

Blue Mountains Rhododendron Society of New South Wales Inc.

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NEWSLETTER

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PO Box 238, Blackheath, 2785.

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

General Meeting Saturday 15 February 2014 at The Lodge 2:00 pm start

Guest Speaker

Sue Perkins

We are very pleased to have Sue Perkins, of Quincey Cottage at Medlow Bath, as our guest speaker for the first meeting of 2014.

Sue is Secretary, and founder, of the Cottage Garden Club which meets in Epping for all-day Saturday meetings on a quarterly basis. There are over 800 members of the Club and with this large number of possible travellers Sue is able to organise many interesting trips for the members. These trips vary from day and overnight trips around New South Wales, to several nights to Victoria, a week or so to New Zealand and three week tours to England for the Chelsea Flower Show.

Sue will talk about recent trips to Tasmania and a tour to England last year for the Centenary of the Chelsea Flower Show and hopefully have pictures to show. Her son Grant will also have cottage perennials to sell. He has only recently started a small nursery from Quincey Cottage in Medlow Bath.

Definitely not to be missed!

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.

Veronica Dallas, Blackheath,
Donald and Robyn Frame, Blackheath.

STRANGE THINGS IN THE GARDENS!?

About three months ago Dick Harris, our Garden Supervisor, showed me a strange creature he had found on one of the paths in the Gardens that morning. It seemed rather lost! It stands 50 centimetres tall having very long pointed ears and a slender body with thin arms and legs. It wears a bright red woolen outfit. Fellow volunteers in the Gardens decided it may be some type of
mountain devil.

A week or so later another volunteer reported discovering a huge nest that had been built up near the Wentworth Street gate to the Gardens. The materials this nest was made from looked quite ancient. Consultations with local "palaeontologists" decided that the nest had been built by a type of dinosaur which thrived in cool to cold climates and is known as a
Rhodosaurus.

These dinosaurs are believed to have been quite small, about the size of a woolly mammoth, and to be vegetarians. More recently a large white egg was discovered in the nest. It is fully intact and quite hard having become petrified with age.

And now one of the volunteers has reported discovering another nest like it between the Maple and Glade Walks!

What else may be discovered in these Gardens?
Sonia Levitt

From the President – Julia’s Jabber

Happy New Year to all members! I hope it is a good one for you all.

At the Gardens it will be a busy one. We have already begun the year with a “bang” by letting a contract for the building of the Lookout. This is well underway with footings laid before Christmas and by the time the next General Meeting takes place much of the steel framework should be erected. It is exciting to think that so many people will again be able to see right down into the Valley and enjoy the spring colour in all its glory.

Thank-you to those of you who took the time to fill in the survey sent out with the last newsletter. We had a number of interesting suggestions for activities and for ways to connect with our community. At the moment the Management Committee is working through a list comprising these suggestions and other items. We will make a priority list for action from these discussions. Please rest assured that all your suggestions are being considered. I am not promising that all will be enacted but many will be incorporated into more general activities. One suggestion of a “Library” section at each meeting will begin next meeting. We are currently updating some of our reference books. More at the meeting.....

In 2014 we look forward to welcoming more volunteers on Mondays to work in the Garden and particularly in October / November to help in the Lodge with the many tasks specific to the “Open Days”.

Looking forward to seeing you at the General Meeting on 15th February at 2:00pm.

Julia Hanley – President 2013-2014

Collectors’ Plants Fair

Sydney’s treasured gardening event, the Collectors’ Plant Fair, will be held on 12 & 13 April, 2014 at the Hawkesbury Race Club, Clarendon NSW.

Stalls are open 8am to 4pm Saturday,
9am to 4pm Sunday.

www.collectorsplantfair.com.au

Telephone (02) 4567 2026 for details.

Garden Report – January 2014

Since returning from our Christmas break it didn’t take long to get the Monday working bees going again. More dodder has been removed, a deal of follow-up weed spraying was done in the conifer garden area, as well as some cut & paint. One conifer that had been severely damaged some time ago and couldn’t be salvaged was cut down & stump treated. The Honeysuckle that covered part of this conifer was then poisoned. There is a large heap of old Pinus Radiata branches in a heap there as well as the large trunks of the tree. I am looking into options to remove them.

Peter Morey has another Wollemi Pine in a pot, & I thought this could go up in the conifer area. Unfortunately we haven’t been able to locate the watering point that is in the conifer garden area.

We have also trimmed back some of the conifers & removed some lower branches on some that had died back. We also removed several branches from high up on conifers that Endeavour Energy left after they cut them.

Fortunately over the Christmas break we had some rain, so I only had to water 3 times during this period.

The hazard reduction may be done this year – but Council (or the RFS?) would like a fire break put in along the Ridgewell Road fence line. (The fence will be fixed after the burn.)

Dick Harris – Garden Supervisor

Survey Feedback

The items raised in feedback to the Survey have been divided into 7 major categories, with some further division into sub-categories. The major categories are:

- Garden Development
- Activities to raise profile and funds / Publicity
- Education & training
- Building a modern organisation
- Electronic / digital systems
- Membership
- Volunteers

There has already been spirited committee discussion about the first two categories – with more to come!

Results will be advised in due course.

Beryl Black - Volunteer

(This is one of what will be an ongoing series, profiling Society people who may not be well known to some of our recent members, but who have played a significant role in the establishment of, and ongoing maintenance of, the Campbell Rhododendron Gardens.)

Beryl Black followed in her husband's footsteps and became a volunteer in the Campbell Rhododendron Gardens in the mid 1980s. She came whilst the original volunteers such as Norm and Olive Campbell, Bob Baker, Rachael Cleary and Ulli Englebert were present. These early volunteers were a friendly group who were dedicated and worked hard to fulfil their dream of establishing these gardens.

Beryl witnessed Bob Baker and Ulli Englebert and others making all the tracks and service roads. These were begun in the 1970s and building continued through into the 1980s when Beryl arrived. When she walks around the Gardens she marvels at "how these nurserymen conceived this idea and developed the gardens" and is overwhelmed at their success. She is amazed at "how the volunteers managed to water all the new plants with no running water – just buckets". Beryl doesn't want to forget how all this happened.

By the year 2000 many of these volunteers were no longer able to continue. For a few years the gardens did not have enough volunteers to maintain the gardens which went into some decline. However Beryl is delighted that a recent influx of new volunteers has "brought new life, enthusiasm, energy and happiness into the gardens". She is astounded at seeing so much commitment and passion amongst the new volunteers.

In 2000 when Norm Campbell wanted to remove boxes from his garage to have them sorted, Beryl found herself becoming an archivist for the gardens. Her niece, a librarian helped with the sorting of archival documents. She loves learning more about the history of these gardens from this work. For her long service and commitment to the gardens Beryl was made a life member at the AGM 2013.

Sonia Levitt

Society Supports Memorial Park Action Day

On a cold and damp day in November, over 100 people including community members, Rotarians, members of the Rural Fire Service, and volunteers from the defence force donned gardening gloves, wielded forks and spades, or pushed wheelbarrows in a clean up at the Memorial Park.

This was an initiative of the Blackheath Community Alliance in partnership with the Friends of Blackheath Pool & Memorial Park (FBP&MP). The aim was to get some over-due maintenance undertaken on the Park and this goal was well and truly met.

Organiser, Adele Coleman, said that the community response exceeded expectation, both in the terms of the degree of participation and the scale of work that was completed on the day. It was said that it was very clear that the community cares deeply about its Park and wants to see it in good condition, better condition ... and the community were prepared to put their spades to work to make this happen.

This event deserves to be highlighted. It demonstrates that community groups working together can pull together and get big things done. The Blackheath Community Alliance has made this achievement possible.

The Park clean up day also demonstrated clearly that the community will come together and work extremely hard for a community asset that they are proud of. Our community cares about its public infrastructure and will work hard to save it and keep it in good nick.

*Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre
BANC news – January 2014*

(Our own **Jeannette Adrian** was there ...)

Several Rhododendron Society members contributed to the concerted effort that achieved such wonders at the Memorial Park on 17 November 2013. They worked in areas around the duck pond, the playground and picnic area, the timbered slope to the north of the pool and along the paths bordered by rhododendrons.

The rhododendrons in this park were planted in 1920 in honour of each man from Blackheath who served in World War I. Being 90+ years old, several have reached jungle proportions. Removing jungle-sized weeds (blackberry, laurel, holly, ivy, thistles, etc) and fallen timber was a most satisfying occupation. More remains to be done, so maybe this will be an annual event?

Jeannette Adrian

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

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