

NEWSLETTER – AUTUMN 2015

From the President's Desk...



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PRESIDENT'S REPORT – AUTUMN 2015

Greetings to all our members and I hope you are enjoying the New Year. At our AGM in February the new committee was inducted. There were only two changes. Mike Sorell advised us that he would not be available for renomination as President, and I was asked to take on this role for the coming year. Trish Twaits also announced that she would not be renominating as Secretary. Beryl Plummer agreed to take on this position (in addition to her role as Convenor of the Western Bedders and work with the Growing Friends).

It is appropriate at this stage to pay tribute to the work done for and on behalf of the Friends over the past twelve months by both Mike and Trish. They have put in many hours and we appreciate their dedication.

Our guest speaker at the AGM was **Mark Richardson, Botanical Consultant**, who prepared the Visionary Plan for the Ballarat Botanical Gardens for the Ballarat City Council last year. He gave an excellent and thought provoking address on the subject '*Do Australian Botanic Gardens Need Accreditation?*' The answer to the question was 'Yes'. Currently there is no system set up to provide such accreditation but the need is obvious when one considers the plethora of Botanical Gardens – or at least town or city gardens bearing that label – which often do not meet the criteria one would expect to be applied to Botanical Gardens. (See p.11)

The recent **Begonia Festival** was an outstanding success in all aspects. The City of Ballarat, through Heidi and her team, did an excellent job planning and coordinating the many activities associated with the Festival. The Gardens looked magnificent and the Garden staff did a fantastic job both in preparation and during the Festival.

The Friends of course were actively involved in two main avenues. **Our Educating Friends**, with the *BotaniKids* program did a marvellous job over the three days helping children to decorate almost 4,000 pots. Special thanks go to *Bunnings* who were most generous in supplying not only the pots and materials to fill them with, but also providing staff to help children to fill and plant their pots. Thank you Julie and your team for a great job – exhausting but no doubt very satisfying.

Our other activity of course was **plant sales**. This time we sold through two outlets, our own Nursery and also a marquee within the Gardens. We achieved what we think is a record of a little over \$5,000 in sales which also included donations from the many customers who took advantage of our plant crèche to look after their plant purchases until it was time for them to leave. So also a big 'thank you' to Yvonne and her team of willing helpers. Also thank you to those who responded to my last minute email for assistance in cleaning up at the end of the Festival.

The major project which will be occupying our minds, and time, this year is the **Fernery Redevelopment Project**. Elizabeth Gilfillan is the Convenor of this exciting new development and is providing a report in this issue of *Wellingtonia* (see page 7) to bring you up to date on what is planned. Having seen the new landscaping plans and suggestions we are tremendously

continued page 4



FBBG Patron:
Prof. Tim Entwistle,
Director and Chief Executive,
Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne.

RSVP please by Monday 13 April

Don't Forget!
SPECIAL MORNING TEA
for new and old members of the Friends.

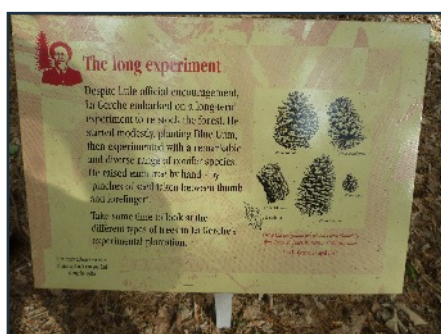
April 16 (Thurs) 10-12 noon in the Robert Clark Horticultural Centre
Come along to catch-up and meet new Friends too!

Guiding Friends Report:

The challenge for guides is keeping up with the many changes in the garden. Guides do not have to be the expert on all aspects but do have to be a respected source for all the random questions that come our way. Among the questions are maintenance questions and the answers lie with the garden staff. Ballarat Botanical Gardens Curator Peter Marquand's reports, informal conversations with the garden staff, our questions and observations are different ways we try to tap into this knowledge. As a guiding group we need to continue to look for more opportunities for this exchange to occur.

The U3A/FBBG course is progressing well. It has provided an opportunity for participants and guides to learn from the gardening staff; Peter Marquand and Donna Thomas have contributed to the sessions. One participant commented what a prized opportunity it was to get the inside information from the people managing the gardens. The U3A/FBBG also provide the opportunity for guides to explore a particular area in more depth than usually occurs in a tour. The willingness of the guides to develop the presentations and the role they play in making this course a success is much appreciated.

On Monday, March 16 some of the participants and Friends enjoyed a picnic tea at Creswick preceded by the La Gerche walk. Raoul and Beth Dixon, and Brian Hay helped us appreciate the remarkable tenacity of this pioneer forester who worked so hard to conserve for the future.



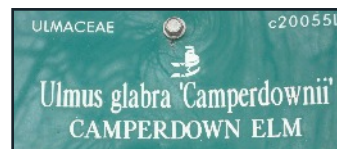
In our tours there is always interest in the age of the trees. Donna Thomas, Ballarat Gardens Education and Collections Officer, has the huge task of trying to sort through the varying and incomplete tree identification systems used over the years. In her session on Plant Nomenclature and Labelling to the U3A /FBBG course she explained how one of the identification numbering systems you will see on some trees in the gardens provides this information.

The accession numbers **c37096L**, can help as follows:— **c** = circa; **37** = year it was planted – in this case 1937;

096 = which number of plant, planted in that year – is this case the 96th plant in 1937.

L = location in gardens (The 'L' = Lawn but not exactly which lawn).

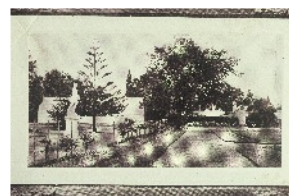
Can you work out from the label above when and where the Camperdown Elm was planted?



Unfortunately other tree identification systems have been used over the years and don't tell us about the age of the tree. Donna is working on other sources to try and track the information down to have a comprehensive database on all the trees.



Sometimes on our tours we try to describe the change over time with these trees. The Turkey Oak near the start of the Prime Ministers Walk was planted early 1880's and now much admired for its broad canopy. (See three photos to right)



With very mature trees it is inevitable that some will disappear over time. At the AGM Peter Marquand drew our attention to the elm near the floral clock being removed for safety reasons. (See page 10 for photo)

As guides we point out the succession planting underway in the gardens. Near the Turkey Oak you will find new



plantings – *Agathis robusta* (Queensland kauri) , *Araucaria angustifolia* (Parana Pine) and *Agathis microstachya* (Bull Kauri). The latter may grow to 50 metres tall in ideal situations!

Two Queensland Kauris are planted in the lawn area. Because of their size these trees are rarely grown. The Kauri is a member of the ancient family of conifers, the *Araucariaceae*, that is well represented in the gardens (*Araucaria*, *Agathis* and *Wollemia*). Just as we admire the Turkey Oak canopy today we also need to paint the picture ahead of us when this rainforest tree will be the tree we admire. Imagine its straight trunk with branches high up the trunk and covered in smooth, silver-grey bark and 30 – 40 m tall.

The begonias and the bedding displays are certainly a magnet for visitors in March. Guides had many tour groups – all from out of Ballarat. Guides were also asked to provide the guest speaker for **Vic in Bloom Regional Awards**. The awards recognize the work of tenants at public and community housing properties who create gardens that bring joy and beauty. As Sharon Knight, State Labor Member for Wendouree, commented at the awards, "Gardens are not just places where people can go to rest and relax. They help create communities. We've all had a moment where we have been walking down a street but stopped to enjoy a particularly beautiful garden somebody worked hard to create."

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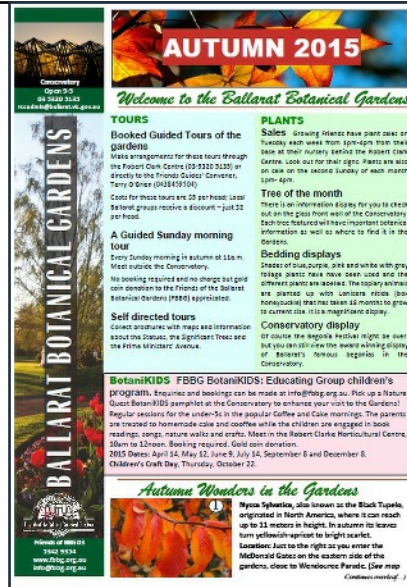
(Continued from page 2)

To encourage more exploration and appreciation of the varied riches in the Ballarat Botanical Gardens the guides have produced 'Autumn 2015' a two-page flyer. (See right) It can be picked up in the Conservatory. This sheet highlights some of the autumn wonders in the garden and invites you to use the map to explore and investigate the gardens.

Terry O'Brien Convenor of the Guiding Friends



(Far left) just two of the bedding displays; (top right) the Autumn flyer.



La Gerche Walk:

In Terry O'Brien's newsy Guides Report (above), you will see mention of the La Gerche Walk at Creswick. It was a joint event undertaken for Guides and U3A members participating in the Gardens Course.

Abutting the old Forestry Nursery, the 2.2 km walk is revealing. It takes about one hour with stops to read the plentiful signs depicting aspects of the work of forester/bailiff John La Gerche. He planted many trees to rehabilitate the landscape after the devastation of gold mining. Worth a visit. (right are some photos of the event.) **Ed.**



Above and Right: The group moving along the La Gerche Walk.

(Right): Forest gnomes? No, Michael Bird and Raoul Dixon along with John La Gerche carving.



THE GARDENS IN....AUTUMN!

BEDDING PLANTS: Did you realise that very few Australian botanical gardens are able to present such an impressive display of bedding plants like those found in Ballarat this autumn? Glen Fisher from the BBG's staff has provided a comprehensive summary of the autumn annuals currently on display. This year shades of blue, purple, pink and white have been interspersed with grey foliage plants.

Main Walk – stachys (lamb's ears) as a border; petunias 'Waterfall mix' and 'Wild Rose' (blues and pinks); front three beds: bedding begonias (pink) with 'Victoria Blue' salvias.

East side of Fernery – Impatiens (pink) with a grey border of Helichrysum; giant dinner plate dahlias and Redskin dahlias next to the Claxton fountain.

Prime Ministers' Walk: the two beds alongside the Conservatory – Delphiniums ('Guardian Series') in shades of purple, blue and white. The next two beds along have white Alyssum, Victoria Blue Salvias, Delphiniums and white Cosmos.

Around the Statuary: beds in front have a mixed display – Chlorophytum (spider plant) as a border, perennial Verbena, tall growing dahlias, Ageratum and Helichrysum (grey foliage). The six beds around the pavilion have a formal design with topiary box plants under planted with Echeverias (succulents), bedding begonias with contrasting foliage and variegated pelargoniums on the ends of the beds. The two beds near the sundial have 'Redskin' dahlias in them of a mixed colour.



Michael Bird & Glen Fisher

excited about this. It will breathe new life into our Gardens and, I believe, will cement their place as one of the pre-eminent regional Botanical Gardens in Australia.

There is no doubt that, once complete, the new Fernery Development will be a major attraction and be instrumental in attracting more visitors to Ballarat.

We have two social activities coming up in the near future. Included with this edition will be a flyer for a bus trip to Wombat Hill Gardens at Daylesford and the Blackwood Nursery on Thursday, April 23. This will be a most enjoyable and relaxed trip and I would encourage early registration so that you do not miss out.

The other one is our annual **Special Morning Tea** for new members the week before, on Thursday, April 16 at 10.00 a.m. This is a very informal get-together and will be held in the Robert Clark Horticultural Centre, so that new members can meet with both Committee members and other Friends over a cup of tea and some good things to eat. Although it is intended for new members, **all members are welcome to attend**. While RSVP's are not essential, it would help tremendously with catering if you can let us know if you are intending to come. Until next time....

Raoul Dixon, President

CURATOR'S REPORT:

Over the Begonia festival weekend 26,000 people viewed the 2015 Begonia display. The display included over 600 tuberous begonias and species begonias from the collection of the City of Ballarat. The City of Ballarat nursery shop and other exhibitors experienced large sales of plants over the three days as did other exhibitors.

Parks and Gardens Apprentices - Working Together at the Begonia Festival

The Begonia Festival Lego display project was undertaken by the apprentices of the



City of Ballarat parks & gardens staff and the 'Lego Begonia'

Parks and Gardens teams. The display included bedding Begonias, Ornamental Chillies and Petunias placed around the walkway and Lego Begonia to enhance the display. Taking two days to erect, the plants remained in their pots which were surrounded by mulch all held in place with garden edging. Locally sourced sandstone and laser cut panelling added to the interest of the temporary garden. The apprentices performed incredibly well in the design and construction of the display which was appreciated by thousands of members of the public during the festival.

We would have been forgiven for thinking that the festival was all about the Lego begonia. The flower generated enormous media attention and attracted many visitors throughout the weekend. A steady stream of visitors lined up patiently as soon as the gates opened on the Saturday, until the end of the festival on the Monday.

Before the festival a crack was found in the trunk of the southern *Araucaria bidwillii* at the start of the Prime Ministers' Walk. As a safety precaution we made the decision to fence the area off and change the Begonia Festival setup until further testing could be undertaken. The tests have shown that while the trunk does have a crack and that there is an area of internal decay the tree is deemed to be safe. Over coming weeks we will meet with specialists to investigate further options of ensuring the long term viability of this important part of the gardens tree collection.

Peter Marquand



The begonia display inside the Conservatory



Like a futuristic triffid, the Lego Begonia stood out at the Begonia Festival



ALL THINGS MUST PASS:

(Left and right): two images showing the size of a mature elm tree recently removed from the Gardens.



Memorial University of Newfoundland Botanical Garden - St John's

It's hard to imagine that fog, sleet and snow covers the vegetation for nearly five months of the year while enjoying the eye catching pastel colours of the heathers in the woodland garden, the bright red tomatoes in the hot house and the brightly coloured berries on one of the six trails through the gardens during summer

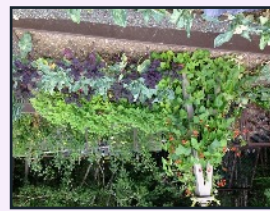


Opened in 1977, the Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN) Botanical Gardens are located a few kilometres west of the city centre of St John's (capital city of Newfoundland, Canada) on the North Atlantic Ocean. Newfoundland was the setting for the novel and film *The Shipping News*. As the gardens are part of the university they take their educational role seriously. The series of nature trails showcase the native vegetation; including the acidic heathland of low growing shrubs, known to Newfoundlanders as the *barrens*, and the *boreal forest* which is dominated by conifers, particularly spruce, interspersed with vast wetlands, predominately bogs and fens.



Entry (\$7.00) is through the interpretative centre which is also capable of taking school groups and customised tours. Guided tours (from \$7.00 - \$25) range from regular overall garden tours right through to

area specific tours with an expert in the chosen field - be it birdwatching, native wildflowers or tree identification.



The garden itself does not have a formal design but rather includes 110 acres of extensive nature trails, a fresh water pond and special areas including medicinal, peat woodland, potager and a vegetable garden, among many others. The vegetable garden was a surprise to see

considering the short growing season in St. John's. A hot house provided extra warmth for the tomatoes. Raised beds and information boards showed the vegetables (mainly root and brassicas) that could be successfully grown in such a cold climate.

They are trying to increase awareness in the local community on many aspects of gardening through providing information sessions to interested residents. Our daughter-in-law attended one on composting. Due to Newfoundland being an island and the continuing increase in waste being thrown into garbage, landfill is starting to become a problem. Composting is one step towards decreasing this waste. However, if composting is not done correctly there are many issues, such as vermin, that can arise which are not desirable in urban communities. Therefore to be able to get a composting bin the information session had to be attended. After completing the session all participants were then given a compost bin and clear instructions as to how to compost even in the depth of a "Newfie" winter.



The gardens are only open from May 1 until November 30, so they try to maximise the small window of garden friendly weather in a place better known for its harsh winters and a snow covered landscape.

Wendy Sandiford (Guiding Group member)

"Killed by Vandals"

Tim Entwisle, chief executive of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens and Patron of the Ballarat Friends, is reported to be "*.. sad, but determined to take positives from the death of the 400-year Separation Tree..*".

Arborists began lopping branches and the trunk of the heritage-listed tree. Vandals had ring-barked it twice -- in 2010 and 2013 -- and despite major attempts to save it, the tree has died. Twenty-five per cent of the tree will be removed initially, with further work in the next six months to reduce its height from 25 metres to a ten metre high trunk.

Tim believes that the stump "*..is better kept in its natural form, but ..(he).. is open to ideas ...*" including sculpting it in some way.

By way of a positive outcome, three offspring of the tree already stand in the gardens. As well seedlings have sent to 20 schools. Hundreds of seeds are also on hand in the Botanic Gardens' nursery.

Asked what he would say to the vandals, Professor Entwisle said he would be speechless! He would like to see wood from the lopped branches be made into benches, a table for Parliament House or for souvenirs to raise money for projects.

(Taken from an article in The Age, February 13, 2015) MB



(Above) Damage caused by one of the vandal attacks on the Separation Tree.

Orchidaceae PART 2

Australia's Vulnerable Species

PART 1 OF THIS ARTICLE WILL BE FOUND IN THE SUMMER WELLINGTONIA 2014 -15

Australia has both epiphytic or lithophytic (growing on host trees or rocks) and terrestrial orchids. Ninety percent of epiphytic orchids occur in northern Queensland, and most terrestrial orchids occur in southern Australia in dry sclerophyll forests.

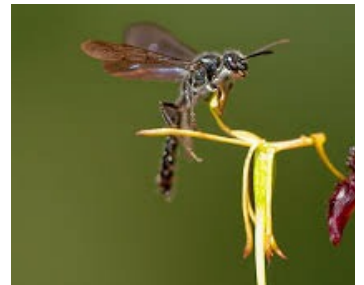
Australia has 100 genera and 1,700 species of orchid, but sadly, nearly 25% of extinctions. In part our species are vulnerable because they require symbiotic relationships with specific types of "mycorrhizal" fungi to grow and germinate, and many are pollinated by a unique species of pollinator.

Species that stand out are the greenhoods, flowering in winter and trapping unsuspecting fungal gnats to pollinate them. Spider orchids are the showy and alluring sirens, using several means to attract their pollinators. Sun orchids have numerous flowers resembling lilies and open on sunny days. Duck orchids employ entirely sexual deception to attract their pollinators. Perhaps the most bizarre of all are the underground orchids – members of a cryptic group that live out their lives entirely below the soil surface.

The term mycorrhizal simply means "fungus root". These microscopic fungi are found within individual plant cells from which the orchids absorb their nutrients; these can be located in the roots or other parts of the plant. The degree of dependence on the fungus varies, with most orchids having the ability to draw energy from sunlight via chlorophyll. However, some orchids (such as hyacinth orchids and underground orchids) have taken this relationship to a point where they no longer have chlorophyll and derive all their nutrients from their fungal partner.

Like other flowering plants, there are many ways in which Australian orchids are pollinated, but the majority requires a third-party insect pollinator to transfer pollen from one plant to another. Some provide a pollen or nectar food reward; others simply mimic food-rewarding plants but do not provide a reward.

One of the more interesting pollination syndromes in Australia is sexual deception. Male thynnine wasps are drawn in by pheromones, and then copulate with the flowers, because they resemble female wasps (*right*). The orchid in the photo is a hammer orchid, (*Drakaea*) which has a hinge which, when the wasp attempts to mate with it, swings backwards into the pollinia and the wasp is daubed with pollen. The wasp then flies to another plant and the pollen is thus transferred. It doesn't always work though, especially where the females are numerous.



There are also orchids (*Rhizanthella*), which spend their entire lives underground, even flowering there. This strange plant was first discovered in 1928 in Western Australia and is now critically endangered. The white leafless plant is made up of a fleshy underground storage stem (or tuber), which produces a flower head consisting of around 150 tightly packed, tiny flowers. Because it can't obtain energy from the sun, it instead feeds on the broom honeymyrtle, a shrub. It is linked to it by a mycorrhizal fungus. The orchid relies completely on the broom honeymyrtle and fungus for nutrients and carbon dioxide. The plant is then able to convert this into the energy required for growth and maintenance.

Underground insects such as termites and gnats are known to pollinate the flowers, attracted by the fragrance. The pollinated flower will then take six months to mature. In all studied flowers these were not dispersed and eventually decayed, thus releasing their seeds. It may be, however, that native marsupials were important dispersal agents, but substantial findings are hard to come by as only 19 mature specimens of the orchid are known to currently exist in the wild and only 300 specimens have been collected to date.



The Impact of Fire: Fire is, of course, a common occurrence in southern Australia, where most terrestrial orchids grow. When there is a hot summer burn, there is a dramatic increase in the total number of flowering orchid plants as well as the diversity of species. Some terrestrial species have become adapted to regular burns and their response indicates that fire has become an integral part of their life cycle. Some are so highly adapted that they will only flower after a hot summer fire.

However, there is no evidence that similar effects occur in tropical areas. This can mean that if these forests burn, many orchid species could be very vulnerable and perhaps even wiped out where they have a restricted range. It appears that climate change is having an impact, as fires are now occurring in some of these northern forests, putting the native flora (including orchids) under threat.

Orchids as Food: Australian aborigines used the starchy tubers of terrestrial orchids as food, notably the potato orchid (*Gastrodia*). The *Potato Orchid* (*left*) is found in Australia and New Zealand. This leafless plant occurs in a variety of habitats; often growing in leaf litter in high rainfall areas. The plants were located by observing where bandicoots had scratched in search of the tubers after detecting the plants underground by scent. The flavour of the tuber is said to resemble that of beetroot, though insipid and watery.

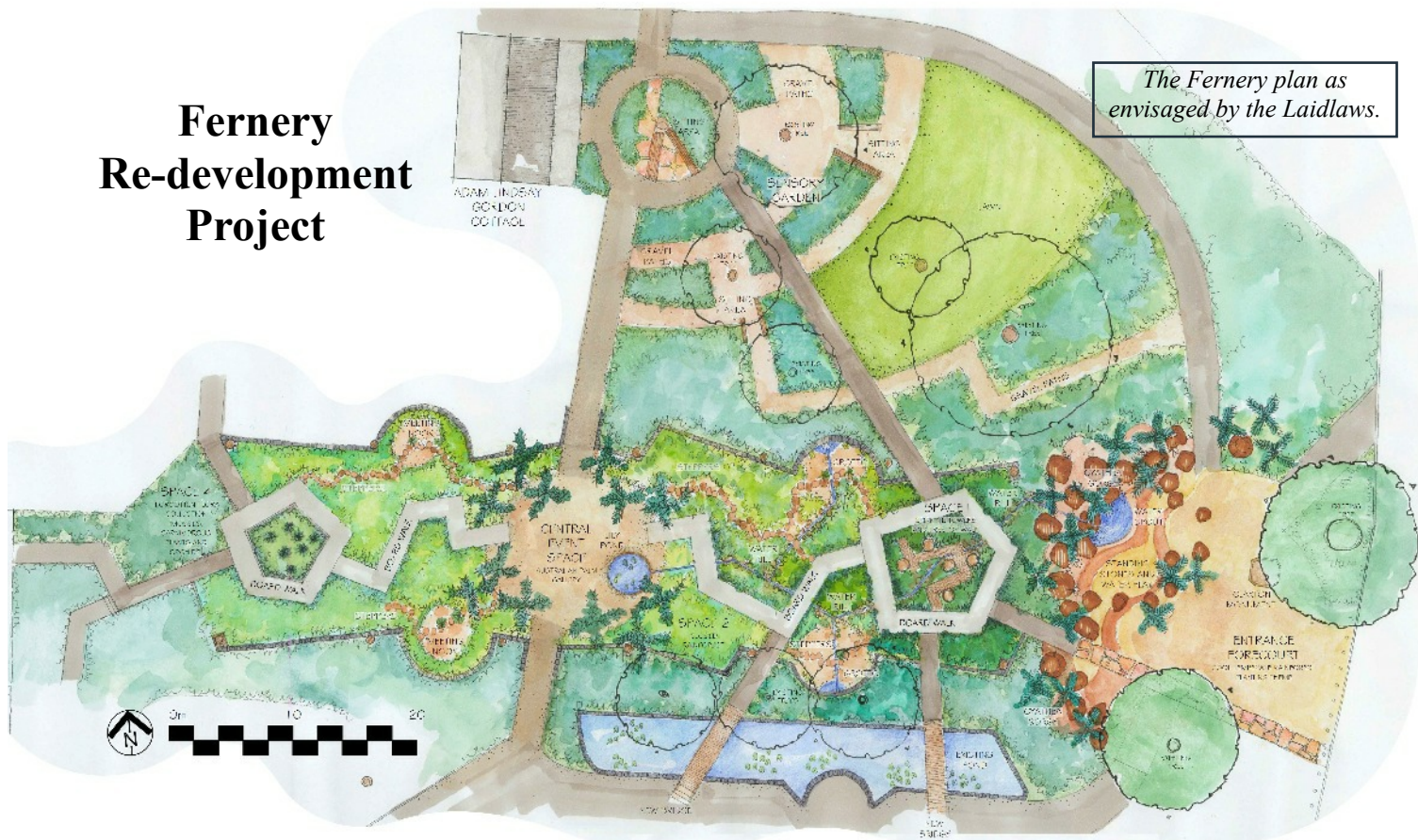
The other orchid grown commercially today is *Vanilla*, which produces a seed pod used in the extraction of vanilla. This is referred to as 'vanilla bean' but of course is not a bean at all!

(CONTRIBUTED BY BERYL PLUMMER, CONVENER WESTERN BED GROUP)

Sign in Nursery:

Unruly children will be given hugs, sugar and a free puppy

Fernery Re-development Project



The new development is becoming an exciting reality as you can see from Andrew Laidlaw's beautiful illustrations. The Project Group met with Heritage Victoria's Landscape Architect, John Hawker, he was impressed and has approved in principle the draft plans. On 4 March the final proposal was presented by Andrew Laidlaw to Ballarat Council Assembly before being presented for approval in the forthcoming budget for Capital works.

Laidlaw & Laidlaw have proposed: the landscape concept for the new Fernery is based around developing a series of beautiful spaces each with a different plant collection focus. The main entrance will be to the east with a large central forecourt with water spurting standing stones surrounded by a forest of Cyathea tree ferns. The use of water in this area has a dual role, providing a continuous link with the internal Fernery and acting as a water play elements for children.

On entering the Fernery visitors will be greeted by large epiphyte towers and a tree-top walk. These towers will display a collection of epiphytic (air-dwelling) plants such as mosses, ferns, orchids and bromeliads. An elevated series of steps and platforms will take visitors up into the canopy of these towers, giving 360 degree views of the fernery and forming an iconic and decorative structure.

The second space, or collection in the Fernery will be closed canopy, southern Australian rainforest including plants such as tree ferns, acacias, mint bush and low growing ferns and orchids.

The final space in the Fernery will be a mounded area with a collection of local rare and unusual plants including mosses, carnivorous plants and orchids.

The proposed timeline is likely to be:

- JULY 2015: Tender for Architects
- AUGUST 2015: Architects appointed
- SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER 2015 Architectural schematic design work, background reports for landscape
- JANUARY 2016-MAY 2016 Construction of the Sensory Garden
- MARCH 2016-JUNE 2016 Tender for the building and landscape works and demolition of existing
- JULY 2016-JULY 2017: Construction of the building
- MAY 2017-OCTOBER 2017: Construction of the landscape
- NOVEMBER 2017 Expected completion date (allowing for some delays)

A funding campaign will begin in the near future.

Elizabeth Gilfillan



(Above) Sketch provided by Laidlaw & Laidlaw showing a profile of the proposed redevelopment



BotaniKIDS Begonia Festival, POTTING FUN!

Pots and petunias

Oh what fun, with Bunnings, Garden

staff, Council and Friends - Tons of

support from everyone. Tots to

teens,

Inside and out, tables and tarps,

Nearly 4000 pots, we almost ran out!

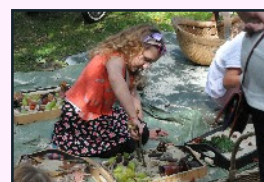
Great times were had by all about.

Fantastic effort, more than 10 000 people. Using

nature's storehouse of everyday things,

Nourishing connections these events do bring.

Julie Bradby and Jenny Haynes



Seen at the Begonia Festival



Look at that Begonia! Giant *Lego* Begonia made especially for the 2015 Begonia Festival. Made from 100,000 bricks of 11 colours it took 400 hours to assemble!



GROWING FRIENDS' IMPRESSIVE SALES AT BEGONIA FESTIVAL:

The Growing Friends had a fantastic response from the public in regard to sale of plants, during the Begonia Festival on the Labor Day Weekend. Sales amounted to \$5,187 from both the nursery and marquee combined. It was a great effort from all the willing workers who helped achieve this result. Also, because of all those sales we need plastic bags and pots, 4, 6 and 7 inch pots. No larger as they are too heavy for people to carry!

Yvonne Curbach, Convener

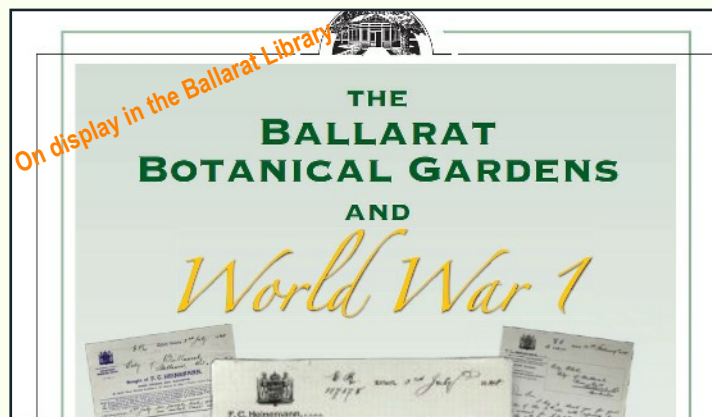


History Group -- Lorraine Powell, Convener

Sincere congratulations are extended to our two Joans! Joan Garner on achieving an OAM in the 2015 Australia Day Honours list and Joan Hunt on her recent RHSA award -- a 'Merit Award' truly merited if ever there was one.

The year has got off to the usual flying start with History Group members helping to present some of the U3A Course sessions. These are attended by about 40 participants.

Our exhibition '*The Ballarat Botanical Gardens and WWI*' (see right*) is presently on display in the Ballarat Regional Library and will remain there until after Anzac Day. It has also been submitted for consideration in the Ballarat City Council/National Trust Heritage Awards 2015 and has made the 'Shortlist'.



As usual, we continue to be entertained by the correspondence at the Public Records Office. The news that there had been a *beheading in the Gardens* on Christmas Eve 1964 was a little shocking! Thank goodness Superintendent T.C. Beaumont was given authority to have the marble bust of Mr Claxton promptly re-attached to its plinth by a workman from Monumental Masons, F.W. Commons & Co!



A headless statue
...but not Mr Claxton!

The focus for 'Tree of the Month' this autumn continues our interest in the Do Gondwanaland trees. take a look at the display in the entrance windows of the Robert Clark Horticultural Centre.

Each month a different tree is in the 'spotlight'.

* You can download a copy of *The Ballarat Botanical Gardens and WW I* from:

<http://www.fbbg.org.au/uploads/images/pdfs/Ballarat-Botanical-Gardens-and-World-War1.pdf>



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 through the driveway!

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

This is an on-going safety issue. Please use the gate.

'Garden Cuttings' by Green-Thumb

- Will a seedling/seeds from the **Separation Tree** in Melbourne's Botanic Gardens come to Ballarat?
- The **lawns** have sprung back really well after Begonia Festival 'traffic'; Staff have been very busy with remedial work, including aerating and fertilising. Rain has helped.
- Have you noticed the **security mesh fence** around the *bunya bunya* pines? (See page 4)
- The **Friends Committee** has had a re-shuffle this year. Sadly we said farewell to Mike Sorrell, Trish Twaits and Di Dunne. Thanks to all for jobs well-done.
- Our new Secretary is **Luda Kedova**. Make sure you introduce yourself to her next time you are browsing amidst the Growing Friends, visiting the George Longley Centre or at the April Morning Tea.

DISCOUNTS FOR FBBG 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

Mark Twain once said:

'A cauliflower is a cabbage with a college education.'

(he was a funny man was Mark! Ed.)

**Hopefully you will chuckle as you read this
because as stupid as it may sound, this is exactly
what we do!**

GOD to ST. FRANCIS:

Frank, ... You know all about gardens and nature. What in the world is going on down there on the planet? What happened to the dandelions, violets, milkweeds and stuff I started eons ago? I had a perfect no-maintenance garden plan. Those plants grow in any type of soil, withstand drought and multiply with abandon. The nectar from the long-lasting blossoms attracts butterflies, honey bees and flocks of songbirds. I expected to see a vast garden of colors by now. But, all I see are these green rectangles.

ST. FRANCIS: It's the tribes that settled there, Lord. The Suburbanites. They started calling your flowers 'weeds' and went to great lengths to kill them and replace them with grass.

GOD: Grass? But, it's so boring. It's not colorful. It doesn't attract butterflies, birds and bees; only grubs and sod worms. It's sensitive to temperatures. Do these Suburbanites really want all that grass growing there?

ST. FRANCIS: Apparently so, Lord. They go to great pains to grow it and keep it green. They begin each spring by fertilizing grass and poisoning any other plant that crops up in the lawn.

GOD: The spring rains and warm weather probably make grass grow really fast. That must make the Suburbanites happy.

ST. FRANCIS: Apparently not, Lord. As soon as it grows a little, they cut it-sometimes twice a week.

GOD: They cut it? Do they then bale it like hay?

ST. FRANCIS: Not exactly, Lord. Most of them rake it up and put it in bags.

GOD: They bag it? Why? Is it a cash crop? Do they sell it?

ST. FRANCIS: No, Sir, just the opposite. They pay to throw it away.

GOD: Now, let me get this straight. They fertilize grass so it will grow. And, when it does grow, they cut it off and pay to throw it away?

ST. FRANCIS: Yes, Sir.

GOD: These Suburbanites must be relieved in the summer when we cut back on the rain and turn up the heat. That surely slows the growth and saves them a lot of work.

ST. FRANCIS: You aren't going to believe this, Lord. When the grass stops growing so fast, they drag out hoses and pay more money to water it, so they can continue to mow it and pay to get rid of it.

GOD: What nonsense. At least they kept some of the trees. That was a sheer stroke of genius, if I do say so myself. The trees grow leaves in the spring to provide beauty and shade in the summer. In the autumn, they fall to the ground and form a natural blanket to keep moisture in the soil and protect the trees and bushes. It's a natural cycle of life.

ST. FRANCIS: You better sit down, Lord. The Suburbanites have drawn a new circle. As soon as the leaves fall, they rake them into great piles and pay to have them hauled away.

GOD: No!? What do they do to protect the shrub and tree roots in the winter to keep the soil moist and loose?

ST. FRANCIS: After throwing away the leaves, they go out and buy something which they call mulch. They haul it home and spread it around in place of the leaves.

GOD: And where do they get this mulch?

ST. FRANCIS: They cut down trees and grind them up to make the mulch.

GOD: Enough! I don't want to think about this anymore. St. Catherine, you're in charge of the arts. What movie have you scheduled for us tonight?

ST. CATHERINE: 'Dumb and Dumber', Lord. It's a story about....

GOD: Never mind, I think I just heard the whole story from St. Francis.

Contributed by a well-known member of The Friends...Raoul Dixon



© www.andrewthomasphotographer.com/

(Above) A rare view! This beautiful summer view of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens looking south and over towards Lake Wendouree was taken by a camera-borne drone flown by local photographer Andrew Thomas. Andrew has been very helpful by being involved in producing the range of visitors' pamphlets used by the Friends.



More glimpses of the Begonia Festival displays

'So many weeds, so little Thyme'.

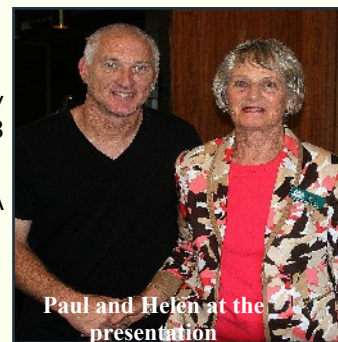
BALLARAT ROTARY CLUB DONATION

In January the Friends received a most generous donation of \$5000 from the Ballarat Rotary Club. The donation came from the money they made at *Springfest* that being part of the \$78,458 raised for local groups. Thirteen Ballarat community organisations received donations.

Paul Taylor (known as PT to his listeners) and is the early morning radio announcer on Radio 3BA Monday to Friday. Paul is the Springfest Ambassador for 2014/15.

The Friends are very appreciative of the great work they do.

Helen Vincent



MARK RICHARDSON'S ADDRESS TO FRIENDS AGM FEBRUARY 2015

Mark's theme was '*should Botanical Gardens be accredited in order to better define their status?*' He noted that at present no Australian agency gives legal accreditation to botanic gardens; anyone can call any garden a *botanic garden* and no one can stop them. Because of this the difference between a botanic garden and town park can be blurred. He emphasised that there is in fact a much closer connection between botanical gardens and museums because of the importance of their collections.

The Ballarat Botanical Gardens, in his opinion, needs to be promoted more as a modern botanic garden, in addition to having high profile activities like the Begonia Festival. Mark also emphasised, that the BBG needs to have '*at the end, a significant collection*' that has been well thought out in terms of themes. He noted for instance, the current development of the Monocot planting.



Ultimately he believes that an accreditation process would provide a means for improving what an organisation (e.g. Ballarat Botanical Gardens) actually does. As a part of this, accreditation would provide standards, proof of achievement and feedback from peers.

Mark believes that *the Visionary Plan for the BBG* has similarly provided recommendations to help it to achieve its goals. These include to position itself as one of Australia's top regional botanical gardens, and, to meet its role as a botanical garden in the 21st century. This in itself is a form of accreditation according to Mark.

In passing, Mark commented on the need for 'labelling' to reflect more than just botanical information which in itself can be a turnoff to members of the general public. He suggested that the date of planting would be a simple and interesting addition to labels along with discrete minimal interpretive material.

Interestingly, Adelaide has the only accredited Botanical Garden in Australia, and it did so through the American Association of Museums. Finally, he put the question that perhaps BGANZ should investigate providing an accreditation process, after agreeing on minimum standards for what it means to be a Botanical Garden in Australia.

Michael Bird

Membership Matters

There are still quite a few members who have not yet paid their membership fees for this calendar year. I will be sending out reminder notices in the next few weeks or so, if you have not yet paid, I would greatly appreciate your prompt attention to this matter.



Raoul Dixon, Membership Officer

Llew Williams

Members were saddened to hear of the recent death of our well respected member and friend, Llew Williams. Llew had been an active and vitally interested member of the Friends for many years, serving particularly as a Growing Friend, specialising in begonias, and in later years as auditor of our financial accounts. Llew was granted Life Membership status in recognition of his contributions. He will be greatly missed. Our condolences to Dorothy and family.

Raoul Dixon, President.



Photo credits: Thanks to Raoul and Beth Dixon, Andrew Thomas, Beryl Plummer, Terry O'Brien, Helen Vincent, Elizabeth Gilfillan and Peter Marquand for providing photographs used in this edition. Ed.

Friends of Ballarat Botanical Gardens Information 2015

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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

Meetings and Events:

April 16 (Thurs) 10-12 noon Special Friends Morning Tea (RCHC)
April 23 (Thurs) 9am Bus tour to Wombat Hill and Blackwood Ridge
May 21 (Thurs) 10am General Meeting; **Speaker** Chris Findlay - Flora Victoria (RCHC)
August 20 (Thurs) 10am General Meeting; **Speaker** Janet O'Hehir, urban landscape researcher. (RCHC)
October 5 (Mon) Friends **Rail Trip** to Royal Melbourne Botanical Gardens
October 15 (Thurs) **George Longley Day**; George Longley Building
October 23 (Fri) **Spring Lunch** (RCHC)
October 24 & 25 (Sat & Sun) **Gardens in Spring** (Ballarat area)
October 26 (Mon) Coombe Gardens **Bus Trip** (Coldstream)
November 26 (Thurs) Friends Christmas Breakup BBQ. (RCHC)

MEETING TIMES 2015

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

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, 10am

Plant Labelling as required.



*'An addiction to gardening is not all bad
when you consider all the other choices
in life.'* Cora Lea Bell

BotaniKIDS 2015

"Coffee and Cake" @ 10.00 a.m. on Tuesdays:

April 14
May 12
June 9
July 14
September 8
December 8.

Children's Craft Day Thursday, October 22

The Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens have
pleasure in inviting you to a tour of Wombat Hill
Botanical Gardens and Blackwood Ridge Nursery,
Trentham

Thursday, April 23, 2015

Transport: Gold Bus Coach

Departure: 9.00am, Fernery, Ballarat Botanical
Gardens

Return: 5.00pm, depending on traffic

Cost: \$25 per person

(see enclosed notice with newsletter)

2015-16 FBBG Committee Appointments

POSITION	NAME	POSITION	NAME
President	Raoul Dixon	History Convener	Lorraine Powell
Vice president	John King	Hospitality	Carole Haines
Secretary	Beryl Plummer	Membership	Raoul Dixon
Treasurer	Bruce Holland	Merchandise	Helen Vincent
Convenor Fernery Proj.	Elizabeth Gilfillan	Western Bed Convener	Beryl Plummer
Education Convener	Julie Bradby	General member	Kathleen Hobson
Grants/Proposals	Glen Lake	Newsletter Editor	Michael Bird
Growers Convener	Yvonne Curbach		
Guides Convener	Terry O'Brien	Engraving Convener	Joy O'Brien (non Committee)

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 Winter Wellingtonia 2015 are due by mid-June.** Michael Bird, Editor.