

OPERCULUM JUNE 2015

The Lease is finally signed



The long awaited document



At the signing ceremony (L.to R) Ann Prendergast, Council's General Manager, Mayor Duncan Gair, Charlotte Webb, Jacqui Page, Barry Barford, Chris Webb and Mark Peppin

It seems to have taken forever, but the 21-year lease for the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens site was finally signed in the last week of May. It has taken 2½ years from the time the first lease negotiations began with Council. Overall there have been seventeen years of negotiations—with Council and the community—and finally it all came to a satisfactory conclusion.

Next Working Bee – Tuesday 7 July



Please come along at 10.00am to join in the fun of the working bee. This month we will be constructing shelves for the new IMB storeroom, potting plants from the eastern bed ready for the new pathways, getting new plants ready for our November sale and of course, there's always a delicious morning tea. Even if you are harbouring aches and pains we'll find a suitable job for you!

Planting Trees on 2 June 2015



Charlotte Webb and Mayor Duncan Gair plant the *Pistacia chinensis*

To celebrate the signing of the lease, Mayor Duncan Gair planted a *Pistacia chinensis* (Chinese Pistachio). This beautiful tree, which will grow to about 8m (25ft), has brilliant yellow, orange and scarlet foliage in autumn. It's planted just inside the current main entry.



Sandy Alsop, assisted by Mayor Duncan Gair, planted a *Quercus ilex* (evergreen oak)

Under the deep blue wintry sky, the celebratory tree planting took place—down in the Woodland section, Sandy Alsop, a former member of the Galston Garden Club, planted a *Quercus ilex* (evergreen oak), donated by the GGC.

Another five trees were planted down in the woodland—a circle of *Quercus robur* 'Fastigiata' (the upright English oak)—as its name indicates it is a columnar form of English Oak. The fastigiata oak was originally propagated from an upright tree first discovered growing wild in a forest in Germany and was propagated by grafting in 1783—so should it really be called a German oak?

These deciduous trees will eventually mature into a dense elongated oval shape with short trunks, growing to about 13m high with a 4m canopy. The circle will be a lovely feature in the Gardens and is a result of one of our members' 70th birthday. Instead of presents, her guests contributed money to purchase trees for SHBG.



Kristine Gow with pots, pots and more pots

Heritage Tourism Award



Certificate of Recognition



A typical scene from a working party—hats on, eyes down!



Brisk buying at the plant stall

One of our supporters also planted a commemorative tree to celebrate her wedding. As you can imagine, the June working bee was literally a hive of activity with all the planting, the potting of lots of roses and other specimens for later sales. The Marulen Garden Club came for a visit and enjoyed their buying spree. Judy Keast, Di Grant and their friends provided a sumptuous morning tea.

Wingecarribee Shire Council recently presented SHBG Inc with an award for best Heritage Tourism project for 2014 for the 'Oldbury Experience', part of our Autumn Open Garden Weekend 2014. The gardens of three historic properties were open—*Oldbury Farm*, with its handsome sandstone homestead, was built in the 1820s and is one of the oldest properties in the area; *Oldbury Vale*, a new 2006 house designed by Richard Rowe replacing a 1950s weatherboard cottage, with a redesigned country garden surrounding; and *Oldbury Cottage*, a renovated sandstone shepherd's hut with a new addition by Richard Rowe surrounded by a new garden established in 2005. The three gardens delighted all the visitors.

Many grateful thanks are due to David and Jane Newby for allowing the Oldbury gardens to be open for our Botanic Gardens major fundraising event for 2014.

The Bird Fence

A fence has been erected to ensure that the public doesn't disturb the Latham snipe (*Gallinago hardwickii*) during their migratory period. The gates will be closed in that area from September to the end of March each year. Latham's snipe is a non-breeding visitor to SE Australia, and is a passage migrant through northern Australia to reach non-breeding areas located further south. They breed in Japan and far eastern Russia during the northern hemisphere summer.

Migrating south after the breeding season, they travel across Papua New Guinea to winter in eastern Australia. Internationally, Latham's snipe is considered to be a species of 'Least Concern', which means that the species is one which has been categorised by the International Union for Conservation of Nature as evaluated but not qualified for any other category. As such they do not qualify as threatened, near threatened, or (prior to 2001) conservation dependent.



Latham Snipe (also known as Japanese Snipe)

The Latham snipe, of course, is not the only bird on the site and it is hoped that birdwatching (known as 'twitching') will be a highly popular activity in the Botanic Gardens—a wide number of bird species can be seen throughout the year.

The number of species is likely to increase as a result of the varied range of landscapes and environments that will be found in a relatively small area (from urban forest, wetlands, open plains, native and exotic plant species plantings). Neighbours have spotted at least eighty-five species on the site.

Developments on the SHBG site



The new extension

You will have noticed the new extension to the pavilion (sometimes called 'the Shed'). The toilet block will enable us to invite school parties to visit the site. New pathways and a paved area are currently being designed to ensure easy access from the veranda to the Shade House. There are new gates erected at various points along the boundaries. Please remember that dogs are not permitted within the Gardens.

Personalised Pavers

Friends will be given the opportunity to purchase a personalised paver (\$50 each) for inclusion in the new paved area. There will be more details about this in the next *Operculum*.

The Main Building

The architect's competition for the main building is currently being planned. We are hoping that it will include a visitors' centre, restaurant, shop, areas for exhibitions and a library. Watch this space for further news about this exciting future development.

Plant Stall at Harper's Mansion

The National Trust will be holding its Fair at Harper's Mansion, Berrima, on Sunday 1 November 2015. The SHBG Plant Growers Group is planning to hold a stall—a great opportunity for those of you who are looking for some special or elusive plants for your own gardens. Last year the SHBG PGG raised \$3,500 for the Botanic gardens and, with everyone's help, they want to increase that total.



Last year's stall at Harper's Mansion Fair

Would you like to help with winter and spring propagation?

The winter months allow you to evaluate your garden beds—have your perennial plants become too large and overcrowded and would they benefit from division? Some of the clumps will divide easily and there may be younger shoots ready to be removed from the outside of the clump. Other plants may require lifting and then tackled with a spade or sharp knife.

Immediately plant out the offcuts where you need them—but any excess plants remember the Botanic Gardens plant sales and pot them up into the best potting mix available and label. We will be very grateful to receive your offerings.

Bulbs

We always need bulbs to sell at the plant stalls. While you enjoy your bulbs this winter/spring, take note of areas where your bulbs are overcrowded. Mark the spot and after the foliage has completely died down you can lift them and donate them to us in a paper bag. Please clearly label the packets of bulbs.

Autumn Gardens Weekend 2016

The Friends Committee is already busy planning for the next autumn gardens weekend (23-24 April 2016). Make sure the date is in your diary, as we will need all the volunteers we can muster to help with the event.

Elizabeth and Noel Symonds Retire

After five years on the Friends Committee, Elizabeth and Noel have decided to retire. They have worked tirelessly over their period of involvement with the committee and we wish them continuing good health and happiness. No doubt we shall still see them at the working bees.



Elizabeth and Noel Symonds

New Members on the Committee

We are delighted to announce that Lyn Barrett and Peter Scott have both agreed to be co-opted on to the Friends Committee following the retirement of the Symonds. Lyn Barrett and her husband John are both very active Friends and she is particularly involved with the Plants Group. Peter Scott has recently retired as manager of Bowral Co-op and we are delighted that he has agreed to re-join the Friends Committee, having been a member for a term some years ago.

The Board of SHBG:

Chairman: Charlotte Webb OAM
Members: Barry Barford, Frank Nevill
Jacqui Page, Chris Webb

Committee of Friends of SHBG

Chair: Chris Webb (4861 4899)
(Email: friends@shbg.com.au)
Judy Barford, Lyn Barrett, Chris Blaxland,
Ian Dwyer, Shandra Egan, Judy Keast
Meg Probyn, Peter Scott

Contact details for Newsletter

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Friends of the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens

Renewal of Membership

If you haven't already paid your Friends' membership for June 2015 to June 2016, please complete this form or the one on the website.

Please note that if you joined after 1 April 2015 your membership is paid until June 2016.

(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 30/6/2016	3 YEAR Valid to 30/6/2018
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.** and return cheque and completed form to **SHBG, PO Box 707, Moss Vale, 2577**