

Blue Mountains Rhododendron Society of New South Wales Inc.

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November/December 2013

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 39 No. 6

PO Box 238, Blackheath, 2785.

Christmas Luncheon Saturday 14 December 2013 at The Lodge Time – 12:00 noon

Please bring a plate (e.g. salad, dessert, etc) OR a \$10 donation.
Drinks (fruit punch, wine, tea or coffee) will be provided.

PLEASE RSVP by December 11th
by phoning Julia on 4787 5728, or Alan on 4787 6983.

There will be no normal meeting following the luncheon,
but a number of items will be brought
to your attention beforehand – see following box.

On behalf of the Management Committee – a Merry Christmas to all!

December 'Meeting'

Julia Hanley will give details of the final figures on the Open Days, as well as more information on the proposed Lookout. In addition she will provide initial feedback on some of the ideas presented in the returned survey forms. The meeting will be kept very short, so as not to reduce the time spent socialising!

Raffle Results

The winners of the Open Days raffles:-

Drawn at The Lodge on Sunday 10th
November by members of the
Fairlight Garden Club:

Painting – Vicky Geraghty,
Blackheath, Ticket 1833

Hamper – Lucy Turner,
Allambie Heights, Ticket 1227

Wall Hanging – Jim Moorhead,
Blackheath, Ticket 11B

Society Survey

At our September meeting a Survey form was handed out to all members present, asking their views on where they would like to see their Society heading by 2020.

As only a small percentage of Society members have been given this opportunity to have their say, we are including a copy of the Survey form with this newsletter.

Please give us your ideas, and return the completed form either to The Secretary, PO Box 238, Blackheath, 2785, or at the Christmas Luncheon – all your ideas will be very welcome!

Items for Sale

There are still a number of 'souvenirs' for sale, left over from the Open Days. These include the excellent 2014 Calendars created by **David Cook**, Australian motif Tea Towels, blank Greeting Cards with Australian Wildflowers photos, and a few hand made scarves from Timor Leste – all attractively priced. Just right for Christmas!

From the President – Julia's Jabber

Hello to all members,

Since I last wrote, many of us have been hard at work during the Lodge Open Days. Despite the unseasonably hot weather and the fires we have earned enough money to maintain the Garden for the next year. Many thanks go to all those who have helped keep the Gardens in their A1 condition and who filled roster spaces in the Lodge. It was a hectic but enjoyable time!

The new lookout is progressing. We have received approval from the Council to proceed and now the Committee has a number of quotes which we are evaluating. We will tell you more at the December meeting.

In this newsletter you will find a sheet with questions on it. We would very much like your feedback on these topics. Please fill it out and bring it with you to the December meeting or send it back to the Secretary. I will collate the information and publish it in the next newsletter. We need your input at this time of year as we will be planning our activities for the year ahead in January.

I look forward to welcoming you all to our Christmas meeting when a short business meeting will take place and then lots of Christmas good cheer is planned.

See you all there,

Julia Hanley – President 2013-2014

Ducks Sighted!

No, it wasn't part of the English cricket team. Four black ducks have recently been seen around the lake, but it is not known at the moment whether they have taken up permanent residence or if they are just strays from the Memorial Park duck pond looking for a new home.



Garden Report – November 2013

Most of our time recently has been spent maintaining the tidiness of the Gardens during the open period, and the weather has made this all the more difficult. The dry weather and the wind brought down lots of small branches and tons of leaves.

Garth has continued in the area below the valley access road, removing dodder and generally making it tidy. The drain from Wentworth Street is working well but it also needs some regular cleaning.

Watering recently planted plants (Kalmias, Enkianthus, Wollemi Pine, Natives in the Joan Storey area, some Rhododendrons, etc.), has been an ongoing chore, and indeed a couple of times I came down during the week and gave them a water.

We had a hiccup with the tap timer. The one we have had for several years finally gave up, and I had to buy a new one. I also bought a pack of 4 AA batteries – the first ones worked well. When I had to replace them I had huge problems until I realized that one battery was slightly shorter than the others. No doubt 'Made in China'.

We have left one Rhodo put aside to plant, and some of the Explorers Triumph daisies. The daisies will go in the rock garden at the front of the Lodge, and with the committee's approval I will use the Rhodo to replace one of the dead ones in the Centenary Walk.

Some of the Azaleas that are growing where the new Lookout is to be built are to be moved. These will be cut back hard, treated with Growth formula to promote new roots, Envy to help preserve moisture in the leaves, etc, and a regular dose of Seasol. They will probably be planted down below the toilets where 4 Mollis Azaleas are already there. On the narrow area next to the path in front of the toilets Alpine Phlox will be planted.

Thank heaven for the recent rain as I can now start some fertilizing of the Rhodos and Azaleas, and hopefully we will get some good growth to allow them to set good flower buds for next year.

We have started to cut back some Azaleas that were long overdue for a good prune, and will also start the usual trim on the rest of the Azaleas.

I have just about beaten the Montbretia in the areas I have been treating and have started a program on the Ivy, Privet, Cotoneaster, Honeysuckle, etc in the Conifer Garden area. I also believe some of the conifers need a good haircut.

Dick Harris – Garden Supervisor

2013 Open Days

The Open Days this year were like the proverbial Curate's Egg – good in parts. We opened the Lodge for the first time on Friday 4th October, at the start of the October long weekend (also the start of the Leura Gardens Festival), and at the end of the first 2 weeks our takings were on a par with those for the same period last year. We had been blessed with fine weather, and warmer temperatures than last year, and by halfway through the 3rd week we were about \$2000 up on last year's figures.

The warmer weather also brought out the cicadas, with some locals saying it was the best year for them since 2004.

Then – disaster. As you know, areas of the Blue Mountains were ravaged by bushfires from mid-October, with Blackheath being under threat for a number of days. Even though there was much smoke from the fires, the prevailing winds kept most of the smoke away from Blackheath itself and the Gardens – most of it was blown down to Sydney and surrounding areas. However, when Blackheath was most threatened, it was decided to close the Gardens completely for 3 days. After we re-opened the Gardens, on Friday 25th October, it took almost a week for the visitors to come back in any sort of numbers. It wasn't helped by the Sydney media warning people against coming up the mountains 'because of the bushfires'. In addition, many coach lines cancelled their day trips to the mountains, probably because of the (remote) possibility of a bushfire cutting the highway at Springwood and trapping their passengers at the top of the mountains.

Another, major, set-back to our early record-breaking run was the break-down of our local baker's oven at the end of October. No more scones! Undaunted, we substituted banana bread, pikelets and biscuits, which kept our visitors happy.

The positives? Despite losing nearly a week's visitors due to the fire threats, our takings were fairly healthy, even though they were 20% down on last year. The weather was much better than last year, with only one 'typical' Blackheath spring day (mist and showers) – and that was on the last day before we closed the Lodge. And – we sold all the plants we had brought in, 100 Rhododendrons, 50 Mollis Azaleas, 20 Kalmias and 100 Explorers Triumph daisies (well, 92, actually; the last 8 have been planted in the Gardens near the Lodge).

We still managed to attract visitors from all over the world (see later in the newsletter). There were even some people from Blackheath – the other one, in England!

A big thank-you goes to all the volunteers (both members and other locals) for their sterling efforts over the Open Days in manning the kitchen, serving the visitors, selling souvenirs and raffle tickets, and meeting and greeting as many visitors as they could. Where would the Society be without you?

Statistics? (Courtesy of Jeannette)

Scones consumed	1428
Jam consumed	37.5 kg
Cream consumed	26 litres
Milk	70 litres
Pikelets consumed	240
Banana Bread used	200+ slices
Teas/coffees drunk	At least 1500 – possibly up to 2000

Odd Questions?

Do we supply earplugs?

(On a particularly noisy cicada day)

Can we turn the volume down?

(Ditto)

Did we have any damage in the Gardens?

(After we reopened after the bushfire threat)

Explorers Triumph Everlasting Daisy

This daisy was specially propagated at Gondwana Nursery on the NSW north coast for the GCA Blue Mountains Zone, as part of the celebrations to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the first crossing of the Blue Mountains by Europeans.

The Society bought 100 of these daisies to sell during the Open Days – and sold all but 8 to visitors from all over NSW. We initially were advised that the daisies were quite suitable to the Blue Mountains climate, but have now been told that they are Frost Tender. Oberon Garden Club has not purchased any for their members – but they do have much colder winters than we have in Blackheath.

However, if necessary, cuttings may be taken in the new year in case the plant succumbs to the frost in winter. The other problem, as with many other plants, is that snails and slugs love them – but snail pellets soon deal with that!

September General Meeting

The following is a brief summary of the last General Meeting, held at the Lodge on Saturday 21st September.

President Julia Hanley welcomed the 19 members to today's meeting and advised that our proposed speaker, Barbara Tyrrell of Dryridge Estate Winery, was unable to attend due to sudden TV commitments. 7 apologies were received and noted in the Attendance Book.

Dick Harris's Garden Report suggested that this spring's flowering season was to be 10 days earlier than usual, but the flowering will show what a good year we have had in the Gardens. Maintenance is continuing – weeding, paths upkeep, renewing steps, and lining the drain from Wentworth Street. Montbretia has almost been eradicated, and those areas will be replanted with ferns. Dick's next target will be Ivy.

Publicity for the Gardens is increasing, with Sonia Levitt and Diane Twose concentrating on radio stations and the print media, with emails also sent to all the Garden Clubs in the GCA Blue Mountains Zone advising them of our Open Days. Dick has written another article for *The Rhododendron*, the Australian Rhododendron Society's annual magazine.

General Business included more information on the proposed lookout, with a few quotes being received for its construction. The Society has applied for a grant to cover part of the cost, and will know in December if we have been successful.

Julia Hanley filled in as guest speaker at the last minute to give an enlightening PowerPoint presentation on the garden she and her husband, Wayne, have created over the last seven years or so on a large sloping block around their house in Blackheath. To see how the many paths have been built and garden rooms created on such a difficult site should serve as an inspiration to all of us.

How some streets in Blackheath got their names

When one drives to the entrance of the Campbell Rhododendron Gardens, one will be driving along two streets whose names have interested me for a long time and I wanted to find out how these names originated. They are Bacchante and Inconstant Streets which are very unusual street names.

Firstly the name Bacchante was the name of a corvette, which was the Flagship in a detached Squadron of the British Navy which visited Sydney Harbour in 1881. The other street is Inconstant Street which ends at right angles into Bacchante Street. Inconstant was the name of another corvette which belonged in that squadron.

Three other corvettes in that squadron were used as names for other streets on the plan for "the village of Blackheath" submitted by the Surveyor W. Greaves to the Government of the time. Blackheath was gazetted as a village on 20th March 1885. These names were Carysfort, Cleopatra and Tourmaline. In recent years Tourmaline Street was renamed Park Avenue and the lane between that avenue and Govetts Leap Road is known as Tourmaline Lane.

The corvette Bacchante carried two midshipmen on that visit to Sydney Harbour. These midshipmen were Prince George, later King George V and his brother Prince Albert after whom Prince George Street and Clarence Road were named. Clarence Road which forms part of the boundary to the Gardens was named after Prince Albert who later became the Duke of Clarence.

Sonia Levitt

Well, we nearly had our hazard reduction burn done last month – although it would have been either because of a rogue bushfire or a back burn done by the RFS. The area on the far side of Ridgewell Road (outside the Gardens) has been burnt as part of the 'battle' to save Blackheath.

Well done the Firies!

Visitors to Campbell Rhododendron Gardens

– 2013 Open Days

Some of the ‘Home Towns’ of our many visitors included:

- **Blue Mountains** Blackheath, Blaxland, Hazelbrook, Katoomba, Lapstone, Lawson, Leura, Linden, Medlow Bath, Mount Riverview, Mount Victoria, Springwood, Wentworth Falls, Woodford
- **Sydney** Ashfield, Avalon, Balmain, Bankstown, Bardwell Park, Baulkham Hills, Bayview, Beacon Hill, Beecroft, Belfield, Bexley, Blacktown, Bondi Junction, Botany, Bronte, Burwood, Cabramatta, Campbelltown, Carlingford, Castle Hill, Chatswood, Cherrybrook, Chippendale, Clovelly, Cremorne, Cromer, Crows Nest, Curl Curl, Denistone West, Dolans Bay, Dover Heights, Dulwich Hill, Dural, Earlwood, Eastern Creek, Eastwood, Emu Plains, Engadine, Epping, Fairfield, Forestville, Frenchs Forest, Freshwater, Gladesville, Glebe, Glenhaven, Glenorie, Glenwood, Gordon, Harrington Park, Heathcote, Hornsby, Hunters Hill, Hurstville, Illawong, Ingleburn, Ingleside, Jannali, Kellyville, Kensington, Killara, Kings Langley, Kirrawee, Kirribilli, Kurrajong, Lane Cove, Little Bay, Liverpool, Longueville, Malabar, Manly, Maroubra, Marrickville, Miranda, Moorebank, Mosman, Mulgoa, Narrabeen, Northbridge, Northern Beaches, North Richmond, North Sydney, Oatlands, Oatley, Old Toongabbie, Paddington, Padstow, Palm Beach, Parramatta, Pemulwuy, Pennant Hills, Penrith, Petersham, Pymble, Pyrmont, Quakers Hill, Randwick, Richmond, Rose Bay, Roseville, Rossmore, Rozelle, Ryde, St Clair, St Ives, St Johns Park, St Marys, Seaforth, Silverdale, Stanhope Gardens, Stanmore, Strathfield, Sutherland, Taren Point, Thornleigh, Turramurra, Vacluse, Wahroonga, Waterfall, Wattle Grove, Waverton, West Pennant Hills, Willoughby, Woollahra, Woronora
- **NSW** Albury, Avoca, Bateau Bay, Bateman’s Bay, Bathurst, Bowral, Brunswick Heads, Byron Bay, Charlestown, Coolah, Cootamundra, Cordeaux Heights, Cowra, Dalmeny, Douglas Park, Dubbo, East Gosford, Edgeworth, Eleebana, Erina Heights, Fennell Bay, Glen Innes, Googong, Gosford, Grenfell, Hamilton, Kangaroo Valley, Killcare, Kulnura, Lambton Heights, Lismore, Lithgow, Little Hartley, Maitland, Merimbula, Morisset, Mt Warrigal, Mudgee, Murwillumbah, Narara, Narromine, Nelson Bay, Newcastle, Oberon, Ocean Shores, Orange, Parkes, Picton, Portland, Port Macquarie, Port Stephens, Queanbeyan, Redhead, Shellharbour, Smiths Lake, Tamworth, Tarana, Taree, Tenterfield, Trangie, Umina, Wallsend, Wamberal, Wollongong, Woy Woy, Wyoming
- **Interstate** **ACT** – Ainslie, Campbell, Gungahlin, Hughes, Isaacs, Kingston, Turner, Narrabundah, Macquarie, Melba, Nicholls, **Queensland** – Brisbane, Caloundra, Cashmere, Coolum, Ipswich, Mackay, Maroochydore, Oakey, Shailer Park, Toowoomba, Townsville, Twin Waters **South Australia** – Adelaide, Belair, Erindale, Glenelg, Largs Bay, Millicent, Modbury, Petrie, Port Pirie, West Lakes Shore **Victoria** – Beechworth, Brunswick, Ferntree Gully, Geelong, Horsham, Lara, Melbourne, Mirboo, Montmorency, Red Cliffs, Whittlesea, Wodonga **Western Australia** – Applecross, Beechboro, Burswood, Perth, Porongurup, St James, Warwick
- **Overseas** **Austria, Canada** (British Columbia (Montney, Vancouver, Vancouver Island), Manitoba, Toronto, Winnipeg), **China** (Guangzhou), **England** (Buckinghamshire (High Wycombe), Cambridgeshire (Cambridge), Cumbria (Wigton), Devon, Dorset (Sherborne), Hampshire (Alverstoke, New Forest, Winchester), Kent, Lancashire (Bolton, Lancaster, Liverpool), London (Hammersmith, Notting Hill, Potters Bar), Midlands, Nottingham, Oxford, Somerset (Taunton), Surrey (Blackheath, Guildford), Sussex (Brighton, Worthing), Wiltshire), **Finland** (Turku), **France** (Paris), **Germany** (Frankfurt, Mannheim, Munich, Munster, Thüringen), **Holland** (Eindhoven, Groningen, Rotterdam), **Ireland** (Dublin, Wexford), **Japan, New Zealand** (Auckland, Bay of Plenty, Christchurch, Nelson), **Norway** (Oslo), **Malaysia** (Kuala Lumpur), **Portugal** (Madeira Island), **Russia** (St Petersburg), **Scotland** (Gretna), **South Africa** (Durban, Johannesburg, Pretoria), **South Korea, Sweden** (Gothenburg, Stockholm), **Switzerland** (St Moritz, Zug, Zurich), **Ukraine, USA** (Arizona, California (Julian, La Mesa, Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Diego), Hawaii, Idaho (Boise, Meridian), Massachusetts (Boston), New Hampshire, New Jersey (Sedgefield), New York, Oregon, Virginia (Falls Church), Washington (Seattle)), **Vietnam, Wales**

Commemorative Plaques

Many Commemorative Plaques and Structures throughout the Gardens may be seen by visitors as they wander along the paths. Each one signifies a special event or it recognizes services given to the Rhododendron Society.

The first of these are the Entrance Gates which were a Blackheath Rotary Project in 1974. They were constructed by Phil Harris, a foundation member of the Rhododendron Society.

Another one is the Gazebo which was a gift from Harold and Alice Griffiths in the Bicentennial Year, 1988. A Plaque nearby contains a special Bicentennial Brick.

A stone Cairn and a Plaque celebrates the 20th Anniversary of the establishment of the Gardens in 1970; as well it recognizes the devoted work that Norm and Olive Campbell put into the Gardens.

Many other such Plaques and Structures will be found as one wanders through the gardens. Go have a look!

Sonia Levitt

Photos Required

Your Photos and Memorabilia of the Blue Mountains are Required

We are particularly interested in any items connected with the Blackheath Community Halls and surrounding areas. Nearly everyone has (or their relatives have) historical pictures and other items that show what the Blue Mountains were like, who lived there, and what they did at work or play.

A receipt will be issued for these items, stating whether they have been donated or on loan for copying. Any items donated or copied are being kept in a locked archive, available to the public on request. We guarantee the utmost security when returning or carefully copying any photos / posters etc.

The images will also be saved on disc within historical societies' archives.

Please contact Delia on 4787 7506 for further information or to arrange the pickup of items.

Delia

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.

Murray Bailey,	of Blackheath
Kerry Chater,	of Mount Victoria
Brian & Laraine Graham,	of Blackheath
Wayne Hanley,	of Blackheath
Bev McNeill,	of Blackheath
Jim Moorhead,	of Blackheath
Julie Nettleton,	of Blackheath

Many of these new members joined the Society during the Open Days, and some have already proved their worth by also joining the roster of volunteers we relied on so heavily during October & November.

Committee Responsibilities

The following responsibilities have been allocated:-

Jeannette Adrian	Survey / Plant labelling
Beryl Black	Archivist
Geoff Cannings	Building projects & Council liaison
David Cook	Electronics / Calendars
Marion Freidman	Membership / Librarian
Joan Hailstone	Insurances
Julia Hanley	President
Dick Harris	Garden Supervisor
Judy Johnston	Vice Pres / Speakers / Merchandising / Roster
Sonia Levitt	Vice Pres / Publicity
Alan Lush	Secretary / Website / Newsletter Editor
Diane Twose	Publicity
Val Moorhead	Treasurer / Public Officer

In addition, Bette Brown is our very popular Meeting Hostess.

Management Committee 2013 – 2014

President

Julia Hanley
4787 5728

Vice Presidents

Judy Johnston 4787 7298
Sonia Levitt 4787 5502

Garden Supervisor

Dick Harris

Secretary

Alan Lush
4787 6983

Treasurer

Val Moorhead
4787 8267

Membership Secretary

Marion Freidman
4787 8416

Committee Members Jeannette Adrian, Beryl Black, Geoff Cannings,
David Cook, Joan Hailstone, Diane Twose

Meeting Hostess Bette Brown

Editor/Webmaster Alan Lush

website – www.rhodogarden.org.au

**BLUE MOUNTAINS RHODODENDRON SOCIETY OF NSW INC
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