

Blue Mountains Rhododendron Society of New South Wales Inc.

www.rhodogarden.org.au

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NEWSLETTER

Vol. 39 No. 4

PO Box 238, Blackheath, 2785.

Annual General Meeting Saturday 17 August 2013 at The Lodge starting at 2:00 pm

We welcome all members, especially those who have recently joined us, to our 44th Annual General Meeting and election of committee members for the ensuing 12 months.

Please note that members need to be financial to be able to vote.

**ANNUAL membership RENEWAL fees
(for 1st July 2013 to 30th June 2014)
are still only \$11 per person per annum**

The Agenda for the meeting will be supplied separately

Vale - Norm Campbell

All members of the Society will be saddened to hear of the death of Norm Campbell, one of the 'founding fathers' of the Society and the Gardens. Norm and his wife, Olive, were the driving forces for many years in making the Gardens what they are today. Norm passed away on 27th June at Katoomba Hospital, aged 97.

This newsletter is dedicated to Norm, and includes both an Obituary (most of which appeared in the Blue Mountains Gazette on 3rd July) and a Eulogy given by Dick Harris at the celebration of Norm's life, held in The Lodge, following the funeral service at the Leura Memorial Gardens on 10th July.

Advance Notice - September

Please note that the next general Meeting will be held on Saturday 21st September, as the Lodge will be in use during the Open Days in October.

Election of new committee

At this AGM a new management committee for the Society is to be elected. According to the Society's constitution the management committee will consist of the office-bearers and (up to) seven other members. The office-bearers consist of one President and up to three Vice-Presidents, one Honorary Secretary, one Honorary Treasurer and one Membership Secretary. **Robert Stock**, one of our local Councillors, has kindly consented to be Chairperson for the election.

A nomination form is attached to this newsletter. If further copies are required please contact Alan on 4787 6983. Nomination forms must be returned to the Secretary by 10:00 am Friday 16th August.

See Page 5 for the guidelines to be followed for voting at the AGM.

From the President – Judy’s Jottings

This is the end of my year as President of the Society (2012-2013) so you will elect a new person for that position at the upcoming AGM.

Norm Campbell, one of our founding members and long time Garden Supervisor, died in June just after celebrating his 97th birthday. Those who knew him will remember his hard work and dedication to the Gardens, and also his retiring disposition and quiet sense of humour. Norm has made a lasting contribution to the success of the Rhododendron gardens.

During the past year we have had six general meetings, each with an interesting speaker, and always followed by our traditionally excellent afternoon tea.

However, the highlight of the year, on April 13, has been the ‘Gardening in the Blue Mountains’ Seminar held in the Lodge which brought six eminent horticulturalists here to our gardens. They were impressed with the mixture of exotics grown successfully among the native plants of the region and it was a truly wonderful way to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the ‘Crossing of the Blue Mountains’.

A special plant commissioned by B.M. Zone Garden Clubs to commemorate the 1813 Bicentenary Crossing is an Australian everlasting daisy bred by Angus Stewart, which will be available for you to purchase in Spring. It has been named ‘Explorers Triumph’ by seven year old Hedi Wood from East Blaxland Public School.

I must congratulate all members of the Management Committee for their enthusiasm and hard work, attending monthly meetings and carrying on the business of the Society, in particular our multi-talented Secretary and our uncomplaining Treasurer.

Joan Hailstone, the Treasurer, has ably completed the big task of managing our finances, banking, insurance, etc, and I am in awe of the job she has done for the last 9 years. Joan has indicated she can no longer undertake this task.

To all our members a big thank you, first for belonging to the Society and attending meetings regularly, but also for the effort put into gardening, administration, and help during the Springtime opening, which, as you know, is the major fundraiser of the year.

My good wishes to all for another great year.

Judy Johnston – President

Garden Report – July 2013

The treated pine sleepers have now all been used to renew the steps in front of the Lodge, and also some on the far side of the valley and through the azaleas below the valley access road.

The two small bridges (drain covers) on the Maple Walk have been replaced, and two seats repaired and painted.

The maples, virburnum and camellias have all been given a dose of dolomite.

A lot of fallen dead wood has been removed from between the Centenary Walk and the valley access road, and also from along the Maple Walk.

Bill Webster and Peter Morey have made good progress removing large holly trees from along the fire trail near the Ridgewell Road gate. These have been cut down, the stumps poisoned and the felled trees and branches piled up on site due to the volume involved.

Work is proceeding with the lining of the open drain from Wentworth Street.

Garth found a water leak while removing dodder down towards the Maple Walk. This was found to be a long split caused by a growing root pressing the pipe against a rock. A section was removed and replaced.

Barry returned after a long absence and went to work clearing tracks. Paul also returned from his overseas trip.

The guttering along the front of the Lodge needs replacing.

The proposed hazard reduction burn has now been placed on the Fire Brigades’ list. (Does this mean it will be done this year? – Ed.)

Geoff Cannings

Arthur’s Seat

Where is it? What is the significance?

Apparently Arthur and his wife enjoyed the Garden very much. He would sit on a seat by the Lodge looking out while she strolled along the paths. One day he turned to her and said: “This place must be like Heaven!” When he died shortly afterwards, his widow ‘donated a seat and arranged its delivery plus two rhododendrons’ in her husband’s memory. The President of the day, Dr. W.P. Nelson, said that it should be called “Arthur’s Seat”. The seat is on the Soroptomists Walk below the Lodge.

(Source – President’s Report 1999 AGM) –
submitted by *Sonia Levitt*

Obituary

Norm Campbell

(16/06/1918 – 27/06/2013)

Norm Campbell, after whom the Rhododendron Gardens in Blackheath is named, died on the 27th June in Katoomba Hospital, aged 97.

Born on June 16, 1916, in Marrickville, Norm was the oldest of four children. His parents moved to Hazelbrook in 1918 and Norm spent the rest of his life in the Mountains. He attended Lawson Primary School and Katoomba High School where he gained his Intermediate Certificate.

After leaving school he became an apprentice sign-writer in Katoomba. He used to make up beautiful posters for the two theatres in the town – the Empire and the Savoy.

He was found temporarily unfit for active duty in World War Two and instead went to work at the Lithgow Small Arms Factory, where his talents for draftsmanship (also studied during his apprenticeship) were much utilised. He was attached to the Plant Department as an Architectural Drafting Officer after joining the staff in 1942. He stayed at the factory for 35 years, until his retirement.

Norm married Olive Neville, a childhood friend, on St Valentine's Day, 1944, settling in Blackheath and renting a house in Clyde Avenue. Norm and Olive then moved to Warrigal Street, where Norm built their new home.

Norm and his wife Olive played an integral role in the establishment of the Gardens in the late 1960s. Norm joined the Rhododendron Society as an ordinary member, but was soon appointed as the original garden supervisor, a voluntary position he held for more than 33 years. In this position he was responsible for much of the planning, design and layout of the Gardens. He and his crew built the paths, garden beds and buildings as well as planting hundreds of rhododendrons, azaleas, maples, camellias and other cold-climate plants that today attract thousands of visitors each year.

Olive was elected Secretary of the Society in 1970 and held that position almost until her death in 1994.

Norm and Olive were life members of the Blackheath Horticultural Society and Norm was also involved in the Scouting movement, rising to be district commissioner for the Upper Mountains.

But it was for his work at the Campbell Rhododendron gardens for which he will be best remembered. The Gardens were named after him and Olive in 2002. Norm, a private man who generally kept to himself, later said: "I didn't want them to do it, but I had no option." Maybe it was because he was such a private person that there are hardly any photos of him in the Society's archives – those that are of Norm usually show him (with his hat on) up a ladder building something, down a hole digging something, or just working in the background.

In 2003, Norm was named Blue Mountains citizen of the year for his work with the Gardens, when he estimated he had spent more than 25,000 hours working there.

He spent the last eight years in Bodington Aged Care facility, where he was very happy. He could recall the days when Bodington was a TB hospital and patients used to sit outside and watch horses pulling sulkies stop halfway up the steep hill to drink from a spring at the side of the road. He could also remember when Don Bradman, playing cricket for Blackheath against Lithgow on the 2nd November 1932, "scored a fabulous 256 runs". This included scoring 100 off three eight-ball overs, while his partner scored just two.

Norm's last sibling, his brother Colin, died on May 28, a month before Norm did. He is survived by his nephews Gary and Chris and his niece Nellie.

(From the Blue Mountains Gazette and elsewhere)

Vale - Arne Ulrichsen

We also have to report the death of long time member Arne Ulrichsen, who passed away on July 14th 2013 at the age of 91. Arne, of Morven Gardens, Leura, and formerly from Blackheath, was remembered in the last few years as always coming to the Lodge at least once during the Open Days for his Devonshire Teas. He generously donated to the Society, including a number of books for the Library.

His funeral service was held at the Leura Memorial Gardens on July 19th.

**Dick Harris's Eulogy for Norm Campbell,
given at Norm's funeral on the 10th July
2013.**

I have known Norm and Olive since I was a little boy, and they were customers of Mum and Dad at Mt Boyce and became good friends. 60 odd years is a long while and a lot of water under the bridge.

In the mid 1960's a group of local nurserymen building on an idea of the late Ib Sorensen decided to form a Rhododendron Society with the aim of establishing a Rhododendron Garden somewhere on the Mountains. We identified several blocks of Crown Land with the one where the Garden now is being the most suitable.

At this stage we decided that our group should promote the idea to the wider community and also find someone who would take over the job of Secretary which now needed someone more permanent. I was asked to attend a meeting of the Blackheath Horticultural Society to promote our idea but, just between us, I was after Olive for our Secretary, and was successful with Norm and Olive joining us.

I would hate to write all the letters and deal with as many bureaucrats as Olive had to. Of course she was successful with both Federal and State Governments; however the condition was that BMCC were trustees. More work for Olive!

After we got the land we started to put together a plan of action, this was, I guess, about the early 1970s and Norm played a huge part in this. Along with Norm and Bob Baker, 3 of my staff and myself, all volunteers, started many Saturday morning working bees. The block was fenced, irrigation pipes were put in and Norm started to put some plans on paper. Paths started going in and the Lake was built. Rubbish that had been dumped in the Valley was shifted.

During this time I really got to know Norm well, to appreciate his sense of humour, his dedication and his driving force to the project at hand. I can remember when the bulldozer building the lake got bogged. I had my John Deere farm tractor with a front end loader on it down moving some rubbish; I suggested to the local guy who was driving the dozer that I would hook onto the dozer and give him a tow. "That toy won't shift me", he said. Norm replied, "Just do as Dick says, I've seen what that tractor can do". Job complete - Norm laughed and said, "Told you so".

Our first planting was a group of White Pearl Rhodos the other side of the Lake and both our Federal and State members planted one each.

One of these plants died and we replaced it, the members found out and both tried to find out whose had died. Norm wouldn't tell them and I guess now the secret remains with me.

By this time I had succeeded Ib Sorensen as President. We had planted lots more Rhodos, put the road into the Valley. We needed a tool shed; some of you may remember a roadside stall on the Highway in Hartley with the big apple on top. This was given to us and Norm oversaw its removal in one piece to the Gardens and its positioning where it now is, all done on pipe rollers. During this period Norm and his Monday Volunteers (this volunteering had started by now) put in more paths, more plants and more irrigation.

We also decided to build the Lodge and Norm drove this project as well as doing a huge amount of the actual work, including paving, tarsealing, arranging contractors, etc. While this was happening Norm opened and closed the gates every day and with his volunteers maintained all the plants, paths, etc which were already in the Garden.

Norm never wanted or expected recognition for his efforts and was most embarrassed when the Gardens' name was changed to the Campbell Bacchante Gardens. He was also surprised when he was made Blue Mountains Citizen of the Year 2003. However he did say, "The Garden is really part of me and it keeps me out of mischief".

Not many of you know about Norm's rescue effort in 1962. Two Rover Scouts were lost on a trek into the Grose Gorge; they had not left many details of their trip except it would take 6 days. After 7 days a search was called and over 200 searched without success. Norm, who had been a Rover Scout, had his own theory, knowing they were going to abseil in from Mt Hay. Norm reckoned they would abseil down at Arethusa Falls. Norm and Olive drove out to Point Pilcher and as they approached the cliff edge he saw them with an SOS sign perched on a ledge on the opposite side of the Gorge. I believe Norm's action embarrassed the police who had dismissed him earlier when he suggested where they might be. You see the Scouts' ropes weren't long enough for the next drop.

In closing can I say that I am sure the good Lord has found out what a great Garden Supervisor Norm is and that he is already volunteering in the gardens up there. But most of all Norm is happy being united with Olive and those many volunteers who worked with him and are now working in the Lord's Garden.

**Guidelines for Voting
at the Annual General Meeting**

1. Only financial members can vote, nominate or be nominated for a position on the Management Committee.
2. If only one member is nominated for an executive position (or up to seven members for the committee positions), then that member (or members) is/are considered elected and no vote is taken, providing that their nomination(s) was/were received by the Secretary by the advertised closing date.
3. If more members are nominated than there are advertised committee positions, and their nomination forms were received by the advertised closing date, a secret ballot will be taken by those members attending the AGM. That member (or members) with the most votes will be declared duly elected to the particular committee position.
4. If a position has NO nominations, the Chairperson can ask for nominations at the meeting (“from the floor”). If more than one person is named and seconded, a vote will be taken as in 3.
5. If a position is NOT filled at the AGM it is called a “casual vacancy” and may be filled at a later date by an appointment by the management committee.

The Management Committee consists of:

- President
- up to 3 Vice-Presidents
- Treasurer/Public Officer
- Secretary
- Membership Secretary
- up to 7 committee members

The committee positions of Archivist, Garden Supervisor, Newsletter Editor, Publicity Officer(s), Social Secretary and Webmaster will be confirmed at the first Management Committee meeting in September.

New Members

We warmly welcome the following people as members of the Society, and invite them to become involved in all the activities the Society has to offer.

- Leslea Leggo, of Medlow Bath
- Jennifer Connolly, of Blackheath
- Mary Chernov, of Mount Victoria
- Liz Fox, of Blackheath

If you wish to nominate a member for a position on the management committee please cut out the form below, fill it in and post it to the address shown on the form by 10:00 am on Friday 16th August

Blue Mountains Rhododendron Society of NSW Inc.

NOMINATION FORM

Term 2013-2014

I wish to nominate

.....
(name of person to be nominated)

for the position of

.....
(Name the office/position)

Signed.....

.....
(Signature of nominator)

SECONDER

I wish to second the above nomination –

.....
(Signature of seconder)

ACCEPTANCE

I accept the above nomination

Signed.....

.....
(Signature of nominated person)

Nominations to be returned to Secretary, PO Box 238, Blackheath, 2785, no later than 10 am Friday 16 August 2013

Blue Mountains Rhododendron Society Newsletter – July / August 2013

Management Committee 2012 – 2013

President

Judy Johnston
4787 7298

Vice President

Jeannette Adrian
4787 7904

Vice President

and Garden Supervisor
Dick Harris

Secretary

Alan Lush
4787 6983

Treasurer

Joan Hailstone
4787 5859

Membership Secretary

Marion Freidman
4787 8416

Committee Members Beryl Black, Geoff Cannings, David Cook, Julia Hanley,
Sonia Levitt, Val Moorhead, Diane Twose

Meeting Hostess Bette Brown

Editor/Webmaster Alan Lush

website – www.rhodogarden.org.au

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PO BOX 238, BLACKHEATH NSW 2785**

