

# Blue Mountains Rhododendron Society of New South Wales Inc.

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January/February 2011

## NEWSLETTER

Vol. 37 No. 1

PO Box 238, Blackheath, 2785.

### General Meeting Saturday 19 February 2011 at The Lodge 2:00 pm start

We welcome all members, especially those who have recently joined us

#### Guest Speakers

**Brenda Lyon  
Lin Boswell**

Brenda owned and ran the Falkirk Daffodil Garden in Edith Road, Oberon, for many years. She started with about 20 blooms, and over a period of 30 years had transformed the paddocks on her property into a beautiful garden with over 2000 varieties of daffodils to look after. In January 2010 Brenda retired, selling Falkirk and her business of specialty bulbs to Lin.

Brenda will illustrate her talk on the History of Falkirk with a powerpoint presentation. Lin will talk about her vision for the future of Falkirk and will provide a variety of bulbs for sale after the meeting.

Brenda and Lin promise to be very informative guest speakers, so come along armed with your questions for them – remember, planting time for these bulbs is only a few months away!

See their website – [www.daffodils.com.au](http://www.daffodils.com.au)

#### New Member

We warmly welcome John Johnston of Blackheath as an official member of the Society, and invite him to continue his involvement in all the activities he has so ably carried out unofficially in the past.

#### 2011 Open Days

This year the Society's Open Days will run from Friday 30<sup>th</sup> September to Monday 7<sup>th</sup> November, inclusive. This means that The Lodge will be open for the serving of our famous Devonshire Teas, plus souvenirs, calendars, plants, etc., for a total of 39 days.

To spread the workload, many volunteers will be required to help in the kitchen, or to serve the visitors in The Lodge, or to sell raffle tickets and souvenirs, or to meet and greet the visitors as they come in (and sell plants as they go out).

We would love to see as many members as possible join in these rewarding activities – even if you could manage just half a day at a time. The Open days are our major fund raising event of the year, and one reason why our membership fees are still only \$11 a year!

So – over the next few months, why not think about (not if, but) when you will be able to join us as one of the Open Days volunteers?

#### Advance Notice for April

The guest speaker at the meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2011 will be David King, a Gundungurra Man, talking about Aboriginal Resources.

## *From the President - (Rob's Ramblings)*

Our year has started on a sad note, with the passing of Orme Brown, Betty's husband. Our deepest sympathies go to you Betty, from us all. We look forward to your continued involvement in the Society.

The premiere at our thoroughly enjoyable Christmas Lunch of Mike Chirgwin's short film on our Gardens "I Want My Flowers To See You" saw more than a few screenings. Never have I seen such applause for an event at any of our meetings in my time with the Society. And, yes, it is a DVD so you can play it at home or send it afar. More details at the February meeting.

Mike deserves the thanks of every member for his contribution to our Gardens, worth much, much more than the several thousand dollars that he could have charged us. Mike did it for free as did the narrator, Richard Neville. Again, that wonderful Blackheath Community Spirit comes through. Long may it be so!

Our website provided many visitors this year, from, would you believe, a woman in Katoomba who has lived there for 48 years and didn't know of us until she found us on the internet, to visitors from Melbourne, Reading (outside of London), Ohio, New Zealand and Birmingham. The American Rhododendron Society discovered us this year and Dick Harris was there to take two members of that Society around our Gardens in the rain. They were amazed - as they should be!

Our Gardens were mentioned more than favourably several times at the Australian Rhododendron Society Golden Jubilee Conference in October, held at the Olinda Gardens outside of Melbourne, attended by our very own Jeanette Adrian and Janet Dempster. Dick's article for their golden jubilee issue of The Rhododendron was well received.

Several folk have asked me why we commissioned Mike's short film. Its genesis was a comment from Dick at a committee meeting in early 2009 that he believed our Gardens were world class. I was somewhat surprised by that comment and started to look at our Gardens in a different light. After our trip to the UK and France, where we saw many of the great gardens of Great Britain, Ireland and France we knew that Dick was dead right!

We are a world class garden.  
Unique on this planet.  
How great is that!

The web site and the short film have come about from Dick's passionate comment. I hope you can make it to our February meeting, where we have an exciting announcement to make about our Society and the Gardens' future that has amazed and excited me, and I am sure, will amaze and excite you too. I hope you can be there for it. It has much to do with us being a world class garden.

### *Rob Emanuel - President*

#### Ongoing Happenings in the Gardens

- ◆ The Gardens continue to attract interest in the outside world, with enquiries for weddings, photos and other functions being received after people have discovered our website, and what we have to offer.
- ◆ Barry Barnes and Jeannette Adrian have held a number of discussions on how best to use the data being made available from the survey of the Gardens. One aim is to provide an accurate plan of each garden bed and its plantings – so we will know just what is where!
- ◆ The number of plant labels engraved has now passed 650, with labels already produced for many of the rhododendrons, azaleas and natives. As you will see when you visit the Gardens, white labels on wooden posts are springing up all over the place.
- ◆ The Monday workers are continuing their battles with Dodder, track maintenance, mowing, dealing with windfalls, and general garden maintenance. They are always on the lookout for more volunteers to join them, with a BYO lunch in The Lodge every Monday. A suggestion has been made that each volunteer could take a 'proprietary interest' in different sections of the Gardens.



### *Garden Report*

Fertilizing with the Camellia Azalea Food was completed before Christmas. Not as much was used this year as the plants are now in much better condition from both the program and the good season we experienced last spring. The Potash was spread around in early January, and now we need some sunny days for maximum bud set on the rhododendrons.

Lace bug has been sprayed using a small hand spray, because of the smaller infestation due to the cooler weather up to mid January. Another spray may be needed if we get a warm spell and a fresh hatching.

Large amounts of Dodder in some azaleas has meant heavy pruning and mulching of the affected azaleas to control it.

A large stand of holly in the North Eastern corner of the Garden needs to be attended to – possibly by poisoning the female holly as they start to berry, and then leaving them standing, allowing the bushes to die off. In addition, some clearing of ferns, etc., is required around the rhododendrons on the slope at the far side of the lake – an area that is becoming quite a jungle!

Heavy rain late last year has ruined some work on the tracks up on the Ridgewell Road side of the Garden. Some major drainage work is required to control the water that comes down from the Conifer gardens area.

*Dick Harris*

### *Jazz in the Gardens*

On Sunday April 17, the day after our general meeting, we will be hosting the popular Jazz In The Gardens, where the musos from the New Ivanhoe Hotel play in the valley in the Gardens from lunchtime onwards.

This will be a great day – not to be missed.  
Cost will be \$10 per person.

Bring a picnic rug and lunch and something to imbibe and enjoy. It's guaranteed to be a wonderful afternoon.

### *Contributions Wanted*

If any member would like to contribute an article to the Newsletter, we would love to hear from you! The Newsletter is produced bi-monthly, but contributions can be received at any time.

Please see Rob, Alan, or any member of the committee for further details.

### *Weather Notes*

If you think last year was rather damp – it was! Over 1650 mm of rain was recorded (unofficially) in parts of Blackheath, which is 400-500 mm more than in either of the two prior years. To this can be added a further 200 mm or so in January – not to mention the 21 days of mists during the month!

### *Obituaries*

Ormonde William Brown – It is with regret that we announce the death of Orme Brown, Betty's husband, on the 15<sup>th</sup> January at Three Trees Lodge in Lithgow. Orme was much respected in the RSL.

Yvonne Kemmis – We are also saddened to hear of the death of Yvonne Kemmis, who passed away peacefully on the 19<sup>th</sup> January in Katoomba Hospital. Although Yvonne was not a member of the Society, she was always willing to help out at the special functions held in the Gardens. She loved cooking, sharing her expertise in the presentation of food, and helped greatly in the design of the new kitchen in The Lodge.

**Management Committee 2010 – 2011**

**President**

Rob Emanuel  
4787 5558  
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**Vice Presidents**

Jeannette Adrian – 4787 7904  
Judy Johnston – 4787 7298  
Robert Reid – 4787 5253

**Garden Supervisor**

Dick Harris

**Secretary**

Alan Lush  
4787 6983

**Treasurer**

Joan Hailstone  
4787 5859

**Membership Secretary**

Marion Freidman  
4787 8416

**Committee Members** Barry Barnes, Beryl Black, Bette Brown, David Cook, Nancy Etcell

**Editor/Webmaster** Alan Lush

**website** – [www.rhodogarden.org.au](http://www.rhodogarden.org.au)

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