



FRIENDS OF Old Parliament House ROSE GARDENS

Issue N° 5 Spring 2012

Volunteers share horticultural knowledge

Early in September, Nathan Ward, of the National Capital Authority, arranged a meeting for prospective horticultural volunteers.

Representatives from the Ladies Gardens, Fred and Ann Knowler, along with other fellow garden coordinators, were invited to assist the presentation by sharing knowledge and experiences of working in the gardens.

At the end of the presentation one very keen lady approached Mr and Mrs Knowler with a number of questions concerning the Ladies Garden. The conversation went as follows:

Why is your garden called The Ladies Garden?

By 1933 the Rex Hazelwood and Broinowski Gardens had just about been completed and planning was in progress for a third rose garden on the House of Representative side. However Robert Broinowski, the Secretary of the Joint House Department, and the planner of the Parliament House Gardens had his funding for this work curtailed. This was the time of the Great Depression and all non essential expenditure virtually came to a standstill. Broinowski asked Dame Mary Hughes, Dame Enid Lyons and other



The Ladies Garden

parliamentary wives if they could assist. They agreed and organised the collections of donations of one shilling and fourpence per rose as well as obtaining contributions of plants for the proposed garden. They were so successful that the development went ahead and the garden was therefore named 'Ladies Garden' to commemorate their efforts.

Is the present garden the same as that laid down originally?

With the opening of The New Parliament House in 1988 the original rose gardens were neglected and went into decline and it was not until the year 2000 that action was taken to renovate them. The character and layout of the gardens have been returned to their former glories and

their historical and cultural significance has been maintained, although in the Ladies Garden modern species of the hybrid tea and floribunda roses have replaced the original varieties.

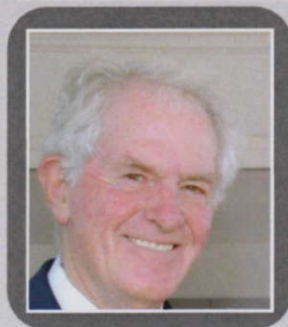
The squash courts, erected there in 1965, have been removed and the tennis courts rejuvenated. A few of the original roses were saved and replanted in a bed behind the bowling club hut.

Are all the gardens the same?

Each of the four gardens has its own identity and design with very few roses appearing in other gardens.

Cont' on page 3

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Friends

Welcome to the Spring Newsletter where I am happy to report the Rose Gardens are in full bloom.

The Friends hosted a successful visit of garden lovers from the Anglican Parish of Cooma. The

National Capital Authority's Education Officer led a tour of the gardens and the Friends put on a splendid afternoon tea.

We have also been working with a group of talented students from the University of Canberra (pictured right) participating in the Public Relations Institute of Australia Student Challenge. Students are teamed with not for profit organisations to assist organisations with their communication and promotion activities. Our students have developed a comprehensive Communication Strategy and Implementation Plan for the Friends which are brimming with ideas and are somewhat daunting in their scope. We have published the Strategy on our Friends website www.fophrg.com

We have our work cut out for us in progressing their many and varied ideas – so if you are looking for ways to get involved in the Rose Gardens please email us at friendsophrosegardens@gmail.com

Finally, I would be delighted if you could join us for the Friends Wine and Roses party in the Gardens on November 25th at 4pm. We have "A Bunch of Posers" playing for us - delicious wine and yummy food. Hope to see you there.

Greg Cornwell AM
President



From left: Rose Drover, Miriam Beswick, PRIA ACT Division President Justine O'Brien, Elizabeth Notting and Alise Salins.

Claude Crowe OAM, Plantsman and Gardener

Over the coming months, the Friends newsletter will be featuring stories behind the roses - as funded by patrons of the Rose Patronage Campaign. In this edition, we focus on the Gardener's Pleasure Rose in the Ladies Rose Garden.

Born in Manus Valley (NSW) in 1914, Claude Crowe commenced his gardening career in Albury in the 1920s, eventually becoming the Garden Design and Construction Manager for Andersons in Sydney.

Upon the outbreak of WWII Claude was heavily involved in operations to camouflage Sydney's main buildings from aerial surveillance. In 1939 he moved to Berrima to operate a wartime program to ensure that Australia had sufficient seed banks to maintain crops for food. He and his wife Isobel established and managed Berrima Bridge Nurseries in

Berrima in 1943, where they grew plants and seed for the production of herbal medicines and crops for the war effort in the Pacific Region.

After the war he researched and commenced the propagation and growing a broad range of plants suitable for the cool climate areas of NSW, also designing hundreds of country and city gardens in the state.

As a foundation member of the Australian Nursery Association, Claude provided advice and assistance to the development of plantings around Canberra and established the Junior Farmers group in Moss Vale, which encouraged excellence in agriculture amongst young farmers.

Claude was also actively involved in the scouting movement and was awarded the prestigious President's Medal for his contribution to scouting by Sir Roden Cutler. In 1998, shortly before his death, he was awarded the Order of Australia Medal for his contribution to the Nursery Industry and the scouting movement.

-Text provided by Florence Sofield, and reprinted from an NCA publication 'Old Parliament House Gardens'.



From page 1

The Ladies Garden is laid out by colour in four quadrants of white, red, pink and yellow roses with a circular bed and pergola covered with climbers in the centre; perennial plants of a blue shade have been placed in the internal beds and lavender has been grown at the end of the beds. The roses have been mainly planted in groups of ten in triangles. Single standard roses stand guard at the end of each bed.

Why were the types of roses chosen?
When the Ladies Garden was planned, it was determined that it would be developed to give much long lasting colour and provide Parliament House with supply of cut roses for about

seven months of the year. Even when Parliament was adjourned Members and Senators would take boxes of cut roses back to their homes. The roses are virtually all hybrid tea and floribunda varieties as these are ideal for providing cut specimens. When the gardens were finally restored in 2004 the old roses were replaced with their modern equivalents.

I suppose you really are only required to work for about half of the year?

That is not true. Roses need attention for most of the year, the exception being during the short dormant period after pruning. When our garden starts blooming again in late October and continues producing flowers till May we are kept very busy with dead heading and general plant maintenance. We have 1554 roses in 169 different varieties in the Ladies Garden itself. We also look after 20 climbing roses which adorn the tennis courts. Depending on the seasonal conditions, most of these roses have between 4 and 6

flushes during the year, so there is a lot of work involved in keeping them up to standard. At the height of the season our teams of eight on both a Monday and Friday morning are barely able to keep up with the deadheading duties. Then of course there is always weeding to be done. After an annual refresher course, pruning of all roses is done during June and July with the help of the garden contractors. Then we have a break.

The arrival of tea and cakes interrupted our conversation and I was then engaged by another applicant.

Fred Knowler (Ladies Garden -- Coordinator)



Top left and above: The Ladies Garden

SPONSORS

The Pork Barrel

King George Terrace, Parkes ACT
(opposite the rose gardens of OPH)

Ph: 6273 1455

www.porkbarrel.com.au



The Heritage Nursery

Banks Street, Yarralumla ACT

Ph: 6281 7373

The Heritage Nursery has generously offered 10% off purchases for Members of the Friends of Old Parliament Rose Gardens. If you present your Friends red membership card, you can either ask for the 10% saving toward buying more plants or a cash discount. For more information, visit their website at www.heritagenursery.com.au

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The Tennis Court Rose Gardens

In our winter 2012 Newsletter (issue number four), mention was made of "internationally renowned Australian rose breeder Alister Clark" (1864-1949). Clark was an amateur breeder so did not commercialise his roses but rather named and gifted them to his family and friends. He wanted to breed roses that flowered all year round in our Mediterranean climate, and used *Rosa gigantea* in much of his breeding.

R. gigantea is a wild rose from Burma and the Himalayas. It is huge, climbing to twelve metres through trees. Its flowers are single, creamy



R. Gigantea

white, and it only flowers in spring: introduced into Britain c.1830, but did not do well in the cold conditions. One of the best known cultivars where it was crossed with a yellow tea-scented China rose is *R.*

Lady Hillingdon 1910 which can be seen in both the Macarthur and Broinowski gardens. The lady it is named for is famous for the saying "lie back and think of England!"

Clark used *R. gigantea* extensively producing many fine large climbing roses in various forms and colours, many tea-scented. All the climbing roses around both the Senate and House of Representatives tennis courts were bred by Alister Clark. Some of these amazing roses only flower in spring though many are recurrent, so it is well worth a visit in November-December when all twenty-six of them are in flower. The first to flower in mid-October is *Harbinger* (1923), a *R. gigantea* cross.

Many of Alister Clark's roses were thought to be lost. He had released 122 new varieties from 1912 until his death in 1949. Most were in the



R. Harbinger

gardens of his family and friends and over the years properties were sold and the roses neglected whilst a few were commercially grown, such as *Lorraine Lee*, *Blackboy*, and *Nancy Hayward*.

A great hunt to find the roses was started in Victoria by Susan Irvine and others. Susan has written five books, all delightful, about her various well-known gardens and Clark's roses. I recommend them to all gardeners and rose lovers.

The books by Susan Irvine are:

- *Garden of a Thousand Roses* (3rd edition, 2003)
- *A Hillside of Roses* (3rd edition, 2008)
- *Rose Gardens of Australia* (1997)
- *The Garden at Forest Hall* (2003)
- *Rose Hips and Crab Apples* (2007)

Judy Refshauge

Dates for your diary

Friend's Valentine's Day Twilight Function

Date Thursday, 14 February 2013

Where Yarralumla Gallery
Cottage 1, Weston Park
Yarralumla Nursery

RSVP friendsophrosegardens@gmail.com