

# Blue Mountains Rhododendron Society of New South Wales Inc.

Inaugurated April 2nd 1969

## September/October 2015 NEWSLETTER

Vol. 41 No. 5

PO Box 238 Blackheath 2785

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### GENERAL MEETING Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2015 at The Lodge 2.00pm start

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

Because of the Open Days throughout October and during early November, the usual bi-monthly meeting has been brought forward to 19th September.

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#### Election of Management Committee for 2015 - 2016

At the Annual General Meeting of the Society, held at the Lodge on Saturday 15th August 2015, the following members were elected for the coming twelve months.

**President** - Julia Hanley

**Vice President** - Deb Wells

**Secretary** - Anna Martin

**Treasurer** - Val Moorhead

**Membership Secretary** - Bill Webster

#### Committee Members -

Geoff Cannings

David Cook

Dick Harris

Sonia Levitt

Judy Johnston

**Our thanks go to Peter Reeve**, for being our Guest Speaker at the AGM. We were thoroughly absorbed in his informative and fascinating history of the Hydro Majestic at Medlow Bath. We also thank him for being the Returning Officer during the election of the new Committee.

#### 19<sup>th</sup> September Guest Speaker

**Michael Carle**

Michael is the Coordinator of Ornamental and Design and also manages the nursery at the Blue Mountains Botanical Garden, Mount Tomah. He has collected rare cool climate plants for over 30 years and has also dabbled in plant breeding. He has overseen and developed several major constructed landscapes and has also been responsible for the BMBGMT's iconic element, basalt walls.

The title of his talk is, "**Story telling using garden displays at the Blue Mountains Botanic Garden.**"

#### 2016 Calendars

**Don't forget** - our magnificent 2016 Calendars produced by **David Cook** and **Jimmy Lim** are on sale at a cost of \$8.00 each. For those members unable to pick them up at the Lodge, we can post one out to you at a total cost of \$12.00 (which includes postage). Just send your details (and a cheque) to: **Blue Mountains Rhododendron Society, P. O. Box 238, Blackheath, NSW 2785.**

## Julia's Say

Hi all members, Spring is nearly here! The Seta Rhododendrons are flowering. The pink Christmas Cheer, and red Cornubia are beginning to flower. Yellow daffodils are also making the gardens look brighter.

This emerging colour makes me realise that the "Open Days" will soon be upon us.

Please will all members try to find some time to do a shift on the roster for the Open Days. If we have lots of volunteers helping the load is less for all! We have a great time working in a beautiful setting, with interesting people and for such a worthwhile cause.

There will be sign up sheets at the September meeting.

Please contact me on 0408 336 635 or Deb Wells on **0418 622 307**.

Looking forward to seeing you all at the September meeting. from Julia

## BMRS President's report for 2014 – 2015

It gives me great pleasure to report on the many and varied activities of the Society over the last twelve months.

What a year it has been! We have been busy!

Last September we officially opened the Dick Harris lookout with a great crowd of members and interested locals making it a very successful day. Graham Ross entered into the spirit of the day and gave two speeches. One highlighting his association with Dick as he opened the Lookout and his very interesting presentation which gave us an insight into his life as a teacher, radio and TV presenter.

We have had very interesting speakers at each of our meetings this year which have been well attended by members.

The Open Days raised a record amount of money despite the 3 days we were closed for "snow". My thanks go to all who helped on the various rosters. The more people who help over these crucial 6 weeks the easier the task is. Many of our visitors commented on the views from the Lookout and were pleased they had such a vantage point instead of having to walk down into the valley.

The calendars were a great success, I think only 30 were left at the end of the year and most of those were sold early in 2015. The tea towels are slower to disappear but feedback tells us they are appreciated for presents.

In March we held a very successful Seminar Day. The theme was "Grand Designs". We had nearly 50 people attend even though there was an election held that day and there were at least 8 other activities in the local vicinity! Quota catered generously for the day and Kevin McLeod sent an encouraging message.

Throughout the last 12 months a group of us has been working on a revision of the Constitution. We needed to

make sure it reflected all of our activities and policies and that it complied with the 2009 Incorporation Act. A number of other people acted as readers and all the members were given a chance to vote for the completed Constitution's adoption. Special thanks to John Chapman, who is our Honorary Solicitor. He spent many hours helping me with final wording, ensuring the document was consistent, as it is an amalgam of our original Constitution and the 2009 Model. He also worked as a co-ordinator between the Society and a potential benefactor. Thanks also to all of those who were involved in developing the revised constitution, to all those who voted in the postal referendum and to Pat, the Returning Officer and Wayne, the Scrutineer. It was pleasing to see the referendum passed convincingly. Now we await approval from the Dept of Fair Trading.

Sonia has been extremely busy with publicity. We are now mentioned on many websites, we even have a Geo cache which brings people from overseas who enjoy "an officially recognised, high-tech treasure hunt". The Committee have spent some money on advertisements in magazines such as the latest Discover Blue Mountains and Gardening Australia. We are also included in two new Mountains brochures, The BMACHO Greater Blue Mountains Heritage Trail and the Garden Trail. Both these brochures will be widely distributed.

Our fliers are now in many more local businesses and we feel our Open Day posters will be eye catching.

The posters have illustrations that were painted by the students from Blackheath Public School. We set up a competition, the idea of a society member, to try and involve the community in general through their children and to perhaps spark more community interest in the Rhodo Gardens. The four winners paintings are on the four posters to be used to advertise our Open Days. Next Monday the judge, Nancy Sarno and I will attend a general assembly at the school and award \$20.00 book vouchers to the 4 winners. We hope to display all the works of art in various shops around the town and in the Lodge.

Website revision & feedback.

During 2015 Marius Coomans has revised our website. It is now compatible with smart phones and tablets. I hope you have all visited it.

The feedback about current usage is as follows...

Sessions 1699 (1000) +69.9%

Users 1342 (858) +56%

Pageviews 10,757 (2825) a 277% increase.

Another measure is the bounce rate (users who leave after seeing just one page). That used to be 47.2% it is now 5.8%.

While we pay Marius a small stipend he gives us very generous hours of support for our money.

One of our "First World Problems" is mobile phone access in the Lodge. We are also endeavouring to find a solution to the cashless society. To this end I have applied to the Advocacy Board of Telstra to have them sponsor a Smart Antenna. I'm told this will give us mobile phone coverage in the Lodge. Generally we can cope without this access but now-a-days people can transfer money via their phones to our bank account. We will also be able to operate the Bendigo Bank

Eftpost machine which we have on loan from them for a couple of weeks during the Open Days..

We are trying to make firmer links with our community. Jeannette Adrian and Marion Freidman attend the Blackheath Alliance meetings on our behalf. This body is highly supportive of our activities. The calendars are sold in various outlets on the basis that we both benefit from their sale. The poster competition, I hope, will bring more families to the Lodge and to the various businesses looking for the children's art work. We have a strong connection with Kerry and Dale at The New Ivanhoe Hotel. They allow us to place our banner on their fence for 6 weeks and give us good prices for wine when we need it. We attend various RSL activities and give book vouchers to the school. During Open Days Michael of the Friendly Grocer and Lim of the Patisserie help us with supplies. The GCA Blue Mountains Zone seems to enjoy using our Lodge for their meetings as do the Red Cross and the Horticultural Society.

A heart felt public thanks to the many volunteers who support us and carry out invaluable work. Without these people this society would not be able to maintain our unique gardens which are playing an ever increasing role in attracting visitors to our region. The Monday workers, ably led by Garden Supervisor, Dick Harris, have had a frustrating time tidying up after weather events! However Dick has many ideas for new developments within the gardens which will keep us all busy in the months ahead. Those who help us during the Open days play a pivotal role in raising money for the continued maintenance of the gardens. There are also many who help in incidental ways. I wish to recognise you all and encourage others to join the happy band!!!!

Finally but by no means least my thanks to all on the Management Committee. They all do the most amazing job of keeping the Society moving forward while fulfilling the many roles necessary to run the Society and maintain the gardens. There are three people moving off the committee, Alan, Joan and Marion; a special thanks to them for all their hours of service to the Society over a number of years.

We now have a number of people who have moved off the committee but are still carrying out important jobs for the Society and and who feed their progress into committee meetings. These people are Beryl Black in the archives, Jeanette Adrian for the ongoing garden survey and purchasing of consumables, Alan who will continue to engrave plant signs etc. Marion will be Librarian and Joan will be Meeting Hostess.

We look forward to completing some existing tasks and commencing new projects in the year 2015 - 2016.

## Garden Report By Dick Harris

Much tidying up and many improvements have been made and will continue to be made in preparation for the Open Days in a few weeks time.

Variiegated Buxus have been planted in front of the Lodge. Paths and tracks have been regularly checked for dead branches as a result of the bad weather. Some

dead trees have been taken down and we have finished removing dead wood from rhododendrons along the Quota Walk.

We have tidied up the edge of the lake near the road where the azaleas had become overgrown.

Dead rhododendrons have been removed from Centenary Walk and replacements have been ordered from Batlow. Some varieties were not available so I have chosen replacements.

There has been ongoing removal of dodder and other weeds etc near azaleas and rhododendrons.

The recent freeze plus a piece of pipe between 2 joints that was a little short caused a leak which has been fixed. The downpipe from the library was blocked and has been cleared. I have removed some small stumps that were traps and could have caused a fall along the path to the water metre.

Other tidying up has also been done.

**Old and new views:** A comparison showing how far the gardens have developed. Looking up hill towards the entry gates. Top photo late 1974, bottom photo 2015



**A Mystery:** We need to know the identity of a couple of people who renewed their membership by direct deposit into our CBA bank account. We have no record of who you are as no name was entered into the "description" box. Please contact the Lodge on 4787 8965 to tell us who you are so we can add you to the membership list!!

**Management Committee 2015-2016**

**President**  
Julia Hanley

**Vice President**  
Deb Wells

**Garden Supervisor**  
Dick Harris

**Secretary**  
Anna Martin

**Treasurer**  
Val Moorhead

**Membership Secretary**  
Bill Webster

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

**Meeting Hostess:** Joan Hailstone

**Editor:** Sonia Levitt

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



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