

Blue Mountains Rhododendron Society of New South Wales Inc.

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NEWSLETTER

Vol 42 No 2

P.O Box 238, Blackheath 2785

GENERAL MEETING
Saturday 16th APRIL 2016
The Lodge
2:00pm Start

Afternoon Tea will be served after the Meeting. Please bring a plate to share.
We welcome all members, especially those who have recently joined us.

GUEST SPEAKER: Dr Alan Lane

Dr Lane has led an active life in Blackheath since he retired as a microbiologist from CSIRO. In 1989 he began work on Bush Regeneration in Pope's Glen which was an overgrown patch of willows and invasive weeds. Since then he has led a dynamic group of volunteers in transforming this area into a vibrant native environment where over 55 species of native birds have been recorded.

He has completed a Masters Degree on frogs in the Upper Blue Mountains. His talk will give details about this work and it will be most informative as we have a number of frogs in our Rhododendron Gardens. His talk will be about
FROGS IN THE UPPER MOUNTAINS

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

The temperatures are lowering ...slowly... and soon we will be surrounded by colourful leaves hanging from the deciduous trees before falling to the ground to form a carpet through which it is great fun to "rustle" your feet! In the Gardens the leaves are beginning to turn their usual bright colours. There is a new track, Volunteers Way, which winds downhill from the Tool Shed. The It's with sadness that I need to tell you all of the deaths of two of our long time members, Nancy

Etccl and Isobel Page. Some of our members attended their funerals and commiserated with their families. Joan Hailstone has written about Nancy. Jeannette Adrian has written briefly about Isobel. These are included in this newsletter.

We have had several water leaks meaning a monster water bill and so will be replacing the water pipe from the metre to the Lodge. Planning for the renovation of the Kovac Garden, Pryor Bridge area of the valley is progressing. This will enhance the area most favoured by people seeking to have their wedding in the Gardens. Labelling of more rhododendrons is underway and natives around the Lodge and into the Valley have been identified and will be labelled asap. I have constructed a list with description, photo etc which will be available in the Lodge. There are over 50 species identified.

The endless saga of the sewer connection and toilet construction continues. We are still hopeful the project will be completed for Spring.... but don't hold your breath on that one!!

Planning for the Seminar on the 14th of May is completed; now we need to sell tickets! It should be a good day, full of interest and chat and of course good food provided by Quota Club. Please buy your ticket asap so, if necessary, we can advertise more widely. Our speaker list is looking

very interesting and varied so we hope you will all enjoy the topics chosen for the rest of the year.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at our April meeting to learn lots about our froggy friends!
From Julia

Membership

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

Penny Henderson Blackheath

Greg Borschmann Blackheath.

Garden Report

It has been a busy time for the last month due to water leaks which took some time to locate. These leaks were caused by the rural polythene pipe being backfilled with a deal of stone in the soil. When tree roots grow larger, the pipe was pushed against the stone in the soil and with water hammer the pipe rubs against the stones which eventually springs a leak. Both leaks have been fixed. Pressure reducing valves ordered should halve the pressure. Dick has ordered 4 x 50metre rolls of stripe poly pipe to replace the rural pipe from the meter to the lodge and toilets. All other rural pipes can be isolated with existing gate valves.

We have put wood chips on the Volunteers Way and part way through the Maple Walk and a tree was cleared from the Glade Walk and one that came down as well on the fire trail.

The girls have been busy cutting the spent agapanthus flowers as well as dodder in various areas. Geoff and Dick have taken out a huge amount of ivy and clematis around the Pryor Bridge area with still plenty more to go as well as montbretia.

Back to the water problem. Dick used Adams Shed to source the pipe and fittings in stock as the other suppliers couldn't understand what Dick wanted. Preparation for the new pipe has begun and should be completed in a couple of weeks.

Q. What does everyone have on one's face?
A. Tulips.

Inaugural Volunteers' B-B-Que

Many thanks to Elaine Cannings who thought of having a Volunteers' B B Que on 29th Feb. and for organising this event which was held in the Lodge. All enjoyed the tasty sausages and salads that were provided by members. There was much chatter and laughter as all enjoyed the great food. Thanks again to Elaine.

Future Events and Speakers

Seminar on "Changes". 14 May 2016, 9.00am to 3.00pm. **Wyn Jones** - "Changes in Climate and in our Gardens"; **Dick Harris** - "Looking back at changes in the Campbell Rhododendron Gardens"; **Mayfield Garden Manager** - A very big change; **Surprise Finale** - Changes in Life.

Gen. Meeting - 18th June 2016 at 2.00 pm - **Stuart Reid** - Heritage and Trees.

AGM - 20th August 2016 at 2.00 pm **TBA**.

Gen. Meeting - 17th Sept. at 2.00 pm **Rosemary McCall** - Past dean of Ryde Horticultural College.

Garden Lodge Open Days - 30Sept - 6 Nov.

Gen. Meeting - Christmas Luncheon.

Nancy Etccl Obituary 1931 to 2016

Soon after I became the Treasurer of the Blackheath Horticultural Society, their then Secretary, Nancy Etccl, bailed me up at one of the monthly meetings and said, "How would you like to be Treasurer of the Rhododendron Society?" I pointed out that, not only was I not a member, but did not know anyone, beside her, who was. "That's no problem", she said, "you just join – only cost you eleven dollars. I will organise your nomination. They're desperate!"

It did not take me long to realise that Nancy was a new broom who was dying to make some alterations and was facing a lot of opposition from members of long standing. The Society worked with a tight budget and Nancy was keen to introduce a few events to raise some funds. One I remember well was a bird-watching morning with Jill Dark, in fact I think we held them at least twice. They consisted of a ramble around the Gardens, commencing at 7:00am., with Jill pointing out and identifying the varied bird life we

are lucky to have in the Gardens, followed by breakfast, with Nancy manning a large barbeque, cooking sausages.

Nancy's committee meeting minutes were sometimes not quite verbatim, but they were always beautifully presented and very professional looking. She appeared to be very much the career woman, so I was very surprised to be told that she had eight children.

Nancy lived at No1 Great Western Highway, Mt. Victoria – entering and exiting her driveway was a hair-raising experience. She loved her house, built to her specifications, and even tolerated the wallabies that attacked any new plants she put in her garden. Her husband, Fred, was a tall, gentle man who smiled and supported her in whatever she wanted to do.

I believe Nancy was instrumental in persuading the Horticultural Society to move their monthly meetings from the Uniting Church Hall to The Lodge, further cementing the bonds between our two societies.

For sometime after she became Secretary, Nancy took on the task of editing and printing the Newsletter, and put a lot of her personality into each edition. During the annual Open Days she could be found in the kitchen preparing sandwiches. In the old kitchen that was, where all our workers turned out great food in absolute minimum workspace.

Nancy was in hospital and away from Mt. Victoria - Blackheath for long periods in the last few years, so many members may not remember her. In her heyday she was a driving force who got things done.

We shall miss her. **Vale Nancy Etccl.**

Vale – Margaret Isobel Page

Known as “Margaret” (with variations) among her family and as “Isobel” by her mountain friends, this most caring lady left us on 2nd March 2016 aged 91.

Born on 23rd August 1924 in Mungindi on the NSW/Qld border, Isobel was the only child of a Presbyterian minister, Rev. Baird. Her younger childhood was spent in various NSW country towns in accord with her father's postings until the family moved to Sydney where Isobel attended high school at PLC Croydon. She then trained as a nurse through Royal Prince Alfred Hospital.

Towards the end of WW2 Isobel met her future husband, a Royal Marine. Shortly after they married in early 1946 Sid had to return to England for demobilisation. Isobel was thus about one of about 640 Australian war-brides who sailed in HMAS Victorious to new homes in Britain.

In London the couple's first home was or had been owned by singer and entertainer Gracie Fields whose signature song was “Wish Me Luck As You Wave Me Goodbye” - fittingly played at the end of Isobel's funeral service.

A few years later and with two small children the family moved back to Australia and settled in Picton. Isobel's skills in handcrafts and gardening came to the fore. Two later children were born, and the family spent some time in Tasmania.

In later life Isobel made her life in Blackheath where she enjoyed the Blue Mountains climate. She became an active member of The Blackheath and District Horticultural Society supporting their annual flower shows and monthly meetings. She has been a long time member of our Rhododendron Society assisting on Open days at the Lodge until very recent years.

Isobel had many skills. She was a generous gardener, sharing her love of gardening with many others by gifts of plants, advice, or knowledge and practical tips. She read widely on philosophy, religions, meditation methods and healthy living; she was most artistic and found time for landscape painting, as well as other community efforts. She was part of the team painting the mural designed by Jenny Kee for Blackheath's Victory Theatre building. We will miss her kindness and her caring ways.

J. Adrian

Quotations

For in the nature of things, if we rightly consider, every tree is far more glorious than if it were made of gold or silver.

Martin Luther

The actual flower is the plants' highest fulfilment, and are not here exclusively for herbaria, country floras and plant geography: they are first of all for delight.
John Ruskin 1819 - 1900

Management Committee 2015 - 2016

President

Julia Hanley

4787 5728

Vice President

Deb Wells

47876724

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.
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