as a Friend of Ballarat Botanical Gardens.

Terry O'Brien, Guides Convenor

2020 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING GUEST SPEAKER: Michèle Adler

The first 20 years of Michèle's career was as a pharmacist. Then she fell in love with horticulture and worked for over 30 years as a university lecturer and researcher at the University of Melbourne – Burnley Campus. She is also a journalist, author and television and radio presenter.

Michèle is the immediate past President and Honorary Life Member of the Friends of Burnley Gardens, Burnley. She is currently researching the early history of the Gardens for an update of their history book.

Michèle's passion is experiencing plants in their natural environment. For the last 20 years she has lead tours to wild places – Galápagos, Machu Picchu, The Amazon and Madagascar and also garden tours to France and England. The next tour is to Cusco, Machu Picchu and/or Galápagos in October -November 2020. (For more information: www.adland.com.au)

Following this passion has led her to many wild places in the world, both for work and sheer pleasure. She has designed gardens in Australia, England and the Galápagos Islands. Michèle will present a talk on one of her passions – *'There's no other place like Galápagos'*.



Galalagos Hawk and
Galapagos Marina Iquana



My wife asked me if I thought we needed new garden furniture. I'm sitting on the fence.

FRIENDS OF THE BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2020

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens Inc. will be held on **Thursday, February 20, 2020** in the Robert Clark Horticultural Centre, commencing at **10.00 a.m.** **RSVP by Monday, Feb 18.**

Business to be conducted:

1. Presentation of reports of activities for 2019
2. Election of Committee for 2020;
3. Any other general business.

This will be followed by a General Meeting when we will enjoy a talk by **Michèle Adler**.

Robert Selkirk, President



Lorraine Powell's addresses part of the recent Remembrance Day tour in the Gardens



Left: Large (and unidentified) wasp nest spotted by Warwick Sellens in the Gardens.

Friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens Information 2020

Email: 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

2019-20 FBBG COMMITTEE AND AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

POSITION	NAME	POSITION	NAME
President	Robert Selkirk	Growing Friends	Yvonne Curbach
Vice President	Terry O'Brien	Guides	Terry O'Brien
Past President	Raoul Dixon	History	Lorraine Powell
Secretary	Susan Pilbeam	Hospitality	Doff Kemp
Treasurer	Bruce Holland	Membership	Raoul Dixon
BotaniKids/ Education	Julie Bradby	Newsletter Editor	Michael Bird
Events and Speakers	Carole Haines	Promotion/Public Relations	Vacant
Foundation	Elizabeth Gilfillan	Western Bed	Vacant
General member	Susan Rattray	Ambassadors	Beth Dixon (non-Committee)
General member	Stephanie de Boer	Botanical Art	Val Richards (non-Committee)
General member	June Cheetham	Engraving Plant Labels	Joy O'Brien (non-Committee)
General member	John King		

COMMITTEE MEETING TIMES 2020

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

History Group 1st Tuesday each month 4 pm.

Plant Labelling as required.

WHAT'S COMING UP FOR THE BALLARAT FRIENDS (see page 6 too)

FRIDAY, JANUARY 24, 5 PM	FREE	Special Guided Tour of the Prime Ministers' Avenue. Focus will be on how Australia has changed as the various PMs came and went. Meet at the Turkey oak at the start of the Avenue. Free event!
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 10 AM	FREE	Ballarat Friends' 2020 AGM in the Robert Clark Horticultural Centre, 10 a.m. Guest speaker: Michèle Adler, <i>'There's No Other Place Like Galápagos'</i> . (see page 11)
THURSDAY, MARCH 5, 5.30 - 7.30 PM	FREE	New Members of the Friends Welcome! 5.30 -7.30 p.m. Gatekeeper's Cottage
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 9.30 AM -4.40 PM		Excursion to <i>Musk Farm</i> and <i>Frogmore Nursery</i> (not the Garden). \$50. BYO lunch. Booking: direct at George Longley office or www.trybooking.com/BHPLF or www.trybooking.com/590439
THURSDAY, MAY 21, 10 AM	FREE	General Meeting 10 am. GUEST SPEAKER - SHELLEY WOOD - Curator Warrnambool Botanic Gardens who will speak on the history of those gardens. RSVP May 19.
THURSDAY, AUGUST 20, 10 AM	FREE	General Meeting 10 am (further details in Autumn Wellingtonia).
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28		Day excursion to <i>Sunnymeade</i> , near Kithbrook. Further details in next Wellingtonia.
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 9.45 - 3.30		<i>Speakers' Luncheon</i> (further details in Autumn Wellingtonia).
THURSDAY NOVEMBER 26		<i>Christmas Nibbles and Drinks</i> . 5.30 (time, venue and cost to be confirmed)

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



Photo credits: Thanks to: Warwick Sellens, Donna Thomas, Terry O'Brien, Tim Entwisle, Julie Bradby, Elspeth Murray, Susan Pilbeam, Raoul & Beth Dixon, John Garner, Michèle Adler and Michael Bird for providing the photographs and illustrations used.

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 2020 are due by late March please. Michael Bird, Editor.

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