

Wellingtonia

Robert Clark Conservatory 5320 5135 PO Box 33W Ballarat West Vic 3350
ABN 32 346 573 092 ACN 346573 fbbg@ncable.net.au www.fbbg.org.au



FRIENDS NEWSLETTER WINTER 2010



PRESIDENT'S REPORT – JOAN GARNER

This autumn has been quite spectacular in the Gardens and the progressive changes in colour of our deciduous trees have been an absolute joy. The return of all the Stoddart statues has been a strong talking point. The absence of these statues has made us realise the importance of their place in the Gardens. Congratulations once again to the staff on maintaining the gardens at such a high level and also for the new display in the Conservatory.

Our special morning tea in May, a social event for members, was well attended and having Peter Marquand and members of the staff present to answer questions about the Gardens was most appreciated.

Attila Kapitany was a very popular guest speaker at our May General Meeting. He came stocked with a large collection of plants for sale, also his books.

We are delighted that the Buninyong Botanic Gardens have now become incorporated and we look forward to maintaining a strong relationship with the Group, especially as they are nearing the 150th anniversary.

We had 9 members attend the Australian Friends of Botanic Gardens Conference in Mildura recently and you will see a report on that elsewhere in this Newsletter.

We congratulate our first Life Member, Llew Williams and his wife Dorothy on their 65th Wedding Anniversary, an incredible achievement for a very special couple.



Llew & Dorothy Williams on their 65th wedding anniversary

It is with much sadness that we record the passing of Wallace Cochran. Wal became our treasurer in 1992 and remained in this position for 10 years. His guidance and common sense over the years was invaluable to the Committee. We have all lost a very special friend. Our sincere sympathy goes to Shirley and her family. *Below: Wallace Cochran*



HISTORY GROUP REPORT



History Friends Kathleen Hobson & Kaye Crawford archiving material for the Begonia Festival

The History Group continues its work in preparing brochures and booklets of significant trees, personalities associated with the Gardens, and its structures past and present. Jenny Burrell is preparing a special brochure of the Stoddart statues and her presentation to the Heritage and Cultural Award Committee of Sustainable Cities on the restoration of Stoddart's grave has reached the finals. Work has commenced in archiving material associated with the Begonia Festival previously stored in the Council's repository. PowerPoint presentations are being developed and Lorraine Powell has delivered one such on the Garden History to the Art Gallery Guides. The Memorandum of Understanding between organisations in Ballarat holding archival material (of which we are a member) has been recognised by Blue Cross in Canberra as of National significance.

JOHN'S JOTTINGS

Sister Elizabeth (Betty) Johnson Rose Garden

At the southern end of the central Ballarat Botanical Gardens is the Betty Johnson Rose Garden in the shape of a cross. Betty Johnson was born in Ballarat, and trained at the (then) Ballarat Base Hospital from 1939 to 1942 and carried on her training as a Midwife. Subsequently she travelled to England and studied at the Great Ormond St. Hospital in London. She had special training concerning the various milk formulae for problems of infant feeding at the time. This was particularly important on her return to Ballarat when she became Sister in Charge at the Ballarat Base hospital paediatric ward dealing with normal paediatric problems and also the difficulties involved with rearing aboriginal and disadvantaged children. These children were often admitted to the ward to get them properly organised. Subsequently she worked with Janet Low in the Children's Protection Society, and her work in this field was commemorated by the establishment of the Rose Garden recognising her particular passion for roses.



ENGRAVING REPORT

Engraving activities are quiet at present.

Adele Thomas

GROWING FRIENDS REPORT

A number of new members have recently joined the Growing Friends, swelling our number to twelve. Many hands make light work, and also make it more interesting and enjoyable!

The Ballarat East Mens' Shed have built and delivered a number of new plant benches for both the growing and sales areas. With the plants raised off the ground OH&S issues in our work area have improved considerably. Plant sales have continued to be very encouraging, and should increase with better access and display in the warmer months.

Carolyn Pinkowski

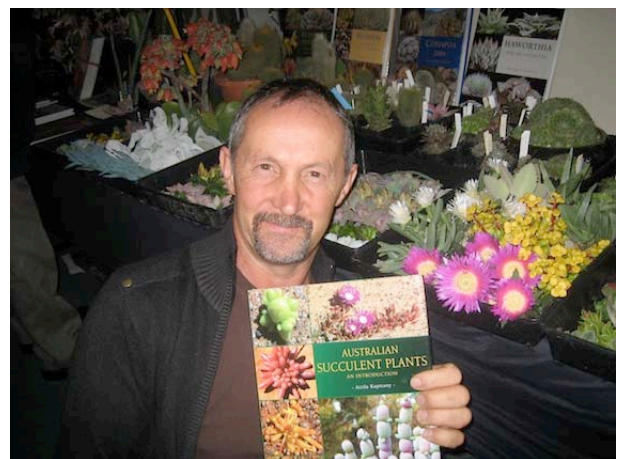
EVENTS & SEMINARS REPORT

The General Meeting on May 20th was well attended by Members, friends and members of the garden staff. Our Guest Speaker, Attila Kapitany entertained us with his wonderful knowledge of succulents and succulent plants. He introduced us to many new plants with his photos and many people were able to purchase some treasures from a selection of cacti, succulents and books. Everyone was able to speak to Attila about his plants during a late morning tea. Friends purchased a book on Haworthias to add to our great library collection.

GENERAL MEETING – Thursday 19th August, 2010.

We are very lucky we have Lynsey Poore as our Guest Speaker for August.

Lynsey visits many groups speaking on her travels to countries around the World. This month Lynsey will give an illustrated talk on her visit to the beautiful gardens of Paris and the wonderful display of flowers she was privileged to see. Look forward to seeing members and friends at the meeting.



Attila Kapitany with succulent plants and book

MILDURA CONFERENCE

Serious topics were interspersed with humour at the Conference held at the Australian Inland Botanic Gardens on the other side of the river. Trivia questions resulted in the Adelaide contingent showing off their knowledge but we still don't know the answers to several of the questions we failed to answer properly!

A couple of new terms have entered the lexicon: "floor-robe" is the latest explanation describing the teen-age technique of stuff everywhere on the floor: this occurs when some water wise plants (such as rosemary and lavender) curl up leaves to prevent water loss. "Baby bear's porridge" was a vivid illustration of a scientific approach to water usage in the garden. Not too much and not too little: just right!

There were significant messages that resulted from very interesting speeches and presentations:

- Don't keep talking about potential: DO things! : "Gardens will thrive, not just survive" if groups get their members really involved and manage them.
- Use the strengths and attributes of your members.
- Incorporate the talent in your area. Gardens keep people connected.
- Use human resources wherever they may be e.g. Port Augusta has a Friend in Germany who manages their web page!
- Learn from the past.
- Set your minds to do something and do it. Have a plan of action with clear directions.
- Learn to appease councils and manage interest groups!

Some interesting facts were presented to us: the geology of the Murray Darling Basin and how it is reflected in the vegetation. The area was known as a "big inland sea" The Murray is relatively recent. The Murrumbidgee and Lachlan are much older. A huge lake discharged its water into the Wimmera River which entered the sea along what is now the Glenelg long before the Murray carved its course through the layers of soil.

Very recent research, unknown to students in the 1960s, i.e. Julie and Susan, has demonstrated that 2.5 million years ago there was volcanic activity which produced ash, but not volcanic cones. This is now mined as bentonite which is useful for sealing leaking dams!

The belief that mallee vegetation (bulokes) only regenerates after heavy rain was proved to be false. The reason for the failure of regeneration was related to the number of rabbits and kangaroos in a certain area: they attack the young plants and hence they do not flourish. Graphs showing the effects of calicivirus on rabbit numbers and regeneration were fascinating.

Two speakers gave technical information about drip irrigation, both urban and rural: how best to lay pipes, how

to deal with blockages and how to service the systems. One concentrated on Moisture monitoring or "EnviroSMART" and the use of that technology. A light hearted presentation showed how gardeners can interpret plant features indicative of their water use requirements.

A study in Adelaide, based on a questionnaire sent to Friends across the country, shows that volunteers on the whole were very satisfied with their activities at their gardens. Several commented that volunteering was an effective way to meet new people when they themselves were new to a community and positive comments were made about emotional health, social interaction and friendships.

The talk about water management in the Murray Darling opened our eyes to the huge human impact the government's proposals about water will have on the communities that live along the rivers. The speaker pointed out that so much food is dependent on irrigation and showed that there was real concern about the future viability of the region.

Presentations from several Garden Groups were informative and gave us ideas for our gardens: a children's garden, a fairy party to encourage children to come to the gardens, a garden party for adults, to name just a few.

It was interesting to see that the capital city delegates were not in the least enthusiastic about the idea of amalgamating Guides and Friends at a conference. They don't understand how provincial gardens' Friends have to be multi-skilled because of the smaller numbers of Friends. Imagine if our guides were a separate group from the Friends as a whole!

We ate well, saw birds and vegetation (especially Succulent Plants) met lovely people and generally had a wonderful time.

Those who attended included Bruce Holland, Joan and John Garner, Elizabeth and Tim Gilfillan, Julia Richardson, Susan Patterson, Lyn Gorman and Janet Dale.

Susan Patterson & Julia Richardson



L-R: Elizabeth Gilfillan, Joan Garner, Lyn Gorman, Bruce Holland, Janet Dale, Julia Richardson, Susan Patterson and John Garner

GARDENS REPORT

Garden staff have been busy over the last month picking up leaves in the gardens, maintaining garden beds and preparing the eastern section of the cross rose bed for replanting. Within the next few weeks they will commence rose pruning.

We expect the Morey gate repairs to be completed within the next couple of weeks. The southern gate post was extensively damaged in July 2009 and removed in December 2009. A pattern of the post panels was made to allow the recasting of damaged sections, the preparation of the pattern and recasting has been a time-intensive process. All undamaged sections of the post will be reused; repair works will also include painting.

With the recent removal of the damaged wishing well we plan to commence the master plan realignment of the footpaths around the statue of Hercules. Proposed works will include reducing of the large scoria area, installation of new footpath kerbing, irrigation, seating and extensions to the lawn area. Other works programmed to commence early in the new financial year include the building of short sections of picket fencing beside the bluestone gate posts as per the master plan and upgrading of power and water in the North Gardens.

By now you will have heard of the vandalism at the Castlemaine Botanic gardens, it is hard to comprehend what satisfaction people get out of the senseless destruction of a historic community asset. The gardens at Castlemaine are currently undergoing a major upgrade after receiving a Government grant.

The cultural heritage significance of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens has been recently assessed by Heritage Victoria and has been recommended to be added to the Heritage register. Notification of that recommendation was published in the Herald Sun newspaper on Friday the 18th of June. More information is available from the web site of Heritage Victoria.

<http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/places/heritage/70192>

Peter Marquand – Curator

GUIDING FRIENDS' REPORT

The guides continue to meet on the 4th Tuesday of each month at 10 a.m. New members are very welcome to join us. We have had one tour since the last newsletter and have 2 bookings for Spring. Our aim is to continue working on our knowledge and to ensure that all our trees are appropriately labelled. We will meet again in August.

Beth & Raoul Dixon - Convenors

EDUCATING FRIENDS' REPORT

The small but enthusiastic group have been busily collecting ideas on how we can make family visits to the Gardens a

better and more fulfilling experience. This will mean providing small kits or ideas for families to use while they are visiting the gardens. These can be collected at the Conservatory and will be low maintenance but full of many ideas for families to do together. Ideas so far are nature trails, scavenger hunts, thematic nature play and games. It is intended these will be ready by the summer.

For a more long term project we are also collecting concepts and ideas on how various Botanical Gardens in Australia and world wide have catered for children in their gardens, including Children's Gardens

If you visit gardens in the next few months please take images that you think would be useful to give us inspiration.

Our Spring Children's Event is called "Jellypots." We will conduct this event in the Gardens on Saturday the 30th October, near the adventure playground, from 10.30 to 1pm. Please come along and bring the children in your life that you think would enjoy potting up a small plant that actually looks like jelly beans! May even be some real jelly beans to munch on to give us energy!

Here is an idea to do in the garden at home in the winter school holidays with the "Grandies" or with your own children. Bird feeders are simple for kids to make.

Bird watching is a welcome way to pass cold winter days. Attract birds to your yard with a homemade pine cone bird feeder. Hang it near a window so you can watch birds from inside. The birds will be grateful for food in the harsh winter months, and kids will be thankful for the creative activity and brush with nature while they are stuck inside.

Choosing Pine Cones

1. Any size or variety of pine cones work for bird feeders. Choose pine cones that are dry and hard, not soft and green. Look for the largest pine cone you can find and tie a length of twine or ribbon around the top.

2. Use smaller pine cones by tying several together. Cut a 1-foot length of floral wire. Wrap one end of the wire around the pointed end of a 2- to 3-inch pine cone. Wrap the wire around the end of two more pine cones to form a bundle. Loop twine through the wire and make a loop to hang them with.

Simple Seed Mixture Place the pine cone on a paper plate to contain some of the mess. Smear lard onto the cone or cones. Use plenty of lard to coat them well. Pour a variety of birdseed onto the paper plate. Roll the pine cone in the seeds so they coat the cone completely. Hang outside in a tree where birds can easily access it.

There will be no meeting in July . Next meeting is first Tuesday in August, George Longley Building 11.30 am, bring some lunch and we'll pop the kettle on for a cuppa! All welcome. We really mean it. More the merrier.



Julie Bradby – Convenor

FBBG FOUNDERS

The Friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens was formed in 1982 with fewer than 20 members who met in the Trench Room at the Ballarat Town Hall. Founding members who are no longer with us were Tom Beaumont, Jack Chisholm, Ina Clamp, Heather Dick, J. May, James Oddie, Mary Redman, Enid & Frank Rogers, Marian & Roy Mosman and Jessie Scott. From the beginning there was a strong focus on recording the history of the gardens. One of their first tasks was to name every tree. The group produced a pamphlet and arranged for Geoff Nott from 3BA to record a self-guided tape for a tour of the Gardens. That was a great achievement for a beginning group. Today our membership is more than 200.



*Founders of FBBG at the Robert Clark Centre, 13 April 2010
L-R Eleanor Chisholm, Eileen Lawrie, Bob Whitehead, Pat Fiskien (early member before incorporation) and Winston Loveland. Absent: Ian Smith*

SEANA - BUNINYONG GARDENS

About 90 members of the South East Australian Naturalists' Association attended their conference in Ballarat in March 2010 and excursions to various locations were run each day. Lorraine Powell, Convenor of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens History Group was the tour guide for the Buninyong Botanic Gardens excursion. Here is a report written by Val Hocking. Despite being a long term Ballarat resident, this is the first time I have visited these scenic gardens. They were first established in 1861 and were planned in two sections totalling 10 acres. Part two is mainly open space with the "Gong" swamp area now dry. At the end is an early 19th C dry stone wall. There are 4 heritage trees, all Acer species, one being *Acer platanoides* "Red Norway Maple" and another *A. opalus* "Italian Maple". The great dividing trail also goes through this area.

The main gardens have many trees, a pleasing duck pond and bridge, an Avenue of Honour at the entrance and an attractive and recently restored rotunda that was first built in 1901. At the side is a sunken walled garden area that was originally the swimming pool. The pool was built in the

1870s and was fed by nearby springs. This area has recently been neatly renovated under the Work for the Dole scheme. Notes about the early Curator's duties were detailed - he had to look after the ponds, the baths and the animals, as well as the gardens and teach the children to swim! In another area there is a brick stove where the Curator and his family boiled water and sold food to picnickers as a fundraising exercise. After thanking our volunteer guide we headed up Mount Buninyong - Height 745m. A wedge-tailed eagle flew beside us for a while as we ascended giving a great view. Some of the group climbed the tower at the top, being rewarded with great views of Ballarat and distant hills. The fire at Mt Cole area could also be seen. Another surprise was seeing a koala sleeping in the trunk of a tree in the car park area.

BUNINYONG 150TH ANNIVERSARY



Tour guide Lorraine Powell with SEANA conference members at the Buninyong Botanic Gardens, March 2010

The Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens auspice the group of people who have come together to formulate proposals for the celebration of the 150th Anniversary of the Buninyong Botanic Gardens. The main commemorative event, entitled "**Leaving a Legacy**", will be celebrated on the weekend of the 29th and 30th of October 2011. Think food, music and an appreciation of the long history of these pleasure gardens. Please reserve this time to be part of the festivities. For more information about the Buninyong Botanic Gardens please visit www.fbbg.org.au/buni150.html. The Buninyong Group have voted to become an incorporated body in their own right.

BOTANICAL ART CLASSES

The group has made an exciting and challenging beginning, under Margaret Castle's fine tuition, through 5 full day sessions of fun and hard work. The Monday painting days are well attended, everyone practising their techniques, with subjects from this glorious autumn.

We are looking forward to a visit to Marg's Studio in Newham. The next teaching workshop will be October 2nd & 3rd, with Stephanie Goss, who is ranked in the 20 most

acclaimed Botanical Artists of the World.

The cost is \$185 for 2 days. A minimum of 6 will be needed for this weekend. New members always welcome.

Bookings for the workshop and enquiries to:-

Elizabeth Gilfillan 53347085

thegilfillans@gmail.com

BALLARAT GARDENS IN SPRING

27th October – 2nd November 2010. Featuring-
Botanical Art exhibition - Margaret Castle Artist

Eleven gardens open for viewing

Special Children's event Saturday 30th October

Speakers Luncheon theme "New Directions" Thurs.28th Oct.

Bookings and Enquiries to :-

Elizabeth Gilfillan (as above)

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:

Spring Monday 4th October,

Summer Monday 6th December.

Any members with computer knowledge who would like to help compile the newsletter please contact me on the above e-mail address.

Helen Vincent

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.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR 2010

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.

Our Botanic Art Group will be exhibiting some of their work at this meeting.

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

OPEN GARDENS - Saturday 23rd and Sunday 24th

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

All details in next (Spring) Newsletter.



Wednesday 27th October – Launch event for:

BALLARAT GARDENS IN SPRING- which will be held **27th Oct to 2nd November** to take in Melbourne Cup Day and Botanical Art Exhibition in the Robert Clark Conservatory.

THE SPRING LUNCHEON - Thursday 28th October

Numbers limited to 60 at RCC. Speakers will be - **Rick Eckersley, Carolyn Blackman and Richard Barley.**

SPRING CHILDRENS EVENT – (JELLYPOTS)

Saturday 30th October 10.30-1pm

- meet near the Adventure Playground.

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.

At left: Sculptor Peter Nicholson and Mayor Judy Verlin with the newly installed bust of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, Ballarat Botanical Gardens, 18 February 2010