



FRIENDS OF Old Parliament House ROSE GARDENS

Issue 12 – Christmas 2016

President's letter

I became president of the Friends of the OPH Rose Gardens committee half way through the year after Genevieve Jacobs steered the committee ship very fruitfully in the preceding years.

My first meeting after taking on the role was with Daryl Karp, who is the director of the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House. We met to discuss the Friends' deep concerns about the roses at the front of the building. Consultation is ongoing and we are now waiting for the holes where dead roses have been removed to be filled in with new roses, propagated from the original species. I ask all our members and new members to support us in making sure the roses remain around Old Parliament House.

My first event was the Fire Side Chat, a high tea held at the Mercure Hotel. Our guests were John and Edwina Macarthur Stanham from Camden Park, which they inherited through John's family. These days, it is not only a business but a wonderful place to visit. They gave us the most enjoyable talk about the property, along with photos illustrating some of the wonderful treasures there. We saw not only in the house but also the flower beds and trees from the era that are to be found nowhere else in Australia. After hearing about the history of the garden and house, many of our members are keen to visit. Jacalyn Luby came to our assistance to make the technology work and the Mercure staff were very welcoming. Many new members also joined.

Our next function was also a success, although we took a big chance with the weather to have the Melbourne Cup luncheon in the Senate Gardens. We decided to have a light lunch among the roses with a very large TV for all to see. Nadene Edwards stayed up all night, I think, to make the very best sweep I have ever seen, and we really appreciate the help she gives to the committee. I called on a very good friend, Wanda Faux, to show her pearl jewellery which was modelled by Dianna Evans and Myron Dickson. The girls walked around modelling the lovely pearls during lunch and Wanda very generously donated a pearl and gold necklace to be raffled for the day.

We also enjoyed tasting a wide array of delicious wines from Lerida Estate, who are very generous to the Friends. Thanks to Jim Lumbers who was our guide on the day. I could not have managed it without my committee, the NCA's co-operation and in particular Amanda Hynson, who liaises very effectively

between the Friends and the NCA. She has also just announced her engagement and we wish her well. I thank them all.

Our next function will be held on St. Valentine's Day. This falls on a Tuesday in 2017, and this year we will hold our annual cocktail evening in the House of Representatives Gardens at Old Parliament House Gardens from 6 to 8pm. We will enjoy bubbles, music and finger food. Please bring your husband or wife, your lover and come in your after five wear with your best cocktail hat to make it a evening of love, music and beauty.

Ellnor Grassby



President Ellnor Grassby with Roses from the Parliament House Gardens

Stories about roses

In her ongoing series about roses in the gardens and their history, Friends committee member **Nadene Edwards** discusses commonly used Australian rootstock roses

In the wonderful world of roses we enjoy the colourful and fragrant blooms, old and new varieties and everything in between. How many of us have delved deeper, though, and wondered what sort of rootstock supports our favourite roses in the garden, especially when a shoot suddenly appears and its flowers are different?

Many roses are grafted onto rootstock at ground level or as a standard using long rootstock canes. By using tough, hardy and vigorous rootstock, we can graft on more desirable roses that may not necessarily do well on their own root systems, especially in Australia's vast range of climates and soils. A stronger root system can supply better nutrition to the grafted rose and also helps with improved pest and disease resistance.

Many different roses that can be used for this purpose. The most common rootstocks used in Australia are the Dr Huey Rose, a number of *Multifloras* and the *Fortuniana*. These varieties are the more favoured roses used in the commercial rose growing industry. Different nurseries also have their own preferences in growing rootstock from seed and or harvesting canes from mature stock.

Dr Huey has dark red flowers with up to 15 petals, prominent yellow stamens and blooms in small clusters. The rose is a *Hybrid Wichuraiana / Large Flowered Climber* and was bred by Captain George C. Thomas who released the rose in 1914. It is a once blooming rose in spring and one of its desirable characteristics is that it is nearly thornless.



The Dr Huey rose has vigorous deep red blooms and prominent yellow stamens



Multiflora rose varieties have five or six single petals with prominent stamens

There are a number of *Multiflora* varieties, with variations of white, shades of pink or red flowers. The flowers usually have five to six petals (sometimes more) with prominent yellow stamens.

It is not known when these rootstock roses were introduced to Australia (they were possibly spirited into the country in the early 1900's)

Last but not least is the *Fortuniana* rose which is a Hybrid Banksia, Species Cross rose. It produces large white blooms with up to 40 petals and has a sweetly perfumed fragrance. It grows into a large bush, flowering only once in spring.

Bred by Robert Fortune and released 1840. This rose is still occasionally used by Australian rose growers, but it is not the more popular choice.



Fortuniana roses have dense clusters of petals and are a hybrid species cross with the familiar banksia roses.

Lunch in the Gardens

The Friends enjoyed our second Melbourne Cup lunch, held in the Senate rose gardens on a glorious day.

The Canberra Evening Branch of the CWA provided the catering and the sun shone, fortuitously as around 50 guests gathered among the heritage blooms.

Despite some last minute drama with the television tuning, it was fortunate that the Cup is a long race and everyone present saw both the beginning and the end, while leaving a little mystery about what happened in the middle.



Fran and Peter Buscombe, Llois Cutts and Barry Wilson were among the guests who enjoyed a Melbourne Cup lunch in the OPH Rose Gardens



John and Edwina Macarthur Stanham and their children are the current custodians of Camden Park, one of the most historic estates in Australia (photo credit: the Daily Telegraph)



The garden front at Camden Park features a magnificent wisteria hedge, seen here in full bloom.

Fireside Chat with John and Edwina Macarthur-Stanham

The current custodians of Camden Park, John and Edwina Macarthur-Stanham visited the friends in late August for a very successful fireside chat at the Mercure as committee member Wendy McLeod reports

The early colonial estate, Camden Park, has been under the custodianship of John and Edwina Macarthur-Stanham since 1990, and the historic value of the property is inestimable. The Georgian house, designed by John Verge, was completed in 1835 for wool industry pioneers John and Elizabeth Macarthur. The gardens are thought to have commenced in 1820.

Many changes have occurred in the gardens since that time – its original informal style has been converted to the more formal ‘gardenesque’ style, instigated by the Macarthurs’ youngest son, William. William was a great horticulturist, agronomist, viticulturist and was responsible for the importation of over 1000 species of new plants into Australia.

Many rare and historic trees and shrubs still survive from this time. There are specimen trees from everywhere dating back to William’s day. These include the ‘Camden Park Camellia’ (*Camellia japonica anenomiflora*) - the oldest living camellia in Australia.

Other historic plantings include a *Picconia excelsa*, which was used as an example for the National Arboretum in Canberra. Explorer Ludwig Leichhardt himself planted a *Bauhinia racemosa* in the gardens! Many visitors come to Camden Park in September just to witness the spectacular Wisteria hedge in flower.

These days the upkeep of the large park is greatly assisted by Colin Mills, who established the Camden Park Nursery Group, a large and active volunteer group. This year’s chat was given in the form of an informal interview between Genevieve Jacobs and our guests, Edwina and John Macarthur-Stanham.

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)
- Family (\$40)
- Concession (\$30)*
- Active NCA
Garden Volunteer (\$15)

**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 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