

NEWSLETTER – AUTUMN 2018

'Clippings from
the President'



FRIENDS OF BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As I write my first President's Report I should probably commence with "Who am I" as I suspect most readers of *The Wellingtonia* are wondering who I am, and how I have suddenly become your new President.

Being a fourth generation member of the Selkirk Family I have obviously lived in Ballarat all my life. Over the last 50 years I have had the pleasure of being married to my wife Christine, during which time we have mostly lived at Mt. Helen where we brought up three children.

The last 35 years at Mt. Helen were spent on a 15 acre property in Gear Ave. where we developed seven acres of garden, and retained the rest as natural bushland. This was a most enjoyable journey and gave us the opportunity to have several Open Garden Days over a number of years, with the proceeds being donated to St. John of God Hospital Ladies Auxiliary, and the Rotary Club of Ballarat, of which I was a long time member. Unfortunately we were unaware of the option at that time to support the good work that the FBBG are doing. I hasten to add that Christine is the one with the plant knowledge, in fact she wears a cap with "Head Gardener" across the top and I'm more than happy for her to take that title!

As time catches up with all of us, we gradually came to the realisation that it was time to make a move to somewhere less physically demanding. Fortunately a property on the corner of Sturt and Crocker Streets was on the market at that time, with a well designed and established garden. So the move was inevitable. As luck would have it this property consisted of a double block, with a tennis court on one block. When the previous

owners refurbished the house they also redeveloped the garden, which included the tennis court being turned over to garden as well. So the "Head Gardener" is more than happy with the move.

The move into Ballarat was almost three years ago. Since that time we have enjoyed reconnecting with the Botanical Gardens and the lake precinct.

On our daily walks through the Gardens I became increasingly concerned about the dilapidated state of the Fernery. By coincidence, during last year's Ballarat Gardens in Spring Speakers Luncheon, Christine and I sat with Raoul and Beth Dixon, whom we hadn't met before. Without any background knowledge of the Fernery redevelopment, I naively started a discussion with Raoul inquiring about the lack of progress and where are the road blocks. I

"The agreed position reached ...was to proceed forthwith with the Fernery redevelopment."

remember the reply from both of them was "do you have any contacts at the Town Hall" to which I replied "I will see what I can do".

During November and December I met twice with the Mayor, followed by a meeting with the CEO in February to discuss a way forward. These meetings paved the way for a further meeting on 1 March which involved the Mayor, the

CEO, Terry Demeo, Councillor Grant Tillett and Raoul, John King, Elizabeth Gilfillan and myself.

The agreed position reached at that meeting was to proceed forthwith with the Fernery redevelopment within a budget of \$1.4mill. Unfortunately with the budget being capped at this level the Fernery will need to be scaled back from the original concept.

However the good news is that we now have an agreement with the City for the project to proceed, albeit on a staged basis.

Once stage one is completed we are hopeful the opportunity for further funding will become available. The next step is for the project to be signed off by Council.

Continues page 2...



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- 2018 AGM Report page 5
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- Coming Events page 16



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

See page 4 for new extracts
from Tim's Blog ...

Continued from page 1...

The Memorandum of Understanding between the FBBG and the City of Ballarat was also tabled at this meeting, and left for review and signing. A request was also made for a full Report on the FBBG Trust Fund, which is being held by the City of Ballarat. Both issues, together with the Fernery progress will be followed up at the next meeting on 26 March.

In the lead up to this year's AGM it became apparent that John King was unfortunately unable to take up the role of President due to health reasons. As nobody else was available, I received a phone call from Raoul requesting my support. With the realisation that I was now already involved with the Fernery, and after giving due consideration to Raoul's predicament, I agreed.

And that dear Friends, in a long-winded way, is how I suddenly became your President!

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Raoul on his three year term as President, and who no doubt has been ably supported by Beth. Unfortunately I've only seen the tail end of the enormous effort and the great leadership he has put into the role. But from what I've seen in this short time, it's going to be a challenge to measure up to his dedication.

It was very heartening to attend this year's Begonia Festival and observe the great work and dedication put in by the Friends who freely gave up their time. Given

perfect weather conditions over the week-end Ballarat was really on show, and with the magnificent support of the Friends would have led to a very successful Festival.

In conclusion my main objectives over the ensuing 12 months are:

- To get the Fernery back on Council's Agenda and see a commencement of stage one.
- Focus on the restoration of the Gatekeeper's Cottage.
- To improve the working relationship with the Council. To this end I plan to arrange quarterly review meetings with representatives of the City of Ballarat. These meetings will also provide the opportunity to monitor progress on the Fernery and the Gate Keeper's Cottage.

And finally, in my very short introduction to the FBBG, it has become clear to me that the Friends are a very dedicated and enthusiastic group of volunteers, who operate like a well oiled machine - I look forward to working with you all.

Robert Selkirk, President

Weeds grow at precisely the rate you pull them out.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT



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

Karen Skye, Glenys Bock, Susan King, Colin Fraser, Elspeth Murray, Glen & Pauline Williamson, Jo Barber, Selena Prior, Dayna Hoskin, Anna Boyle, Marlene Tozer, Susan Crook, Shirley Hoffman, Helen Smith and Sue Taylor.

These new members now bring our current membership up to 366 and we thank those members who have introduced their friends - keep up the good work!

However we still have 52 members who have not yet renewed for this year so if you are in that category, I would appreciate your prompt response.

If you do not wish to renew, please let me know so that I can keep my records up to date. I can be contacted by phone at 5335 9052, or by email rdixon578@gmail.com.

Raoul Dixon, Membership Officer

GROWING FRIENDS



The Growing Friends had a very successful three days at the Begonia Festival this year. Total amount raised was \$6841.15, which is fantastic, seeing we had such a lot of competition from commercial plant stall holders.

We were a bit short on volunteers on the Saturday, hopefully this will be better in 2019. I think we had too many other distractions in the region. Still, it was a great weekend and thanks to all the willing helpers that made it a success.

Yvonne Curbach, Convenor

BOTANIKIDS AT THE BEGONIA FESTIVAL

DOWN TO EARTH WITH BOTANIKIDS

AUSTRALIA DAY: We embarked on a first this year. Botanikids staged our very own Australia Day activity morning. with over 70 children attending we were blessed with the good weather and spent most of the session outdoors. It was a time to celebrate all things Australian and we did just that.

Down to Earth was the theme this year!

2018 Botanikids will promise to get grubby muddy messy and really dirty every session! We feel it is important the children get their hands dirty while they are planting potting and growing flowers, vegetables herbs, grasses, trees, shrubs and bulbs.

Our storage shed is at capacity ...let us know if you want to buy easels, a set of small drawers and various sundries. These items will be sold at a Garage Sale soon.

BEGONIA FESTIVAL: Remember the children's counting joke... "1, 2, skip a few, 99, 100? Well at the Begonia Festival Botanikids event over the three days it was more like "1, 2, skip a few 3,300"!



We were supplied with 6 pkts of pastels by Council; these lasted until lunchtime first day!!! Children drew imaginative designs on their boxes!

We worked with over 3000 children, and thousands of adults, decorating their cardboard boxes, making 10,000 newspaper pots, planting various herbs in those pots with potting soil, sprinkling pebbles around the plants, threading knotting and creating a hanger for the box.

The planning of this activity was a little different this year and presented the Botanikids with many challenges. Finally

we were quite proud with our activity we crafted. The cost to the Council was kept at a minimum this year using recycled materials. The Friends sponsored the activity and actually bought the 3,500 boxes !

It was obvious our Botanikids event at the Festival was a hub of activity. Standing room only for most of the three days. At times there were hundreds in our area all busy making and planting. We achieved our goal and our reward will not be headlines in the newspapers or on the news, or even visits from dignitaries, but the fun and smiles of the kids cannot be measured as they clutched their boxes of potted herbs.

I was contacted by many parents and grandparents after the Festival telling us their kids insisted on the precious herbs be planted as soon as they arrived home. How wonderful!



It is important the Botanikids' events and activities always reflect high standards of quality learning experiences about and with plants, planting and gardening.

RECENT CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION: Rotary Ballarat West awarded us with a grant of \$2000 to further the curriculum project with funds to support web work and publicity to develop the Lake Wendouree and Gardens Precinct learning project.

With the Cottage now being restored albeit so slowly, it is imperative schools, students and teachers can access high quality program resources to support learning possibilities at the Gardens and the Lake precinct.

The Gatekeepers Cottage is looking a little more settled with its new roof hat and newly built chimneys, but needs to now move on to the next stage.

Watch this space!

FUND RAISING ASSISTANCE: If you have any ideas to help with fundraising or would like to work on our Gatekeepers Committee we need your help. Thanks to the Council for the work completed so far.

The Botanikids team are a great bunch who work really hard to uphold the spirit of the Friends; please consider joining us as a greater pool of helpers just makes so much difference.



A fine example of BotaniKids work

Multi generation activity



A rare moment where there was standing room in our marquee. Note John King's lavender bunches adorning our marquee. He gathered and bundled 70 bunches !

Julie Bradby , Convenor Botanikids

The only way to guarantee some color all year round is to buy a garden gnome.

Talking Plants - from Tim Entwisle's Blog - Tuesday, 13 March 2018

You can read more of Tim's Blog about this topic amongst many others at:
<http://talkingplants.blogspot.com.au/>.

Tim warned that the report from which this extract is taken is a 'long read'!



THE TOP 10 'FIRST' BOTANIC GARDENS

So, here is my list of the Top 10 first botanic gardens, with apologies to all the countries and regions left out.

First on Earth:

1545 Orto Botanico di Padova; Padua, Italy

1545 Orto Botanico di Firenze (Giardino dei Semplici); Florence, Italy

First on Earth with strong scientific and ornamental values

1587 Hortus Botanicus; Leiden, The Netherlands

First in the United Kingdom

1621 University of Oxford Botanic Garden; Oxford, UK

First in the Southern Hemisphere

1652 The Company Garden; Cape Town, South Africa

1736 Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Botanical Garden; Pamplemousses Mauritius

First in the Americas

1850 U.S. Botanic Garden; Washington, USA

1859 Missouri Botanical Garden; St Louis, USA

First in China

1860 Hong Kong Zoological and Botanical Park; Hong Kong, China

1929 Nanjing Botanical Garden Memorial Sun Yat-sen; Nanjing, China

Oh, and the **Royal Botanic Garden Sydney** began life in 1816, making it the first in Australia. We don't talk about this much at the **Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria** (1846). (Good one Tim! Ed.)



Orto Botanico di Padova; Padua, Italy

From a church bulletin: "Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands."



FRIENDS' AT THE BEGONIA FESTIVAL





This year's AGM covered a wide range of topics. Out-going President Raoul Dixon set the scene when he drew attention to a recent article in Australian Geographic which listed *Australia's Top 10 Botanical Gardens*. **Ballarat (and Melbourne) were not included!** See p.14

Robert Selkirk's was the only nomination for the position of President. John King is to continue as Vice President.

Two new General Members (Nonnie Tennant and June Cheetham) are replacing Kathleen Hobson and Helen Vincent, who have retired. A full list of Committee members is on page 13.

During the meeting the History Group's '*Ballarat's Blooming Begonias*' was launched by our patron, Tim Entwisle. (Tim is pictured top left, and the booklet left) The audience included members of the Rogers family and others who had contributed personal archival material to the booklet. Andrew Thomas, the designer of the booklet also attended.

Copies are available from the George Longley Building for just \$5.00.

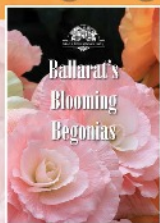
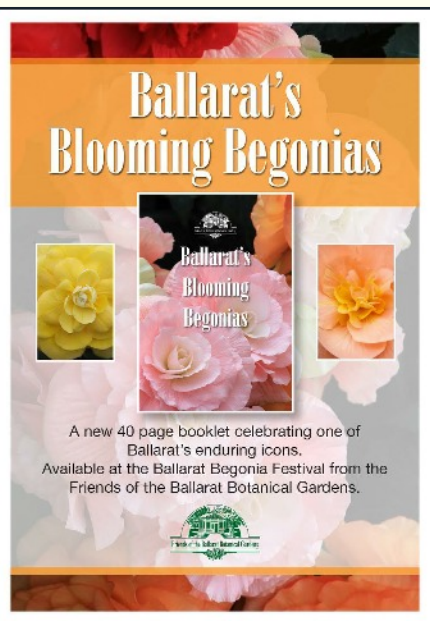
Guest speaker was Justin Buckley (pictured left) the Manager of Horticulture for the National Trust of Australia (Victoria). His topic: "*Tree Succession Planning in Heritage Gardens*". Justin based his talk on the case study which emerged from Rippon Lea estate.

Rippon Lea is 14 acres in area and represents a nineteenth century pleasure garden. It has 200 large mature specimens of which about 45% have a 'useful life expectancy' of 15 years.

Justin emphasised the things that didn't work and that having a rigid policy isn't necessarily a good thing. Also that replacing a tree with the same species doesn't always work.

(Photos: Bottom left: Lorraine Powell thanks guest speaker Justin; Top: VP John King presents Life Membership certificate to Raoul Dixon; second from top: Beth and Raoul Dixon; third and fourth: Part of the large crowd in attendance.)

FRIENDS 2018 AGM February 22



A new 40 page booklet celebrating one of Ballarat's enduring icons. Available at the Ballarat Begonia Festival from the Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens.



"When all the chores are done, the avid gardener will invent some new ones."

CURATOR'S REPORT AUTUMN

Around 60,000 people visited the gardens during this years Begonia festival with Just under 25,000 people walking through this year's Begonia exhibition. Visitors were able to enjoy the many free activities, sample a wide variety of foods from different providers and enjoy a drink in the brewers gardens or at the Mitchell Harris wine garden.

Ballarat's weather was at its early autumn best. We received many positive comments about how beautiful the gardens are. The delphiniums in the main walk were flowering at their stunning best as were the rest of the annual beds.

Over the last five Begonia Festivals City of Ballarat's horticultural apprentices have put together a display within the gardens. This years display was a French themed café with a vertical wall featuring the Eiffel tower.



Festival visitors were able to use the space to have their lunch or just a few minutes break to take in the festival.

Our apprentices developed the concept, grew the plants and installed the display. Viva La France!

Post Begonia festival we have been running short information sessions on the City of Ballarat Begonia collections and their history. The talks were started last year and have again proved to be popular; at times we have had up to thirty people participate. The begonia exhibition will continue through until mid-April with the talks continuing while demand continues.

In coming weeks the plants in the annual beds will be removed and the beds prepared for the spring flowering planting, the conservatory floor will be repainted, and the lawns will have their annual post festival remediation maintenance.

Peter Marquand, Curator



TUBEROUS BEGONIAS

Did you know?

- The Ballarat Botanical Gardens have been growing Begonias since 1898.
- Over 600 Begonias are currently on display in the Conservatory.
- There are over 240 different varieties in our 'registered' collection.
- 1800 tuberous Begonias are grown each year at the Botanical Gardens Nursery.
- All Begonias are grown by the Botanical Gardens team.

Tips for growing Begonias

	Water directly to base of plant rather than from overhead.
	Check the moisture content of the pot before watering. - Begonias prefer it on the drier side.
	Do not place saucers under the pot – allow to free drain.
	As the Begonia finishes flowering reduce the water and allow it to dry out.
	When dormant, place the pot on its side, in a dry, dark place until it shoots in spring.
	When small shoots appear, re-pot with fresh, well-draining potting mix.
	Add a 6 month, slow release fertiliser. Commence watering.
	Place in a protected position outdoors or under shade cloth or laser-light. Protect from wind & rain.

BALLARAT
BOTANICAL
GARDENS

CITY OF
BALLARAT

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

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

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

This is an on-going safety issue.

EARLY BUILDINGS AT BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS

The minutes/reports of the Ballarat Botanical Garden Committee during the early years (1860-1864) present an image of a dynamic committee, engaged not only in the laying out and planting of the gardens, but also with the construction of necessary buildings and other 'built structures'.

Throughout the years 1860 to 1864, there were many references to fences, gates, tree guards, and even a shed being constructed. On 8 April 1860, Mr Longley was paid £8 (eight pounds — about \$16) for the "purchase of building materials for the gardener's house". There is no further reference to the gardener's house, so it is unclear from the minutes whether this was an actual house or perhaps a summer house or potting shed. In April, 1862, it was reported that the Summer House was to be covered in "under the slats".

By June, 1863, it was decided that Henry R. Caselli, a Ballarat architect, would be instructed to prepare designs for two lodges. Caselli was a very well-known architect being responsible for the City and Town Fire Brigade buildings, The Mitchell Buildings (Myers), Ballarat College, Ballarat Orphan Asylum, and many churches. By July, a tender for £334/18/- from Mr Maynes was accepted for the building of the lodges — to be constructed of wood, and plastered.



Fernery & Statuary, Botanical Gardens, Ballarat.

<https://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/items/766602>

At the same meeting in June, the gardener (George Longley) was requested to prepare plans for a propagating house for the nursery. In July the Committee invited tenders for the propagation house, however there is no further information about whether any tenders were received.

In November, 1863, it was reported "That Mr Caselli be requested to prepare plans for two common privies and that the gardeners get two holes dug and have tubs placed therein and that the present contractors be requested to give a price for the erection of the privies." Mr Mayne's tender of £3/12/- each for two closets was accepted. Also in November, the tender of Irving Glover and Co for Gates of £135/7/7 (the second lowest tender) was accepted.

The Committee received four applications for lodge keeper, with Mr Cave being selected.

On November 10 1863, it was moved that the following members of the committee — Appleby, Elliot and Nichols — be appointed to meet Mr Cave and arrange the terms of his appointment as Lodge Keeper. It was also moved that the Ballarat Water Commission be requested to apportion a sum annually to pay the 'man at the lodge to look after and act as swamp ranger'. However, in December, it was reported that Mr Cave wanted a few days to consider the offer. The other Lodge was known as Mr Longley's Lodge.

On September 5, 1864 Samuel Baird, the Town Surveyor, was requested to submit his plans for the Rotunda and Summer Arbors. At the Committee's next meeting, the design of the rotunda was adopted. His plans for the Swings Landing Stage Privies and for the Botanic Reserve were later submitted, adopted and he was authorised to call for Tenders. This concluded the mention of building plans during the period 1860 to 1864.

Source: 1860-1864 Ballarat Botanic Garden Committee Minutes (limited editing of quotes) courtesy of Ballarat Historical Society Inc.

Zelda Martin



Construction of the refreshment rooms known as Lake Lodge on the shore of Lake Wendouree, Ballarat. 1890

<https://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/items/766602>

The only way to ensure rain, is to give the garden a good soaking.

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**.

A good method is to use your surname and initial/s as your ID.

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

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

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

Ambassadors

Would you like to take on a new highly satisfying role for the Friends?

Contact the Friends Office **5342 9354**

President's Report for the Annual General Meeting – 22 February 2018



It is my pleasure to present this Annual Report on the Friends for this, our 35th year: 2017 has been marked by two new events and one non-event.

The **first big event** was of course the relocation of the former Gatekeeper's Cottage back to the Botanical Gardens. We are grateful to the former owners for gifting the cottage to the Friends, and for ensuring that it was not demolished prior to relocation. One of our members generously funded the cost of relocation and we thank her most sincerely. The Council has been most supportive of this project, undertaking the management of the shift and installation on its new site, as well as funding partial renovations including a new roof and rebuilt chimneys and we are we thank them for their whole-hearted support.

The **other event** was the setting up of a new interest group in the Friends, called "Ambassadors". This involves volunteer members being stationed in the Conservatory on weekends to interact with visitors, providing information on the Gardens, and generally making them feel welcome. Since commencement in late April to the end of 2017, Ambassadors have put in 528 hours in total and estimate that they have interacted with over 4,000 visitors who have appreciated the opportunity to have someone to talk to. The project has been managed by Beth Dixon. Donna's botanical support has also been helpful and appreciated. More volunteers however are needed in order to maintain a presence in the Conservatory on every weekend.

The **non-event for the year** is the Fernery redevelopment. Quite simply, nothing seems to have happened. Council advise that they applied unsuccessfully for State and Federal funding and have indicated a preference for using the available funding simply to refurbish the existing structure. We hope that Council will stand by their commitment, as published in "my Ballarat" Summer 2016, to use their \$1.4 million for staged development of the planned \$4 million project. As I have stated many times, the full realization of the Laidlaw design would give Ballarat a magnificent complex which would be much more than a simple fernery - more a Discovery Centre - of world class significance.

Such projects, with their botanical and educational emphasis, are needed to establish our Gardens as more than just a place of beauty but a place where visitors can learn and appreciate more fully our natural world.

New ventures such as the Fernery Development have been overseen by Elizabeth Gilfillan in the role of Project Development Convenor. After ten strenuous years in this role, Elizabeth decided, during this past year, that it was time to step back, so it is appropriate to record in this report our appreciation for her dedication and hard work on our various projects.

Another innovation introduced this year was a revised process for induction of volunteers as required by Council in order to conform with OH&S requirements. Previously this was achieved by occasional group sessions which meant inevitable delays and difficulties in getting everyone together at the same time. I initiated discussions with Council and we now have a more streamlined process whereby our Convenors are authorised to take new volunteers through the induction procedures without delays.

Now to report on our other interest groups.

The **Growing Friends** continue to be the principal source of funds through their nursery sales. Ably led by Yvonne, the work of this dedicated team resulted in sales of \$37,600 for the year including

excellent sales at the Begonia Festival and Springfest. This is an improvement on the \$33,000 in sales the previous year. The Plant Trolley continues to prove a great success, having contributed \$14,350 to the total sales this year. We are grateful to Gardens' staff for continuing to move the trolley in and out of the Conservatory, and to those Friends, especially Rudolf Huebner, who attend to it on weekends and keep it stocked up.

Guiding Group: The number of tours remained steady – 40 tours in 2017, comprising 18 arranged group tours and 22 Sunday morning tours, with a special Anzac day tour arranged by Lorraine Powell which was well attended. There was no U3A course held in 2017 but one is planned for 2018. The Guides monthly meetings are now organised by various Guides on a rostered basis to share the workload, and are informative and enjoyable. Excursions held during the year have also been very successful in furthering the knowledge of the Guides. Jane Munro is responsible for tour organization and roster management with Terry O'Brien continuing as overall Convenor. Currently we have 15 guides but more are needed for ease of rostering.

Wellingtonia: Michael Bird continues to do an excellent job editing and producing our quarterly newsletter which must rank with the best Friends' Newsletters. Susan Pilbeam is now learning and assisting Michael. Ballarat Printworks are to be commended for their efficiency and professionalism in printing and mailing out the Newsletters.

Events: Our first major trip, organised by Elizabeth, was to the Colac area visiting three gardens and the Camperdown Botanical Gardens where we were well looked after by the Camperdown Friends.

Carole Haines, our Events Convenor continued to organise guest speakers for our meetings and also arranged our other excursion to the Cloudehill Gardens in the Dandenongs – always a delight to visit.

Catering: Doff Kemp took over catering responsibilities from Carole and, with her excellent team, has looked after us very well throughout the year, culminating in a well-attended "drinks and nibbles" in November.

Botanical Art Group: Valerie Richards runs the enthusiastic group of botanical artists with 19 on the books and 8 regular attendees who enjoyed some guided art sessions to assist them develop their skills. They have commenced a project featuring the growth cycle of Begonias.

Western Bedders: Bill O'Driscoll advised that the highlights for 2017 were, firstly, the makeover and replanting of the Sensory Garden. With assistance from Vision Australia, new signage makes provision for the visually impaired to identify all the plants in this Garden.

Secondly, the native garden was fully removed and a new plant-out undertaken of the native beds, based on native species growing in a 50 km radius of Ballarat. This assists visitors to the gardens to identify plants common to this region which is most important and also enables Ballarat residents to identify species which might grow well in their own gardens.

The group continued to work on a regular basis in the monocot beds and the grasses there are simply outstanding and frequently commented on by visitors. We also did regular maintenance in the Sensory Gardens.

History Group: Lorraine Powell's band of enthusiasts continues to plough through the records at the Public Record Office of Victoria.

As well as this the team has created an exhibition related to the Gardens and Gardeners in WW1, and also an exhibition highlighting the history of the Ballarat Zoological Gardens. These exhibitions

"... the Fernery redevelopment. Quite simply, nothing seems to have happened."

were displayed in the Robert Clark Conservatory. The team also celebrated the Gardens 160th anniversary, joining with the City in creating a series of panels showing the Gardens down the decades. This was displayed both at the Conservatory and at the Ballarat Library. The major project for the year was the development of a booklet on Ballarat's Begonias, due to be launched at the AGM.

The **BotaniKids and Education Group**, under the tireless and enthusiastic guidance of Julie Bradby, again achieved much during the year. Highlights were:

- Celebrating the Gardens 160th anniversary with a children's party, attended by Mayor Samantha McIntosh;
- Again active at the Begonia Festival with over 3,500 children creating a decorated terracotta pot and then planting a marigold in it;
- Commissioning two professionals to produce a series of curriculum guidelines for learning programs when studying the Gardens and Lake Wendouree precinct. This was funded by Rotary and Council grants as well as funds raised from BotaniKids events;
- Regular events with children to encourage appreciation of nature and the Gardens.

Julie is keen to acknowledge the support by Gardens staff, especially Peter and Christian for these events.

The annual **Spring Gardens Luncheon and Open Gardens Weekend** was again a great success with inspiring speakers and some most interesting gardens on display. The combined events generated a profit of \$11,615 of which \$9,606 was allocated to our Ballarat Friends with the balance allocated to the Buninyong Friends. Helen Todd and her committee have consistently organised these events most professionally. However, after ten years, members of this committee are retiring to a well-earned rest. At the time of writing, we have no volunteers to take their place, so the future of this event remains in doubt.

Joy O'Brien continues to engrave **plant labels** as required, and we are grateful for her reliable attention to this important activity.

Our **Treasurer**, Bruce Holland, continues to meticulously and accurately record all financial transactions, whilst Sue Rattray as well as assisting Bruce is our very efficient **Minutes Secretary**

Membership was 353 at the end of 2017 an increase of 18 over 2016.

Susan Pilbeam continues to be of invaluable help in her role as **Administrative Assistant** and we thank her for her reliability and willingness to help whenever needed.

Thanks are due to the members of the various groups who work so hard during the year, also to those members who assist when called on to help at such events as Springfest and the Begonia Festival, as well as those who quietly assist behind the scenes such as in watering the nursery plants.

The total hours put in throughout the year by members with all our various activities has been estimated for the year as 7,850 hours. Using a conservative figure of \$20 per hour, it could be said that we have contributed in the vicinity of \$160,000 to the people of Ballarat in promoting and supporting our magnificent Botanical Gardens.

The Friends are again pleased to acknowledge the great work done by Peter Marquand and his dedicated team to maintain our Gardens in such great condition and are to be congratulated. The Conservatory displays also attract much favourable comment from visitors.

Finally, I again extend my thanks to Elizabeth Gilfillan, for her guidance and support when called on, and to my wife, Beth for her continued help in the performance of my duties as President.

So to conclude this report, I again thank one and all for helping us to support the Gardens.

Raoul Dixon, retiring President



Left: The newly designed logo for the BotaniKIDS new home, the Gatekeeper's Cottage, currently being renovated in the North Gardens.

BALLARAT GARDEN DISCOUNTS FOR MEMBERS

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

You will need to show your FBBG membership card

"Annuals" mean disappointment once a year.



AAFBG Member's Biennial Conference Benalla 2018

"Cultivating Friends"

April 20 - 22, 2018

Congratulations to The Friends of **Benalla Botanic Gardens and Riverine Parkland** for hosting this year's Conference.

Conference registration forms are available from George Longley Room or download from:

<http://www.friendsbotanicgardens.org/conferences/2018-agm>

Your Association has a new website and we would love you to have a look. It is still evolving and more news of Botanic Gardens around Australia and the world will appear.

The web address is:

www.friendsbotanicgardens.org

FRIENDS GUIDING GROUP : Ballarat's Indigenous Plants

The focus of the guides 2018 meetings has been the recently planted indigenous garden. This features plant species that have evolved and adapted to Ballarat's climate, soils etc. and are "endemic" or indigenous to the area. The bed includes grasses, herbs and wildflowers found within a 40 kilometre radius. This new addition to the gardens in the Western Border will provide an opening for many interesting discussions with our tour guests.

What was the vegetation like in our area pre-European settlement? Of the indigenous grassy woodlands, we have a remnant tree near the POW memorial and a few surviving grasses in the Northern gardens. This showcase garden of local vegetation shows some of the plants that made up the lush and colourful appearance of these grasslands, as described and praised by Major Mitchell in 1836.



How have the gardens changed since their 19thC establishment? Values have changed, the initial drive was assimilation and experimentation. The attraction was to exotics, novelties and bringing in new tree discoveries. In the early days there was excitement about the Giant Redwoods and other new species from overseas. In the early days of the garden's establishment there was removal of the vegetation and planting of exotics.

We are now concerned about conservation, biodiversity, the challenge of climate change and using drought tolerant species. Von Mueller was excited about Australian flora but apart from the Blue Gums and some conifers of the Araucariaceae family, few Australian trees were planted. It will be interesting to observe the transition we make with our replacement trees, as we move into a new era of coping with senescing trees (*).

What plants were used by indigenous culture and how?



Diet included the roots of plants gathered from the vegetable garden – the grassland and medicinal plants. The native vegetation provides an opportunity to expand our understanding of indigenous culture.

How can we use the Pre-European vegetation?

A range of water-wise indigenous herbs and grasses can be grown in local gardens. These are particularly effective in clumps and combined with natural materials of wood, rock and gravel. Many of these plants have spectacular and colourful spring and summer flowering displays.

How much remnant grassland remains?

Since the 1830's grazing, cropping and introduced pastures has cleared or altered more than 95% of these Western Volcanic Plains



grasslands. We now have a highly stressed landscape whose survival is threatened. Only small remnants remain and many are so small that their long term viability is a major concern.

In the Western Volcanic Plains, it is estimated less than 0.1% of native grasslands, and less than 5% of grassy woodlands remain.



As a result, there are a high number of threatened endemic flora and fauna species, impacting significantly on biodiversity. There is a need to increase awareness of the conservation value of these grassland species.

What is the COB Living Collections Policy and Plan?

Plant collections are being documented at Buninyong Botanic Gardens, Ballarat Botanical Gardens, Victoria Park and Eureka Park. These collections of living plants assist in scientific research, conservation and education. Victoria Park has in place strategies to preserve and enhance indigenous vegetation. The wetlands will highlight and provide education about Ballarat's native vegetation and open up links to nearby relevant sites.

The indigenous garden ties in with educational resources available on these plants provided by COB and Federation Uni.

Special focus gardens like this are being increasingly seen in Botanic gardens as part of the goal to educate. Guides are enjoying the challenge to learn more about this new bed and its importance.

We are very appreciative of the assistance Donna Thomas has given the Guides in this quest.

Terry O'Brien, Convenor

(* Senescence (/sɪˈnɛsəns/; from Latin: senescere, meaning "to grow old", from senex) or biological aging (also spelled biological ageing) is the gradual deterioration of function characteristic of most complex lifeforms, arguably found in all biological kingdoms)

Location, location, location is also true for plants.

GUIDED TOURS:

Several Group tours have already occurred and the free guided Sunday Autumn morning tours commenced on Sunday March 18 at 11am.



Members of the Australian branch of the International Wood Collectors Society awaiting their tour. The IWCS is a non-profit Society devoted to distributing information on collecting wood

U3A GARDENS COURSE: (See ad on this page above right)

We are ready to start our extended Gardens course. It commences on Friday mornings, 10am-12pm in the Robert Clark Centre from April 20 to June 8.

All sessions have separate topics and so joining in late or missing some is not a problem. The course is open to Friends and also members of Ballarat U3A. A range of speakers (Garden staff, Guides and outside experts) will help us understand more about these gardens. Some topics:

- Who is involved in these gardens?
- Is the concept of a Botanic garden changing?
- How are the trees and statue managed and conserved?
- What impact will climate change have on these gardens?
- How are the designs developed for the bedding and conservatory displays?
- What are collections?

Just contact Susan at the office if you want to join the class.

T.O'Brien, Guides Convenor



U3A/ FBBG (Friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens) Course 2018

This extended program for those who want to learn more about Ballarat's Botanical Gardens will be available to members of U3A as well as Friends of BBG.

Through a series of presentations by a wide range of speakers and some tours and excursions it will examine the actions and thinking over time that has shaped and is shaping our BBG.

It will be held on 8 Fridays from 10 am – 12 noon from 20 April to 8 June at the Robert Clark Horticultural Centre in the Gardens.

If interested in joining this program please pass on name and contact details to Susan at the FBBG office (534 29354) or info@fbbg.org.au

Terry O'Brien, Guides' Convenor

WANTED

The Friends Committee are looking for a volunteer to take on the role of Convenor of the Western Bedders Group. Recent work involved planting the indigenous bed and work on the sensory garden. Be prepared to get your hands dirty and work with a small team.

- Requires a few hours one day per week
- Ability to liaise with the Gardens' curator and staff.

Contact Susan at the FBBG office (534 29354) or info@fbbg.org.au

Going to Mt Macedon on April 11? To find FBBG events please use the following link: <https://www.trybooking.com>

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Footprint: 44 cm L x 38 cm W (x 24 cm H)

BOTANICAL EXHIBITION CELEBRATES BURKE AND WILLS AT ART GALLERY OF BALLARAT

MENINDEE, in the far west of NSW, is desert country, hot and dry with endless horizons of red dirt.

Yet it was here, in 1860, in the midst of Burke and Wills' travails across the continent, that expedition doctor Hermann Beckler managed to find 120 plant species, now held in the National Herbarium of Victoria at the Botanical Gardens in Melbourne.

Those species — and the town in which they were found — are being celebrated in a new exhibition, Beckler's Botanical Bounty: The Flora of Menindee, at the Art Gallery of Ballarat running until May 27.

The exhibition features the works of 20 botanical artists who all took part in an eight-year project to re-create Beckler's discoveries in art.

Artist Valerie Richards, who has a studio at Mt Helen near Ballarat, admits when she first heard of the project, she was a little reluctant.

"I'm a cold-climate person, that's why I live in Ballarat, and so when I heard about Mendindee I thought, 'That's far too hot for me, hot, dry and dusty'," recalls Valerie, who moved to Mt Helen seven years ago.



Val Richards, the Friends Botanical Art group convenor at work

But seven years ago, she decided to join the artists on their trek north and was surprised to fall under the spell of the desert and its flora.

All up, Valerie took part in the group's trek to Menindee three times, going for one week every year, starting out by scouting for those 120 elusive plants, then setting up canvas in the Menindee hall to paint the fresh specimens.

"We would drive to spots where we knew some of these plants could be found and then put our noses to the ground, squatting down, taking pictures, tagging, and then taking samples back to be identified by a local botanist.

"Sometimes it was a matter of using microscopes because the detail was so fine. A burr or a hair could differentiate species."

All up the artists found about 80 of Beckler's total 120 plant species — although Valerie adds Beckler had an advantage in that he spent more time in Menindee after resigning from the Burke and Wills expedition, finding plants across seasons.

According to Art Gallery of Ballarat director Gordon Morrison, Beckler was in charge of the Victorian Exploring Expedition supply party, which remained in Menindee for some three months.

"While the VEE, better known as the Burke and Wills Expedition, ended in tragedy, the work of Dr Hermann Beckler — who is a pioneer botanical collector — has proven invaluable, and his

Why focus on Valerie Richards? The reason is because she is not only a member of the Friends but in particular because she is the Convenor of our Botanical Art Group! Well done Valerie!



Valerie Richards, *Calotis scaiosifolia*, watercolour on paper

original specimens are regarded as a national treasure," Gordon says.

"The exhibition is not just about art, but also science, history and country."

Valerie found about three of Beckler's plants, and painted seven, with her favourite the various wild grasses.

"Everyone else wanted to avoid grasses but they are brilliant, the structure and detail, the seeds are so fine, like hairs."

She believes botanical art is making a comeback.

Taking a weekly class for 2½ hours, she used mainly water colours to capture the details of plants, but also insects, butterflies, shells and lichen.

And it was while taking the classes that she learnt about the Beckler project.

"I have painted all of my life in one form or another, using many mediums, oil, pastel, pencil, charcoal and watercolour.

"The challenges of botanical art are in getting the exact image and great attention to detail, these are the things that draw me to it and keep me involved.



Some of the works currently on display at the Ballarat Art Gallery

"The range of subjects is endless, the gaining of knowledge while painting is an added extra dimension.

"With art generally, but particularly botanical art, there's a meditative quality to it. You finish a work and you're wrung out but also exhilarated at the same time. You're so focused you forget to walk around or drink."

SARAH HUDSON

© Reprinted from *The Weekly Times* March 7, 2018

The Ballarat Botanical Gardens Guides share a common interest in gardening and botanical developments.

They want to support our own Gardens. We help each other in our efforts to be informed and to be a helpful source for visitors wanting guided tours and learn more about the Gardens.

New members always welcome. We meet at 10 am (until about noon) on the fourth Tuesday of the month in the George Longley Room.

All you need is a positive attitude and willingness to share your experience. Come and see what we do!



Terry O'Brien, Guides' Convenor

FRIENDS OF THE BALLARAT BOTANICAL GARDENS COMMITTEE POSITIONS FOR 2018

In accordance with the Rules of the Association, all positions were declared vacant and nominations called prior to the AGM. There being only one nomination for each position, the following officers are declared elected to Committee for 2018:

President: Robert Selkirk

Immediate Past President: Raoul Dixon

Vice President: John King

Secretary: Susan Rattray

Treasurer: Bruce Holland

General Committee: four positions are available on the Committee and these are held by:

Elizabeth Gilfillan

Stephanie de Boer

June Cheetham

Nonnie Tennant

Convenors of the Friends' Groups are automatically on the Committee, these are:

Growing Friends: Yvonne Curbach

BotaniKids and Education: Julie Bradby

Events and Speakers: Carole Haines

Guides: Terry O'Brien

History: Lorraine Powell

Hospitality: Doff Kemp

Membership Officer: Raoul Dixon

Newsletter: Michael Bird

Western Beds: no nomination

The following Convenors are not required to attend Committee meetings; these are:

Ambassadors: Beth Dixon

Botanical Art: Valerie Richards

Engraving of Plant Labels: Joy O'Brien

Botany I - Some *Wrong* Answers:

Rhubarb: A kind of celery gone bloodshot.

Mushrooms always grow in damp places and so they look like umbrellas.

Germinate: To become a naturalized German.

The pistol of a flower is its only protection against insects.

Dew is formed on leaves when the sun shines down on them and makes them perspire.



'Garden Cuttings' by Green-Thumb

Oops. In the last edition a serious spelling error occurred. Apologies to **Rudolf Huebner**.

The Friends owe a vote of thanks to retiring Committee members **Kathleen Hobson, Helen Vincent and Bill O'Driscoll**. Kathleen will be remembered for her passion for the Garden's history. Helen's contributed her photographic and proof-reading skills for this newsletter, as well as being its editor a few years back. Bill played a major role in the co-ordination of the rejuvenation of the Western Beds.

The Friends **FREE Sunday guided tours have recommenced**. 11am outside the Conservatory! Tell your friends and relatives. Tours take about an hour.

Have you got a bit of 'spare time'? Maybe **you** should be considering becoming a Guide for the Friends, or an Ambassador, or a Growing friend, or a Western Bedder? **Costs nothing! Just time!** All organisations need a regular influx of **NEW blood**. Please give it some thought. It is often a lot of fun, and you get to meet people!

Just prior to the Begonia Festival a lot of activity was seen in and around the Gardens. Green Thumb understands that as part of the overall rejuvenation automated air conditioning and watering will be reinstated in the Conservatory.

Bike riding through the Gardens continues to be an issue despite signs prohibiting the practice at and near the gates, and verbal warnings being given. The CoB by-laws officer may be involved as a result.

We are really desperately in need of a 'work-gang boss' to lead the Western Bedders in their next project (think an organised Sergeant Schultz from '*Hogan's Heroes*' not the chain-gang overseer in '*Cool Hand Luke*!').

Till next time**Green Thumb**

10 REGIONAL BOTANIC GARDENS YOU NEED TO VISIT *:

an edited copy reprinted with permission from *Australian Geographic*, January 15, 2018

Australia's regional botanic gardens are 'living museums', not merely places of scenic beauty.

BOTANIC GARDENS CONTAIN living scientific collections and are defined by technical guidelines that distinguish them from public parklands. Australia has about 100 regional botanic gardens and they're often run by a team effort between local councils, community groups and volunteers with a passion for plants. These are our top 10:

1. Australian Arid Lands Botanic Garden: Port Augusta, SA: Established in 1993, this 250ha native garden makes good use of its Upper Spencer Gulf location, where the arid zone and marine environment meet. More: aalbg.sa.gov.au



2. North Coast Regional Botanic Garden: Coffs Harbour, NSW: Boardwalks wind through rainforest, dry sclerophyll, paperbark and mangrove habitats in this 20ha showcase of native species, as well as exotic plants, from Earth's subtropical regions. More: coffsbotanicgarden.com.au

3. Flecker Botanic: Gardens, Cairns, QLD: Flecker gardens' 8ha site, established in the late 19th century, has collections from tropical ecosystems and includes jungle plants, bamboo, local coastal flora, palms and gingers. More: cairns.qld.gov.au/cbg/gardens/discover-gardens

4. Olive Pink Botanic Garden, Alice Springs, NT: In 1956 anthropologist and Indigenous rights campaigner Olive Pink worked with Warlpiri gardeners to transform 16ha in Alice Springs into the Southern Hemisphere's first arid zone botanic garden. Opened to the public in 1985, the collection is 100 per cent natives, with more than 600 central Australian species, including 40 that are threatened or rare. More: opbg.com.au

5. Tasmanian Arboretum

Devonport, TAS: A wide variety of native and exotic trees has been planted since this garden was established in 1984, with the aim of being an international standard arboretum. Its 66ha support the world's biggest living collection of Tasmanian woody plants. More: tasmanianarboretum.org.au

6. Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens Batemans Bay, NSW:

Because its 42ha is located in Mogo State Forest, more than 75 per cent ... is natural forest. The rest is flora from a NSW South Coast region spanning the Clyde, Deua and Tuross river catchments. More: erbg.org.au

7. Geelong Botanic Gardens, VIC: Established in 1851, this heritage-listed site is Australia's fourth oldest botanic garden. It has several special collections, more than 90 per cent of which are labelled. It includes heritage roses and pelargoniums, and showcases such native groups as *Drosera* (carnivorous sundews). More: geelongaustralia.com.au/gbg

8. Tondoon Botanic Gardens, Gladstone, QLD: With an emphasis on species from the local Port Curtis region and far north Queensland, more than 3000 species – 90 per cent of which are native – are cultivated at this rolling 83ha property neighbouring Mount Biondello. More: gladstone.qld.gov.au/tondoon-botanic

9. Wollongong Botanic Garden, NSW: This 27ha property, which was opened to the public in 1968, is home to collections that include roses, succulents, palms and the Towri Bush Garden. More: wollongong.nsw.gov.au/botanicgarden

10. Hunter Region Botanic Gardens, Heatherbrae, NSW: This sprawling 133ha property is mostly preserved natural bushland. It has more than 150 understorey species interspersed beneath native forests, used by an array of fauna – including koalas, sugar gliders and wallabies. More: www.huntergardens.org.au



Shannon Verhagen

(* Whilst I cannot claim to have visited more than a couple of these gardens, Ballarat and Melbourne BGs must have missed a berth by just a whisker! Editor)



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REACHING MORE PEOPLE, EVERYWHERE

Have you been to our website www.fbbg.org.au/? Last year 7,583 visited and this year we have already had over 10,000 visitors! Information about the gardens, groups, events and *Wellingtonia* are all available online.

With numbers growing each year, we are further developing our internet profile, with the launch of our Facebook page:

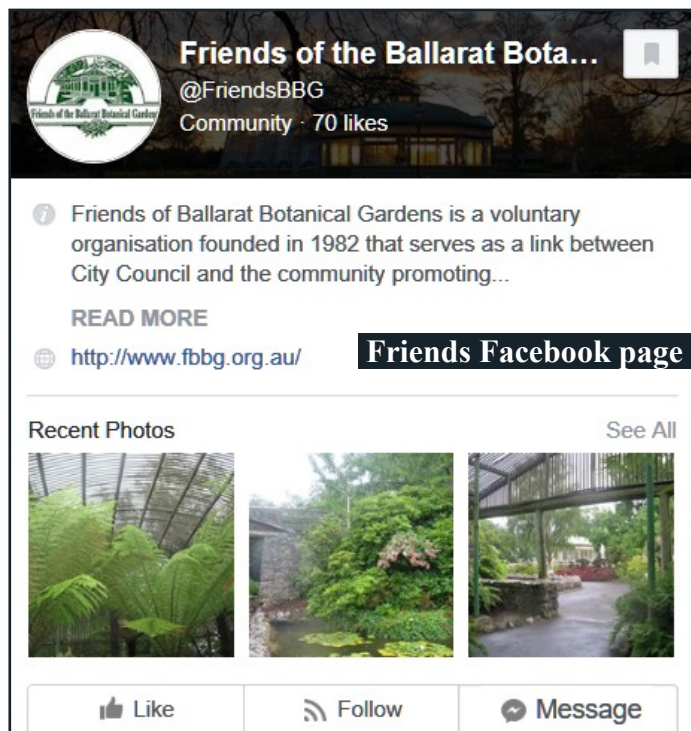
<https://www.facebook.com/FriendsBBG/>

Botanikids already have a page

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

letting people know about their events. Julie Bradby also posts some wonderful pictures and videos of their wide ranging activities and items of interest to children, parents and grandparents.

As our page grows it will have many aspects. Initially it will operate as an interactive message board, with information about our upcoming events and links to other groups and pages you may find of interest.



Friends Facebook page

We will also be posting photos, videos and updates about *Friends'* activities and issues. The page will also function as a forum for your comments.

Growing our membership and supporters is vital to our ability to advocate, for those who care about our Botanical Gardens and their future use.

Ongoing projects, such as the *Gatekeepers Cottage*, upcoming exhibitions, various opportunities and seasonal photos of the gardens will be posted.

So come and have a look, tell your friends and relatives and please 'like' us on *Facebook*.

Susan Pilbeam



Need help getting started with 'social media' or just computer technology itself?

The *Ballarat Technology Hub* located in the Ballarat Library is an excellent place to start!

Free one-on-one or small group classes on a wide range of 'social media' applications.

178 Doveton Street
North, Ballarat, Victoria
3350

(03) 5338 6850

Friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens Information 2018

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

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

Tel. George Longley Building 03 5342 9354

COMMITTEE MEETING TIMES 2018

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 - 3 pm during school terms.

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

Guiding Friends - 4th Tuesday each month 10 am.

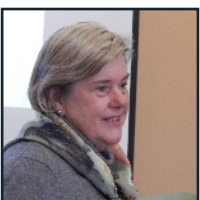
History Group - 1st Tuesday each month 4 pm. **Educating Friends** - 2nd Tuesday each month 10 am

Plant Labelling - as required.

FRIENDS' COMING EVENTS - 2018



EXCURSION - WEDNESDAY, (8am-5pm) 11 APRIL 2018. Visit *Tugurium* - Stephen Ryan's Private Garden and also his Nursery - *Dicksonia Rare Plants*. Stephen (PICTURED LEFT) will walk and talk us through his fabulous Mount Macedon garden. Then a visit to *Ard Choille* heritage garden, Woodend. Tickets available at Trybooking or at George Longley Building until Tuesday, 3 April at 2pm. \$48, BYO picnic lunch.



GENERAL MEETING - 10am 17 MAY, 2018: Our member Elizabeth Gilfillan is our Guest Speaker. Elizabeth (PICTURED LEFT) will talk to us on her trip overseas. "JOURNEY TO AND THE 6th GLOBAL CONGRESS BOTANIC GARDENS IN GENEVA, 2017." Elizabeth will include her visit to other places as well as the interesting Global Congress.

GENERAL MEETING - 10am 23 AUGUST, 2018: Kate Toll will be our Guest Speaker. Kate has an interesting talk on the beautiful homestead - **MOUNT MITCHELL** a stunning historic homestead within the renowned Pyrenees wine region of Victoria. The property established in 1838 captures early Victorian Rural History. Its beautiful formal gardens cover an area of ten acres and include the kitchen garden, orchard, nut lawn, parterre rose garden, extensive hedged rooms and park like spaces.



EXCURSION - OCTOBER 2018 (Date to be confirmed): Following on from Kate's talk, this excursion will be to visit **MOUNT MITCHELL** (PICTURED LEFT). Kate will take us on an historic tour of the gardens as mentioned above and the restored outbuildings.

More details on this visit and other information will be in the *Winter Wellingtonia*.



CHRISTMAS NIBBLES AND DRINKS - 22 NOVEMBER 2018.



Carole Haines, Events Convenor

This newsletter is produced and distributed with the generous financial assistance of the City of Ballarat.



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Disclaimer: The views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens or those of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens. Neither the Friends nor the Ballarat Botanical Gardens accepts responsibility for statements made or opinions expressed, although every effort will be made to publish reliable and accurate information.

Contributions for Autumn Wellingtonia 2018 are due by mid March please. Michael Bird, Editor.

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