

OPERCULUM SEPTEMBER 2014

September Working Bee

The Working Bees take place at the Botanic Gardens site every first Tuesday of the month from 10.00am. Despite the cold damp weather, forty people turned out on 2nd September for a morning's activity.

Maureen Purtell gave a demonstration on dividing hellebores (and we were able to take home a few of her beautiful double pink); Sally Gaudry showed us how to handle the *Cyclamen* seedlings very carefully; and Kristine Gow demonstrated how easy it is to take cuttings of native plants, in particular *Correa*. Charlotte Webb completed the morning's work by explaining the techniques she uses for both seed sowing and taking root cuttings from plants like the deciduous *Crambe cordifolia* and evergreen *Bergenia*. It was both educational and great fun.



Charlotte Webb, Diane Grant and Marilyn Gleeson



Maureen Purtell and Sally Gaudry



Charlotte Webb teasing out the little seedlings

Meantime Les Musgrave and a team potted up hellebores for the plant sale and Chris Webb, Clive Probyn, Ian Dwyer, Nick Dwyer focused their energies on laying the piping for the watering system in the new shade house. There were a group of Friends putting together the tables for the shade house; others were mowing, weeding and digging.

AGM for Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens Ltd

The first AGM for the SHBG Ltd was held on Monday 8 September 2014 at 5.30pm. The Chaiman, Charlotte Webb, gave a comprehensive report on all the activities of the new entity, which came into being on 7 June 2013 when the Incorporated Association became a Company Limited by Guarantee. She paid tribute to Ross Stone (who stood down late last year) and thanked the current Directors of the new company (Barry Barford, Frank Nevill, Jacqui Page, Chris Webb) and the Honorary Treasurer, Jan Edwards, and the Honorary Solicitor, David Cummins. An edited version of the report is on the website.



Kristine Gow and Maureen Purtell

Red Cross Exeter Celebrate 100 years

The Exeter Red Cross Society celebrated the centenary of the establishment of the Australian Red Cross Society by planting two red roses in the garden on 2 September 2014. The Australian Red Cross Society began on 13 August 1914 at Government House, Melbourne, nine days after the outbreak of World War I and subsequently hundreds of thousands of volunteers signed up during the war. By World War II, Red Cross had become Australia's largest charitable organisation. From a population of seven million, nearly half a million people were members of the Red Cross, most of them women.



Anna Hopkins and Robyn Lawler (President and Vice-President respectively of the Exeter Red Cross Society) planting the first rose



Shirley Wyatt (Honorary Secretary) and Maureen Smith (Honorary Treasurer)



Maureen Smith, Robyn Lawler, Anna Hopkins, Shirley Wyatt

Education Committee

At the request of the Board, Margaret Stuart has agreed to take on the leadership of the inaugural SHBG Education Committee. Other initial committee members are Graeme Whisker and Robyn Kremer—additional members will be recruited as required. The founding committee members are all qualified professional educators, with a lifetime of teaching and management experience across a broad spectrum of student age groups.

The education committee's charter is to research, develop and prepare an educational program for the SHBG. Of course, considerable infrastructure will need to be in place before the Gardens can start to host educational visits, but the committee will be able to provide informed input into these developments.

The committee has been in contact with Mt Tomah and Mt Annan Botanic Gardens, and has an appointment in October, to visit and meet the staff of the Community Education section of the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney.

The committee will also liaise with relevant educational representatives of the primary, secondary and tertiary education sectors. This is an exciting and challenging project, in which SHBG members' involvement will be valued.

Town and Country Open Gardens 2015

If you would like to be a volunteer for the Town and Country Open Gardens Weekend (18 & 19 April 2015), please make sure your name is on the list. The gardens are currently being negotiated and the final selection will be advertised in the December edition of *Operculum*.

Contact Shandra Egan (telephone: 0402 096 206 or email: shandra.maree@bigpond.com).

Archive Committee

Elise Shepherd and Janet King have volunteered to take on the SHBG's archives following the retirement of Helen Johnstone and Dr Jenny Simons from that committee.

It is to Helen and Jenny's credit that the SHBG archives have been so carefully kept. So often new organisations neglect to preserve their records from the outset and that makes it extremely difficult for future generations. It's not an easy task to select those records that require permanent or long-term preservation. Archival records are normally

unpublished and almost always unique and it is very important that original documents are preserved. The SHBG already has a place in history and documentary evidence will be increasingly treasured over the years.

All the historic Botanic Gardens have impressive archives—hugely important botanical reference sources in the world.

The archives at the Royal Botanic Garden at Edinburgh, for example, contain manuscripts, images and photographs relating to the history of the Garden from its beginnings in 1670 to the recent past. There are files of correspondence and diaries relating to plant collecting in India and China in the 19th and 20th centuries.

The 4,600 archival collections at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, contain the papers of many botanists, gardeners and other individuals and are an irreplaceable resource on the history of the discovery, study, transfer and use of the world's plants and fungi. The collection includes rare books, botanical illustrations, photographs, letters and manuscripts, periodicals, biographies and maps, many of which were gifted over the years.

Storage is another major issue—in Kew there are over seven million sheets of paper. Records from their archives are available for consultation once they are 30 years old.

Already Friends of the SHBG are offering books for the proposed library. The problem is that until the principal building on the site is constructed, which will house a cafe, lecture, meeting room facilities and a horticulture library, there is no place to store books. So please hang on to your donations—unless we can find an adequate storage unit in the meantime.

The IMB Grant



Hellebores in the shade house

The newly constructed shade house is already being filled with plants. The IMB Community Foundation awarded a grant for over \$7,100 for “Seed funding to expand facilities to provide chemicals and equipment storage to support propagation and protection of endemic and rare plant species to develop the gardens”. Some of the funds were used to install an automatic watering system both inside the shade house and also within the perimeter of the propagation area. The grant will also fund the next

project—to erect a shed for the safe storage of chemicals.



Chris Webb, SHBG Director (centre) receiving the cheque from the IMB Community Foundation co-founder, Professor Ken McKinnon (left), and IMB CEO Robert Ryan (right).

The automatic watering system will ensure that the plants receive the appropriate amount of water as required, without having to rely on the good will of volunteers. Plants not readily available from nurseries will be grown for the Botanic Garden and for the plant sale—a major fund-raising activity.



Testing the irrigation system

The chemical storage shed will enable the SHBG to meet its obligations under codes of practice for the safe handling and storage of chemicals and will ensure a hazard-free learning area for visitors and school groups.

Next Workshop - Tuesday 7 October 2015

Dahlias:

Next month Tony Davis will hold a workshop on lifting and dividing dahlias. Once a rather despised plant in the UK according to Robin Lane Fox, because it ‘became entangled with boundaries of social snobbery, as if it was only fit for the bungalow-gardens of the working class.’¹ Now there is resurgence in the dahlia’s popularity. The downside of growing dahlias is that they do require attention and Tony will teach us all about how to get the best out of these beautiful plants.

Native plants:

Kristine Gow will also demonstrate the methods she uses to propagate natives.

¹ Robin Lane Fox, *Thoughtful Gardening* (Penguin, London, 2010) p. 307.

The Friends Committee

Two long-standing members of the Friends Committee resigned recently—both will be sadly missed. Carolyn Dwyer and Rosemary Willis played crucial roles in the promotion and organisation of the Town and Country Open Gardens Weekends.

During the summer months Rosemary coordinated the watering roster, thus ensuring the survival of the newly planted trees. Both Rosemary and Carolyn participate regularly at the working bees and their on-going support is much appreciated.

Judy Barford has joined the Friends' Committee and is a most welcome addition.

The Lease and future developments

Wingecarribee Shire Council exhibited the lease for the site in July 2014 but because there were objections, the decision had to be referred to the NSW State Minister for Local Government. Hopefully, negotiations will result in a speedy and satisfactory outcome.

Once the lease is signed, the building project will be initiated. The SHBG Board has engaged APP to run a competition for the design of the principal building. APP was founded in 1989 to service the project management needs of the building and construction sector.

The APP organisation has an excellent track record of delivering on a range of projects including the Olympic Games, NAB and ANZ headquarters in Melbourne, Perth's first 6-star Green Star-rated commercial office building and the multi-award winning National Portrait Gallery in Canberra. This part of our project will be an exciting development and is keenly awaited by the community.

Once the lease is signed, the detailed design for the central part of the garden, incorporating the bird protection area required by the Federal Government, will be able to be finalised.

Director Profile: Barry Barford

After serving in the British merchant navy Barry Barford worked onshore in the maritime industry and, later, in the aviation industry and as a trade fair organiser throughout continental Europe, before taking up a career as a journalist. He reported mainly on the industries he had worked in and on international trade generally, based in London and Hong Kong.

In 1975 he migrated to Australia and continued his career in Sydney, later becoming a director of three public relations companies.

In the twenty years before he retired he worked for state and federal governments in Sydney, Cairns and Canberra as a policy adviser, regulator and director in the Senior Executive Service.

In the 1990s Barry was the Executive Officer and later a member of the NSW Government's Air Transport Council, responsible for economic regulation of the State's regional air services. During this period he was also a regular guest lecturer at the University of Newcastle's Department of Aviation.

In 2000 he was seconded to a logistics role at the Sydney Olympic Games and in 2002-03 he was seconded again to the Federal Government's Australian Logistics Council, a joint venture with the private sector to improve supply chain logistics throughout Australia.



Barry Barford

None of this, he says, has very much to do with gardens and while he has always enjoyed all things botanical, particularly since moving to Bowral in 2006, the gardener in the family is his wife, Judy. However, he is keen to learn more. Meanwhile he brings to the Board skills he has developed over the years in regulatory compliance and business administration. He is also a keen writer of website content. Thanks to Barry, the SHBG website has been redesigned. He has been a member of the Board of Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens Limited since December 2013.

Renewal of Membership

If you receive a renewal form with this newsletter it signifies that you are no longer a financial member. Please complete the form and return it to:

SHBG, PO Box 707, Moss Vale, 2577

Please note that if you joined after 1 April 2014 your membership is paid until June 2015.

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

Please Note: Name badges for all Friends are available. Apply to the secretary, Jacqui Page: secretary@shbg.com.au

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, Chris Blaxland, Ian Dwyer
Shandra Egan, Judy Keast, Meg Probyn
Noel & Elizabeth Symonds

Contact details for Newsletter

Editor: Meg Probyn [Tel: (02) 4871 3134
probyn44@bigpond.com]
