

Operculum: An *operculum* is the little cap on a eucalypt flower bud which is formed from the fused petals and sepals. When the cap comes off, the flower appears with the unfurling of the stamen. Like that operculum, this newsletter will reveal the news and activities of the SHBG as they unfold.

Opening of the Amenities Block

The past year has seen significant progress towards realising the establishment of the South Highlands Botanic Gardens. The SHBG was *launched* in September 2010, with the *official opening of the site*, also by NSW Governor Professor Marie Bashir, in December 2013.

In June last year Wingecarribee Council leased the site to the SHBG and the area was fenced. Less than a year later, on April 8th 2016, more than 100 people gathered on a cloudy day for the official opening of the new amenities block and the unveiling of another section of inscribed pavers.

The formal opening was performed by Jai Rowell, Member for Wollondilly. The official party also included Wingecarribee Mayor Larry Whipper, Berrima Rotary President Allen Cupitt, IMB Bowral Manager Di Manley and SHBG Chairman Charlotte Webb.



MP Jai Rowell,
Mayor Larry
Whipper,
Berrima Rotary
President Allen
Cupitt, IMB
Bowral Manager
Di Manley and
SHBG Chairman
Charlotte Webb

While the completion of the amenities block is a milestone, what it enables the SHBG to do is far greater. This facility will now allow SHBG to fulfil its education role. It will now be possible to host workshops and field days, especially for school groups. As is often noted, it will be the children of today who will be able to fully enjoy the Gardens as it matures over the coming decades.

The generous financial support by the NSW State Government, Wingecarribee Shire Council, Rotary and IMB and the services provided by Home Hardware, Beaumont Tiles and Argyle Landscaping was also recognised at the ceremony.

The SHBG is a community based Botanical Garden and the involvement of so many local organisations and businesses is at the heart of its development. The

continued support from a range of government, commercial and community groups, supplemented by the excellent work done by many individual volunteers and donors, will ensure the completion of the dream so passionately supported by so many.

At the completion of the day, SHBG Chairman Charlotte Webb commented: "So many people complimented our achievements in the garden. I thought many of our volunteers looked like they were bursting with pride at being able to show off 'their garden'. It was lovely to see all those involved in the inscribed pavers project connecting with their pavers."

Thank you to Meg Probyn

Meg Probyn has edited the Operculum newsletter of the SHBG for the last 5 years. She has done a great job in producing such an interesting and informative publication. As she passes these duties over to Susan Hand, I'm sure we all offer our thanks for everything Meg has done and wish her well for the future.

Autumn Open Gardens Weekend

The Autumn Open Gardens Weekend (April 23rd & 24th) is the major annual fundraiser for SHBG. The weekend provided a wonderful opportunity for locals and visitors to experience the beauty of cool climate gardens in autumn – and to buy locally grown plants.

This year Les Musgrave designed a wonderful display for Bowral Bookshop promoting autumn gardens and in particular our Autumn Open Gardens weekend.



The annual Plant Fair was held at the SHBG for the first time this year. There was already a queue outside even before the gates opened at 9am!



Although Saturday was cool and cloudy, the queue at the gate was an early sign of how bright the weekend would become. Eastdene at Bundanoon, for example, ran out of tickets. Many of the gardens had people arriving early and also arriving right up to, and in some cases after, the 4pm closing time. This level of interest generated great excitement and ensured a financially successful weekend, raising over \$100,000 for the SHBG.

Money raised will be used to initiate the architecture competition for the main building, development of the Winter Woodland, and the commencement of the



native planting area, as well as starting the discovery path around the garden. Inscribed pavers will be used to edge this path as it leads visitors through the journey of the garden.

This year we thank the owners and volunteers that enabled so many people to enjoy the magnificent gardens at: Greenbrier Park, Mittagong; The Garden House, Burradoo; Sutton Tops, Sutton Forest; Whare-Tau, Exeter; Arden, Bundanoon, and; Eastdene, Bundanoon. Thanks in particular to Ted Duncan who spent both days at the plant fair explaining to visitors the plans for the garden. No wonder he lost his voice after 14 hours talking!



this size, with all revenue raised being returned to the gardens.

There was also an opportunity for locals and visitors to enjoy the site, to appreciate the progress to date – and to imagine how the gardens may develop in the future.



This was also the first year The Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens itself was featured. The Plant Fair on site proved to be a great success. The plants, many rare and unusual, were all propagated and raised by Friends of the SHBG. This is unique for plant fairs of



We were pleased to receive so much positive feedback from the visitors – many of whom had travelled long distances for a day exploring the gardens as part of their weekend in the Highlands. Their presence highlights the broad interest in gardens and in particular their support for the Southern Highlands Botanic Garden.



Plants in our (SHB) Garden

The Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens will be a four seasons, cool climate garden and will showcase many native and introduced trees, shrubs and flowers that are suitable for the cold climate environment of the Southern Highlands.



As the first of a regular series, it is appropriate to feature the first tree planted on the site. This was the Bunya pine (*Araucaria bidwillii*) planted by Governor Marie Bashir in September 2010 to mark the launch of the SHBG.

The bunya, bonye, bunyi or bunya-bunya in various Australian Aboriginal languages, provided food for Aborigines well before European settlement.

It was colloquially named the Bunya Pine by Europeans, however, it is not a pine tree (of the genus *Pinus*). It belongs to the same genus as the monkey puzzle tree (*Araucaria araucana*) and is commonly referred to as the "false monkey puzzle".

Bunya is often referred to as a 'landmark tree' as it marks where significant gardens or homesteads are located. This is particularly evident now when you drive through rural areas of Australia and see these mature trees. It was for this reason the tree was chosen as the first tree to be planted on the site. The tree can grow to between 30 and 45 metres tall and will provide a permanent reminder of the launch of the SHBG and a link to all residents of this great land.

Inscribed Pavers

The SHBG needs financial support to achieve its objectives. One way to provide recognition of your support is through the supporter inscribed pavers. This scheme has proven to be a great success and is presently fully subscribed. As funds allow for extension of the path there will be further opportunity to donate a paver to ensure lasting recognition of your, or your family's, involvement and support for the development of the SHBG.



One family well represented in the recently unveiled path is the Webb family. Pavers document seven generations of the family, recognising the present generation's active support of the garden and the extended family's links to the region.



Help along the Path

The Board was delighted to host a meeting in early May with the Curator Managers from the Blue Mountain Botanic Garden Mt Tomah, Mr Greg Bourke and Mr John Siemon from the Australian Botanic Garden Mt Annan. The visitors were impressed by the progress already achieved and were also able to offer some practical suggestions and ideas for the future.



It was reported that there was much horticultural discussion and productive professional exchange, including a suggestion that SHBG could act as a plant bank for rare plants from Mt Tomah. This initiative would help mitigate the catastrophic effect that a bushfire in the Blue Mountains could have on the gardens at Mt Tomah. The first step in this exchange has occurred with the SHBG providing Mt Tomah with both the green and the golden weeping Box (*Buxus sempervirens* 'Pendula' and *Buxus sempervirens* 'Aurea Pendula') obtained by SHBG from Anthony de Francesco and Margie and Fred Krahenbuhl in Berrima.

BGANZ Open Day

BGANZ (Botanic Gardens of Australia and New Zealand Inc) will hold the inaugural National Botanic Gardens Open Day on Sunday 29th May 2016. Over 60 Botanic Gardens across Australia and New Zealand, including our Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens, will open to the public. *Music in the Gardens* will be a key feature of the day this year, in our garden. There will also be a plant stall and Friends Membership information and merchandise available.



The SHBG will use this day not only to highlight the garden's progress and future proposals, but to provide an opportunity for the community to see the benefits offered by Botanical Gardens. We look forward to a sunny day and a successful event. Our web site will post photos of the day and the next edition of *Operculum* will report on the day.

Friends of the SHBG

The Friends of the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens was established to provide an opportunity for locals and the wider community to become involved in and support the development of a cool climate Botanic Garden.

At present there are more than 300 financial members of the Friends and it is the work of this group that provides the core voluntary and charitable support that has helped to develop the Botanic Gardens to its present state.

Plant Growers Group

There is now a protected shade area / potting shed on site which enables plants to be propagated, potted on and prepared for planting in the SHBG or sold at plant fairs. Joining this group is a great way to share your skills, enthusiasm and experience while enjoying the friendship of other Southern Highlands gardeners.

The Plant Growers Group is always looking for pots. If you have any plastic pots, up to a 20 cm size, please drop them off at SHBG.

Working Bees

Gardens always require work and attention. If you have some time available to help, your contribution would be greatly appreciated.

First Tuesday of the Month 10am – Noon



Please join us for the Working Bee on the first Tuesday of each month. Dress in work clothes including a hat and bring gardening gloves. June 7th; July 3rd; August 2nd; September 6th; October 4th; November 1st; and December 6th.

For the Diary

In addition to the Working Bee dates, please also note the following dates and activities:

Thursday 28th June 2016 – Last day to make donations that can be receipted in the 2016 tax year.

Friends Membership Due: 1st July 2016

Working Bees: June 7th; July 3rd; August 2nd; September 6th; October 4th; November 1st; and December 6th.

Tulip Time – Tues 13th to Sunday 25th September

Robertson Open Gardens – 8th & 9th October

Bundanoon Garden Ramble – 23rd & 24th October

Autumn Open Gardens 2017 – April 22nd & 23rd

Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens

Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens Limited (ABN 68 164 166 821) is a registered charity with the aim of developing a “world class botanic garden for the benefit of the local community and visitors”.

Donations to SHBG of \$2 or more are tax deductible. Donations are always welcome, but you may want to make a donation before 30th June!

The SHBG relies upon volunteers who can offer their time as well as depending upon the financial support of government bodies, commercial enterprises and individuals. All support is greatly appreciated.

Any time that you can offer as a volunteer will help the development of the gardens and will hopefully be a rewarding and enjoyable experience.

Please consider becoming a member of the Friends of the SHBG. If you are already a member, please ensure that you have renewed your membership for the coming year. This can be done on line at SHBG.com.au or by completing and posting the membership form here.

There is a wealth of information available on our website at SHBG.com.au

The Board of SHBG:

Chairman: Charlotte Webb OAM

Company Secretary: Barry Barford

Members: Grant Blanchard

Chris Blaxland, Lyn Collingridge,

Peter Rowe, Chris Webb

Committee of Friends of SHBG

Chairman: Chris Webb (4861 4899)

(Email: friends@shbg.com.au)

Lyn Barrett, Chris Blaxland, Ian Dwyer,

Shandra Egan, Susan Hand, Judy Keast

Meg Probyn, Peter Scott

Contact details for this Newsletter

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Friends of the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens

New Member / Renewal of Membership

Membership now falls due on 1/7/2016.

This year we are offering 1 & 3 year memberships which can be done online at SHBG.com.au.

If you haven't already paid your Friends' membership for June 2016 to June 2017, please complete this form OR complete the one on the website.

(Don't forget to include your email address to help us reduce mailing costs.)

TITLE & NAME

ADDRESS

POSTCODE

PHONE HOME

PHONE MOBILE

EMAIL

DATE:

MEMBERSHIP	1YEAR Valid to 30/6/2017	3 YEAR Valid to 30/6/2019
Individual	\$20	\$60
Household	\$35	\$105
Single Concession	\$15	\$45
Household Concession	\$25	\$75
Clubs/ Groups	\$50	\$150
Corporate	\$200	\$600
Donation	\$_____	\$_____
Cheque enclosed	\$_____	\$_____

Please list any particular interest, qualification or skill you have that may be of help to the SHBG

Details for direct deposit

BSB: 802-101 A/c no.: 350489 Ref: Your name

Or cheques payable to **Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens Ltd.** Please return cheque and completed form to **SHBG, PO Box 707, Moss Vale, 2577**