

Dedication Event

Although 13th September was a cold and overcast day, it did not deter nearly 100 supporters of the Gardens from attending a special event to recognize and unveil three generous donations from Ann & Tony Emmett, The Bowral Garden Club, and The Highlands Gardens Society.

Sculptures in the Gardens

SHBG is delighted to accept the donation of two sculptures by Tony Emmett. Tony and his wife Ann were actively involved in the early stages of the plan to establish a Botanic Garden. Their vision and enthusiasm were integral in laying the foundations for what is presently being developed on the site today, so it is significant to now be able to showcase the talents of Tony, the sculptor, in the community Botanic Garden that he helped establish.

The two sculptures were formally unveiled by Tony Emmett and his wife Ann, along with SHBG Chairman Charlotte Webb.



Photo shows, from left, Ann Emmett, Maureen Purtell, Tony Davis and sculptor Tony Emmet.

The work titled, “Wings of Love”, which sits in the Birch Grove section of the Autumn Wonderland, is dedicated as a “Tribute to the work of Tony Davis and Maureen Purtell”. Tony and Maureen were both totally unaware of the dedication and were visibly surprised and moved when it was announced.



Tony has always admired the work of Tony Emmett, and was humbled but delighted to have one of his works dedicated to himself and Maureen. The tribute acknowledges not only their continual input and energy but their significance as plant breeders and growers.

The setting of the sculpture in the Birch area, underplanted with some of their specially bred and donated

daffodils, is a fitting location for a tribute to two significant Gardens enthusiasts.

The second sculpture, closer to the Chain of Ponds, titled “Man in the Universe” is dedicated as a “Tribute to the efforts of the founders of this botanic gardens, their committees and supporters.”



In future years as visitors wander through the Autumn Wonderland, these two sculptures will provide a surprise focal point amongst the spring and summer foliage.

Support from local Garden Clubs

Two local garden clubs have also generously contributed funds to the Gardens. SHBG is pleased to have received significant donations from the Bowral Garden Club and the Highland Garden Society. The funds donated are being used to help establish the Autumn Woodland, and in particular the Birch Forest. In recognition of their generosity and support, park benches, sourced from Cotswold Furniture of Mittagong, have been positioned in the Gardens, each carrying an acknowledgement plaque.

The Bowral Garden Club dedication “Friendship through Gardening” was unveiled by the Club’s President, Ann Curvers. (Photo below.) This bench sits in the perennial garden section and benefits from an excellent vista down the Foundation Walk to the Governor’s tree and beyond.



Judy Keast, President of the Highlands Garden Society, unveiled its plaque (below) which reads "Donated by the Highlands Garden Society - Celebrating 40 Years." This bench enjoys a view through the birch trees which were in part funded by their donations.



For further information on these local garden clubs please refer to the websites for **Bowral Garden Club** (www.bowralgardenclub.com) or the **Highlands Garden Society** (www.highlandsgardensociety.org.au).

Notes from Sculptor Tony Emmet

The sculptures installed at the Gardens are created as thought. They are an idea made into form, the vision of an energy shaping our life. They are a concept which is completed in the mind of the observer.

Wings of love.

This galvanized steel pair of wings emulates tongues of fire, the fire of love, the driving force of life.



I initially made a smaller piece when I was an art student at Wollongong TAFE after retiring from plastic surgery in Brisbane and moving to the Southern Highlands. The initial work was in steel and wire 1450 mm high, which I clad in long black nylon stockings to the delight of the 18 year old art students around me.

This present work is 3 metres high made of steel tube with connecting rods faced with expanded steel, dipped in molten zinc, to give it a uniform rustproof cover. Eden Hunt helps me with this steel work, and we have worked together for 10 years. He is an expert welder for my various stainless steel pieces as well.

This sculpture is dedicated to Tony Davis and Maureen Purtell whose tireless work for the set-up of the Botanical Gardens over more than a 10-year period has borne the initial result we see around us here now. They worked with my wife Ann, and with Jim and Margaret Osborne, supporting the numerous attempts to find a site for the gardens.

They continue with plant propagation raising money for the ongoing garden development. Tony is a world class breeder of daffodils creating numerous new hybrid types, which he gives to, and sells for, the SHBG.

Man in the universe

Here we see the concept of man rising above the distractions and interruptions to ascendancy of achievement.

This construct of steel rod, wire, and hollow section, welded together as a creation, is also zinc dipped.

It is arranged now on a concrete pad surrounded by a box hedge. The work is over 4 metres high and is a beacon of the garden interest, for passing traffic on the road.



It is dedicated to all of you who are working to promote and create the gardens. In particular are the committee and Chris and Charlotte Webb, and all of you who do the gardening, propagating, preparing the wonderful food and creating the human interest and warmth, which is the spirit in the place. The fellowship of shared love for plants is the strength of this garden.

Sculpture as a garden focus

Sculptures are a way of defining areas in a garden and drawing the eye through. Often these conceptual works can lead the mind to created thought patterns.

The joy of gardening is a type of creation, making that harmony of form and colour, itself a great art, which gives to each individual gardener that happy disposition which makes for long life. A garden is a growing thing, never static, never complete, an ongoing fascination which changes. The beauty and mystery of a leaf bud opening, or of a flower appearing and moving to face the sun, as each little cell fulfils its life journey. What a beautiful world.

Thank you Meg

Meg Probyn has resigned from the Friends Committee. Friends Chairman Chris Webb offers these comments:

At perhaps our very first working bee more than six years ago, Meg and Clive Probyn arrived with their wonderful small, slightly dilapidated wheel barrow to help spread mulch on our newly planted trees. In fact the first trees to be planted in the gardens. Meg in her inimitable enquiring manner asked whether we had a newsletter writer. Of course we said yes, but we would like to pass the task on. There was a hushed discussion between Meg and Clive which culminated in Meg announcing 'I'll do it'!!

What a wonderful day that was for our Operculum readers. Meg imbued the Operculum with her great writing and editorial skills, lifting the standard to such an extent we actually had people becoming Friends just so that they could receive the Newsletter. Now that's a compliment and they really did want to read it 'just for the articles'.

Being Operculum editor, Meg then became a member of the Friends committee and also took on the role of editing the Open Garden Weekend Brochure which was a momentous task in itself and one she carried out with great enthusiasm and aplomb. This brochure I am sure has become the envy of all other open garden events. When Meg took on these roles we didn't actually know she had a PhD in Literature and that Clive, the proof reader, was a Professor of

Literature, how fortunate have we all been to have had such expertise guiding our humble Operculum.

Thank you Meg for your outstanding effort in editing the Operculum and laying the ground work for its ongoing success while being a tireless, enthusiastic SHBG Friends Committee member.

Chris Webb, Chairman of the SHBG Friends.

Upcoming Events

Hydrangea Walk & Plant Sale

10th & 11th December 2016

Although the majority of hydrangea are dormant over winter, they provide a spectacular show of colour for many months in summer. SHBG is holding an open garden weekend, featuring three adjoining gardens brimming with hydrangeas, roses and fabulous perennials. These gardens will highlight this fabulous plant this December.

Enter through 56 Burradoo Rd and meander through the adjoining gardens. Your stroll will culminate in the garden of 'The Garden House' where the SHBG plant Propagators will be holding a Plant Sale featuring Hydrangeas, Hostas, Francoas and many hard to find perennials.

Tickets (\$10 for all 3 gardens) will be available at the entry at 56 Burradoo Rd. Eftpos available at the Plant Sale.

Christmas in the Gardens - Picnic & Carols

This year, for the first time, the Gardens will host an early evening event between 5:30 and 8:30 on **Sunday 11th December** for Friends of the SHBG, their families and friends to celebrate the Christmas season. Bring a blanket and a picnic hamper to enjoy, while listening to carols performed by *Women of Note*.

A special visitor is sure to delight the young and young at heart. Coffee will be available for purchase from Coffee Culture. A gold coin donation will be appreciated on entry.

Lyn Collingridge at WSC Awards

In August, SHBG Director Lyn Collingridge – who now has Board-level responsibility for government and community grants – gave a presentation on the Gardens at a WSC function. Lyn has supplied the following report on the evening and her presentation.

The Wingecarribee Shire Council participate in an annual Wingecarribee Community Assistance Scheme (WCAS) to encourage the development of community initiatives in line with Council's Community Strategic Plan 2031. In the 2016/17 WCAS, grants of up to \$7,000 were available to successful applicants who met the rigorous criteria. SHBG submitted an application for \$7,000 in March 2016 to purchase a defibrillator and two garden seats and was awarded \$4,000. The total pool of \$110,000 was distributed amongst 55 worthy community recipients.

All successful recipients were invited to attend an Awards night at the WSC Chambers in August, at which successful applicants were presented with their awards, before gathering for a chat over a cup of tea and small eats. Approximately 150 people attended on the night, including some Councillors and WSC senior management. SHBG

was invited to make a presentation to the audience before presentation of the awards and Lyn Collingridge accepted that challenge on behalf of SHBG.

The focus of Lyn's short presentation was to make people aware of the Garden. Many in the room raised their hands to the question "who has visited the Garden?". Also, a few timidly raised their hands when asked "who does not know where the Garden is located?". Having delved into Charlotte's wide and wonderful collection of photos and earlier slide presentations, Lyn was able to give a good pictorial history of the early development of the Garden, starting with a map of its location! Many photos showed how progress has been made on the infrastructure of the Garden, including the buildings and paving, the shade house and planting of various garden beds.



Photos also demonstrated SHBG's heavy reliance on volunteers and Friends. The photos told a story of happy volunteers participating at the working bees and showed the results of their hard work at the very successful plant fairs and Autumn Garden weekends. The audience "wow" moment was reached when it was mentioned that the volunteers had raised \$90,000 at the 2016 Autumn Garden weekend.

The photographic journey also documented the many occasions when the Garden has recognised the support of the community by holding official openings, with the attendance of local dignitaries and Friends. The WSC is but one, in the local community, whose continued support of the Garden is greatly valued.

Chairman's Column.

What makes a Botanic Garden different from a park? We are well on our way to proving we are not 'just a park' as we undertake to register some of the plant collections now held in the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens. We have commenced the registration process with **Garden Plant Conservation Association of Australia** for two of our largest single Genus collections.

We thank Highlands Garden Society Inc for providing the funds to allow us to put together one of the largest Betula (Birch) collections in public ownership in Australia. We currently have 14 different types of birch planted in the existing birch grove, 7 new types to be planted out at the November working bee while 2 further types are gaining size ready to be planted out next autumn. This gives us in total 23 species/cultivars.

Over the coming years we anticipate expanding this collection to include some of the other members of the Family of Betulaceae including Corylus (hazel), Carpinus (Hornbeam) and Alnus (Alder).

Our second registration is for our Buxus (Box) collection comprising 20 identified types of Buxus and 1 yet to be identified. This year we sent some *Buxus sempervirens* 'Pendula' to Mt Tomah Botanic Gardens to ensure this little known box is maintained in cultivation.

Charlotte Webb OAM

Plant Growers Group

The Plant Growers Group and Friends work together during the year to provide a large array of quality plants for planting in the Gardens or for sale. Around 4,000 plants were prepared for the 2016 Autumn Plant Fair and at present exciting summer flowering varieties are being grown for our December Hydranga Walk & Plant Sale.

Joining other garden lovers at the monthly working bees is a fun way to contribute to the Gardens' growth while sharing skills and learning from others.

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.

Charity & Donation Status

The Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens is a not for profit company registered with the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) and the Australian Charities & Not for Profit Commission. (ACNC). As a "not for profit" the company does not pay tax on income with all money earned staying within the company.

So that tax deductible donations can be made directly to SHBG the company needs to be recognized by the ATO as a "Deductible Gift Recipient – Item 1" (DGR-1). Specialist advice is being sought to assist in the process and hopefully ensure that this status can be granted.

In the meantime, tax deductible donations can still be made to the Southern Highlands Foundation.

For the Diary

In addition to the regular monthly working bee at the SHBG, here are some local events that may be of interest:

- **Bundanoon Garden Ramble** – 23rd & 24th October
- **Hydrangea Walk & Plant Sale** - 10th & 11th December
- **Carols & Picnic in the Gardens** – 11th December
- **SHBG Autumn Gardens '17** – 22nd & 23rd April

Open Garden Fundraiser



As noted above, Meg Probyn has announced her retirement from the Friends Committee – but Meg and



Clive have indicated that they will continue to support the goals of the Gardens. In early October they opened their own garden for a successful fundraising event. Thank you again.

New People & Roles

SHBG Chairman Charlotte Webb has announced:

- Sue Oberman has become a *member* of the company.
- Susan Ingram has taken on the role as the new volunteer office administrator. Welcome.

Friends of the SHBG

The Friends provide support towards the establishment of the Botanic Gardens. Many Friends are happy to provide financial support to the SHBG through their annual fees while other also put in many hours volunteering to help in the growth of the SHBG. This involves participation in the monthly Working Bees and also involvement with events organized by the Friends – including the annual Autumn Gardens weekend.

As well as enjoying the social engagement offered, Friends also enjoy knowing that they are part of the development of the SHBG and the creation of what will be a long term legacy for the Southern Highlands.

Working Bees

The SHBG relies on volunteers to undertake the constant work needed to maintain and develop the garden. There are regular monthly working bees on the **first Tuesday of each month** and at other times as required.

First Tuesday of the Month: 10am – Noon



Please come along on the first Tuesday of each month with comfortable clothes, hat and gloves. Enjoy a friendly chat over morning tea. 1st November, 6th December, (Not January), 7th February, 7th March and 4th April.

Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens Ltd.

Chairman: Charlotte Webb OAM

Company Secretary: Barry Barford

Directors: Grant Blanchard, Chris Blaxland, Lyn Collingridge, Peter Rowe, Chris Webb

Committee of Friends of SHBG

Chairman: Chris Webb

(Email: friends@shbg.com.au)

Lyn Barrett, Chris Blaxland, Ian Dwyer, Shandra Egan, Susan Hand, Judy Keast, Peter Scott

Contact details for the Operculum Newsletter

Editor: Susan Hand

(02) 4861 6950; skhand@ozemail.com.au

Website: shbg.com.au

**Next Operculum due to be published in December.
The deadline for the receipt of articles and photos is
9am Wednesday 14th December**