



FRIENDS OF Old Parliament House ROSE GARDENS



Issue 10 - Christmas edition, December 2015

President's letter

Dear Friends,

The year began and ended for the Friends among the roses: our first Melbourne Cup function was a roaring success on a beautiful spring day. We gathered before lunch in the Senate gardens which were in full flower for a glass of deliciously dry sparkling rosé and a very entertaining chat with former ABC weatherman and gardening guru Mark Carmody. Thanks to Anne and Jim from Lerida for the perfectly tinted bubbles!

Musing on the theme of "serendipity," Mark talked about the happy coincidences which led him through a career as a gardener, onto the radio as the 666 ABC gardening expert and thence to the Canberra news bulletin. Mark's good cheer and constantly changing array of buttonhole blooms endeared him to the wider Canberra audience. When new management made the suggestion that the flowers were a touch outré, and needed to go, there was a deluge of complaints which brought them back immediately! These days, Mark travels and gardens to his heart's content. We thank him for a most entertaining speech, which set the tone for a lovely day.

The assembled crowd then enjoyed a delicious lunch in the Pork Barrel's lobby room, and a flutter on several sweeps administered by Andrew McLeod. After lunch we cheered on Michelle Payne, the first female jockey to win a Melbourne Cup. Amid a plethora of rather magnificent spring hats, many in shades of bright pink, Dennis Dempsey carried off the prize for his very literal decorations complete with horses, flowers and a helicopter. It seems likely that the Friends lunch might become an annual event, and we acknowledge the support that Bruce Gibbs and his staff offer us.

Earlier this year, the Friends gathered at the Mercure for a fireside chat with Trisha Dixon, the acclaimed author and garden photographer. Trisha gave us a beautifully illustrated speech woven together by the theme of the briar rose (*R. eglanteria*), and bringing together several threads of her own family history (see report on p.3). The Mercure was a very attractive location with its recently restored historic lobby and welcoming open fire. We thank them for their support of the Friends.

The Friends are also involved in a project which we hope will bring more early 20th century Australian roses to the Gardens. The roses are part of the collection at Ruston's Roses at Renmark,

where the nursery and display gardens cultivate over 4000 varieties. However, the Ruston family have decided to put it up for sale and their extensive collection is at risk of being lost. The Ruston's roses include a number of little known cultivars that illustrate the history of the species in Australian gardens but are not represented in our collection. Both Heritage Roses In Australia and the Friends have been involved in discussions which now include the NCA about whether a number of these roses might find a home in the Old Parliament House Rose Gardens. We'll keep you updated on our progress.

In 2016, we are looking forward to our annual St Valentine's Day lunch, which is set down for the day itself, Sunday February 14. We'll have champagne at dusk in the gardens with a speaker and you can expect an invitation shortly. Plans are also afoot for an autumn garden visit and afternoon tea. Again, stay in touch with us for further details. We wish you a Merry Christmas and look forward to sharing the rose gardens with you in 2016.

Genevieve Jacobs

President,

Friends of the Old Parliament House Rose Gardens



Committee members Malcolm Beazley, Lorraine Gentle, Fred Knowler, Jacky Luby, Nadene Edwards, Wendy McLeod, Ann Knowler, Andrew McLeod, Genevieve Jacobs



Author, photographer and rose lover Trisha Dixon with Nadene Edwards and Jacky Luby at the winter fireside chat



This year's racing fashion trend is clearly in the pink, judging by the wonderful hats worn by guests at our Melbourne Cup lunch



Mark Carmody delights the Melbourne Cup crowd with Cynthia Kimlin and Ann Knowler in the background



Wendy McLeod and Judy McLeod enjoy champagne in the Gardens on Melbourne Cup day

A Wilful, Winsome and Wild Rose

By Wendy McLeod

Trisha Dixon is a self confessed 'rose tragic' who is also passionate about old buildings and their history. In her research on both old buildings and gardens in her home town of Bungonia and her current home of Bobundara on Monaro, she has uncovered some fascinating snippets of history which she weaves around the story of one wild rose, the briar.

Since Elizabethan times or perhaps even further back in English history, *R. eglanteria* with its sweetly scented leaves, has been the most favoured of all the wild roses growing in the English countryside. Towards the end of the 17th century, the Eglantine was still the only wild rose grown together with 'tame roses' in Dutch gardens - gardeners were told they should plant from suckers in the full moon if they were to produce an abundance of flowers.

The cultivar was *R. rubiginosa* in the 1700s. This rose is known for its apple scented foliage, giving off an aromatic scent in damp weather, petals pink with prominent yellow stamens, flowering from spring to mid-summer then followed with bright red hips. Tea made from the hips of this rose is very popular in Europe where it is considered a healthy way for people to get their daily dose of vitamin C and other nutrients. During World War II the British relied on rose hips and hops as the sources for their vitamins C and A. It was a common British wartime expression to say that, "we are getting by on our hips and hops."

In 1817, James Richard Styles (born 1798 in Kent, England) arrived in NSW as a free settler. By 1848, J R Styles owned 24,000 acres. In 1821 Styles travelled from Sydney by bullock wagon with his wife, their young baby (said to be the first white child in the Goulburn district) and all his servants and livestock

(cattle, horses and pigs). They cut their way through the bush and built a home amongst the trees. Possibly the oldest home in the Goulburn district today, it still stands intact, despite the ravages of a fierce bushfire in 1963 which burnt all around it, but not the building.

Originally called Parramarrago, the big white stone house was built in an L shape around a courtyard, with a blank wall facing west. This wall had dummy windows and a door which, when seen from a distance were indistinguishable from the real thing. This would have tricked bushrangers, and assisted the Styles to avoid the window tax which was still in force at the time, and also acted as a barrier to the strong westerly winds.

The Styles family lived at Reevesdale at Bungonia for 67 years, before Trisha's great grandfather Dr William Burkitt bought the property from Charlie Styles in 1899. At the time it was quite over-run with rabbits and briars but was good basalt country. Mrs Styles had brought out a briar rose from England and tended it with loving care. By 1899 the briar rose had taken over all the Reevesdale paddocks and they had a long and expensive job getting rid of it.

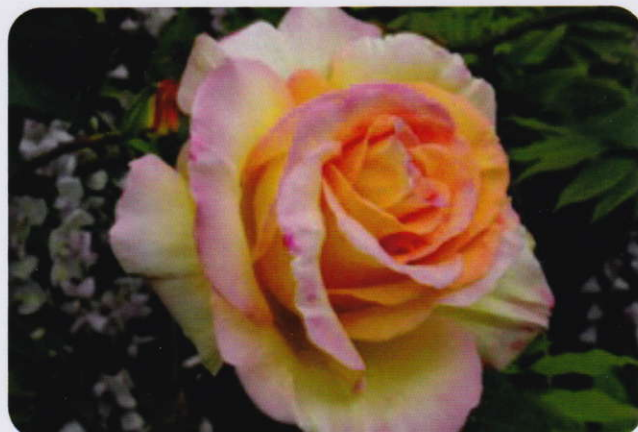
Today, Trisha lives at Bobundara Station, another early colonial house built in the 1830s on an historic Monaro grazing property at the foothills of the Snowy Mountains. Her gardens have been opened to the public. A stand of beautiful elm trees shelters the homestead from the wild weather of the Monaro Plains. It is a vast landscape that stretches beyond the two hectares of gardens that surround the single-storey house. Trisha tells us that she saw only beauty in the property, where others probably saw the inevitable mending that was needed to keep an old slab home going.

Significant roses of the Gardens

Friends committee member and Citywide team leader Nadene Edwards reflects on several of the Gardens' significant and unusual roses. Look for them when you are next in the Gardens.

Ladies Rose Garden – Peace Rose, Hybrid Tea (Located in the centre circle)

The beautiful Peace Rose is a wonderful tale of hope and preservation in the face of war. It was bred by renowned French horticulturist Francis Meilland, between the years 1935 to 1939 and named 'Madame A. Meilland' after his deceased mother. Cuttings were sent to Italy, Turkey, Germany and the USA to protect the survival of the rose. During the Second World War communications were cut off so different names were established in the different countries. The name 'Peace' comes from America and is now one of the most popular cultivated roses.



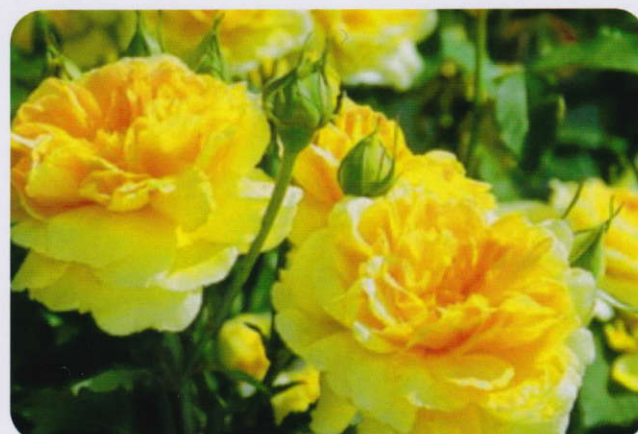
Macarthur – The Green Rose, China (Located on the North Outer circle, left hand side of path)

An extraordinary green rose known as *R. chinensis viridiflora*. It is a true rose, meaning it has not been cross bred for its characteristics. It is unique in that its blooms are made up entirely of sepals rather than petals. Because of this genetic anomaly the rose is asexual and cannot produce pollen. As a result of this it doesn't produce hips. The rose is believed to be a sport from the original China rose around the mid-17th Century. Early cultivation records can be found dating back to the mid-18th Century with a British nursery firm called Bembridge & Harrison.



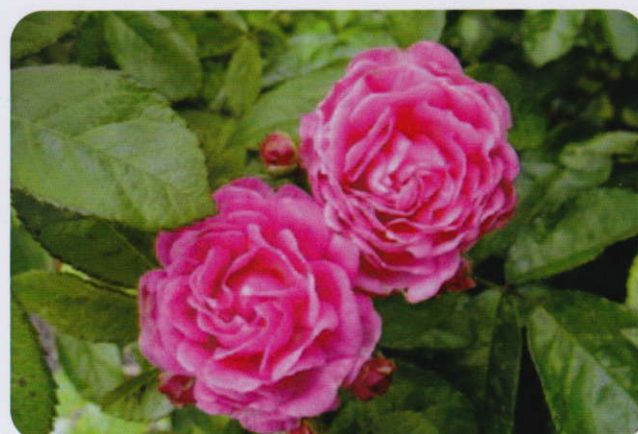
Broinowski – Molineux Rose, Shrub (Located on the southern section of the outer line in the centre circle)

A gorgeous award winning rose, bred by the famous English rose breeder David Austin who was born in 1926. It has a strong tea fragrance and a rosette formation with 120 petals. Named after his local football club, it was released in 1994 and introduced to Australia in 1998. David Austin is known for his emphasis on cross breeding old roses like Gallicas, Damasks and Albas with modern roses like Hybrid Teas and Floribundas. He was able to achieve beautiful scented roses with a wide range of colours that are repeat flowering.



Rex Hazlewood – Mrs Alston's Rose, Polyantha (Located in the North East outer rim of the two inner circles)

This pretty little rose has deep pink, fading with age, semi double blooms of up to 25 petals. Bred by Alister Clark its parentage is unknown and was circulated in Australia in the 1940's. Alister Clark, who lived in Glenora Melbourne, was a renowned and influential Australian rose breeder, and his roses were very popular between the world wars. He was best known for breeding roses to suit the Australian climate conditions and released 120 to 150 new varieties. Sadly many of these roses have been lost since his death in 1949.



Membership renewal

A reminder that membership renewals are due in March. Four categories are available: join as a single member for \$35 per annum; as a family for \$40; and at a concession rate for \$30, available to pension card holders or full time students. Active Rose Gardens volunteers are eligible for a special rate.

Friends membership brings you inclusion in our events, lectures and workshops, and helps us to raise awareness of the Gardens, to advocate for their care and wellbeing and to enhance our own knowledge of rose cultivation.

To renew, or to become a member the Friends, please visit the membership section of our website at www.fophrg.org.au. Alternatively, complete this form and post to:

Friends of the Old Parliament House Rose Gardens
PO Box 213
CURTIN ACT 2605

Membership category (please tick)

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Single (\$35) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Family (\$40) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Concession (\$30)* | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Active NCA Garden Volunteer (\$15) | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Pension card holders or full time students*

Concession Card Number

Contact details

Name

Address

Post code

Telephone

Email

Payment (Please tick)

Cheque ☐ Direct deposit ☐

For payment by direct deposit:

BSB: 082 902

Account number: 16770 7016

Account name: Friends of Old Parliament House Rose
Gardens

With thanks to our sponsors

Many thanks to our supporters, who contribute a great deal to our work in promoting and supporting the Gardens.



The **Pork Barrel Cafe** is unfailingly helpful to the Friends and Volunteers and we highly recommend tea, cake and refreshments among the blooming roses. Friends receive a 20% discount.



The **Heritage Nursery at Yarralumla** offers a 10% discount to the Friends and have been most generous in their support of our rose events.



We are also delighted to welcome aboard the **Mercure Hotel**, who have joined us this year and kindly provide assistance to the Friends through their use of its facilities for our events.



Greeting cards

We have a range of beautifully photographed cards made by gifted photographer Margaret Weir.

Includes close detail and landscape shots of the Gardens. They are available either as individual cards at \$4 each or at \$15 for five plus \$3 for postage and packaging.

We also have available "There's Something About a Rose," a book of Australian poems and artwork that celebrate the rose compiled by Malcolm Beazley and Judith Pugh, and "Sunshine and Roses". This CD of 24 favourite old tunes also plays upon the rose theme. Both are priced at \$15. Please email the Friends for further details.

For details please email
friendsophrosegardens@gmail.com