



Southern Highlands
Botanic Gardens

OPERCULUM

March 2019

5 MAGNIFICENT GARDENS OPEN ON THE PLANT FAIR WEEKEND



Bangala

A plant collectors garden surrounding a restored 1930's residence abounds with many treasures. The current owners bought the house in its 1 acre setting in 2007 and undertook extensive restoration. The work was recognized with a heritage award from the Shire Council in 2011. Having completed the work on the house, work was started on the garden. Apart from a few established trees, such as maples at the rear and Pin oak and Macrocarpa in the front, the garden is relatively young but now looks surprisingly established.

The owner's aim was always to develop a garden that suited the Arts and Crafts character of the house. The garden abounds with rare and unusual perennials and an extensive collection of hydrangeas.



Wirreanda

An extensive and detailed 2 acre town garden set around a 1960's house with rural views. The front garden comprises a number of mature exotic trees from the original '68 plantings along with a range of eucalypts. The current owners have used these "bones" to flesh out the garden with an extensive planting of shrubs, new trees and perennials, adding dry stone walls and stone edges. The gentle curves of the garden juxtaposed against the rectangular lines of the house. The rear garden a mix of exotics planted around many of the original eucalypts and other indigenous trees.

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Timbarra

This town garden is the culmination of 40 years of earnest gardening dedication and plant collecting.

The house, driveway and early garden beds were planned around the existing large Eucalyptus radiata trees. Deciduous trees for autumn and spring colour were added, as were evergreen shrubs. The design was informal with specimen trees planted around the circular driveway and a courtyard behind the house.

The house and garden have been substantially renovated over the last 10 years, with the removal of several large eucalypts creating the opportunity for a redesign of the rear space making formal and informal areas. The land has been terraced with hedges separating the various garden rooms adding different areas of interest in every area. A truly delightful garden.



Gowan Brae

A large town garden famous for its roses and perennials. The Cants have created a classic English-style plant lovers' garden. Skilful plantings of harmonious colours and rich textures have created mixed borders that surround a croquet lawn, drifting apparently effortlessly from one colour theme to another.

Towards the back of the property is the woodland garden, which features mature eucalypts underplanted with European woodland species, ferns and Australian natives. The shade of the woodland garden provides a contrast to the light-filled borders and lawns. The removal of a large row of pines several years ago created new opportunities along the eastern boundary which blends effortlessly into the overall garden scheme. The garden has been masterfully planted so that even the most tricky cold and moisture-loving species flourish in the harsh Australian conditions.

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Rotherwood

An outstanding 20 acre rural garden surrounding an 1880's homestead renovated 12 years ago. This grand country house (circa 1890) was built by Christopher Bennett, Sydney newspaper proprietor. When the current owner and his late wife bought the property in 2004, Howard Tanner was commissioned to bring his expertise to the redesign. The house set on 100-acres of prime grazing land at Sutton Forest has 5 acres of gardens and lawns with magnificent old specimen trees.

The brick gate lodge is the only building visible from the road—a striking building with its slate roof and Tudor-style battens. One of the new additions to the garden is the walled vegetable garden with a central fountain and 12 garden beds. At the corner of this walled area is a completely restored glasshouse with the original metal parts but 21st century glass technology on the roof.

Chairman's Column

As gardeners we are able to withstand a deluge of rain (unfortunately not this year) or 40 degree heat and think nothing of it. Grab a raincoat, gumboots, a sun hat, some insect repellent for the bull ants and off we go!

It is a hard message to convey to children with conditions like these that gardening is fun (and addictive)! Children are the future of our gardens, so it is important we encourage them to participate.

With local schools now asking to visit the gardens on a regular basis, we desperately need a place for them out of the weather.

Our project this year is to construct the **Education Centre**.



Our DA is approved, but we do not have the money to construct. Please consider donating to our building appeal.

Information can be found at shbg.com.au/donations/building-fund/

We are also looking for volunteers to help with our visiting schools. Please contact us if you would like to Volunteer.

Autumn Plant Fair

We look forward to a new format for the plant fair next month, with 16 visiting stallholders plus our own superb quality plants grown by our Plant Growers Group. A number of local nurseries, plus nurseries from Sydney, the Blue Mountains, Victoria and even Adelaide will be offering plants for sale including rare South African bulbs, beautiful maples, hardy plants grown in the Highlands and tough drought tolerant flowering plants from Canowindra. This year we have expanded to include landscape art and sculpture curated by John Brain of Bespoke Art Gallery, Bowral.

Also new this year is the hospitality tent sponsored by YES events, offering a greater range of refreshments and a place to rest while enjoying a glass of wine, beer or just a coffee while you listen to the garden talks.

\$10 entry to each garden & the fair or \$35 entry to all 5 gardens & the fair. Book at shbg.com.au/open-gardens-plant-fair/

EARTH HOUR

A big event that should not be missed will be held at the Garden on 30 March.

Earth Hour in 2019 will be quite different from the 2018 event, which focussed on art and solar lighting. This year we have an even bigger focus on solar lighting and will be attempting a world record for the largest display of solar lanterns at a single venue.

The other very exciting part of the night is for everyone to be part of the giant solar powered footprint in the Southern Highlands. We would like all our visitors to form part of this footprint holding their solar light. It will be great fun.

Other activities on the night will include a range of local renewable energy displays that you can talk to and the University of Wollongong's futuristic sustainable home that you can look at. There will be a kids' solar lantern making workshop, guest speakers, live music, a BBQ and bar.

Everyone is welcome to bring a picnic and enjoy the fun on the night.

Lights will go out at 7.30pm for Earth Hour and a drone will take photographs of the giant solar light display that will be attempting a world record for the largest display of solar lanterns at a single venue. Entry is free but your donation will be very welcome. It would also be helpful if you registered your intention to attend - it will help us to anticipate and cater for the numbers.

Kids 4 -10 who plan to attend the lantern making workshop need to book by going to www.shbg.com.au/event/lantern-making-workshop/ and pay a \$5 + booking fee which includes the provision of all materials. Then they can join in the lantern parade just before 'lights out'. Come along and share the fun.

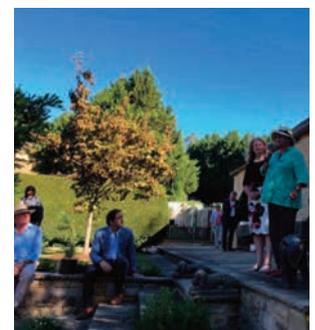
FUNDRAISER AT OLDBURY

About 150 people came to support our fundraising event at Oldbury on Sunday, 3 March. The event was held to launch a Building Fund to pay for the construction of our Education Centre, which will be located next to the existing Shed and used for a huge range of education purposes, together with community activities.

David Newby kindly offered his garden at *Oldbury* for SHBG to hold this event. He welcomed the milling crowd and gave us a short but fascinating history of *Oldbury* and its relationship with Louisa Atkinson, whose work inspired the SHBG design for the proposed Fern Garden. He also talked about the close relationship between SHBG and *The Australian School of Gardening* and how these two organisations complement each other. Charlie Albone, our loyal supporter, said a few words of praise for the Education Centre and told how his kids learn from their early experiences at gardens. Charlotte outlined the need for the Education Centre and how this would be a big boost to SHBG, especially when it is open to the community on a more regular basis. The wonderful background music of Darren Powell added another dimension to everyone's happy mood.

The weather was beautifully balmy, the setting gorgeous and the atmosphere was one of everyone having a good time. Some with drink in hand took the rare opportunity to stroll around the *Oldbury* garden. During the afternoon, people wandered to the information table and asked more about the Education Centre and the Garden itself and took away brochures and pamphlets that tell them how to support this important next step in the development of the Garden. What a great success!

A big THANKYOU to all those who volunteered to make this such a successful event. We raised over \$6,000 on the night and have kicked off the Building Fund with a number of donations already made. But the big funding has just begun and will continue until the Education Centre is fully funded. So your donation, large or small, would greatly assist.



OUR NEW CEO & ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANT

I'm sure you will agree that it is great news that Charlotte has been appointed as CEO of the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens. This arose from the generosity of The Paul Ramsay Foundation, who funded this three day a week position. Charlotte will still stay on as Chairman and she will report to the board on her role as CEO.

The appointment gives Charlotte the opportunity to focus much more on setting up the Garden to become more operational; opening the Garden to the public more frequently ; getting the nursery flourishing; registering a couple more collections and getting more working bees off the ground. Apart from 'hands on' in the Garden itself, there is much background work that is overdue. This is work you can't see on a day-to-day basis, like the website overhaul; data management; filing and archiving; establishing procedures; developing marketing brochures and flyers; finalising the education program; contacting more local businesses to become partners with SHBG; increasing community engagement; putting on more events; increasing the number of Friends; expanding the newsletter circulation - the list goes on & on...

It is therefore no surprise that all this work can't be done by one person and thus we have hired a part-time Administration Officer, again with the financial support of The Paul Ramsay Foundation. Anne Kragh has just taken up this role and we look forward to working with her. Anne, who was a former librarian and teacher, has recently retired and has lived in the Highlands for some years. She is good fun and we are sure you will enjoy meeting her.

Congratulations to Charlotte and Anne – and to SHBG for making this big step into the future.

NURSERY MANAGER

What a find Margaret Roberts is!

Margaret is a horticulturalist and our new and very enthusiastic SHBG nursery manager. Margaret is volunteering her time to get all the plants in the nursery into tip-top condition by the end of April. Our DA for the retail nursery is still struggling to be finalised and, in the meantime, the Autumn Plant Fair is the target for the next big sale.

The Fair this year will have a very different format to its previous eight year history. Around 18 other selected and specialist nurseries from around NSW, Victoria and locally are coming that weekend to sell their high-quality plants at our Fair. The competition will be strong. Margaret is passionately working towards getting SHBG's nursery plants into perfect condition so we can compete with our guest nurseries. She and Charlotte have set a very high bar and Margaret is determined to meet it and to make us all very proud.

She is essentially directing the volunteer workforce, who keep coming in droves, to help with the potting up, making sure all the plants are happy, healthy and weed free. Working bees will continue every Tuesday until the end of April and there may be extra sessions added. Margaret is happy to teach you what to do and how to do it.

Margaret just loves pots. Her garden, which is featured in Highlife in Dec/Jan 2019 (worth a read), comprises almost 2,000 pots. Her pots are of wonderful shapes, sizes and materials and the plants are chosen to suit their port. She is perfect for this job. Welcome Margaret!



LEISURE AND TRAVEL EXPO

We had a great day show-casing the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens at the Mittagong RSL on Wednesday 13 February. Our display was 'manned' during the day by Maureen, Tony, Shandra, Chris and Charlotte. Lots of people stopped by and took an interest in the Garden and took away forms to become a Friend. Our flyers were popular, and many people got into a discussion about what the Garden has to offer the community. Many were interested in when the Gardens are open to the public. Now that we have a CEO working 3 days a week, the Garden is open 3 days each week. This is the first time we have participated in the Expo. It was a valuable experience and we will definitely do it again.



MEETING THE CANDIDATES

Everyone knows there are a couple of elections coming up - the NSW State election in March and the Federal election in May.

We have been taking advantage of this pre-election frenzy by meeting with many of the candidates in both the NSW seat of Wollondilly and the Federal seat of Whitlam. The aim, of course, is to raise the profile of SHBG in the minds of any candidate who might be elected

The incumbent in Wollondilly is Jai Rowell, who has stepped down. So, we met with Liberal candidate, Nathaniel Smith; the Labour candidate, Jo-Ann Davidson; and the Independent candidate, Judy Hannan. We also met with Stephen Jones, the Whitlam incumbent.

Farther afield, we have met with Ursula Stephens, the Labour candidate for the NSW seat of Goulburn, bearing in mind that Pru Goward is also stepping down. Although the seat of Goulburn is not the electorate in which the Garden is situated, many of our Friends live in that electorate. We met with NSW Senator Kristina Keneally.

At these meetings, we have discussed ways in which government can assist in funding the establishment of the Garden. We can't expect full funding to be made by any government, but if we make ourselves known to those who get elected, it can't harm our profile and their support could be a positive help down the track. It is also useful for us to learn the ways they may be able to help. We continue to live in hope.



Working Bees

Each Tuesday until the end of April

10am - noon

then

First Tuesday of the month 10am -12noon

Wear comfortable clothes, hat & gloves

Enjoy a friendly chat over a cup of tea.

Nursery Working Bees

Every Tuesday morning 10am -12noon

3rd Wednesday afternoon of every month

2pm - 4pm

Thank you in advance for your support - it is always appreciated

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

March 30 5.30- 9pm

Earth hour celebrations in the Gardens, including Children's Solar Lantern making workshop.

April 27 & 28 9am - 4pm

Autumn Open Garden & Plant Fair weekend

May 26 - 11am - 2pm

Music in the gardens

July 28 - Corrective Tree Pruning Workshop, in conjunction with *The Australian School of Gardening*

August 18 - Kite Flying Workshop

October 27 - Plant stall at Harper's Mansion Plant Fair, Berrima

HELPING WITH CHILDREN

We are calling for Volunteers to help with the children visiting and working at the Garden.

If you would like to become involved with these new enthusiastic supporters, you will need to get a **Working With Children Check** which is **free** and then register the number with SHBG.

It is easy to register.

Log on to the website:

<https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/apply-working-children-check>

and follow the links to apply.

Then go to the Service NSW office in Mittagong to show your photo ID and your Notification will come through in a couple of hours.

Forward the approval number and your date of birth to info@SHBG.com.au. for the register

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Next Operculum due to be published in June
Deadline for articles & photographs

1st May

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