

THE RHODODENDRON NEWSLETTER



NOVEMBER 2007

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Australian Rhododendron Society, Victorian Branch Inc. (A5896Z)
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Picture site <http://picasaweb.google.com/ARSVic>

**CHRISTMAS LUNCH AT CHATTERLEY'S
RESTAURANT,
Cloudehill Garden & Nursery, Olinda-Monbulk Rd, OLINDA
SATURDAY 15TH DECEMBER, 12.00pm
Cost \$15 per member or guest (balance subsidised by ARS),
wine \$5 per glass. NO BYO.
Bookings essential. Phone Alan Walker: 9726 8836 by Dec 7
Numbers are limited**



**FESTIVE GREETINGS
TO ALL MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES**



**AUSTRALIA DAY BBQ
SUNDAY 27th JANUARY 2008, 5.00pm
National Rhododendron Gardens
BYO everything.**

PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING,
NOVEMBER 2007.

It is with pleasure, I present the Presidents report for the year past,

The Society year has been one of change brought on by the effects of the drought, thus the need to alter our activities to fit. The recognition of the Vireya by some of the garden writers was good news. At a time when the Rhododendron seems to be out of fashion, we have the Vireya to thank for continued interest in the genus by gardeners.

The Monthly meetings at Nunawading have comprised a number of internal and external speakers, including Dr. Ben Wallace from Canberra, Ron Neyenhuis, on 'Coir fibre in Horticulture', Paul Lucas, who gave a presentation; A Fantasia of Gardens & Flowers of the World'. In July we were presented with the latest on Iris'. Probably the highlight of the monthly meetings was the presentation by our long time colleague Ken Gillanders, of Slides of Chile in South America. Andrew Raper from Rhodo Glen Nurseries presented, to a small audience at Olinda, a detailed look at the reticulata Camellia and the culture in raising camellias. In October Laurie Begg and Alan Kepert presented some of the secrets of deciduous Azaleas including some of Laurie's double hybrids. A year of interesting general meetings, but we need your suggestions and ideas for the agenda for 2008.

The cancellation of the Vireya show, normally held at Mount Waverley in April, had a silver lining at Olinda in September. A one-day release, sale and show of Vireyas, was very successful. The reports from the Olinda Hall, said 'hectic in the morning', and quieter later. Thank you to Bill Taylor, his team and everyone who helped to organise and run this event. The Committee will be looking at such an event for 2008.

The Society volunteers who work tirelessly at Olinda most Tuesdays, should be particularly thanked for their efforts. Without the volunteers, where would the gardens be now? Parks is unable to provide more than a token number of outdoor staff, thus the importance of the volunteers. During the year, Parks Victoria hosted an event to recognise the long service volunteers have given to the Gardens.

On a more technical note, we are in the process of drafting a Collections Policy for the Olinda Gardens. In the process, we are reviewing copies of Collections policies from other Gardens. It is important the final document recognises the significance of the collection at Olinda and the botanical status of the garden. Much work is being done by the volunteers in obtaining the GPS location of many plants. This is a large job, and can only be continued when time is available.

Our secretary, Marcia Begg has been busy organising events at the gardens. The first was the Lady Bird Exhibition over Easter, on the Cherry Lawn. Many extra visitors came to the gardens, at what is normally a quiet time. The next event was the Olinda Garden & Arts Festival over Cup weekend. Once again, much time and

effort was spent in putting on a very good range of activities for the visitors, in addition to our Rhododendron Show. Unfortunately, the weather turned against us on the Sunday, but we do need the rain.

We attended the annual ABC gardening show at Caulfield in October, and provided visitors with the opportunity to discuss their rhododendron gardening problems.

A recent addition to the Society's presentations, are the display boards hanging in the Olinda hall. This was the work of Mike Hammer. This photographic display shows much of the early days of the gardens and how it is now, 40+ years onward. Thank you Mike, for all the work you did in preparation and execution of the project.

In closing, I must record, thank you to all members who have contributed to the Society over the last year, in whatever way they have helped. Particular thanks go to Bill Taylor for steering the volunteers in the right direction, and organising the shows, Marcia Begg, for efficiently looking after secretarial activities, Simon Begg, for writing a very enjoyable newsletter, Val Marshall, for quietly managing the library and Alan Walker for a myriad of jobs, done without most of us noticing.

Regards,
Neil Webster.
President.

**OFFICE BEARERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS ELECTED AT
THE AGM 16TH NOV 2007**

PRESIDENT: Carole Quinn – 03 5968 1027

VICE-PRESIDENTS:
No. 1: Mike Hammer – 03 9755 2176
No. 2: Bill Taylor – 03 9754 8275

TREASURER: Neil Webster – 03 9859 3622.

SECRETARY: VACANT

COMMITTEE: 3 YEAR TERM :
Mike Hare – 03 9844 2232
Elizabeth Xipell – 03 9859 9934
Marcia Begg – 03 9751 1610
1 YEAR TERM:
Len Sloggett – 03 9808 6484
Inge Hammer – 03 9755 2176

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2007

The 2007 AGM of the Society was held on the evening of 16 November 2007 at Nunawading.

It promised to be an interesting meeting because, for the first time for at least 10 years, there was an expectation of a ballot for office bearers. 30 members attended in person. In the event there was no ballot. Proxies held by Carole Quinn, husband John and Bill Taylor had put the outcome beyond doubt. Nominated candidates for contested positions, whose candidacy they did not support, withdrew.

After the formal opening and minutes Neil Webster, the outgoing President, presented the President's and Treasurer's Reports [pages 2-3 and 5-7 respectively]. Roger Fowler was reappointed auditor.

Bill Taylor presented the Show report [page 8], Marcia Begg the Festival Report [page 16-17] and Simon Begg the National Council Report [pages 11-13]. Simon was appointed National Council delegate for a two year term.

Neil Webster presented the Membership report, Alan Walker the Volunteer Group report and Val Marshall the Library Report [page 16]

Neil Webster then read Ron Moodycliffe's citation for Life Membership awarded by the ARS [page 13]

Bill Taylor, as Show Manager, presented Awards.

The SS McKay Memorial Medallions [provided by the Royal Horticultural Society of Victoria] were awarded by ARSV for highest General Meeting bench aggregates in the categories of Rhododendron, Azalea and Vireya. All three were won by Simon Begg, the Azalea one by one point from Alan Walker. *[Val Marshall sent me an extract from **The Rhododendron**, 1979[I think], recording George Langdon as the 1978-1979 winner. This article also, helpfully, set out useful information about the Medallion. ARS Vic 'for many years'[before then] was 'privileged' to participate in the distribution of its 'Silver Medallion'. 'From 1975 this medal was known as the SS McKay Memorial Medallion in honour and recognition of the services of the late Mr Stuart McKay (a member of the famous HV McKay – 'Sunshine Harvester' family), to' RHSV. Mr McKay was Vice President of RHSV for many years and President from 1962-1974 when he died of a heart attack in his mid 60s. 'The rules laid down by RHSV for the issue of the medal within individual Societies are quite stringent and medals are only to be given to members who make an outstanding contribution to Horticulture, within the Society'. At ARSV the Committee decided that the Medallion would be awarded to the member whose plants and/or blooms exhibited at monthly general meetings obtained the highest aggregate points for the year in 6 exhibit categories. In the intervening years the exhibit categories have increased in number and one medallion has become 3. I do wonder whether **any** of these Medallions are within the spirit of RHSV's intent. Perhaps a medallion would be better bestowed to the member making the best contribution to the genus Rhododendron in the year. Ed]*

The 2007 Rhododendron Show awards were presented as stated on page 8. There was, as decided by Bill, no Encouragement Award, Certificate of Merit or Banksian Medal Award this year.

Bill announced that 2007 was his last year as Show Manager.

Marcia Begg, in presenting the Festival Report, mentioned that she had updated the names on the trophies for the first time for a number of years and that Inge Hammer had polished them.

When the AGM got around to election of office bearers the retiring president Neil Webster announced he had withdrawn his candidacy for both President, where he was opposed to Carole Quinn, and Vice President, where he was opposed to Mike Hammer and Bill Taylor. Carole was thus elected President and Mike and Bill were elected Vice Presidents unopposed.

Simon Begg then withdrew his candidacy for Treasurer, leaving Neil elected unopposed as Treasurer. An interesting, but unsolved, question is whether Neil is also Immediate Past President. The answer probably is immaterial.

Marcia Begg, unexpectedly in the context of the meeting script, withdrew her nomination as secretary leaving the position vacant.

The Committee nominations filled the available vacancies. According to Neil, Committee had decided, at its November meeting, that committee positions [three three year terms and two one year terms] were filled first by nominated retiring committee members, followed by nominees in the order of nomination. Len Sloggett was the only retiring committee member standing but he only sought one year, which he got. The three year terms were filled by Mike Hare, Elizabeth Xipell and Marcia Begg. Inge Hammer was elected to the remaining one year term.

TREASURERS REPORT TO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2007.

The highlights.

The surplus for the year was \$7540, a decrease of \$4362 (36.65%) on last year. In summary a good year, with interest earned from term deposits, increasing by 3.92% to \$18065. Total income decreased to \$30749. Expenditure increased \$2298 to \$23209. Plant sales decreased by 29.45% to \$10352, on the back of the drought and unfavourable weather conditions.

The income from term deposits reflected static interest rates and the opportunity to select the best term and rates available. Interest rates have risen slightly over the year, and may rise again when the next maturity dates occur. Overall, the current asset position of the Society remains strong.

Income.

The trading result from plant sales and other items produced a surplus of \$12876. This reflects a decrease in plant sales and a slight reduction in purchases of plants. The minimal stock holdings carried over, have been cleared by Spring 2006. It

should be noted that plant purchases of \$5976, includes GST of \$543. We do not charge GST on sales or other income. The income from the Olinda Shows decreased by 55.09% to \$1747. The potential lack of interest in gardening and visiting the Dandenongs, had its effect on both attendances and plant sales. It is very difficult to determine where visitors to the gardens come from and why they come, considering the excess of attractions in the Melbourne region. The considerable increase in entrance charges to the Olinda garden by Parks Victoria, will deter attendances and reduce sales.

The Society handed over the operation of the plant sales nursery at Olinda to Parks from 1 July 2007. We will continue to supply a limited range of plants, raised at the Gardens, for sale. Unfortunately, the number of rhododendron wholesalers is declining, and many lines are now available only from ARS propagation at Olinda, particularly species. Weather conditions continue to have an influence on buyer habits at Olinda.

Membership numbers remained stable in the year to 30 June 2006. The good news is that new membership applications continue to come in, particularly from direct approaches to visitors expressing interest at the Shows. Just placing brochures in the hall at Olinda, produced a steady number of new member applications. Subscription fees from members increased 3.16% to \$5055. This may not sound much, but every new member replacing a departure, ensures our future. We continue to follow up slow payers to avoid losing members who forget to pay their subscriptions. The overall ageing of the membership, is having its effects by the departure of the elder members and replacement by younger members visiting the Shows. We always need members to keep the Society in the public place to ensure ongoing interest in the Genus.

The interest earned from term deposits this year increased in line with funds invested, and static interest rates. Deposits increased from \$304220 to \$315416 (3.68%). Interest rates for the next six months are likely to rise further. A one percent rise in interest rates, will earn the Society, an extra \$3155+ per annum. I am currently investing half the funds for up to twelve months to take advantage of higher returns and provide flexibility should any change in rates occur. The current interest rates available are in the range of 6.25% to 6.85%. This year, we transferred \$6727 to the current account to ensure member's services remain at the same levels as in the past. All funds are invested in Term Deposits with the ANZ Bank.

Expenditure.

Expenditure has increased on last year by \$2298 (11%). Expenditure excludes items of a capital nature, predominantly additions to the library, some propagation items and computer equipment.

A number of expenses showed considerable change, including administrative consumables and depreciation of assets. Many expenses are related to timing issues. We do not bring into account the value of plants raised in the wholesale nursery at Olinda. If actual stock values of plants on hand, were brought into the accounts, the surplus may have been \$2500 lower. We recently reviewed the stock holdings in

the nursery. This will enable closer control of costs and to reduce water usage in view of the current dry weather conditions.

Assets.

The Society's assets are primarily, the library, maps, projectors, P.A. System, office equipment, furniture, bank deposits, show benches, general equipment at Olinda and stock on hand. All Stock on hand is valued at the lowest of cost or replacement and is predominantly trophies, glasses, spoons and a small stock of books and fancy goods for sale. Plants raised at Olinda are not valued in the reports. Most assets past their useful lives, have been written off. There are a number of assets that have intrinsic value, particularly furniture and office fittings.

Liabilities.

There were no significant liabilities at balance date. Sundry creditors were \$625, primarily the cost of the recent audit.

Summary.

The financial position of the Society is strong and income allows the further investment of surplus funds in term deposit. I should remind members, that without the term deposits earning \$18065 in interest, this Branch would have incurred a deficit of \$10525 for the year after offering a full range of services to the members. It should also be noted that we do not charge GST on sales and income, nor do we claim GST on goods and services purchased. The cost to the Society is approximately \$400 per annum. The reduction in future plant purchases will reduce GST cost to a minimum.

I table the audited books of account and the financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2007. I further table the Membership register as at 30 June 2007.

Neil G. Webster.
Treasurer.
4 November 2007.

ARSV MEMBERSHIP ENTITLEMENTS

1. Single Membership:

one vote at AGM or Special GM, eligible for election as an office bearer or to committee, subscription \$25.00 per year,

one membership card, admitting **two** persons to the National Rhododendron Gardens, Olinda [NRG]

one set of publications, *Newsletter* and *The Rhododendron*.

Valid July 1 to June 30.

2. Family Membership:

one vote at AGM or Special GM, and only **one** [nominated] person is eligible for election as an office bearer or to committee, subscription \$35.00 per year,

two membership cards, **each** admitting **two** persons to NRG- that is up to **four** persons in total

one set of publications, *Newsletter* and *The Rhododendron*.

Valid July 1 to June 30.

RHODODENDRON SHOW 2007

As usual the faithful few turned out to put on a very good display of outstanding blooms.

Saturday morning was quiet a frenzy of activity right up to the deadline.

There were only **14** exhibitors but what they put up on the benches achieved the desired result, making a very pleasing visual display with their excellent blooms and plants.

So a round of thanks to all who went to the trouble. **We need more Exhibitors.**

The Major Prizes went to:

John Quinn *Alistair MacLeod-Cooch Trophy (Cadis)*
Walter Lobbezoo *Dowd Trophy (Yakushmanum)*
John Quinn *Gibson Trophy (Lapoinya Panache)*
Andrew Rouse *Pritchard Trophy*

Annual Prizes:

Simon Begg *Alfred Bramley Prize*
Simon Begg *Best Vireya Species Sash*
W. Lobbezoo *G. Louise Anderson Prize (Helwigii X)*

Australian Rhododendron Society, Victorian Branch Prizes:

J. Quinn *Best Rhododendron Truss – Open Section*
J. Quinn *Best Rhododendron Truss in Novice or Amateur Sections*
W. Taylor *Best Azalea Exhibit*

Thanks to the Judges, Laurie Begg, Alan Kepert, Mike Hare.

Trophies and prizes will be presented at our Annual General Meeting.

There should be an “Award of Merit” for effort awarded to Alan Walker. He is the best for effort and endurance “Applause”

W.J. Taylor – Show Manager.

EDITOR’S NOTES

The Rhododendron Show 2007 report above is exactly as it was sent to me. I raised the issues in the following pages, as to the identity of the winning blooms, with Bill (several times) and he said to print it as is. So I have.

I add this note primarily to specify a description of the various kinds of Rhododendron[s] for which the prizes are awarded. Bill, obviously, from his long experience is familiar with the details however most members (including me), need reminding and, in some cases informing. I have also provided the identity of the winning entries where these are lacking and corrected

wrong descriptions where photographic evidence requires. The photographs are to be found by clicking the following website <http://picasaweb.google.com/ARSVic>. Then proceed to [ARSV Rhododendron Show 2007](#).

The **Alistair Macleod-Cooch Trophy** is awarded for the three best blooms, species or hybrid, grown by an amateur. The Show Schedule details make clear this trophy is awarded to the winner of Class 46. As Bill says, John Quinn won. But, obviously, not with a single bloom. R "Cadis" as stated. I went back to NRG and got John's original entry form. His entries were R "Naselle", R "Point Defiance" and R "Empire Pink" [photo]. Peter Damman and friends organised this Trophy in memory of Alistair, who died in the late 1960s in lieu of flowers at his funeral. A much more lasting memorial! Colonel Alistair [or the Brig as he was known] had been in the British army in India and was then a Bank of Australasia manager who retired to Olinda and loved rhododendrons.

His only sister was married to Trevor Oldham who, us oldtimers remember, was a minister in the Holloway Government. Trevor and his wife were both killed when the Comet out of Rome crashed into the sea.

The **Dowd Trophy** is awarded for the best three Rhododendron Species (1 truss or spray of each,) in the Open Section, from either Section A Rhododendron Species (except Vireyas) item 2 or Section C (Vireya Species) item 24. These Classes are for trios of species staged separately. As Bill says Wally Lobbezoo entered the winning trusses. They were non Vireya Species being, respectively, R *yakushiminanum* –as Bill states- (now renamed by the Rhododendron Handbook 1998 (RHS) as R *degronianum* Subsp. *yakushiminanum*), R *wardii* and R *scottianum* (now, also, renamed RHS *ibid*, as R *pachypodum*). They beat the winning Vireya species trios from Class 24. The Dowd trophy was donated by Bernard and Maurice Dowd in memory of their mother. The Dowds owned Hickory ladies underwear. According to Peter Damman (my source) Bernard Dowd owned "Whernside", the Myer mansion in Toorak when the Kew Horticultural Society was wound up. The Rhododendron, December 1966, credits John Pritchard with obtaining this Trophy, as well as the Gibson trophy, for the Society. I infer that, previously, they were trophies of the Kew society.

The **Gibson Trophy** is awarded for the best truss or spray of a Rhododendron in the Amateur Section. The relevant Class is class 48. John Quinn won this as stated. However the winning entry was R "Cadis" not R "Lapoinya Panache". I know this because I have a photo taken before the truss was moved to the 'winners table' [photo]. My researches have yet to identify who Gibson was. Neither Peter Damman nor Val Marshall can help.

The **Pritchard Trophy** is awarded for one container of the best Rhododendron Hybrid raised by the exhibitor from seed either from Section B, Rhododendron Hybrids (except Vireyas) item 17 or section C, Vireya Rhododendrons, item 27. Andrew Rouse won this with a R *pauciflorum* x R *gracilentum* cross. [Photo]. I do not think there was any entry in Class 17. Val Marshall sent me copies of extracts from 'The Rhododendron' for December 1966 page 5 and March 2007 pp 15 and 16. The former notes John Pritchard's death and the latter contains an Obituary for him compiled by Bob Withers. He was 'aged 85..[and] was one of the best known horticulturalists of the old school and was instrumental in obtaining the Dowd and Gibson Trophies' for the Society. Bob describes something of John Pritchard's life; his working life with The Myer Emporium, and later Foy and Gibson, and the sadness of his later life, losing his wife and then his two sons both in the prime of life. Finally his Kalorama property was burnt out in the 1962 fires. His interest in a wide range of plants eased the pain a little.

The **Alfred Bramley Prize** [Originally the Woolrich Prize named for the nursery which Alf Bramley ran, where "Cloudehill" now is, and renamed for Alf, our first President] is awarded for 2 species and 1 hybrid of Rhododendron (one truss or spray of each, staged separately) in the Amateur Section, (Class 47). Simon Begg won this as stated. His winning

entries were **R degronianum Subsp. yakushiminanum R laetum** [Vireyas permitted in this Class] and **R “Australian Sunset”** [photo].

The **Best Vireya Species Sash** is, as its name implies, awarded for the best Vireya Rhododendron species (truss or spray) in the Show. Simon Begg won this, as stated. He won with **R stenophyllum**, flowering for the first time [photo]. Actually the sash was abandoned a couple of years ago but that merely adds to the mystique. Incidentally Class 48 could also have been eligible but no Vireya species were entered in this class.

The **G Louise Anderson Prize and Sash** derives from a bequest. Again there is, now, no sash. **Louise Anderson**, according to Val Marshall, was a member of the Ladies Auxilliary and a gifted pianist who left the bequest in her will. It is awarded for the best Vireya Rhododendron Hybrid (truss or spray) in Show. There is a story to tell about this award at this show. Apparently the winning entry was misplaced when judging for the two Vireya Hybrid Classes (large and small) took place so it was not judged in these Classes, nor, obviously in other Classes in which a single truss or spray of Vireya Hybrid was eligible [eg. Class 48]. It was correctly described as being in Class 22 but staged with entries in Class 20 (large species). During staging, the position of the Vireya species Classes [20 and 21] was changed from their usual place to the space usually occupied by the hybrids. In these circumstances accidents happen. When I tried to identify, from my photos, the winner, entered by Wally Lobbezoo, as stated by Bill, I could not, for I knew who won the Hybrid classes; Bill himself and Simon. I asked Wally if he entered a **R hellwigii x**. The answer was no; he entered only one hybrid a **R konori x**. Mystery solved; my photo of the large Vireya species winner shows Wally's **R konori x** next to it and not staged in its right Class [hybrid class 22] but correctly entered in it. So Wally won with a **R konori x**. Murray MacAllister thinks it has **R hellwigii** in it as well [photo].

Best Rhododendron Truss- Open Section. As Bill says John Quinn won this. But with what? John had plenty of winners in the Open Section. His entries were outstanding. Real Class! My guess, and its only a guess, is **R “Lapoinya Panache”** [Photo]. I know from my photo of the winning truss for the **Gibson Trophy** that John's winner of that Trophy was **R ‘Cadis’**, and it did not win this one as both Bill and John stated at the AGM.

Best Rhododendron Truss in Novice or Amateur Sections. John Quinn won this also. Again with what? As John is not a Novice the winner must have come from the Amateur Section Classes 48-52. **R Cadis** again? As I said John had so many outstanding entries I can't even hazard a guess.

Best Azalea Exhibit in Sections D (Azaleas), E (Plants) and F (Novice). Bill won this. I have photos of Bill's winning hanging Basket in Section E 40 whose name I cannot read, a winning vase of evergreen Azalea in section D 32, **R “Mauve Schryderii”**, but I cannot read the winner and Bill's winning potted plant of Azalea in Section D33 whose name I cannot read, but which, to me, also looks like **R “Mauve Schryderii”** [Photo]. So what won for Bill remains a mystery.

When organising the Trophies for cleaning the Secretary found the **Herbert Trophy**. This, obviously, has not been awarded for many years. Peter Damman informs me it was awarded for Doug Herbert who worked at NRG at busy times. Doug worked as a gardener for Peter, Frank Bankin and others. He died of a heart attack playing tennis. The Trophy was awarded for the best camellia in the Show. That was when the Society encouraged other plant entries.

The final prize is the **Banksian Medal** presented by RHS. This is for the highest aggregate of points over the ARSV shows (excluding, I assume, the Vireya Show). This year there was only one show. Bill has stated there is no award.

Writing this note brought home to me my lack of knowledge of many of the people for whom prizes are named. Val Marshall and Peter Damman gave me much information. I have made a note to find out more for the next Newsletter.

I reiterate the credit Bill has given to all the outstanding entries that did not win prizes. Some won or were placed in their Classes; but many worthy exhibits won nothing. I contrast the Florence, Oregon USA Rhododendron Show this year, the subject of John Quinn's presentation following the AGM [see page19-20] where ribbons were awarded to many entries to try to encourage exhibitors.

I mention a few standouts that caught my eye and camera. Karel Van de Ven's magnificent potted Rhododendrons (R "Yacko" and R "Maria's Choice" [photo]); Bill's Azalea plants and hanging basket [photo]; the magnificence of John Quinn's Asiatics [In the Amateur trio Class (Class G 46) I counted no fewer than 5 trios entered by John, all, to my inexperienced eye, potential winners.] and the large number of entries in the Vireya Hybrid Classes [photo].

I must mention also the Children's entries in Section H Classes 53 and 54.[Photo] These were genuine entries by children not, so far as I know, being grandchildren of experts. If even one of these children becomes an addict and a future member the Secretary's work in generating the Children's entries will have been worthwhile.

ED

NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING, HOBART 26TH OCT 2007

OFFICERS 2007-2008

The following were elected unopposed:

| | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| PRESIDENT – | Kaye. Hagan |
| VICE-PRESIDENT – | Neil. Webster |
| TREASURER – | Peter.Waidrowski |
| SECRETARY – | Murray.Mc Alister |
| PUBLIC OFFICER – | Robert. Hatcher |
| AUDITOR – | John. Turner |

Discussion re scheduling of future NC meetings and AGM's due to the proposed 2010 ARS 50th anniversary in Melbourne.

Delegates were interested to hear that the Botanic Gardens at Mt Tambourine in Queensland is considering establishing a Rhododendron Garden and requested information from other garden groups and experts. It was suggested that NC hold its **2008 NC meeting** at Mt Tambourine sometime in August 2008. Simon and Marcia Begg, who were going to that part of Queensland anyway, agreed to meet the Director to discuss the feasibility of this idea during their visit and report back to Kaye Hagan. SA delegates agreed to organise the NC meeting. (Since then Simon has had a very enthusiastic response to his email to the Director and we have organised to meet him on December 6th).

It was suggested that the **2008 ARS AGM** could then be included in the October ARSV General Meeting in Melbourne. Delegates and members from other branches could be invited to attend. As it is necessary to have a quorum of 30 ARS members at its AGM some proxies would be needed.

2010 Conference in Melbourne, a celebration of the 50th anniversary of the ARSV and the NRG (National Rhododendron Garden).

NC agreed to consider the feasibility of inviting international speakers, and having garden visits, dinner, etc. Kaye suggested that, after the conference, the speakers could do a circuit of the other branches and all branches would contribute to the costs. Robert Hatcher offered to be Marketing Manager. Kaye suggested a vireya

speaker from Hawaii and 2 other overseas speakers could be included. Vic delegates to explore approximate travel costs for speakers and report back to Kaye. A selected gold vireya could be propagated and named.

Proposed NC Meetings for the next few years are;

2009 – SA, 2010 – Vic, 2011 – Emu Valley, 2012 – SA, 2013 – Hobart

Vireya Conference.

NC agreed, at the strong urging of Kay and Murray that Vireyas were the potential salvation of interest in Rhododendrons [though they should be publicised as Vireyas not Vireya Rhododendrons. At Kay's suggestion NC agreed to consider the feasibility of a Vireya Conference to be held in the future in Hobart. High profile media presenters to be invited.

ARS Medals, highest recognition for Society members.

NC agreed to order 20 medals. Die cost and medals - \$1153.90

Ron Moodycliffe.

Neil moved a motion that ARS award Ron a Life Membership. This was carried.

Bank signatories. Neil, Murray, Robert and Peter.

Lace wing trial at Mt Lofty.

Robert Hatcher reported that, in 2006 there had been 3 releases at Mt Lofty in Oct, Nov and Dec. There had also been one or two releases in private gardens in SA. The outcome was very successful at Mt Lofty because it is isolated from other rhododendrons and there had been sufficient releases. Mt Lofty was repeating again this year. The trial also had success on Clethras that had red mites.

From a Victorian perspective Glenn Maskell should be asked confer with Robert.

IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

Robert Hatcher drew attention to the work of The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources [hence the acronym], now called, more simply, the World Conservation Union. According to its website [accessed from the acronym] it was formed in 1948 and is the world's largest, and most important, conservation network. It brings together 84 States and huge numbers of Government agencies and scientists from 110 countries. Australia is a State member [Environment Australia- Department of Environment and Heritage (DEH)] as is New Zealand. Australia has numerous Government Agency members. IUCN has 1100 staff in 40 countries with headquarters in Gland, Switzerland. One of its principal functions is to monitor the World's species through the IUCN's Red List of Threatened Species.

IUCN's Red List, according to its website, is too big to publish as a book. Instead it is published, in September each year, as an on line searchable database. It covers both flora and fauna. It is searchable by species.

A search of the Genus Rhododendron on 20 November yields 13 species compared with a yield of 11 a few days earlier.

Of these 13, 7 are listed on ARSV Species Database and 4 have GPS references.

The hits [numbers & GPS as well] are; *R cyanocarpum*, [5 and nil], *R dalhausiae* var. *rhabdotum* [24 & 3], *R fictolacteum* [7 & nil], *R rex* [3 & 2], *R subansiriense* [2 & nil], *R protistum* var. *giganteum* [60 & 9] and *R wrayi* [1 & 1].

Robert says, and we have not, as yet, verified, that Australia, as a IUCN member State, is obligated to support Botanic Gardens that have these Red List species.

[We raced outside immediately on reading this list and watered our 2 very small specimens of R rex that are looking a bit bedraggled in the heat! ED]

NC AGM

Motions regarding the use of electronic means for voting on resolutions were passed during a very pleasant dinner.

VICTORIAN DELEGATES, Simon and Marcia Begg

CITATION FOR LIFE MEMBERSHIP – RON MOODYCLIFFE.

Ron Moodycliffe has been a member of the Australian Rhododendron Society Vic Branch Inc. for 24 Years. During these years, he and his wife Marina have supported the Victorian Branch in many ways. Marina, surprisingly, never became a member. Had she done so she, too would have merited consideration for Life Membership.

Ron, as a professional photographer, gave freely of his time to photograph people, landscape views of the growing Rhododendron Garden at Olinda, individual plants of rhododendrons and related genera. He developed stylish photographs and many of these were mounted for visitors to inspect at shows. This included many Asiatic and Vireya Rhododendrons, new and unusual material, and landscapes.

Ron photographed events that were held by the Branch and recently supplied photographs from his archives that have been used to create new display boards for use at shows and publicity events. Many a photograph found its way into the national journal *The Rhododendron*, to be seen by readers around the World.

There were many monthly meetings when blooms from the Moodycliffe's were among the winners, particularly when exhibited by Marina. There were also many occasions when the Moodycliffe's exhibits were among the top awards at the annual Rhododendron shows.

For many years, they regularly organized and supplied suppers for the monthly meetings, which they only relinquished when Ron's failing eye sight made driving unsafe at night.

Ron also served on the Branch Committee and attended to publicity as necessary.

Ron and Marina's garden at Mt Evelyn, of several hectares, was always available for garden visits – we all applaud that wonderful Magnolia 'Volcano'. Ron grew Vireyas in difficult bush conditions, many plants producing outstanding trusses. Bulbs were another interest of Ron & Marina. They have a huge collection of bulbs, particularly lilliums and many other rare and unusual bulbs. They are both always available to discuss their interests and the garden with visitors, both local and overseas.

We appreciate Ron has given unstintingly of his time and knowledge to the Australian Rhododendron Society over many years.

Val J Marshall, 10 October 2007

[A photo of Ron, taken by Sue Jarvis at the Cup Weekend Garden and Arts Festival, is on page 14 Ed]



Raugustinii [pale form]

*Taken in October 2007 at National Rhododendron Gardens
Olinda*

[See page 21]



Ron Moodycliffe
at the Olinda Garden and Arts
Festival 2007 [Photo Sue Jarvis]



Show Hall, National Rhododendron Gardens, Olinda 2007
[photo Sue Jarvis]



Trophy Table
John Quinn's winners of the Alistair Macleod-Cooch Trophy and
Andrew Rouse's winner of the Pritchard trophy
[see pages 8 & 9]

LIBRARY REPORT

There haven't been many new Rhododendron publications during 2007. Any that have been reviewed or requested by members have been investigated and purchased if possible.

A notable addition to the library is *'The Rhododendrons of Sabah'* by George Argent, A. Lamb and A. Phillipps. Also another publication by George Argent *'Rhododendron, Sub-Species of Genus Vireya'*. We have several copies of this available for sale at \$105 if any member is interested. Another publication we receive each year is the N.Z. Rhododendron Journal which has a collection of interesting articles. We subscribe to a variety of magazines both national and international. *'The Garden'* by UK RHS, *'The Gardener'* from NZ, *'The BBC Gardener'* from UK, plus various pamphlets produced on Vireyas, e.g. *'The Vireya Vine'*.

Perhaps you may enjoy borrowing several books and magazines over the summer break. Half our library is at Nunawading and half at the NRG in the lunch room. Alan Walker has the keys to the library and is at the NRG most Tuesdays if you wish to borrow books or magazines from there. Thank you to Alan for his cheerful dedication to the library.

Valerie Marshall

Hon. Librarian, November 2007.

OLINDA GARDEN & ARTS FESTIVAL 'THE FESTIVAL THAT BROKE THE DROUGHT!'

The weekend of 3rd and 4th November loomed up with dismal weather forecasts. I tried to ignore them! All the advertising for the Olinda Garden & Arts Festival had been and still was in full swing. Graeme Purdy had written an excellent article in the Saturday Herald Sun the week before about the Rhododendron Gardens and the Festival. The Sunday Age also had an article about the Gardens as did the local papers. Thousands of flyers had been distributed, banners hung, radio talks and emails sent in every direction. Parks Victoria and the Sherbrooke Art Society also advertised the event.

To complement the Rhododendron Show on Cup weekend I had invited a range of attractions to come on the Saturday and Sunday. The aim was to raise the profile of the National Rhododendron Gardens and encourage an interest in the activities of the Australian Rhododendron Society Vic. Both the National Rhododendron Gardens and Pirianda Garden are classed as Botanic Gardens and it is amazing how many people, even locals, have been to neither garden. Planning and organising the event with Glenn Maskell and Maureen Irvin from Parks Vic was both enjoyable and productive. They helped in every way they could, no request was too difficult.

The nurseries and food and wine vendors invited were all keen to participate. The Olinda CFA and Police, vintage cars, Mt Dandenong and District Historical Society, Healesville Sanctuary, Sherbrooke Art Society, our own Botanical Artist, Anne O'Connor, Ferny Creek Horticultural Society and local musicians were all very enthusiastic. Wendy Britt, Principal of Mt Dandenong Primary School, took up the challenge and organised a children's art show involving five local schools. The Upwey branch of the Bendigo Bank sponsored the children's art show and awarded

trophies and a cash prize. Stockdale and Leggo and Bell Real Estate erected Community Boards, Logie-Smith Lanyon Lawyers helped with printing and Tesselaars and the Royal Horticultural Society Vic. helped with the distribution of flyers.

Sunday was Family Day with free children's activities organised by Parks Vic and an animal farm sponsored by SkyHigh Restaurant, Mangana Crafts and the ARSV. A children's potting up bench was sponsored by Floriana/Oasis who donated trays of seedlings, Garden City Plastics donated pots and Norwood donated labels. Special thanks to Alan Walker for his support and for manning the very successful children's potting up bench for the four days.

Everything went according to plan – except for the weather!

Saturday was dull and 440 people visited the garden. Saturday night was very wet and Sunday still wet, we had nearly 70mls of rain and only 209 people braved the weather, only ten of those were children! Monday was not much better with 340 people and the perfect day was Tuesday when 895 people arrived. The total numbers for cup weekend were up on last year so perhaps the advertising contributed to that, especially the cup day visitors, even though the extra attractions were not there that day.

Despite the weather the interest generated was encouraging and the advertising brought at least twenty-five new members to the ARSV. Many of these have joined to benefit from the free entry into the NRG but some may become active in the ARSV in the short or long term and they will all spread the news about the NRG and the ARSV to a wider community.

Marcia Begg

GENERAL MEETINGS

SEPTEMBER 15TH

The committee decided to hold two General Meetings at the NRG on Saturday afternoons to allow members to enjoy the garden together when the rhododendrons are at their peak. It was also thought that those who could not attend evening meetings may be pleased to have the opportunity to meet during the day. This day was cool so the fire in the Vireya Room (formerly 'Vireya Café') was lit early (thanks to Wally and John Curtis) and the room proved to be a very comfortable meeting room. Although we were low on members we made up for it by having a super speaker, Andrew Raper, an excellent topic and a very friendly atmosphere.

Andrew gave an excellent talk on Reticulata Camellias, their culture and history. 'Reticulata' refers to the strong veining or reticulated pattern in the leaves. They originate from Yunnan in southwest China.

He explained how the camellia had evolved to become the magnificent flower it now is thanks to the patience of the Chinese monks who have propagated and selected the best specimens since 900AD. For hybridists selection is a process of elimination by discerning the assets and liabilities of each plant. This holds true for all species.

Assets to look for include – good shape, floriferous, long flowering, propagate from cuttings easily, non-crunchy leaves (crunchy leaves are easily damaged by hail, etc), have a ‘WOW’ factor and will hybridise with *Camellia japonica*.

Liabilities are crunchy leaves, rangy trees with a few flowers at the top, large floppy flowers, sterile plants which have to be grafted and late flowering plants which do not keep well.

The best camellias were grown in the gardens of the Buddhist temples and monasteries. The plants were greatly revered by the monks who were very protective of their temples and gardens and so the first plants did not reach Europe until the mid 1820’s thanks to Captain Richard Rawes of the East India Company. USA and Australia imported 20 varieties from Kunming in 1948 and 15 more in 1949 but the Cultural Revolution stopped trade until 1976 when the Botanic Institute of Yunnan opened. The original *reticulata camellia* has been so inbred that it is now sterile and can only be propagated by cuttings or grafted. Occasionally a sport will produce a worthwhile flower. Andrew had some beautiful flowers displayed. His enthusiasm for the subject is very obvious and he had to field many questions from the group.

Staff at the front entrance invited visitors to sit in at the meeting and we had a few people wander in and out. One gentleman from Singapore spent nearly an hour listening to Andrew’s talk.

The bench display had entries in all sections except deciduous azaleas. Following afternoon tea we all piled onto the Parks bus and had a delightful trip around the gardens. Some of the experts on board helped the Parks driver with relevant information. All those who attended thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon.

OCTOBER 20TH

About twenty members attended this meeting at the NRG on a fine Saturday afternoon. Laurie Begg and Alan Kepert needed no introduction. The topic was ‘Deciduous Azaleas’. Both Laurie and Alan are specialists in the area and showed us some beautiful specimens. Laurie displayed his hybrids, some of which were double pinks and yellows. Laurie is fast running out of space on his block and has outsourced other places to grow-on his hybrids. We are one of the lucky recipients of some of these trial plants which Laurie inspects at flowering time to see what is worth propagating. Evidently it can be some years before their true type is certain. Alan’s examples are proof that they grow just as well in the suburbs as they do in the hills. He lives at East Ringwood and has some very large plants flowering well. Propagation is tricky so if any members want to give it a try I recommend a phone call to either of these experts!

A pleasant afternoon tea and a bus tour of the gardens completed the meeting. The changes from one month to the next during the rhododendron flowering period are remarkable. This year after its extremely hard prune two years ago the Kurume Bowl was breathtaking. Two of our members, Sue Jarvis and Mike Hammer, have taken some wonderful photos during the season and some of these will be shown at future general meetings.

NOVEMBER 16TH

The first half of the meeting was occupied by the AGM with elections, presentations and the usual formalities. John and Carole Quinn spent a few weeks travelling in the USA this year so, following supper, John showed a video of the Rhododendron Show staged at a small, historical, coastal town called Florence in Oregon, by the Siuslaw Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society. John and Carole were invited to participate in the judging. Although Florence is a small town the Rhododendron Show had over 1300 entries from people in the area. It is the fastest growing chapter and the largest show in USA. To celebrate its centenary one member had made a patchwork quilt of rhododendrons for the raffle. Eighteen judges were needed to cater for all the entries! There were rows and rows of magnificent blooms in colours and shades never seen here. Darkest blues and blacks, purples, reds and deep yellows to mention just a few. The size and shape of the trusses were breathtaking [*editor could not produce photo on paper*]. All the judges gave blue ribbons to as many entries as they liked and these were then benched together for the final judging. Of the eighteen judges the three most experienced selected the winners. The judging was done by colour, size, foliage and overall appearance. Winners received sashes and trophies. Most significant was the fact that one man had managed to encourage all this participation and enthusiasm. The blue ribbons were his idea and this and the fact that entrants do not have to be members are two reasons for the success of the show. A children's art show and rhododendrons made of paper were two other competitions held at the same time. A very inspiring video. Perhaps we could borrow some of their ideas.

MNB

JOTTINGS

Leongantha Expo: For the last few years Josie Rutherford, her grandson Daniel, and Sue Thompson have organised a stand at the Leongantha Expo, which is organised by the Lions club, on behalf of the ARSV selling vireyas which they have sourced from Andrew Raper at Rhodo Glenn nursery and the ARSV nursery. They drive from Leongantha to the Dandenongs to collect the plants then spend two days, whatever the weather, encouraging people to invest in a plant. The plants that do not sell Josie takes to the Garden Club and eventually they are all sold, raffled or given away. This is a wonderful way of flying the flag for the ARSV in an area which is not in the Dandenongs. Our thanks to Josie and her team from the ARSV.

Marysville Day Trip: If you are looking for somewhere to go for a very pleasant drive or holiday, try Marysville. As well as beautiful gardens, Steavenson Falls, bush walks, golf, accommodation, gift shops and restaurants it has an amazing sculpture park. I had heard about Bruno's Art and Sculpture Park and was not disappointed. Bruno came from Belgium to Marysville via many other countries in 1998. Since then he has become well known for his wit and imagination. The sculptures are mostly of clay, but include logs and miscellaneous paraphernalia. If you are lucky you will meet Bruno and he will demonstrate some of the intricacies of his work. Ask to see Mona Lisa's twin sister! Be sure to watch the video about Bruno and his art. There is a gallery and a garden with over 100 pieces of sculpture. It has been described as 'A paradise for art and garden lovers, a place where you soon discover that art can be fun and experienced by all ages'. Beyond the gallery

Bruno has cleverly connected his art with the natural ambience of the beautiful Marysville bushland. Before you leave Marysville be sure to meet the ‘Gunki’, an extinct member of the Marsupial family, at the Information Centre.

A Newly Discovered Element, ‘Governmentium’: A major research institute has announced the discovery in 2006 of the heaviest element yet known to science. It has been named ‘Governmentium’, given the chemical symbol ‘Gv’, and shown to have one neutron, 25 assistant neutrons, 88 deputy neutrons and 198 assistant deputy neutrons, giving it an atomic mass of 312. These 312 particles are held together by forces called morons which are surrounded by vast quantities of lepton-like particles called peons.

Since Governmentium has no electrons, it is inert. However it can be detected because it impedes every reaction with which it comes in contact. A reaction that normally takes barely a second takes four days with a minute amount of Governmentium added, and other uses are being discovered daily.

Governmentium normally has a half life of three years during which it does not decay but undergoes re-organisation in which a portion of the assistant and deputy neutrons exchange places. This leads to a time related increase in mass, since each reorganisation will cause more morons to become neutrons, forming isodopes. This characteristic of moron promotion has led some scientists to believe that Governmentium is formed whenever morons reach a critical concentration. This quantity is referred to as the critical morass.

When catalysed with money, Governmentium becomes Administratium by halving its peons but doubling its morons, leading to an element that bonds to any proposal for progress with unbreakable power. The application of anti-Governmentium to this element results in violent explosions and a shutdown of all agencies.

The scientists are currently working on ways of living with this new element as its presence seems so ubiquitous.

Inexpensive Plant Labels: Next hard rubbish collection day look out for venetian blinds. Although they are back in fashion, as with all fashions they have made some changes so that the fashion conscious person is forced to refurbish to keep up with the trends! Cut into small or large pieces they are ideal for slipping into pots, hanging from trees or standing in the ground marking bulbs and valuable plants. Most texta pens fade so use a pencil that will write on plastic on at least one side. To tie on to plants drill a hole and tie loosely with a plastic tie available from Bunnings, Excell in Lilydale or other hardware shops.

Tempo Two to Scale Down: Mike Hare draws members attention to the fact that Tempo Two is scaling back its operation as Lesley and Barry say they have reached retirement age. This is a specialist Iris and Hosta Nursery on the Mornington Peninsula. This spring may be the last time for public viewing. Their breeding program will continue. Visit their website, easily accessed by Google search.

Please send us your memories and any other stories about gardens, holidays, people, etc..

MNB

THE SPECIES COLUMN.

augustinii -Subsection Triflora [Photo page 14].

Rhododendron *augustinii*, in it's best forms, has undoubtedly the best blue flowers in the Genus. It needs cool soil temperatures and is generally has a short life in Melbourne, but does very well in the Dandenongs and similar climates.

Name:

Named after Augustine Henry, a medical officer in Chinese Customs, and later Professor of Forestry in Dublin. He originally discovered this species in 1886 in Hupeh, Central China.

Distribution:

Hupeh, Szechwan, Yunnan, S.Tibet, 1300-3400 metres, in woodlands, thickets, and rocky slopes.

Characteristics:

An upright shrub to 10 metres, with long narrow green leaves densely scaly on the underside. Flowers in terminal clusters of 2-6 (usually 3) varying in colour from white, mauve-pink, lavender-rose, to deep violet blue. There are two sub-species of *augustinii* which deserve mention, namely ssp. *chasmanthum* and ssp. *rubrum*, which can be distinguished by the type of hairs on the petioles. The plants prefer a moderate amount of sun in the hills.

Selected Forms.

Ssp.chasmanthum. Pale lavender with chestnut spots. F.C.C. 1932.

Ssp.rubrum. Reddish purple flowers. A.M. 1978. This was re-named *R.bergii* by Davidian, but has now reverted to a sub-species.

augustinii v. Tower Court. Clear lavender-blue flowers.

Hybrids:

This species has been used extensively as a parent overseas but has unfortunately been crossed with *Lapponica* species, which are not heat-tolerant. All of these varieties do well in the hills, but are often short-lived in Melbourne.

Blue Diamond. (*augustinii* x *Intrifast*). An excellent blue for cooler climates.

Blue Tit (*augustinii* x *impeditum*)

Florence Mann. (*rigidum* x *Blue Admiral*) Violet-blue flowers with a white centre.

This is probably the hardiest of the blue hybrids and can be grown in Melbourne under the right conditions.

Ilan Violet. (*Electra* x *russatum*) A deep violet-blue from New Zealand.

Saint Breward. (*augustinii* x *impeditum*) Deep Blue F.C.C. 1962.

Where to See These Plants:

There are several old plants of *augustinii* at the start of the *Maddenia* Walk which put on a magnificent display in late October. There are also a number in the *Triflora* Bed towards the North end of the Garden but unfortunately the original tags have disappeared. We hope to identify these plants when in flower.

Alan Kepert.

VIREYA SPECIES

R womersleyi Section VII Euvireya Subsection i Linnaeopsis [according to the classification proposed by Dr George Argent *Rhododendrons of Subgenus Vireya* RHS 2006] [photo on Picasaweb site 'Vireya Species']

Name

Named for John Womersley Chief of Division of Botany in Lae, Papua New Guinea who collected this plant in 1956 from New Guinea Central Highlands on Mt Wilhelm in the vicinity of Lake Piunde at 3600m . Members who have heard Ben Wallace's presentation [at Emu Valley October 2006 or at Nunawading 2007] on two mountains [Mt Wilhelm and Mt Kinabalu] will recall him showing this plant on the shores of Lake Piunde.

Description [taken, though not completely, from Argent pp 150-151]

A stiffly erect shrub to 2m. This species is widely held in Olinda and was growing at NRG before Bill Taylor's and Murray McAllister's Vireya species collection trip to New Zealand in 2003. Nevertheless I have not seen one remotely close to 2m. My first one grew happily for several years in a shade house to about 60 cm then died suddenly. Others have also complained of sudden death of this plant. Argent notes this also. I do lose Vireyas to phytophthora. I have a number of replacements, some cuttings from the original. All are still in pots [up to 20 cm diameter] but are growing vigorously. I am getting flowers. The **twigs** are 1-2mm in diameter and tend to grow to 30cm before branching giving a leggy appearance. The tips of the twigs are rounded and densely covered with brown stellate stalked scales. **Leaves** are densely, spirally arranged along the upper part of the twigs, giving the stiff, prickly appearance. **Blade** 7-14 x 4-9 mm, ovate to ovate elliptic, broadly elliptic or semi circular; apex shortly acuminate, broadly acute to obtuse or rounded; margin entire or weakly crenulate from indentations of scale bases. Mid-vein distinctly impressed above, weakly prominent beneath; lateral veins not visible. **Petiole** 1-2 x 1-1.5 mm weakly grooved and with dense, short, white hairs above and brown scales mostly beneath. **Inflorescence** of 1-4 hanging bright or deep red, hanging flowers. **Corolla** 20-25 x 16-20 mm, tubular, slightly dilated at the mouth; tube 15-18 x 5-7 x 8-10 mm almost parallel sided but expanded just below the mouth.

Origin

Papua New Guinea Eastern Western and Southern highlands; Morobe district: Rawlinson Range. At over 3000m in New Guinea night temperatures are close to 0 degrees C, so mild frosts are not unknown.

Hybrids

Argent records *R womersleyi* as hybridizing with *R atropurpureum* and *R commonae* on Mt Wilhelm.

Verdict

Worth trying. However do keep a back up. It will be interesting to see what flower coverage there is on a mature plant.

SWB

VIREYA GROUP MEETING 10 NOVEMBER 2007

A week before the meeting both the venue and plan changed. Mike Hammer's demonstration of construction of a propagation bed at minimum cost was postponed until 2008. Instead the group visited Andrew and Vicki Rouse's house in East Hawthorn.

I contacted all recent attendees at Group meetings in person, by phone or by email. Unfortunately I missed Olive Howard. My sincere apologies, Olive, that you went to NRG in vain.

Andrew has a marvellous collection of Vireya Rhododendrons, both species and hybrids, as well as many other collector's plants. Some of the Vireyas came from John Rouse, Andrew's father. Others Andrew collected in the wild. The extremes to which Andrew has been pushed by Melbourne's drought brought home to me, a hills dweller, how lucky we hills dwellers are, compared with suburbanites, with more rain, slightly cooler temperatures, better soil and, in some cases, more space for tanks. Andrew had a selection of tanks to collect rain water and grey water as well as pumps to reticulate or relocate stored water. Because of very limited supply Andrew had to hand water all his shade house pots, using town water at permissible times and tank water when supplementary watering was needed. His household had to shower with plant acceptable soaps. Andrew showed us the site of the swimming pool he demolished when he and Vicki moved in 10 years ago. If only he had covered it over as a water storage instead!

Of huge interest to us was Andrew's glasshouse in which he is propagating seed of species not held elsewhere in Australia or, at the least in very few hands. At any time the overseas supply chain may evaporate in consequence of tightened Government policy. The precious seedlings were very small, and in some cases, very few- but healthy. They were 'protected' by moss. I remember Jack O'Shannassy experimenting at NRG with all sorts of moss killers that, hopefully, would kill moss, but not small seedlings. Andrew used tweezers to remove excess moss [a task which requires very keen eyesight and steady fingers] but says the moss helps keep the seedlings moist. It will clearly be some considerable time before these seedlings progress to flowering plants. I hope I live to see them.

Andrew had a fine *R sessilifolium* in flower. His *R gracilentum* was growing in a basket but was, after many years, still a very small plant.

Out in the garden Andrew had a R "Liberty Bar" in flower which he says is very hardy in tough conditions. It is not a fashionable plant these days, being a bit straggly and rather prone to rust [at my place]. Andrew's plant showed why it was originally popular.

Progressing to other plants Andrew showed us his sacrificial magnolia. The possums eat it and leave other plants alone. Plant lovers in the city could be forgiven for a New Zealand attitude to these protected natives. He showed us a *gingkgo biloba* grown by John Rouse from seed. Andrew was worried about drought stress on his lemon scented gum. There could be no doubt its foliage was thinner than it ought to have been.

Andrew gave the group a selection of his hybrids. Most took their little plants, but some were thinking of their own watering problems as they did. Andrew is keen to discover if any of the plants show potential.

We all enjoyed afternoon tea in the garden. Thank you Andrew and Vicki.

Marcia Mike Hammer and I took Elizabeth Xipell home to her house in Kew on our way home. Elizabeth has an impressive array of water tanks under her deck and many fine vireyas both in the ground and in pots. Of particular note was *R jasminiflorum* var. *punctatum* in full flower and her *R zoelleri*. It is not hard to see why Elizabeth is a regular winner at bench displays and shows. Indeed the *jasminiflorum* won the best Vireya Species at last years show and its class on the bench at this year's AGM. Elizabeth's broken wrist surely deprived it of victory at this year's Show.

I can report that my species propagation program [from cuttings only at this stage] is going really well. Almost all the winter cuttings have struck and last years' are growing on well. I am saddened that 4 of this years *blackii* cuttings, which had rooted in NRG's fogger, found an unscheduled owner just before I was about to pot them up. They would have brought the tally to 8 from the one small plant Bill Taylor gave me a couple of years ago. I am getting a deliverable supply of quite a lot of species. Interestingly drought has led to a marked caution among the Vireya Group in taking delivery!

SWB

SEE NEW ZEALAND IN FULL BLOOM

Discover the brilliance of springtime in New Zealand on the Grand Pacific Tours South Island Garden Tour. Fully escorted by garden designer and horticultural expert, Kevin Walsh, this tour visits a number of specialty public and private gardens, including a guided tour of the stunning Christchurch Botanic Gardens. The highlight of the tour will be a full day at the magnificent Dunedin Rhododendron Festival. For more information see the comprehensive tour brochure included with this month's newsletter.

[Advertisement]

RHODODENDRONS DOWN UNDER DOWN UNDER 2007

The members of the Southern Tasmanian Branch of the Australian Rhododendron Society organised the National Council Annual General Meeting, garden visits, Rhododendron Show and Annual Dinner. The Show was held in the Hobart Town Hall, a magnificent venue supplied free of charge and opened by the Lord Mayor. The National Council Meeting attended by delegates and officers was held at Kaye and Gordon Hagan's home. The meeting closed at 4.00pm and delegates and everyone were free to enjoy the garden. The vireyas, asiatics and all other plants looked in the peak of health. This was noticeable in the other gardens also, clean foliage, no insect damage, lush and healthy plants. Like most of the garden owners

they buy in rotted pine bark to use as mulch. This leads to a clean fresh look. Gordon is an excellent handy-man and has erected a glasshouse which is well organised and productive. There is still space for a future project when time and energy are available.

Other gardens on the Friday were 'Telopea' (Essie Huxley) and Ken and Leslie Gillanders at 'Woodbank' where a light meal was enjoyed. 'Woodbank is a large garden full of rare and exotic plants. One needs to walk around with Ken or Leslie to gain full advantage of it.

Saturday we were bussed to Joy Stones and Ted Cutlen's garden 'Jubilee Garden' where a boxed lunch was served followed by 'Birch Cottage' (Rob and Maureen Wilson), 'Bracken Lane Garden' (John and Barbara Tooth) and 'Glenlusk Gardens' (Phillip and Dianne Cooper) where the AGM was held and a sit down dinner.

Sunday, another bus trip. It was very pleasant not having to navigate from place to place. Before boarding the harbour ferry for a cruise and lunch we spent a few hours visiting the 'Davidson Garden' (Barry and Lorraine), 'Fircroft' (Neil and Sandra Harwood) and the 'Horder Garden' (Neville and Denise). Barry and Lorraine's vireyas had suffered very badly from a severe frost a couple of months earlier. Over 60 vireyas had died and older established ones had been severely damaged.

It was a delightful well organised weekend. Congratulations to the Southern Tasmanian Branch.

MNB

BENCH DISPLAYS

15TH SEPTEMBER 2007

There were 7 exhibitors from an attendance of about twice that number. However there were notable absentees, especially coming into the Asiatic season. Simon Begg provided about half the bench.

Vireyas, as always, were well represented. Simon's *tuba* once again won the small species with Andrew Rouse's *macgregoriae* and *jasminiflorum* were 2nd and 3rd. Andrew's *hellwigii* won the large species with Simon's *laetum* 2nd and Elizabeth Xipell's *zoelleri* 3rd. Simon won all three places in the small hybrids with 'Pacific Shower', 'Popcorn' and 'Penny Whistle'. Alan Kepert won the large hybrids with 'Hotel on Mayfair' with Simon in the minor places with 'Pindi Peach' and 'Simbu Sunset'. Simon won with the only entry in the vireya plants with a *polyanthemum* hybrid.

Simon was the only entrant in the evergreen azalea species with *stenopetalum*. Alan Walker won all three places in the hybrids with 'Kirin', 'Eri' and 'Cocoanut Ice'. Alan Kepert was the only entrant in the deciduous azalea species with *canescens*. There were no hybrids.

Simon's *tatiense* won the small asiatic species from Alan Walker's *websterianum* and Inga and Mike Hammer's *genestierianum*. Simon's *grande* won the large asiatic species from his *irroratum* and Inga and Mike's *arboretum*. Simon won the small asiatic hybrids with an unknown from his *spinuliferum x spinulosum* and Alan Walker's 'Emasculum'. Simon also won the large hybrids with 'Cornubia' from his 'Gillii' and Alan Kepert's 'California Gold'. Elizabeth Xipell won the *Maddenia* species with *veitchianum* from Julie Anne Webster's pink *maddeni* and Simon's *ciliicalyx*.

The best non *Rhododendron* Class was won by Mike and Inga's *Fritolaria*.

20TH OCTOBER 2007

In October there were 8 exhibitors from 20 attendees. John Quinn's entries added class to the Asiatics. As in September Andrew Rouse's *hellwigii* won the large *Vireya* class and attracted much comment. The small *Vireya* species attracted many entries. Simon's *tuba* in its final 2007 appearance was unplaced. Instead his pink *macgregoriae* won from Andrew's *jasminiflorum* and Simon's *dielsianum*, flowering for the first time.

Simon won the small *Vireya* hybrids with 'Sweet Mac' from Alan Walker's *polyanthemum x (Dr Sleumer x herzogii)*. Simon also won the large hybrids with 'Simbu Sunset' from his 'Bold Janus' and Mike and Inga's 'Lord of the Rings'. Alan Walker won the *Vireya* plant with 'Craig Faragher' from Simon's 'Simbu Sunset'.

In *Azaleas* there were no evergreen species. Mike and Inga Hammer won the evergreen hybrid Class with an unknown white from Somon's 'Hino de Giri' and Mike Hare's 'Teacher'. There were no deciduous *Azalea* species. The judges did not record the deciduous hybrid results but it is believed Alan Kepert won all the places; though, as Laurie Begg spoke on deciduous *Azalea* hybrids, his unentered examples would have been very competitive.

Alan Kepert won the *Azalea* plant with *R schlippenbachii* from Alan Walker's pink *Azalea*.

Mike and Inga Hammer won the small Asiatic species Class with *yunnanense* from Mike and Inga's *genestierianum*. There were no small hybrid Asiatics. Simon won the large Asiatic hybrids with *fortune*. John Quinn won all the places in the large Asiatic hybrid Class with 'Sunspray' from 'Purple Gown' and 'Aunty Ivy'. There were many other entries, but as stated above- a touch of class.

Simon won all the places in the *Maddenia* species with *parryae* from *formosum* and *johnstoneanum*.

The judges created an ad hoc *Maddenia* hybrid Class which Simon won with a *johnstoneanum* hybrid from 'Princess Alice'.

Marcia Begg won the non *Rhododendron* Class with a bowl of *Pleione*.

SWB

ANTICIPATED PROGRAMME FOR 2008

Some dates to be confirmed

JANUARY - :SUNDAY 27TH Australia Day BBQ 5.00pm

FEBRUARY - FRIDAY 15TH General Meeting Nunawading– Mike Hammer, Digital photography. Mike has mounted historical photos for display in the Hall. He will have all sorts of tips for taking and restoring photos.

FEBRUARY 23RD AND 24TH – ‘Garden Living Expo’. Volunteers are required to help on the Friday to set up and to man the stand Saturday and Sunday. Please ring a committee member if you can help.

MARCH – SATURDAY 8TH , Vireya Group. Ring Simon Begg to confirm. 9751 1610

MARCH - FRIDAY 14TH (not the 3rd Friday) General Meeting Nunawading-

APRIL – FRIDAY 18TH General Meeting Nunawading

**MAY -SATURDAY 10TH , Vireya Group. (Simon Begg overseas)
FRIDAY 16th General Meeting Nunawading**

JUNE – FRIDAY 20th General Meeting at Nunawading

**JULY – SATURDAY 12TH , Vireya Group Ring Simon Begg to confirm. 9751 1610
FRIDAY 18th General Meeting**

AUGUST – FRIDAY 15th General Meeting – Ian Wallace, Big Leaf Rhododendrons.

**SEPTEMBER – SATURDAY 13TH , Vireya Group Ring Simon Begg to confirm.
9751 1610
FRIDAY 19th General Meeting**

**OCTOBER – FRIDAY 3rd , SAT 4TH AND SUN 5TH ABC GARDEN SHOW @ CAULFIELD RACECOURSE
SATURDAY 4TH & SUNDAY 5TH AZALEA DISPLAY in Hall
FRIDAY 17th General Meeting and National Council AGM**

NOVEMBER – FROM SAT. 1st TO TUES. 4TH , RHODODENDRON SHOW in Hall.

SATURDAY 8TH – Vireya Group Ring Simon Begg to confirm. 9751 1610
FRIDAY 21st h AGM at Nunawading

DECEMBER – CHRISTMAS FUNCTION – 1ST OR 2ND weekend.

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| Future Functions | Page 1 |
| The President' Report for 2007 AGM | Pages2-3 |
| Officers and Committee elected at 2007 AGM | Page 3 |
| 2007 AGM | Pages 4-5 |
| Treasurer's Report 2007 | Pages 5-7 |
| Membership Entitlements | Page 7 |
| Rhododendron Show Report 2007 | Page 8 |
| National Council Meeting 2007 Report | Pages11-13 |
| Citation for Life Membership- Ron Moodycliffe | Page 13 |
| Photographs | Pages14-15 |
| Library Report | Page 16 |
| Olinda Garden and Arts Festival | Pages 16-17 |
| General Meetings September October and Nov 2007 | Pages17-19 |
| Jottings November 2007 | Pages 19-20 |
| The Species Column | Page 21 |
| Vireya Species Column | Page 22 |
| Vireya Group Meeting 10 November 2007 | Pages 23-4 |
| See New Zealand in Full Bloom [advertisement] | Page 24 |
| Rhododendrons Down Under 2007 | Pages 24-25 |
| Bench displays September and October 2007 | Pages 25-26 |
| Anticipated Programmer or 2008 | Page 27 |
| Contents | Page 28 |

Australian Rhododendron Society Vic Branch Committee 2007-8

| | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| President –Carole Quinn Ph 5968 1027 | Val Marshall – Ph: 9803 4434 |
| Vice President No- 1 Mike Hammer Ph: 9755 2176 | |
| Vice President No- 2 Bill Taylor Ph: 9754 8275 | Marcia Begg, Ph: 9751 1610 |
| Treasurer – Neil Webster, Ph: 9859 3622 | Elizabeth Xipell-Ph: 0959 9934 |
| Secretary – Vacant | John Quinn – Ph: 5968 1027 |
| Simon Begg – 9751 1610 (Newsletter Editor) | Alan Walker-Ph: 9726 8836 |
| Len Sloggett – Ph: 9808 6484 | Mike Hare- Ph: 9844 2232 |
| Inge Hammer-Ph: 9755 2176 | |

SOCIETY PICASAWEB SITE

Visit <http://picasaweb.google.com/ARSVic> for the latest pictures.

Additions since the September 2007 Newsletter are :

- Vireya Species arranged alphabetically
- Asiatic species at NRG arranged alphabetically
- Sue Jarvis' pictures of Cup Weekend Garden and Arts Festival
- ARSV Rhododendron Show 2007

For the latest on the "Beechmont" Picasaweb site visit

<http://picasaweb.google.com/simonwbegg>

SWB