

Blue Mountains Rhododendron Society of New South Wales Inc.

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NEWSLETTER

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PO Box 238 Blackheath 2785

GENERAL MEETING **Saturday 18th June 2016** **at The Lodge** **2.00pm start**

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

GUEST SPEAKER: Stuart Read

Stuart Read was fortunate to win an overseas fellowship from the Pratt Foundation/ International Specialised Skills Institute, travelling through Spain in 2005 studying the management of change in old and new parks and gardens. He led a tour of Spanish gardens for the Friends of the Historic Houses Trust of NSW, in 2010. Trained in science, amenity horticulture and landscape architecture in New Zealand, he has specialised since 1991 in working on Australian World, National and now NSW heritage areas. Stuart strives for acceptance of landscapes as a valid type of heritage place worth managing sensitively. Particular passions are lessons from historic gardens, tracing global plant movement, better management of cultural landscapes as part of our future identity and economy.

Annual Membership Fees Due

Please note that the ANNUAL Membership Renewal Fees are now due, so there will be an opportunity to pay early at this meeting.

From the President. Julia's Say.....

Autumn and its wonderful colours has nearly gone! We still seem to have warm days although the nights are cooler. The coloured leaves on the deciduous trees seemed to hang onto their twiglets for a long time, however many have now succumbed due to the recent high winds. Winter

and a resting time for the Gardens is on it's way. The Monday Volunteers will not be resting. They will be preparing the Garden paths, shrubs, trees and built structures for spring when our Gardens overflow with visitors from all parts of the world.

Very little has happened over the last few months in terms of progressing our main project, dare I mention the name.... the new toilet block!! We are still hopeful that all the necessary paperwork will be collected very soon and we can apply to Council for our DA. I feel that we will probably be putting the building of the toilet block off until after our Lodge Open Days late in 2016. I am hopeful that the sewer connection will be made before the spring visitors arrive.

We have not been sitting still and other projects have been progressed. We were fortunate to receive a bequest from a family who loved to visit the Gardens. This caused us to consider the importance of the Society having a clearly defined and stated Financial Investment policy. This has been written after much consultation and will now go to our honorary solicitor and an accountant for the final reading to make sure all is legal. This document is to be used to safeguard money coming to the Society and to make sure it works for us. It will sit beside the Constitution and the Governance Manual as the main administrative documents for the Society.

Other smaller projects are progressing well. The Committee will fill you in on these at the June meeting.

Our recent big success was the May 14th Seminar day which had the title "Change". There were around 60 participants who listened to a very interesting presentation by Wyn Jones about the changes we are experiencing in our climate and what we should be trying to grow in our gardens at the top of the mountains. Dick Harris told us anecdotes from the early days of the Gardens and illustrated the changes over the years with historical and modern day photos. People were fascinated by the changes, many had not heard the early history before. Jo Murphy treated us to "never seen in public before" photos of Mayfield Gardens as it was when the farm was purchased, glimpses of it's development over the years and told us of plans for the future. This is a garden in Oberon well worth a visit. We were sent home from the day with a smile on our faces by Myra Hutton and Sabine Erika who told us of changes in Blackheath. The Quota "ladies" made sure we were all well fed and "watered" throughout the day. A big thank-you to them and to all who helped set up and pack up and generally kept the day running smoothly. The lucky door prize of a beautiful book was won by Jim Moorhead.

Our June speaker will be very interesting so I hope to see as many of you as possible there.

Good wishes for the cooler months from Julia

Garden Report

Most of our time has been taken up with laying the new blue stripe pipe which has involved digging some 200 metres of trench, laying pipe on a bed of sand and covering it with sand before filling the trench with soil removed without any stones in it. This has also involved going under 3 paths which will now be repaired on Monday.

David Hellyer, the plumber, has connected the pipe at the meter and also to the lodge and the existing toilet. David is also putting in a tap near the fountain in front of the lodge to top up the ponds. I believe at least one of the ponds is leaking and when time permits we will re-seal these ponds. (At the meter a 50% water reduction valve has been installed.)

The way we have reconfigured the irrigation means that the blue line to the lodge and toilet, and later on the new toilet will always be live. Two

gate valves at the metre will control the reticulation to various parts of the gardens.

The Monday workers and I will discuss whether all gate valves should be turned off in this system as an added safety for leaks and turn on only those we need on a Monday.

While the above has occupied most of the male volunteers' time we have still had time for some general maintenance with most of this being done by our enthusiastic ladies.

Some waratahs will be planted on the far side of the drain in the valley which will start our revamp of the area for the Kovacs family. Some Camelia Reticulatas will be planted when we have finished the pipe laying. I am having trouble finding enough flat iron stone to do what I had planned to do in this area and may have to turn split sand stone. we must engage Tony Crawford to do the silt traps in the drain. We have got the red gum seat for this area and hopefully we can set it in position on Monday.

After all the above I think the volunteers deserve another B-B-Que soon to say Thanks.

(written by Dick Harris 13/5/16)

Project Report Toilet Block

No further progress on toilet block as we are still waiting on the following - additional information from the architect; advice from Sydney Water; and quotations from builders.

The architect advises that the information is ready we just haven't been able to obtain it yet.

We expect to hear from Sydney Water very soon.

A promised quotation from the builder has not been delivered yet. All of the above items are required before our DA can be submitted.

Earth Works - Silt Traps

Tony Crawford maintains that in heavy rain, the drain under the bridge on the fire trail cannot handle the volume and silt washes out onto the road and down through the Kovacs garden and into the lily pond. He suggested a mound above the bridge to keep water in the water course and one good trap just above the lily pond, plus another mound to direct water from the road into the silt trap. His quote for this is \$5,995,00 including GST

New Rhododendron Society Members

We warmly welcome three new members to our Society and we invite them to become involved in

the activities that the Society has to offer. Our new members are —

Edith Rewa Barrett - Blackheath
Fleur Maree Rappoport - Katoomba
Jacqueline Turner - Blackheath

REMINDER
Garden Club Weekend Coach Trip
Oct. 22-24 2016

One of our newsletters last year featured this Garden club Trip as an extra special one. There are **still a few seats available** so if you wish to go on this tour, contact Warren Boorman of the BM Garden Club Inc. soon for details and to make a booking.

The destination of this trip is the “Orange Citrus Sculpture and Garden Festival” in Griffith. The luxury coach sets off early on Saturday morning travelling down through Grenfell then to Griffith for a two night stay. The coach returns home via Young arriving home late Monday afternoon. Guided tours to 2 Festival Gardens, Calabria Family Winery, Citrus Sculpture display and other venues are included over the weekend.

Contact Warren Boorman on **4759 2149** or by email - **bevandwboorman@bigpond.com**

A Riddle

What can go up the chimney down and down the chimney down but can't go up the chimney up nor down the chimney up? Answer p. 3

The Legend of the Rhododendron

Based on a Nepalese Legend.

There was a time when marriage wasn't just for people — trees and shrubs got married too. But they don't any more and it's because of a tree that was too quick to judge a beautiful potential bride.

Fig cherished her role as matchmaker. Along every forest trail were dozens of happy couples she helped pair up. Alder was the only tree in the forest who wasn't in a relationship.

“Quick there is someone you just have to meet!”

“Not today”, Alder replied. “It's a beautiful spring day, I think I'm just going to sun myself.”

Alder was all about himself. His appearance mattered more to him than anything else.

Months later, after after seeing how happy everyone was, he thought perhaps it was time for him to settle down and plant roots, if you will. He thought again about fig's offer and decided to take her up on it.

“Sure I'll take you to see her,” Fig said. “Her name is Rhododendron.”

Rhododendron was by all means a catch. She had an absolutely beautiful soul and, and for part of the year, was one of the most beautiful things in the forest.

Winter, however, was not one of those times.

“I can't be seen with that! Alder exclaimed, pointing to her blackened leaves and decaying flowers. “I have an image to maintain”.

“You're making a huge mistake,” Fig said.

The following spring Alder and Fig were walking in the forest when alder was overcome by the beauty in front of him. He couldn't take his eyes off her vibrant scarlet blossoms. All the forest creatures we're surrounding her, singing about her beauty.

“Look at her. She's absolutely beautiful”, Alder exclaimed! I will marry her! Fig, make the arrangements!”

Then Rhododendron spoke up.

“I cannot marry you”, she said. “You rejected me last winter. I could never be with someone who has such a fickle heart”.

Distraught, Alder rushed to s bluff and threw himself off, landing in a deep ravine below.

That's why alder trees, even today, are typically found only in ravines — and why the forest will no longer trees to fall in love.

Riddle's answer - an umbrella.

Management Committee 2015 - 2016

President

Julia Hanley

4787 5728

Vice President

Deb Wells

4787 6724

Garden Supervisor

Dick Harris

Secretary

Anna Martin

0439 062 256

Treasurer

Val Moorehead

4787 8267

Membership Secretary

Bill Webster

4787 6082

Committee Members: Geoff Cannings, David Cook, Sonia Levitt, Judy Johnston.

Meeting Hostess: Joan Hailstone

Editor: Sonia Levitt

Website: www.rhodogarden.org.au

If you have any articles or news for the newsletter, please send to Sonia at salevitt13@bigpond.com. Thank-you



THE BLUE MOUNTAINS RHODODENDRON SOCIETY OF NSW INC

PO BOX 238, BLACKHEATH NSW 2785