

Wellingtonia

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FRIENDS NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2010



PRESIDENT'S REPORT – JOAN GARNER

The Friends have certainly had a very busy start to 2010. We had decided to try an evening meeting for our A.G.M. and it was well attended but members of the Gardens' staff were missed. The Committee has therefore decided to go back to 10am for all our General Meetings in the future.

Ann Watson and Lorraine Powell were thanked for their time on the Committee. The Guides are now led by Beth and Raoul Dixon with Raoul the representative on the Committee. Kathleen Hobson is the representative of the History Group and we welcome Kaye Crawford as a Committee member. Other positions are unchanged.

Life membership was awarded to Judith Bailey. Judith has taken part in every aspect of the Friends activities and has been a member since incorporation. She certainly is a worthy recipient.

The Begonia Festival weekend was indeed memorable. The heavens opened and we had the most marvellous three days of rain to gladden the hearts of all gardeners. No doubt, however, the conditions affected the attendance but many braved the elements and the feedback was very positive regarding the format of the Festival. The Gardens and the Begonias were just outstanding and the highlight was having 8 of the Stoddart Statues back on their pedestals in the Gardens. What a joy to see them back where they belong and as I write the other four are also being returned. The staff is to be congratulated for creating such excellence for the Festival.



On the 9th March (still raining and blowing a gale) the Friends met at the Old Cemetery for a ceremony to celebrate the unveiling of the refurbished grave of benefactor, Thomas Stoddart. His gift to the City was the 12 Carrara marble statues in 1888 and over the years his grave had fallen into disrepair. Joining us were the Mayor, Cr Judy Verlin, Cr Samantha McIntosh, members of The Ballarat Foundation which funded the project and representatives of organisations which had lent support. The project was the brainchild of Jenny Burrell with the help of the History Group and made possible by The Ballarat Foundation's grant. With the background sound of the bagpipes, with wind and rain outside, Jenny delivered a memorable comprehensive address concerning the background to the gift in the context of Ballarat in the 1880s. This was indeed a most important event not only for the Friends but also for the City of Ballarat.



Gardens Curator Peter Marquand, Mayor Judy Verlin, Jenny Burrell, Chair of The Ballarat Foundation James Cogblan at the Ballarat Old Cemetery, 9th March 2010.

At left: Coordinator of the Robert Clark Centre and Nursery, Sue Rbook, at the orientation for the Conservatory volunteers, Thursday 4th March 2010.

President 's Report continued

In her "Events" report Carole has written about our lovely trip to the Bendigo Gardens and I want to thank Jane Cleary of the Bendigo Friends and her members for their hospitality and her informative tour of the Gardens.

I am pleased to say that the formation of our first Botanical Art group has proved to be a most successful project and we hope to display some of the work of the participants later.

We now have six gardens for our "Friends of the Gardens" weekend on October 23rd and 24th. We would like to have at least another two. Please let me know if you would like to take part, the event is not open to the public, just our members and their friends. Our gardens have not been opened before, so, if you love your garden and would like to share it, please ring me on 5332 6461.

HISTORY GROUP REPORT

Our history group has been very busy — heads down, tails up delving and shelving.

The library is very nearly in a useable state. Well done to the many willing hands and to the many generous donors.

The heritage trees brochure is being worked on and will be ready for George Longley Day.

It was a very wet unveiling of the newly refurbished Thomas Stoddart grave at the Ballarat Old Cemetery. The piper piped damply in the Scotch mist and umbrellas were unfurled.

Large numbers turned up to acknowledge Stoddart's generous gift to our city.

The research into this project was ably supported by Jenny Burrell's fine speech which will be kept in our archive and perhaps published at a later date.

A wreath was also laid — thank you to Kathleen Hobson.

Thank you to Carole Haines and crew for the ready cuppa at the end of the morning.

A large proportion of the assembled returned to join us including several ex-mayors, councillors, members of The Ballarat Foundation and of course us.

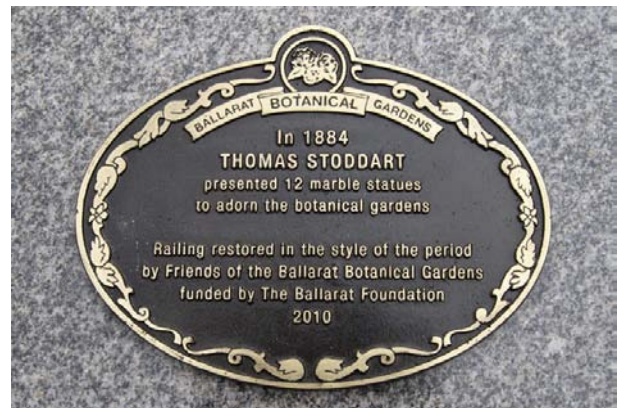
Lorraine Powell Convenor



The unveiling of the refurbished grave of Thomas Stoddart took place on Tuesday the 9th of March at 10.00am at the Ballarat Old Cemetery. About 40 invited guests, including Mayor Judy Verlin, gathered in the rotunda to shelter from the cold and the rain to the strains of the bagpipes. President Joan Garner welcomed the guests

and introduced Jenny Burrell who gave an address on the life of Thomas Stoddart and the significance of his gift of the statue collection to the Ballarat Botanical Gardens in 1884. That first generous act began the movement to make Ballarat a "City of Statues" whose only rival was Edinburgh in Stoddart's home country of Scotland. Only two years later, in 1886, Thomas Stoddart was one of three trustees appointed to administer the bequest of James Russell Thomson which resulted in the addition of six more magnificent marble statues and the Statuary House which has become the icon of the Gardens adopted for the Friends logo.

During a break in the weather John Garner and Jenny Burrell lifted the covering of the flag of St Andrews off the grave to reveal the restored railing (which had been missing), the gilt lettering and the new plaque. Lorraine Powell, Convenor of the Friends History Group, and Kathleen Hobson, Vice-President of the Friends and a member of the History Group, then placed a wreath of flowers they had made from the Gardens. It was pleasing to see so many representatives of the organisations who supported our submission to The Ballarat Foundation for funding of the project. Afterwards refreshments were enjoyed in the George Longley Building. It was remarkable timing, to hold this ceremony of respect to a fine gentleman just seven days after the first eight Stoddart statues were returned to their pedestals out in the Gardens after being indoors for the past eight years.



The Friends' plaque on the refurbished grave

JOHN'S JOTTINGS

The Druids' Oaks – We have two "Druids' Oaks" in the Gardens, both English Oaks (*Quercus robur*). They were planted 100 years apart, the first in 1870 with the founding of local Druid Lodges and the second in 1970 planted by Bro. Croft as a centenary commemoration. The relevance of Oak trees relates to the ancient traditions of the original Druids who met in groves of Oak trees, also to the root of thereof - (Greek – drus). It is believed that the 1870 tree came from Melbourne, the acorn from England. The Druid Friendly Society was founded in England in 1781. The first Australian lodge was set up by Bro. Hymen and the first Melbourne Lodge by Bro. Barnard in 1861. Rapid expansion of the Order followed, particularly in rural and gold mining areas. The objectives of the Society were to provide sickness and funeral benefits, benevolence and charity work particularly aimed at assisting those who had fallen on hard times. In Ballarat there were two Lodges, the Ancient Britain and the Royal Oak, both of which have now ceased activities, support from younger people not forthcoming over the past 20 years. The associated Friendly Society was absorbed into another Health Fund.

EVENTS & SEMINARS REPORT

Over 40 members and friends gathered to hear Kevin Walsh, from Bendigo Botanic Gardens talk about the impressive future plans for these Gardens. Everyone enjoyed the information about the design, and appreciated the use of photos to assist Kevin's talk.



Guest Speaker Kevin Walsh, with Curator Peter Marquand and Friends Mike Sorrell and Raoul Dixon

Tour of the Gardens and Basket Tea with the Friends of Minerva – Mechanics' Institute.

This afternoon and evening was well attended with many FBBG members and Minerva Members enjoying a pleasant social time together. Hopefully our members will visit the Mechanics Institute when renovations are completed.

Restoration ceremony at the grave of Thomas Stoddart - 9th March, 2010.

This morning was a great success with 45 members, Friends, Mayor and Councillors of the City of Ballarat attending the ceremony and 27 enjoying morning tea back at the George Longley Building.

Visit to the Bendigo Botanic Gardens - Thursday 25th March 2010.

On arriving in Bendigo we visited an ex-FBBG member Sally Thompson, at the Bendigo Pottery Complex.

Members thoroughly enjoyed the visit to the Bendigo Botanic Gardens and we were delighted to see some of the future plans are well under way. The Friends welcomed us with a beautiful morning tea and their enthusiasm about the new plans was great to see. We wish them well over the next few years and hope to make a return visit in a year or two.

We then travelled to the Goldfields Revegetation Native Plants Nursery where many couldn't resist buying many of their wonderful and unusual Native Plants.

Carole Haines Convenor

At right: Robert and Carole Haines in their garden 'Avalon', on the long weekend in March for the Open Gardens Scheme

GROWING FRIENDS' REPORT

While Carolyn has been away the Growing Friends have continued to make good sales, especially from the double-decker trolley which is proving to be a 'money tree'. During the Begonia Festival sales were very strong. Thanks to those who helped during that busy weekend. Welcome to the new members who have joined our group.

ENGRAVING REPORT – ADELE THOMAS

There is some good news in this area as Mike Sorrell is beginning to learn the engraving computer program and the tricks of the engraver. It will be great to have someone else who can use this equipment and we are having some laughs as we work our way through the process of mastering this equipment.

GUIDING FRIENDS' REPORT

The Guiding Friends have been busy so far this year with four booked tours of our beautiful gardens, plus two tours of the Statues each day during the Begonia Festival. We have planned for a Statues tour for April 18th, promoting it in the Australian, Age and local papers. Our group is busy updating information, and training. A PowerPoint presentation is a project we hope to get together for training, to use in inclement weather with tour groups, and to promote our outstanding Gardens. Our numbers are a bit depleted, with illness, operations and the usual time away so we would welcome anyone interested in guiding. It is interesting to learn more about every aspect of our gardens.

Beth & Raoul Dixon - Convenors



Beth Dixon (centre) tour guide for picnic tea with Friends of Minerva, 28th February 2010



EDUCATING FRIENDS' REPORT

OUR PLANS for 2010

We are looking forward to an exciting year ahead.

SCHOOL LINKS

We are planning a teachers information session where we hope to encourage a two-way conversation between the teachers and ourselves on the amazing learning opportunities of our gardens for their educational programs.

HELP US WITH OUR COLLECTIVE BRAINSTORM ON CHILDREN, IMAGINATIVE PLAY AND GARDENS.

We are in gathering mode at the moment looking out for readings, articles and ideas on children and gardens. So please, if you have any thing to add to our collective brainstorm please forward on our website, give us a call or drop us a line. We are in the early stages of thinking about a Children's Garden for Ballarat and interesting family activities to do together when visiting the gardens. As a group we are very concerned about the lack of family backyard space and time allowing children to simply play around in a garden setting. It is with this fact of modern life in mind that we feel we can support, resource, and encourage families to explore, imagine, wonder and play in the gardens. We are working on small kits, maps and 'treasure hunts' that parents can access that could enhance their family visit to the Gardens. Keeping it simple and easy to administer. Any ideas would be gratefully received.



*Max and Henry, Julie's grandsons,
using teapots in 'Nanny's' spring garden*

A SPRING FAMILY GARDEN EVENT.

We will run a potting a plant event, piggy backing on one of the Lake Wendouree Farmers Market day. We'll keep you posted. HELP? We are looking out for an article or book called "Lost Child in the Woods: Saving our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder." [Sounds interesting and sad doesn't it?]

MORE PEOPLE NEEDED!!!

As a small group we are always very keen for new members to add to our throng!

Julie Bradby Convenor

GARDENS REPORT

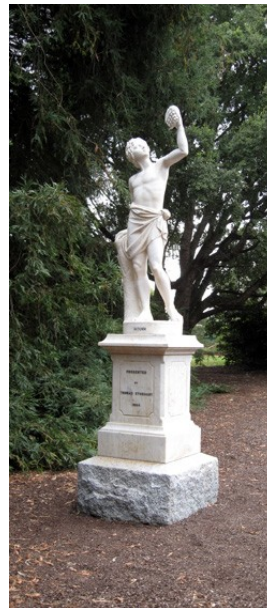
Currently gardens staff are removing the summer display in preparation for the planting of the spring display. The begonia display closes on the 26th of April with the conservatory reopening later that week after installation of the chrysanthemum display. Coming up in the Conservatory will be the Craft Council of Ballarat's exhibition and sale which runs from the 7th to the 14th of June.

It was good to see people taking advantage of the pleasant weather over the Easter weekend, a number of events were held in the precinct including two car rallies and a family reunion. It was also good to see 35mm of rain fall on Easter Tuesday night, hopefully the autumn rains will continue.

Friday the 9th of April will see the return of the final four Stoddart Statues to their original positions in the gardens. The pedestals for Flora Farnese, Leda, Mercury and Hercules were removed for storage a number of years ago and have recently been reinstalled. Last month saw the return of eight of the Stoddart statues in time for the Begonia weekend. Feedback from garden visitors regarding the statues return has been very positive.

Congratulations to the friends on the recent completion of restoration works on the grave of Thomas Stoddart. The ceremony at the old Cemetery on the 9th of March proved to be a memorable occasion with the addition of bagpipes and suitable highland weather.

Peter Marquand Curator



Autumn and Flora back into the gardens

Thomas Stoddart
1828 – 1905
Ballarat Botanical Gardens
Benefactor



BOTANICAL ART CLASSES

The five week workshop with Marg. Castle is almost completed. Participants have had wonderful sessions.

It is anticipated that the group who now call themselves "BAGS" will meet each Monday for a painting day from 10-4 pm. This will take the form of an informal "get together" to enjoy and share painting.



"Crabapples", a work-in-progress by Bruce Sidebottom, workshop participant

MEETING TIMES FOR 2010

Meetings are held in the George Longley Building at the rear of the Robert Clark Centre.

Committee - 3rd Tuesday each month at 4.00pm.

Growing Friends - Tuesday each month 1.00-4.00pm, 2nd Sunday each month 1.00-4.00pm.

Plant Sales At the above times and daily from the trolley outside the Robert Clark Conservatory.

Guiding Friends - as required

History Group - 1st Tuesday each month 4.30pm.

Educating Friends - 1st Tuesday each month, late morning 11.30am, please bring lunch.

Plant labelling - as required.

Botanical Artists ("BAGS") – Mondays 10.00-4.00pm.

WELLINGTONIA

Group convenor reports, photos and items of interest for 2010 to be sent to the Editor of the newsletter Helen Vincent by email: handh@ncable.net.au

Closing dates for 2010:

Winter Monday 5th July,

Spring Monday 4th October,

Summer Monday 6th December.

● *A red dot on your newsletter indicates that your membership fee was due on 01/01/2010. Please do not be concerned if you have renewed your membership in the last week as the records take a little time to reach those who wield the red dots.*

N.B. Please show your current membership card to obtain discounts on plants from the nursery and the trolley, and also on gifts and coffee from the conservatory shop :-)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR 2010

MAY - Thursday 20th May at 10.00am

(Please note the time)

GENERAL MEETING – Guest speaker is -

Attila Kapitany who will illustrate with pictures and talk to us about his trip of exploration around Australia, looking for Australian succulents. He has written an excellent book about these (he found many) and he will be bringing this book as well as a few plants for us to see.

Attila has written at least eight books and is a very enthusiastic collector of succulents and cacti. His talks are very entertaining so I am sure everyone will enjoy the morning. Attila also has a very interesting garden and maybe we can follow his talk with a visit in the future if members are interested.

JUNE – Sat 5th and Sun 6th with Stephanie Goss

BOTANICAL ART WEEKEND WORKSHOP

For registration - contact Elizabeth Gilfillan on 5334 7085

AUGUST – Thursday 19th at 10.00am

GENERAL MEETING – Guest speaker is -

Lynsey Poore. Lynsey is Secretary of the Friends of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens and has travelled extensively around the world. She will be giving us an insight into places she has visited.

Please keep this date free.

OCTOBER – Thursday 14th at 4.00pm

Help us celebrate **GEORGE LONGLEY DAY.**

Members are extended an invitation to attend and remember our first Curator, George Longley. Enjoy nibbles and drinks in the George Longley Building.

Saturday 23rd and Sunday 24th October

Members are invited to visit **OPEN GARDENS** owned by members. Morning and afternoon tea to be included at some gardens.

Wednesday 27th October – Launch event for

BALLARAT GARDENS IN SPRING which will be held **28th Oct to 3rd November** to take in Melbourne Cup Day and Botanical Art Exhibition in the Robert Clark Conservatory.

Thursday 28th October – THE SPRING LUNCHEON

Numbers limited to 60 at RCC. Speakers will be -

Rick Eckersley, Carolyn Blackman and Richard Barley.

NOVEMBER Thursday 18th at 6.00pm

CHRISTMAS BARBECUE - invitation to members and their friends to attend a relaxing evening in the Gardens at the Robert Clark Centre.

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