

# Blue Mountains Rhododendron Society of New South Wales Inc.

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## NEWSLETTER

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PO Box 238, Blackheath, 2785.

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### **General Meeting**

**Saturday 17 April 2010 at  
The Lodge - 2pm start**

Of interest to all will be the speaker at the General Meeting,

**PETER BELSHAW,**

**Bushfire Management Officer at the Blue Mountains City Council since 2003,  
and a lifelong resident of the mountains, having grown up in the  
Glenbrook area and now residing in Hazelbrook.**

**Peter has a degree in natural resource management and subsequently studied bush regeneration in the late 1990s. He has worked in the bushland regeneration industry for over five years, helping to restore valuable bushland environments throughout the Blue Mountains and western Sydney.**

**In his role as Bushfire Management Officer he is responsible for strategic planning related to hazard reduction, fire trails and bushland access, as well as an involvement in coordinating Council's emergency response and emergency management programmes. He is also an active volunteer fire fighter with the Rural Fire Service, holding the rank of Deputy Captain with Wentworth Falls Rural Fire Brigade.**

**Peter's talk will cover topics such as:**

- **The role of fire as an ecological process, including benefits and threats**
- **Bushfire risk in the Blue Mountains and principles of its management**
- **The role of hazard reduction**
- **Land management - the manager's responsibilities and obligations**

**After his talk, Peter will welcome questions and discussion.**

**Afternoon tea will be served at the conclusion of the meeting.**

## *From the President - (Judy's Jottings)*

Dear Members,

Our leading celebration of 40 years' achievement was held on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> March, when the "Members' Native Walk" was opened officially by the immediate past president, Jeannette Adrian.

It was a perfect Autumn morning and a good crowd attended this event. Garden Supervisor Dick Harris and ex-president Ivan Menzies unveiled the new sign indicating the Presidents' Row, and I (as current president) planted a rhododendron 'Noyo Brave'.

Back at The Lodge we were addressed by Jeannette, Dick and Ivan, who attended with his wife Dorothy. After the buffet lunch which was provided by members, the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary cake, beautifully decorated by Lois Korendijk, was ceremoniously cut by Dick (who insisted on my help with this onerous task) and all lingered for a chat.

Let's make this a year of celebration and recognition of the work of volunteers past and present, with the firm expectation that the next forty years will be as successful and rewarding. This is a notable achievement for Blackheath!

The 27<sup>th</sup> March Working Bee at the Gardens was attended by 11 volunteers, most staying for lunch and continuing with the job of removing 'dodder' during the afternoon.

Many thanks to all.

Peter Belshaw's address at the 17<sup>th</sup> April meeting will be of great interest to members. Please come early, and enjoy a walk through the Autumn garden prior to the meeting.

*Judy Johnston - President*

### *New Members*

We warmly welcome the following new members and invite them to join in all the Society's activities:

Carol Whyte,	Wentworth Falls,
Karen Pearson,	Blackheath,
Fiona Garrod,	Blackheath,
Jacqui Turner,	Blackheath.

At our Autumn meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> April we will be pleased to introduce our many recent new members to the general membership. After the meeting we will serve our customary afternoon tea – a legend in the mountains!

### *Rainfall Comparison*

Unofficial rainfall figures for the area around the Gardens again appear to back up the statements made by a number of members that this year will be an even better year for flowering by the rhododendrons, because of the amount of rain in January and February when the buds were being set. Readings taken in Hat Hill Road showed a total of 550 mm for the two months, while in Evans Lookout Road 600 mm were recorded.

## *Obituary*

### **Margaret Joyce Brister (1916-2010)**

Joyce was born in North Sydney in 1916, the second daughter of Ben (a school teacher) and Daph Colditz, her sister Jean having been born two years earlier. When Joyce was six months old the family moved to Harden, where Sybil, another daughter, was born. After two years the family moved to Maitland and then to Taree, where the girls started school and Gordon was born, to complete the family.

Further moves were to Coraki on the Richmond River, for two years, and to Kyogle, for four years. During this period the family acquired a car and they travelled the length of the coastline from Port Macquarie to Coolangatta, camping for the whole of the school holidays. Joyce felt that these long holidays were influential in the shaping of her love for travel and her need for new places to live.

The family moved to Sydney, where the three girls attended St George Girls High, which was only five minutes walk from their home in Kogarah, and where Joyce finished as Dux of the school in 1933.

Winning a Teachers College Scholarship, she embarked on a Science Degree at Sydney University, including geology as a first year option as it involved excursions in its requirements. She graduated in 1939 with First Class Honours and the University Medal in Geology.

Joyce began teaching at Wellington High School, and a year later moved to Yass where she was the only science teacher. From there she was seconded to work with Professor W.R. Browne at Sydney University who was completing the definitive "Geology of Australia" by Edgeworth David. This posting lasted four years, during which she completed an MSc in Geology. She was then able to obtain a position as Lecturer in Micropetrology at Armidale University College, where she stayed for 18 months.

Having been introduced by a mutual friend to Lieutenant Arthur Brister of the Royal Navy while she was in Yass, and meeting him frequently over the next few years, Joyce sailed to England in 1947 to marry Arthur at Portsmouth. There she began her interest in gardening, with the advice of her father-in-law, a keen gardener.

After the birth of their three children, Joyce taught part-time for seven years until the family returned to Australia in 1966. She then returned to teaching science and maths full-time before becoming a lecturer in geology at the Sydney Teachers College. There she finished her career, retiring in 1976.

After retirement, while living in Turrumurra and Normanhurst, she proceeded to learn as much as possible about native plants and their propagation. She took an active interest in the Society for Growing Australian Plants, setting up an educational programme in the Kuringai Wildflower Garden, and becoming interested in Bushcare, which was then in its infancy.

When Arthur died in 1991 Joyce moved to Blackheath to a new house built behind the holiday home she had owned since 1974. Here she continued with the activities she had already established in Blackheath. She had been an active member of the Rhododendron Society since the early 1970s, and her Bushcare work continued at the Centenary Reserve where she had worked for over 20 years. Her plant propagation work was continued as an enthusiastic member of the team at the Blue Mountains Conservation Society's nursery at Blackheath in its early years. Teaching was not overlooked, for when she learnt of the U3A Joyce soon began teaching in environmental issues, which she did for several years.

While living in Sydney Joyce regularly attended Sydney Symphony Orchestra concerts, and opera and theatre performances. In the Mountains she also became a regular at the Orpheus Strings and the Blue Mountains Chamber Concerts in Blackheath. In addition, she became an active member of the Blue Mountains Historical Society and continued her interest in the National Trust.

Throughout her life Joyce travelled whenever possible; as a young woman she visited Central Australia in 1946 and when living in England she travelled throughout Europe. In retirement she was able to travel further and longer, including trips to Antarctica, Patagonia and Alaska. In more recent years she began cruising and travelled to Europe twice on the QE2 and around the Pacific for 2 ½ months in 2008.

Although small in stature, Joyce was always full of energy, stopping only briefly for a rest. She had great enthusiasm for life and for exploring the world. She kept up with modern technology, world events and national and local politics.

She had a strong work ethic which she has passed on to her three children and four grandchildren.

*(From the Blue Mountains Gazette, 10<sup>th</sup> March 2010)*

## *Garden Report –February 2010*

If we thought last Spring was a great show, just wait for next Spring – the flower bud set is huge. This has been achieved by the fertilizer program plus sunshine in between the rain at just the right time.

The weed program is on course; we had a lot of blackberries germinate in the area where we poisoned the hollies, etc. The seed was obviously lying dormant and when the light got in they germinated. These have been spot sprayed as they germinate and hopefully we can start rehabilitating this area in about May.

The Members' Native Walk is well under way with several plants put in and hopefully the rest will be planted Monday. We then have to put their names on for the opening on March 13<sup>th</sup>.

All the rain has been wonderful but it has given us a great deal of work clearing drains & fixing paths, etc. Also several Eucalypts, many quite large, have come down and we still have to cut up some of these.

With the good season the dreaded dodder has taken off and we have had to cut back some plants quite hard to get rid of it, and will have to continue this process in the Spring after flowering.

Once again, a big thanks to all our volunteers, and don't forget the Autumn working bee on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> March.

Unfortunately the lake is leaking, but with all the rain I will have to wait until the level goes way down before I put in more polymer.

*Dick Harris – Garden Supervisor*

### *Autumn Fundraiser*

A fundraiser was to have been held at the Gardens in April, in conjunction with the Blackheath Food & Wine Festival. However, as this festival has been cancelled, the fundraiser will now be a 'Musos in the Gardens' in early May. More details at the April General Meeting.

### *Help Wanted*

The Management Committee would like to obtain information on members of the Society from the early days, as part of a project to update the Society's archives. Any help from current members in providing this information would be greatly appreciated – just contact any of the committee.

<i>Management Committee 2009 - 2010</i>		
<i>President</i> Judy Johnston 47877298	<i>Vice Presidents</i> Rob Emanuel 0412 062 236 Alan Lush 47876983	<i>Garden Supervisor</i> Dick Harris
<i>Secretary</i> Alan Lush / Robert Reid	<i>Treasurer</i> Joan Hailstone 47875859	<i>Membership Secretary</i> Bette Brown 47876463
<i>Committee Members</i> Jeannette Adrian, Beryl Black, David Cook, Marion Friedman, Robert Reid <i>Editor</i> Alan Lush		