

# Blue Mountains Rhododendron Society of New South Wales Inc

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## MARCH / APRIL 2017 NEWSLETTER

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### GENERAL MEETING Saturday 22nd April 2017 The Lodge 2:00pm Start

**Afternoon Tea will be served after the Meeting. Please bring a plate to share.**

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#### **GUEST SPEAKER: Sonia Levitt**

Sonia was born in Java, Indonesia, to an Australian mother and a Danish father. Her father managed a rubber plantation, was captured by the Japanese and was made a POW. Sonia and her mother were left alone, trapped within enemy lines. Sonia's presentation is the story of her family's survival and their eventual rescue by two Australian soldiers. She is documenting the story and is planning to publish it.

Sonia attended Teachers' College in Brisbane and studied History and English at the University of Queensland where she gained a B.A. degree. She is one of our wonderful Monday workers.

Written by Deb Wells

#### **FROM THE PRESIDENT - Alan's Account**

Welcome from a very soggy Blackheath! Most of us up here at the top of the mountains, including at the Gardens, have waded through over 400 mm of rain during March (well over 16 inches on the old scale). While the Rhodos have said thank you for the watering, the rain has held up our major project for the year for a number of days. Luckily Julia has managed to get an extension to the date by which we can still qualify for the Community Partnership Building Program grant – the building must be

completed by the 30<sup>th</sup> June. As at the time of writing, the concrete slab for the new loos has been poured, with the bricklayers to start work during the first week in April. All the preparatory work has been completed, and the builder has contracted to finish all the work by the end of June.

Our 'annual' seminar was held in the Lodge in late March, with over 40 people present to hear three outstanding speakers on the topic of 'Creativity'. Paul Brinkman, the Director of the Cultural Centre spoke on 'Building a City of the Arts', which told of how the Mountains is becoming recognised world-wide as a place where the Arts are growing and flourishing. Greg Bourke, the Curator Manager at the Mt Tomah Botanic Garden showed how to 'Gain Creative Inspiration for Public and Private Gardens', with an excellent slide-show presentation of gardens both here and overseas. As the last presenter, Lindena Robb, a local Visual Artist and Performing Arts Teacher, talked about 'Inspiring Creative Expression'. This presentation was so thought provoking that many of those present just stayed in their seats at the end of it to discuss it with those around them.

Our thanks go to Julia, for her organisation of the seminar, to the three speakers, for their talks on three different aspects of creativity, and, last but not least, to the ladies from Quota, for the provision of what seemed like an endless supply of goodies for lunch, morning and afternoon tea.

Following some comments about the amount of noise sometimes emanating from the kitchen during meetings, the Society has installed a roller shutter at the counter – with the shutter down and the door closed the problem of noise should be solved. Fly screens will be installed on the five windows onto the verandah in the next few weeks to help alleviate one other problem – blow flies in the Lodge during the Open Days when the windows need to be opened.

As has occurred at the end of each previous president's reign, Julia planted her rhododendron in the Presidents' Row last month. Dick Harris thought the name of the rhodo said it all - "Our Gem". Long may it bloom.

Looking forward to seeing as many of our members as possible at the next meeting, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> April. Note – this is a week later than usual as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday is in the middle of the Easter weekend.

**Archivist wanted** - We are still looking for a member willing to become the Society's new archivist to tie over from Beryl Black. After many years in the position, sorting out the Society's history and documentation from the year dot, Beryl feels it is time to hand the duties over to someone else to carry on with the important task. If any member is interested in helping out the Society this way, please contact Alan or Julia.

Alan Lush. President 2016-17

## **FRIENDSHIP DAY**

From the Lithgow Garden Club

Just a friendly reminder about the friendship day being held at the Lithgow Workman's Club

on the **13th May**. This day is put on by the garden clubs of Australia Inc Blue Mountains Zone. It is a sit-down meal with the main speaker Costa Georgiadis from Gardening Australia. We would love to see as many people as possible to make the day a great success. **RSVP is 22nd April**. If you need any more information, please don't hesitate to ring me on phone no 63531596. Regards Barry Lawson.

## **GARDEN REPORT**

The weather has caused us to have extra work repairing tracks and clearing sticks, etc. off them. The drain from Wentworth Street washed away badly where the pipes go under the fire trail, and this was repaired by placing rocks around it on both the entrance and exit ends of the pipe. We also started to place rocks on the sides and bottom of the drain near the silt trap.

We built a mound on the bottom side of the fire trail to divert the water from rushing down where Endeavour Energy contractors have made such a mess and would have caused further damage to the area if more water raced down there. The contractors broke down the raised edge of the fire trail which had previously diverted water down to a drain.

I have rotary hoed and sowed some lawn seed in the Kovack area, and finished this on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> April. I have roped off this area to stop people walking over it.

We have, of course, been keeping on with the usual maintenance of dodder removal, weed spraying, chipping up fallen branches, etc.

Dick Harris, Garden Supervisor.

## **PROJECT REPORT**

The prolonged wet weather has unfortunately slowed the work on the new toilet block. A fence has been set up around the area. Concreting of the pathway and foundations have been finished and bollards have been installed.

The building sub-committee has agreed that it would be preferable for the eave at the front of the block to cover the full 1.6m of the path along the front of the block for better appearance and shelter. This will need a concealed beam and four posts for support and will be at a small extra cost (\$1,500 to \$2,000) but

worthwhile (an overhang of only 0.9 was designed by the architect.

We have also decided that a cove tile where the wall meets the floors will be another worthwhile extra expense as this will eliminate hard-to-clean sharp corners. The wall and floor tiles have been selected and fall within the builder's allowance.

The builder was not able to make the windows larger but has now substituted sliding windows to ensure maximum ventilation.

The old mulchers were well received by the Men's shed but they have only been able to get one of them working.

The sign that is on the Meet and Greet shed displaying our web site has been re-done.

As parts for the ride-on mower are no longer available, Delwin suggested we get a new shaft machined to match the old badly worn one and a new bush to suit. Dick has found a machinist in Lithgow who can do this for a cost of \$270.00. Delwin's costs will be about \$100.00. I feel it is necessary to have a back-up mower at such a small outlay as this repair has taken since November to get this far and without a mower to use, the grass would have been a jungle by now.

By Geoff Cannings

## Membership

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

Patricia Dee	Blackheath
Gina Lazzarini	Blackheath.

From Bill Webster

## OUR PROJECT MANAGER.

Geoff Cannings has worked very hard to have a new toilet block built. It has taken many months of planning. Despite prolonged wet weather it is now under construction. The photograph on the right shows the concrete slab for the accessible toilet block.

We thank Geoff for the many hours of planning and hard work.

**THANK YOU** very much.

## OOPS NO SWIMMING ALLOWED!!!

But we are not swimming!! One of us fell down the embankment and into the lake while removing dodder. The other had to climb a fence to help her out.



## AT LONG LAST THE NEW TOILET BLOCK IS BEING BUILT.



## Management Committee 2016 - 2017

**President**

Alan Lush  
4787 6983

**Vice President**

Deb Wells  
4787 6724

**Garden Supervisor**

Dick Harris

**Secretary**

Julia Hanley  
0408 336 635

**Treasurer**

Val Moorehead  
4787 8267

**Membership Secretary**

Bill Webster  
4787 6082

**Committee Members:** Geoff Cannings, Anna Martin, David Cook, Sonia Levitt, DiTiose, Brough Warren

**Meeting Hostess:** Joan Hailstone

**Editor:** Sonia Levitt

**Website:** [www.rhodogarden.org](http://www.rhodogarden.org)

If you have any articles or news for the newsletter, please send to Sonia at [salevitt13@bigpond.com](mailto:salevitt13@bigpond.com).  
Thank-you



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