



# Australian Plants Society North Shore Group



## A History Part 1 1958 to 1980

By Geoff Bush, Ross Doig and Alan Neilsen



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## Contents

Preamble.....	6
Introduction.....	7
The Early Years: 1960 to 1969.....	8
The Years 1966 and 1967.....	23
The Years 1968 and 1969.....	32
The Years 1969 to 1980.....	35
Postscript - 1998.....	70
Postscript - 2003.....	70



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## PREAMBLE



This history relates, predominantly, to people who are or have been, members of the North Shore Group of the Australian Plants Society (formerly the Society for Growing Australian Plants). It embraces their contributions to the Group and to the Society and their involvement generally in the promotion of Australian native plants.

The history, which covers the period 1960 to 1980, incorporates, to a large extent in chronological order, the activities of the Group in relation to meetings, speakers, outings, foraging expeditions, experiments, garden competitions, working bees, festivals, and projects.

Arising from the North Shore Group's heavy involvement in the initial concept and promotion of the Kuring-gai Wildflower Garden, and the Group's continuing interest in its development, the progressive story of the Garden's establishment and evolution has been included as an integral part of the history.

The history, as accurate as we have been able to make it, covers events, personalities, achievements and the

year by year pursuits of the Group over two decades. It is obviously impracticable to mention everyone of significance and everything of relevance in a limited treatise of this nature. However, if we have fallen into error, omitted details of events and individuals, we plead guilty and hope that the mitigating circumstances of scanty documentation, members who are no longer with us, and our and others' ageing memories will be taken into account. Should any such transgression have occurred, no doubt some future historian will delight in restoring the *status quo*.

We hope the story that unfolds in the ensuing pages is as enlightening and of interest to the reader as it has been to us. For the sake of economy and for easier reading, abbreviations have been used where practicable, e.g. NSG for North Shore Group, KWG for Kuring-gai Wildflower Garden, SGAP for Society for Growing Australian Plants. Also to facilitate identification members and others are generally referred to as they were commonly known, in preference to using their full Christian name(s). Botanical names are recorded, generally, as they were known at the time of the plants' original notations.



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## INTRODUCTION



No history of the North Shore Group can be written without first paying tribute to those far-sighted pioneers who conceived and brought to fruition an Australia-wide Association, devoted to growing Australian plants. Their enthusiasm met with spectacular success in a period of less than 2 years.

All subsequent members of SGAP throughout Australia owe the greatest debt to Mr A J Swaby of Melbourne, who for several years from May 1954 wrote a column "Know Your Natives" in the gardening magazine "*Your Garden*".

We can do no better than draw upon material from a 1975 address to the Federal SGAP Conference on the history of SGAP by F D Hockings. The flood of letters in response to Mr Swaby's articles, the theme of which was "Australia for Australians", inspired him in the June 1956 "*Your Garden*" to suggest a chain of members across the continent helping each other to tame native plants. In the September issue, he invited intending members to forward a 2 shilling postal note to cover preliminary expenses, and in December he reported the number of applicants from all over Australia exceeded expectations. As a result, in the same article, he announced that an inaugural meeting of the Society would be held in the Horticultural Hall, Victoria Street, Melbourne on March 12th 1957 at 8 p.m.

"Over 400 growers rallied to the formation of an Association to be known as Australian Growers of Australian Plants. Growers pledged to promote the establishment and breeding of native plants for garden, park and home".

The founder, Mr A J Swaby, confessed his early timid hope for 12 members, amazement at 385 before the meeting, certainty for a foundation of over 400 and anticipation of 1000 in 1958. They came in, not on promises, but threats of work.

At the meeting, nearly 200 people, perfect strangers from three States, under the exhilaration of a common lively interest, moved around and chatted like old friends. Scores of others, from widely scattered places in all parts of Australia, and regrettably unable to attend, sent congratulations.

With Newsletter No 1 in May 1957 the name 'Society for Growing Australian Plants' first appeared. Between March 1957 and April 1958, Regions were created in Victoria, Tasmania, Queensland, New South Wales, Western Australia and South Australia, and in 1962 the Federal Council was formed in Canberra. December 1959 saw the first issue - Vol. 1, No 1 of '*Australian Plants*' (the Commonwealth Journal of SGAP).

The New South Wales Region came into being on a wild, wet, mid-winter night at a meeting held at 8.00 p.m. on 25<sup>th</sup> July 1957 in the basement hall of the Real Estate Institute, 30a Martin Place. The intention of the meeting was to form a NSW branch of an association known as the 'Australian Growers of Australian Plants'. Nineteen people attended. Mr A J Swaby had commended the meeting in his "*Your Garden*" column, and also contacted Thistle Harris (Stead) and others personally shortly after the inaugural Victorian meeting. It was Thistle Stead who asked N H (Bill) Hicks, an associate, to convene the meeting. An executive was appointed.

Subsequently, a first Annual General Meeting was held on 31<sup>st</sup> January 1958 at Camperdown, in the Amenities Hall of the Electrical Control Company Building in Booth Street. The time set down was 8.00 p.m. and the 56 people attending brought into official existence "The New South Wales Region: Society for Growing Australian Plants". The convenor, Bill Hicks, became the inaugural President and Marie Webb Secretary-Treasurer.

As a result of 'phone calls from Mr Swaby and personal meetings in Melbourne with Swaby, Bill Hicks hurried along the formation of groups, so that by the end of the year these existed at Epping, East Hills, Gosford, Coffs Harbour, Northern Beaches and, important to our history, Northside, so called because the Hornsby-Berowra-Mt. Colah area was its geographic focus. This Group began through the efforts of Joan and Bob Doney, proprietors of Arama Native Plant Nursery at Galston, and here the first meeting was held. Joan remembers that 21 people attended, including Marie Webb (Regional Secretary), who took minutes and advised on procedure. The second meeting was also held at the Nursery and the third took the form of an outing, ably led by Henry Boyd into the wilds of Bowen Gorge below Mt Wilson.



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Promising though this start appeared to be for the future, the Group did not survive the sudden shock of the Doney's departure for Queensland, where Bob was appointed Horticulturist at Dave Gordon's Myall Park. No-one could be found to lead the fledgling group and it lapsed.

Not until some time before March 1960 when Phil Leak and John Wrigley, meeting at a Flower Festival in the Sydney Lower Town Hall, discussed the possibility of reviving the NSG, did our present Group move towards a new beginning. After publicity in the SGAP newsletter a meeting was held at Phil's residence in Hinkler Crescent, Lane Cove on 12<sup>th</sup> March 1960. Present were Phil Leak, John Wrigley, Geoff Bush, and Lindsay Shepherd. An apology was received from Mrs (Ros) Lambie.

From this meeting the unbroken history of the NSG dates, and in spite of ups and downs in membership numbers, it has flourished for 40 years not out.





## THE EARLY YEARS: 1960 to 1969



### 1960 & 1961

Arising from discussions between John Wrigley and Phil Leak, who were members of SGAP in 1959, it was thought desirable to ascertain whether there was sufficient interest in the area to establish a native plants group on the North Shore. Phil Leak agreed to hold an initial exploratory meeting at his home in Lane Cove. Others invited to attend were Lindsay Shepherd (already a member of SGAP) and Geoff Bush, another interested grower of native plants.

This first meeting of the North Shore Group was accordingly held at Phil Leak's home, 43 Hinkler Crescent, Lane Cove on 12<sup>th</sup> March 1960. Those in attendance were John Wrigley, Phil Leak, Lindsay Shepherd and Geoff Bush. General discussion took place concerning the best means of establishing a native plants group in the area. It was decided to invite members of the NSW Region to attend the next meeting in April to facilitate the establishment of the group. It was also decided to invite by personal communication, people interested in the growing of native plants.

The second meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> April 1960 was held at the home of John Wrigley, 18 Mt. Ida Street, Gordon. Present were John & Marcia Wrigley, Phil Leak, Lindsay Shepherd, Geoff Bush, Ross Doig, Ros Lambie, Mrs A Croucher (Secretary, SAP NSW Region), Gordon McKern and Ron Little. Nominations were called for office bearers, and John Wrigley was elected President/Delegate and Phil Leak was elected Secretary/Treasurer. These positions were retained for 2 years except that in 1961 Geoff Bush took over the Treasurer's duties from Phil Leak and Ros Lambie became Delegate. Those who were present at this meeting will remember the enthusiasm (and, indeed, excitement) of members, engendered by the lively discussions that took place and the information exchanged. Knowledge was gained from the experience of other members of the NSW Region and many ideas were propounded, thus auguring well for the establishment and viability of the newly formed Group.

Ted Duncan became a member of NSG at the May 1960 meeting and Alan Nielsen the following month. Others who became members in 1960 included Mrs R Doig (Veronica), Mrs E Duncan (Sandra) and Mrs L Heap (Lorna). Phil Leak was host of the first NSG meeting and a foundation group member and office bearer. It is worthy of note that Phil Leak's involvement

as an active contributor to SGAP covers the period from 1960 to the present. After initial election as NSW Secretary/Treasurer (1960), Phil was then Secretary (1961) and Treasurer (1962-63). In 1960 he was elected as NSW Region Publicity Officer, holding the position until the end of 1977. He was Editorial Committee Representative up to 1978 and then Federal Publishing Representative from 1979 to 1982. In 1979 Phil was also Secretary to the SGAP Federal Council. 'Australian Plants' Vol. 1, No 3 of June 1960, lists Phil Leak as NSW Advertising & Sales Representative, a continuous listing up to and including Vol. 6, No 47 in June 1971, when the individual names of State Advertising & Sales Representatives ceased to be included. Vol. 1, No 5 of 'Australian Plants' (December 1960) included Phil as a Publishing Committee member, with Vol. 3 No 23 of June 1965 and subsequent editions to the present time (2001) showing him as assisting the Editor. Phil Leak's meritorious contribution to SGAP over his unbroken membership since 1960 as grower, meeting participant and office bearer is acknowledged with gratitude, as was his long term membership of the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden Committee.

In order to make people aware of the Society and its objectives, President John Wrigley wrote articles to local newspapers providing information about native plants and inviting the public to attend the NSG meetings. Consequently, articles appeared in the North Shore Times and the Advocate in June 1960 extolling the virtues of growing Australian plants and indicating that the Society would welcome new members. John forwarded information to the NSW Region concerning the progress of the NSG. The SGAP (NSW) Newsletter of July 1960, referring to the NSG stated, *inter alia*

"The recently formed North Shore Group is now getting into full swing. Our meetings so far have taken the form of Saturday afternoon bush rambles and these have proved both enjoyable and instructive. The Group is carrying out a series of experiments on the effectiveness of the commercially available plant hormones in promoting callusing and root growth in cuttings." Also "A study group has been formed investigating the *Epacridaceae* and members are trying seeds and cuttings of such species as *Epacris longifolia*, *Epacris pulchella*, *Styphelia longifolia*, *Leucopogon amplexicaulis* and others of the family."



It can be seen that the NSG became involved in native plant experimentation and research at an early date.

During the early years meetings were held in the homes of members, or occasionally in conjunction with a bush ramble. The archives show that, in this period, meetings were held at the homes of Ros Lambie, Ross Doig (Turramurra), Ted Duncan (Wahroonga), Ralph Glissan (Epping) and Mrs B Reid (Artarmon). Additional meeting venues, combined with bush rambles, included Stoney Range Flora Reserve, Dee Why; Parry's Nursery, Gosford; Wakehurst Parkway, French's Forest; Kuring-gai Chase and Davidson Park.

The meetings attracted some very interesting and informative speakers. They included Mr J Waterhouse - Talks and slides of birds and flowers; Mrs David Stead (Thistle Harris) - Talks and slides on 'The Identification of Native Plants'; Pax Lindsay whose talk was on propagation; Bob Doney, who presented slides of Myall Park Sanctuary, Queensland; Helen Ramsay - a botany lesson, and Alan Ford - a slide evening.

September 1960 saw the introduction of the NSG Notes, a necessity in an expanding group. The notes covered such items as: features of the previous meeting or outing, garden competition, subscriptions, Wildflower Festival, group projects and notice of the next meeting. Pre-inflation days required an annual member's subscription of 5 shillings and 2 shillings to cover the cost of providing tea and biscuits at meetings!

A novel idea involved the compilation of a census of all native plants grown by the members, one reason being to facilitate the exchange of seeds and cuttings. Geoff Bush was appointed to collate the information submitted and produce a list, based on the return of members' census forms showing numbers, genus and species of the native plants grown in members' gardens. While the system worked well initially, the increasing number of new members and the alterations required due to additions and failures of plants made the continued updating of such a listing so onerous that it was eventually terminated. (By September 1960 the number of members had increased to nearly 40.)

A garden competition was held in September 1960. The winners of the competition in the Group were: 1<sup>st</sup> Geoff Bush (Lane Cove); 2<sup>nd</sup> Lorna Heap (Killara); 3<sup>rd</sup> Phil Leak (Lane Cove). A similar competition was conducted by NSW Region in two sections, viz. naturalistic and formal. Lorna Heap, an early member of NSG was awarded 2<sup>nd</sup> prize in the naturalistic section. Thistle Y Stead, on behalf of the judging committee made the following comments:

"Mrs Heap made the most of a charming bit of bushland using some grand specimens of *Banksia ericifolia* round which to plant smaller species."

"Mr P Leak of Lane Cove had a young garden of promise. A striking feature of it was *Boronia megastigma* in close proximity to *Bauera rubiodes*. *Tetratheca ericifolia* is doing splendidly."

"Another promising young garden is that of Mr G Bush of Lane Cove. In this garden *Hakea dactyloides* and *Hakea laurina* were especially good. An unusual form of Geraldton Wax (*Chamelaucium uncinatum*) which produces white flowers in the early stages which deepen in the centre with age drew our imagination. There were a number of small plants coming on very well."

The Society also conducted a point score competition for members bringing in cut flowers and pot plants to the general meetings. Although only having new native gardens NSG was well represented. John Wrigley won points at the September 1960 meeting with *Pultanea stipularis* and *Dendrobium kingianum*, and Alan Nielsen received top points for his cuts of *Melaleuca radula*

The group was very keen to publicise native plants and accordingly submitted entries in the Spring Shows of Kuring-gai Horticultural Society in August and October 1960. In an article for submission to the NSW Region Newsletter covering the August Show, Ross Doig wrote:

"The North Shore Group of the SGAP contributed to the native section (a) 3 cuts (b) 3 vases of 3 cuts by submitting some 70 vases. We managed to win a 2<sup>nd</sup> prize, but we have the 'foreigner' who out-grew and out-showed us, lined up as a new member."

At the October show the Group performed better succeeding in winning a 1<sup>st</sup> prize and two 2<sup>nd</sup> prizes.

The Royal Horticultural Society organised a wildflower display in the Garden Department of Anthony Hordern's Brickfield Hill building as part of the Floral Festival in September 1960. NSG contributed to the floral arrangements. Members also strongly supported the Waratah Festivals in the Town Hall in October 1960 and 1961, both in terms of supplying flowering plants and in their arrangement. The display in 1961 was under the direction of Ross Doig, who was responsible for detailed planning. This festival was an outstanding success, Ross and Joan Doney receiving praise for their effort and competence.



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The merit of securing public land or reserve for the planting of native flora was discussed early in 1960. Members realised the limitations of their own gardens and required space where native plants could be seen and appreciated by the public. Geoff Bush referred to the need to discover such an area within the Ku-ring-gai Municipality, particularly one, if possible, possessing a native plant environment. It was suggested that the Group endeavour to interest local authorities in planting native shrubs and trees in newly developed areas. Alan Nielsen indicated that Epping Boys High School and Kent Road Public School, Eastwood could be suitable venues and was requested to make the necessary enquiries from the appropriate authorities. (Other areas for investigation were Chatswood Public School and a park near Mowbray Road, Lane Cove.)

In respect of these initiatives a paragraph from the Group's 1960 annual report reads:

"....The latest project of the Group is the development of a native garden at the Kent Road Public School at Eastwood. This is the most important work undertaken by the group to date."

Ross Doig drew up a plan for landscaping the first stage of the school grounds and members took part in the initial plantings on Saturday, 6<sup>th</sup> May 1961. This was again referred to in the NSG Newsletter of August 1961:

"... The natives we planted at the school are bounding ahead. No further plantings will be attempted until the present building program is completed early next year."

A further item in the same newsletter read:

"...Ku-ring-gai Council are investigating the possibility of a native garden in the Municipality. The NSG is right behind this move and we have offered our assistance in supplying plants and technical know-how."

This investigation arose from approaches made by officers of NSG to Aldermen of the Council, especially Alderman Bob Turner who, after initial hesitation and consideration, responded enthusiastically to the concept. Alderman Turner (local veterinarian) who was well-known to Brother Pat Stanley of Canisius College (Mona Vale Road, Pymble) was impressed by the variety of native shrubs that Pat had planted in the grounds of Canisius College. He was later invited to inspect John

Wrigley's native garden and was surprised at the quality and quantity of the native flora that John had grown and he was also impressed with the knowledge shown by members of NSG concerning the viability of native plant culture. Consequently on 9<sup>th</sup> August 1961 Alderman Turner, at the request of NSG, submitted a Notice of Motion to Ku-ring-gai Municipal Council to the effect that Council resolve to establish a native garden in the Municipality, and that officers of the Council prepare a report on the project, also that the Mayor convene a public meeting to promote the project. Arising from this proposal a period of inspections of various sites took place involving members of NSG and officers of the Council prior to conclusions in 1962 regarding the availability of land suitable to the aspirations of the Group and that would have the approval of Ku-ring-gai Council.

President John was a frequent contributor of articles to '*Native Plants for NSW*' embracing scientific information and items of general interest concerning native flora. Ross Doig was also a regular contributor, his expertise then being growing Western Australian native plants from seed (in one early issue he even submitted his life-story - later he provided '*Australian Plants*' with a dissertation on cotton-wool sandwiches!) Other contributors in the early stages were Lindsay Shepherd, and Alan Nielsen who, at that stage, showed great enthusiasm for *Melaleucas*. More scientifically, these contributions to the NSW Region's Newsletter (as it was termed up to March 1961) and to '*Native Plants for NSW*' (from May 1961) were: John Wrigley - "Propagating native plants from cuttings without chemical aids"; Alan Nielsen - "*Melaleuca ?blarifolia*"; Ross Doig - "All in a twelve month" - (all September 1960); Lindsay Shepherd - "Sturt's Desert Pea" (March 1961); John Wrigley - "Flannel Flowers from cuttings" and sundry notes (July 1961); Helen Ramsay - "Identification of native plants undertaken". Helen Ramsay was an early member of NSG and a qualified botanist.



## JOHN WRIGLEY

- A PRIME MOVER IN THE FORMATION OF THE NSG AND THE INAUGURAL PRESIDENT (1960-61).

John Wrigley was a dynamic President. In addition to organising and conducting foundation meetings, he wrote articles for publication in local newspapers to promote the Group and popularise native plants. As mentioned previously, he submitted many articles for publication in '*Native Plants for NSW*' including notes concerning the activities of the NSG. For the Society John led the Scientific Group and took on the position of Plant Recording Officer. In March 1962 he was appointed Editor of '*Native Plants for NSW*', a position he occupied until the end of 1966.

John achieved the rare distinction of being appointed Curator of the National Botanic Gardens, Canberra in 1967. The Botanic Gardens grew and prospered under his influence during the many years he served as Curator, until he retired to private Horticultural Consultancy and moved to the Coffs Harbour district. John is the author of several books, particularly the very well-known and popular '*Australian Native Plants*' (with Murray Fagg). John's richly deserved election to Honorary Life Member of SGAP in March 1967 was the first in the NSW Region. In bestowing the honour, Mr Charles Taylor, President of the Society, commented on John's work as Editor of '*Native Plants for NSW*' and of his connection with the various activities of the Society, especially the Wildflower Shows and his influence in respect of the KWG. At the SGAP Federal Conference in 1971 John was elected Federal President. In respect of the NSG, John Wrigley, ably assisted by his fellow officers and members, established standards and precedents which became the pattern for subsequent Presidents to emulate, and indeed the industry and example set in the early times in the Group's history has been sustained and enhanced over the intervening years to the present day.

John's ongoing interests and involvement in SGAP and horticulturally related projects, particularly on the mid-north coast of NSW remain significant.

## 1962 & 1963

The annual NSG general meeting was held on 10<sup>th</sup> March 1962. Those elected to office were: Geoff Bush (President), Ted Duncan (Secretary), Phil Leak (Treasurer). These officers were re-elected at the annual general meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> February 1963 for a further term with the addition of Brother Pat Stanley as Delegate. On the annual agenda were the project at Kent Road Public School (temporarily complete) and proposals for plantings at Mowbray Road School, Chatswood and West Gordon Public School. However, the main thrust of NSG at this time was towards the procuring of land in Ku-ring-gai Municipality for native plant development by the Group. President Geoff strongly supported the initiatives already in train, as did all members of NSG. Examination of various sites by members of NSG, Councillors and the Parks & Gardens Superintendent (Bob Bruce) continued. By far the most attractive available site was some 30-40 acres of land situated in Mona Vale Road, St Ives, adjacent to the existing Council Nursery. Negotiations with Ku-ring-gai Council proceeded, NSG being unremitting in furthering its cause in respect of the Mona Vale Road area.

In July 1962 the Group, having crystallised considerations relative to the St Ives land, submitted a list of proposals to Ku-ring-gai Council concerning development of a native plant garden. The list included the planning of formal gardens within the area, grouping similar species of natives, the making of walking tracks, provision of a shade house and a propagation/nursery area with appropriate facilities. The submission was well received by Councillors and subsequently the Council issued an invitation to NSG to address its meeting in August 1962. NSG members attended the meeting and foundation President, John Wrigley, spoke convincingly on the need and merit of establishing the native plant garden. He amplified the NSG propositions, currently before Council, and referred to the Group's vision of the garden becoming an important area for botanical education purposes and as a recreation area for the public with an interest in native flora.

Arising from this meeting, Council resolved to establish a native garden on the Mona Vale Road site previously mentioned and NSG was requested to assist with this project. A sub-committee was set up in 1962 under the Mayor, Alderman George Nicol, to advise and make recommendations to Council on the planning and development of the garden. The initial composition of the sub-committee was 4 Aldermen (E Carter, P O Atkins, A H Gillott and R S Turner), the Parks & Gardens Superintendent (R D Bruce) and 5 members of NSG - Geoff Bush, Ross Doig, Ted Duncan, Pat Stanley



and John Wrigley. Composition of the sub-committee was reviewed annually and membership varied from time to time, to include members of the public possessing the requisite interests and/or special qualifications. The sub-committee remained a viable dynamic force for many years. However, in 1989, a restructuring of committees by Council resulted in the disbanding of the KWG Sub-committee and the formation of a reconstituted Committee, which contained a significantly diminished NSG representation.

The 'Native Plants for NSW' issue of April 1963 contained, under the heading of Local News - North Shore Group, an important reference to the KWG, viz.

"Following approval by the Minister for Lands for the development of the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden at St Ives, we look forward to this year seeing the start of work on this project, in co-operation with Ku-ring-gai Municipal Council."

Council in 1963 adopted the name "Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden" together with the Aims & Objects:

"The growing of plants from all parts of Australia for preservation and public display, and by these means the attraction of tourists and visitors to the Ku-ring-gai Municipality".

NSW Government Gazette No 32 of March 8<sup>th</sup> 1968 includes the following proclamation:

"Rules and Regulations for the Management of Reserve No 86262 for Promotion of the Study and Preservation of Native Flora and Fauna at St Ives: 'His Excellency the Governor, with the advice of the Executive Council, having approved of the following rules and regulations made by the Trustee in accordance with the provisions of the Public Trusts Act 1897, as amended, for the management of Reserve No 86262 for Promotion of the Study and Preservation of Native Flora and Fauna, notified 12<sup>th</sup> May 1967, at St Ives, and known as 'Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden', such rules and regulations are hereby published for public information (Pks 67.1836)

*T L Lewis, Minister for Lands.*"

As quoted from the first KWG Guide Book 1967, Alderman J R A McMillan, D.Sc.Agr., M.S. (Cornell) said in Council:

"The KWG is a place set aside, and so necessary for human relaxation, a place for the education of both students and the layman, and a place for the contin-

ued research into the natural beauties of Australia's flora and fauna."

George Nicol became a leading proponent of the KWG and through his influence in Council, his enthusiasm for the garden and his love of the natural environment he was able to achieve many things which would have been unattainable otherwise. His influence will be mentioned from time to time as this story unfolds. He was duly rewarded by being appointed Life Honorary Director of the KWG in 1967 in recognition of outstanding services to the garden.

The early history of the site has been adequately covered in a number of publications. Briefly the site of the KWG was Crown Land, originally owned by the Department of Lands and leased to Ku-ring-gai Council. George Caley, the botanist and explorer, is credited with being the first European visitor to the area in 1805. Part of the later enlarged area of the garden was used for poultry farming in the 1920's and the surrounding area was dedicated for public recreation. Market gardens, poultry farms and cottages occupied some of the area near the section currently known as "The Knoll" and the Ranger's cottage and dams were constructed nearby. Part of the area was used for sand mining in the 1930's. The site includes various types of topography - sandstone ridges, dry plateaux, marshland, creeks and shaded valleys ideally suited for the growing of a diverse range of native flora.

In 1963, NSG set up a Planning sub-committee to act as a panel for providing advice and recommendations to the main KWG Sub-committee. This sub-committee included Geoff Bush (Convenor), Ross Doig, Ted Duncan, Brother Pat Stanley and John Wrigley. Meetings were held periodically at the KWG or Geoff's home in Lane Cove. During the years 1963 to 1965 the sub-committee submitted a number of recommendations concerning the planned development of the garden infrastructure. These included:

- ◆ Construction of walking and access tracks
- ◆ Building of rock gardens
- ◆ Taking a census of all species of native plants occurring naturally in the KWG (To achieve this inventory members worked in pairs covering sections pegged out in 40' squares - this was later abandoned as impractical.
- ◆ A water service be provided urgently
- ◆ A car park to be positioned under the power-lines
- ◆ An Amenities Centre to be constructed incorporating a main room (for meetings, tea house and school lectures etc), a kitchen, kiosk and toilet facilities
- ◆ That suitable decorative trees, followed by smaller



trees and shrubs be planted on the Mona Vale Road frontage.

Many of these recommendations were approved by the KWG Committee and adopted by Ku-ring-gai Council and eventually became a reality. The NSG sub-committee was wound down at the end of 1965 as it was considered that it had achieved its purpose in providing impetus to the planning of the Garden and that future activities could be achieved through representation on the KWG Sub-committee.

In the latter part of 1963 Ku-ring-gai Council erected fencing donated by the Department of Lands and arranged for installation of a water service and the cutting of fire-breaks. Large scale contour maps became available which facilitated the preparation of the survey of native flora by NSG together with the general planning for development of the Garden.

In 1962, for the first time, a comprehensive program of NSG events for the year was proposed. NSG meetings throughout 1962-1963 continued to be conducted mainly on Friday evenings or Saturday afternoons at members' homes. Mention is made of such meetings at the homes of Lorna Heap (Killara), Lee Wyatt (Turramurra), Ted Duncan (Wahroonga), John Wrigley (East Gordon), Ross Doig (Turramurra), Ros Lambie (Castlecrag), Phil Leak (Wahroonga) and Geoff Bush (Lane Cove). Members who also gave talks at meetings included Ross Doig (Propagation), Alan Nielsen and Pat Stanley (*Melaleucas* and *Grevilleas*).

The annual meetings incorporated a "Swap" evening in which members exchanged (swapped) plants they had grown from seeds or cuttings. These continued to be popular evenings and one early notation refers to the exchange of more than 100 native plants.

There were some outstanding guest speakers at the monthly meetings. They included: a lecture - 'Growing Native Plants' by well-known author Alec Blombery - at this meeting (June 1962) a competition with prizes was held for the best cut specimen of native flora; a talk and demonstration on the arrangement of native plants by Mrs Gehrig; a presentation of colour slides on *Proteaceae* by Eric Gordon; how to grow native orchids in your garden by Charles Taylor; Eucalypts, especially Mallees, as garden subjects by horticultural expert and author, J L Willis; and a discussion on growing *Boronia* by Don Sands.

Outings were popular. One outing in May 1962 commencing at the corner of Eucalyptus and Yarrabung Roads, St Ives, incorporated a competition with prizes

for the best contribution to the Group's seed project. Other outings were: Garden inspection and bush ramble from the home of Ross Doig; garden inspection, Canisius College conducted by Pat Stanley; bush ramble and inspection of Charles Taylor's property at Glenorie; a guided walk conducted by John English in the Berowra district (some members may recall the white flowered specimen of *Eriostemon lanceolatus (australasius)* and the outstanding examples of *Boronia floribunda*); a picnic outing to Mr P Parry's *Floraland* nursery at Kariong; the incomparable native plant garden of Max Hewett at Mt Ku-ring-gai and walks and viewings conducted of the proposed site of the KWG.

Interesting articles were contributed by NSG members to 'Native Plants for NSW' in 1962 and 1963 and these are summarised: John Wrigley - Mist Propagation (March 1962); Observations on North Coast Flora (Sept 1962); Rockery Plants (Nov. 1962); First National Conference (Nov. 1962); Canberra National Gardens (Jan. 1963); Method of Germinating Heath Seeds (April 1963). Ted Duncan - Germination of Flannel Flower seed (Sept. 1962); *Cymbidium suave* (March 1963); Alan Nielsen - *Melaleucas* (Nov 1963); Ross Doig - *Acacias* (Sept 1962); In favour of seven pound tins (November 1962) [Yes, they were prune tins!]; Three desirable shrubs (April 1963) Ros Lambie - *Persoonia pinifolia* (March 1963); Phil Leak - *Styphelia* cuttings (April 1963).

Additionally Ross Doig submitted articles to 'Australian Plants', viz. 'Western Australian Plants in Turramurra' (March 1963) and 'The Cottonwool Sandwich' (Sept 1962). The latter embodied a method of germination of seed currently employed successfully (with modifications).

A garden competition was conducted by the NSW Region in September 1962. From NSG John Wrigley was awarded equal 2nd in the formal division, and also achieved best specimen with his hybrid tea-tree. A competition for cut flowers and potted plants was conducted at Region meetings. In March 1963 Pat Stanley was awarded 1st Prize for his pot of *Trachymene caerulea* and John Wrigley 1st in the cut flower section for his *Grevillea punicea (speciosa)*.

The West Pymble Garden Club invited NSG to provide a display of native flora for its Spring Show in 1962. Under the direction of Ross Doig a fine exhibit resulted which featured many less common natives, particularly among the *Grevilleas* and *Acacias*. NSG also supported the Northside Arts Festival by arranging a fine display of native flora at the flower show in Pymble Park in August 1963. As well as receiving favourable



comment from the show officials, the display attracted great interest from the estimated 4000 visitors. In respect of the Waratah Festival in September 1963 Ross Doig's painting of an aboriginal motif provided an excellent backdrop to a grand display of native flora.

In September 1963 NSW Region staged its own show in the Anthony Hordern Gallery, combining potted plants, cut flowers and floral arrangements. This was a major flower festival incorporating all types of flora and ferns from Australia-wide and displayed with imaginative thought. NSG members were heavily involved in the preparation of the display which was acclaimed as an outstanding success.

Ross Doig was the main speaker at the Region's General Meeting in May 1963. His talk encompassed the *Banksia* family including Western Australian species and covered Ross's experience in growing such in Turrumurra (Refer '*Native Plants for NSW*' - July 1963). Pat Stanley was the principal speaker at the General Meeting in September 1963 at which he gave a major address on *Grevilleas* which is well documented in the November 1963 issue of '*Native Plants*'.

By the end of the four year period, 1960-1963, NSG had achieved a great deal and had grown considerably in numbers. At the November 1963 evening meeting, the last of the calendar year, held at Geoff Bush's home in Carranya Road, Lane Cove, the number of members who attended far exceeded expectations. As it happened Geoff's wife, Jean, had to scurry around the neighbours to obtain extra chairs and cups and saucers. Fortunately the supply of home made cakes and scones was adequate for the occasion! This meeting was also notable insofar as it was the beginning of a long-term membership in the person of Ted de Brabander (President 1966/67).

#### TED DUNCAN

- A MEMBER OF NSG FROM MAY 1960.

The Group was fortunate to have Ted's services as Secretary in 1962 and 1963. Ted, who was one of the very early members of NSG, was an enthusiastic native plant gardener. He developed a fine native garden at his Wahroonga home with excellent shrubs and wildflowers, many of which were propagated by him. Ted became a native orchid specialist and cultivated many diverse species of orchids from various parts of Australia. He was instrumental, over many years, in supplying and assisting in arranging the display of native orchids at NSG Floral Festivals and SGAP exhibitions. In association with other members of the group his knowledge and experience were of great assistance in the presentation of the orchids at the various festivals.

From time to time Ted submitted articles to '*Native Plants for NSW*' and at the annual meeting of the NSW Region in March 1967 he was appointed to the position of Editor of that publication, a position he filled with merit until May 1969. In 1970 he became the fourth President of the Society (NSW Region) succeeding the long-serving Charles Taylor, and graced this office with distinction in 1971, 1972 and to March 1973.



**GEOFF BUSH - AN EARLY MEMBER OF SGAP AND A FOUNDATION MEMBER OF NSG, BEING ONE OF THE FOUR PEOPLE PRESENT AT THE FIRST MEETING IN MARCH 1960.**

During continuous membership thereafter, Geoff was variously Treasurer, President (twice) and Delegate.

As early as 1960 Geoff referred to a need to discover an area within the Ku-ring-gai Municipality where the public could see and appreciate Australia's unique flora, if possible within a local native plant environment. In 1962, as Group President, he strongly supported initiatives already in train, with the main thrust towards securing land in Mona Vale Road, St Ives. In that year, Geoff was one of five NSG members who joined a Ku-ring-gai Council Sub-committee to advise and make recommendations to the Council on the planning and development of what became the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden. Geoff remained a sub-committee member for the many years it constituted a viable, dynamic force.

From 1963-65, Geoff was Convenor of a NSG Planning Sub-committee set up to provide advice and recommendations to the Wildflower Garden Sub-committee. In 1969, he and the late Wai Knowles constituted a Group Library Committee which reported in 1970 and led eventually to the establishment of the existing comprehensive Group Library.

As an involved Group member and highly successful cultivator of Australian plants, Geoff gave flower descriptions and provided growing plants for sale (or swap) at monthly meetings. He participated in North Shore Group Floral Festival planning and arrangements and contributed flowers and potted plants for display. Geoff devoted time and effort to the development of the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden and propagated many native shrubs and trees for planting there. His native plant gardens at the Bush homes in Lane Cove and Turramurra won Garden Competition prizes between 1960 and 1971, including a major 'Sydney Morning Herald' prize in 1964.

Geoff gave talks on native plants and birds to the NSG and other interested Australian plant groups and horticultural organisations. He followed additional and allied interests in ornithology and the environment.

Geoff was a member of the Royal Australian Ornithological Union and a participating bird-bander with the CSIRO bird-banding scheme. His concern for the need to protect our environment led him to become a Ranger with the Wildlife Service Fauna Protection Panel. Geoff also spent considerable time over a number of years surveying the bird life of the KWG and wrote the 'Birdlife in the Wildflower Garden' section of the 'Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden Guide Book'.

In all his endeavours Geoff had family support. Whether rounding up chairs and crockery from neighbours to cater for an unexpectedly large number of members attending a 1963 monthly meeting at the Bush home or sustaining the history compilers during 1993-6, wife Jean was there with him. Daughter Jenny also contributed, presenting a floral bouquet at the Official Opening of the 1968 Wildflower Exhibition

Geoff Bush was an effective Group President, a forceful committee member and a competent public speaker in support of significant, evident practical skills. Over a period prior to his untimely death in June 1994, Geoff was convenor, principal contributor to and driving force behind the compilation of the early history of the NSG. He managed easily his two co-compilers, curbing their garrulous and irrelevant reminiscences and keeping them focussed on the task.





## ALAN NIELSEN

— NOTED FOR HIS LOVE OF ORCHIDS & THEIR PESTS

Alan Nielsen joined SGAP in 1960, early enough to receive Vol. 1, No 1 of *'Australian Plants'* and was a NSG member by June of that year. Group Treasurer from 1964-68, he became Region Plant Steward in 1970 and 1971, before work constraints caused him to fade from the scene until the late 1980's. Following his return to the Group, Alan joined the Committee, became President in 1991 and 1992, and was Delegate to Regional Council in 1993 and early 1994.

Initially attracted to growing *Melaleucas*, some of which still grow in his Epping 'garden', Alan was seduced into the growing of Australian Orchids by John Wrigley, Ted Duncan and Charles Taylor - an interest he pursues with long-maintained enthusiasm.

Over the years of his SGAP membership, Alan visited the Upper Allyn Forestry area with groups collecting orchids and other material for the KWG. He spoke at Group, Region and outside meetings, led walks, participated in Plant Descriptions and appeared annually with his orchids at the KWG Festival of Wildflowers and other SGAP venues. Alan maintained his interest in and adherence to the original SGAP aims and objects. He is a strong believer in 'Preservation through Propagation', particularly with respect to epiphytic and terrestrial orchids, where line breeding of species and the development of vigorous and attractive hybrids should help to preserve the dwindling natural populations.

## YEARS 1964 & 1965

### 1964

The February Annual General Meeting was held at the home of Ross Doig and the new office bearers for 1964-65 were President - Ross Doig, Secretary - Pat Stanley, and Treasurer - Alan Nielsen. Tom Crotty was elected Delegate to Region for 1964. Group subscriptions were set at 5 shillings and remained at that amount until the end of 1965.

In these years the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden was the dominant theme and its development occupied much of the thinking and action of members. It is expedient to consider this project separately for the two years and what follows is a brief account of activities connected with it.

Ku-ring-gai Council in 1964 commenced fencing that part facing Mona Vale Road, and the area adjacent to the Council Nursery. As the fencing progressed, pathways, service trails and open areas began to take shape, forming the basis of the present network. The project was aided by an initial Lands Department grant of £1000, supplemented by a similar amount voted by the Council. At the May 9<sup>th</sup> Group meeting Alderman Nicol was pleased to announce that the Lands Department would make a further grant so that fencing could be completed. During this year, under the guidance of Parks & Gardens Superintendent, Bob Bruce and his deputy, Ron Burrows, trees and large shrubs were planted and an all-important water service installed. North Shore Group volunteers continued to meet on the last Saturday of each month, concentrating particularly on establishing trees and shrubs in the south-west corner of the Garden. On these afternoons it was heartening to see the practical support, not only of Alderman Nicol, but also other aldermen and Bob Bruce, Ron Burrows and other members of Council's staff.

A census of plants was begun early in 1964 and 'oldies' will well remember the Wrigley grids designed to assist, 'hands and knees' inspection on an almost minute scale, the constant keying out of species, and the tedious listings, most notably where germination of a species had been all too successful in one's grid!

In September Mr Donald of Bobbin Head made a gift of 900 Waratahs, most of which were planted out by Council workmen around the proposed Amenities Block area to give a massed effect. The remainder graced an area of low shrubs adjacent to Mona Vale Road and



Mueller's Track, and were the responsibility of the NSG. Unfortunately few of these plants survive today and it is worth mentioning here that subsequent widening of Mona Vale Road in 1965 not only accounted for these, but also many other plants that came from keen propagators like Phil Leak, John Wrigley, Ross Doig, Geoff Edwards, Geoff Bush and Ted Duncan, members who had embraced the Garden with great enthusiasm. (Refer to Pat Stanley's article in March 1965 'Native Plants' for further reading.)

In 1965 road widening caused a change in orientation of the planting program which was turned inward towards the Knoll and its environs and the gully below the Knoll, an area particularly suited to epiphytic orchids.

The planning for a Fern House for ferns and orchids took place at the same time as the gully project, and to this end excursions north to the Upper Allyn River was organised by Alderman Nicol. Forestry operations of necessity displaced orchids and tree ferns, and it was these which were rescued to form the nucleus of a rare Sydney collection at the Wildflower Garden.

At this time the original 40 acres was increased to 250 acres. The possibility of areas to be left untouched as examples of the local flora which Banks and Caley had experienced became a reality and planning of environmentally friendly walking trails into the area began.

Progress could be measured and the worth of the Garden partly evaluated from a summary of remarks made by Mr Arthur Fairall, Superintendent of the famous King's Park in Perth after his visit in April. He noted that:

- a) the collection of ferns and orchids would be the envy of any gardener in the world;
- b) the contoured paths were a credit to the designer, with a new vista opening at each turn;
- c) the natural rock formations in the Garden were fantastic.

In the following month's newsletter, Secretary Pat Stanley commented

"Council workers have cleared up the 'Knoll' and in doing so have revealed some beautiful stone features. Already some small beds are stocked with dwarf shrubs and in sheltered places 'Native Roses' and other *Boronias* have been planted."

Thus began the continuing saga of a feature of the Wildflower Garden which year after year has been cultivated, planted and re-planted to enthral visitors each spring with its massed display. We are indebted to Pat Stanley, Ted de Brabander (and Ted's wife Ruth) for carrying on alone since 1972 to keep the Knoll the showplace it still is.

Finally, in September 1964, Pat Stanley was able to report exciting developments in the NSG Newsletter:

- ♦ a new road passing the Knoll opening up new areas and providing long-distance views into Ku-ring-gai Chase
- ♦ erection of a Fern House to feature our orchids and ferns.

Resuming meeting reports, the March meeting saw Alan Nielsen leading us into the depths of his home turf, Pennant Hills Park, an area with a wide range of natives, although only a few were flowering at this time. The afternoon culminated in a 'cuppa' in a lovely bush setting overlooking the Lane Cove River gully. As Pat Stanley said at the time, this excursion could well set a pattern for later excursions.

Sandra and Ted Duncan were our hosts for the April meeting, and general business over, Miss K Holmes beguiled us with slides, the result of her recent wildflower visit to W.A. And what a feast - many plants not seen before, close-ups, plants in their natural habitat, particularly the *Lechenaultias* interesting many of us at this time - taking us out of the world of small book illustrations and nearer to the real thing.

The Wildflower Garden had now progressed enough for us to entertain visitors, and accordingly in May we met there with the Warringah Heights group as our guests. At tea-break Alderman Nicol spoke to the gathering in progress and plans for the future of the Garden, which opened up visions of more exciting things to come.

In June our scheduled meeting at the Wrigley home attracted good attendance on a night of deplorable weather. As the newsletter had it:

"Our own resident experts Phil Leak, Ross Doig and John Wrigley demonstrated methods of propagation by seeds and cuttings."

Discussion between the three-some, and members' questions made for an evening of infectious enthusiasm, which must surely have converted the odd tentative propagator.



With the first signs of Spring not far away, the July meeting was held at the pipeline above Manly Reservoir and led to a botanical/sightseeing ramble down to the tidal limit of Middle Harbour. Not many flowers were in bloom which led to constant interruptions for 'What is this?' identifications from foliage inspections.

August brought a treat for members in the form of two garden visits. Betty Maloney's garden had been a prize winner in the 1963 SGAP garden competition and much was learnt from her landscaping ability. In a comparatively small area (at French's Forest) she had created a miniature wonderland of natives. The afternoon was spent under the guidance of two of the 'leading lights' of Stony Range reserve, Mr Joshua and Mr Corkery, wandering the cleverly laid out paths examining such delights as the double flowered form of *Boronia ledifolia* (an aside - Mr Corkery had developed this clone and propagated a great number for sale. By 1994 there might have been only one surviving plant in the garden of Max Hewett at Cherrybrook.) The number and variety of plants, the propagation areas and the knowledge of Warringah Group volunteers made this a day to remember.

Spring now upon us and July and August meetings having provided the taste for going bush, and also visiting gardens, the September meeting combined the two. The Group visited the garden of John English at Berowra where we were greeted by a white *Eriostemon australasius*, *Boronia floribunda*, Mint bushes in bloom, and Western Australian *Grevilleas*. A revelation in what could be done with Australian plants not yet available in nurseries. John then took us into the Berowra bushland, an area of Hawkesbury sandstone rich in its diversity of flora. (We were fortunate that much of the area seen that afternoon remained largely untouched.)

The October meeting took over, it seemed, where September left off, and members headed for Ted Duncan's garden in Wahroonga and continued the day at Phil Leak's North Wahroonga garden. Both showed careful landscaping and planning to cater for beauty, utility and the demands of young children. Phil's propagation methods and Ted's epiphytic orchids left a lasting impression. As if this was not enough the day ended at Canisius College as the guests of Secretary, Pat Stanley. Members were treated here to the sight of several hundred plants growing in pots out in the full sun - specimen *Grevilleas*, *Lechenaultias* and others growing in drums and a simple but very effective propagation system for cuttings. Sales from Pat's plants raised £4/ 5 shillings towards amenities for the Wildflower Garden.

Our year ended in a notable meeting in November. It was the last to be held in a private home, the Wyatt's of Turramurra had that honour, for we were greeted with the news that henceforth meetings would be held in the Card Room of the Killara Memorial Hall in Marian Street, courtesy of the good offices of Alderman Nicol. In addition the 'newly discovered' wonders of *Prostantheras* (Mint Bush) intriguing many at this time received a fillip with the guest speaker, Don Sands, expert on this genus, showing us slides and passing around specimens to be handled and taken as cuttings. Their ease of propagation, attractiveness in the garden and sheer beauty was impressed upon us by Don.

Looking back on 1964 certain other activities made an impact worthy of record. The NSG input into the SGAP Spring Wildflower Show at Anthony Hordern's was largely masterminded by Ross Doig who devised the physical layout of paths and stands, and featured the marvellous organising ability of John Wrigley. The interstate flora, the Ikebana Display, Pat Stanley's flowering plants in drums and the arrangements, many by our NSG lady members, made for a memorable event.

NSG again joined with the West Pymble Garden Club in August providing cut flowers, arranging them and acting as volunteer stewards. Once again, a most successful Saturday afternoon.

In the SGAP Garden Competition (North Shore Section) in September, John Wrigley, Ross Doig and Lee and Ethel Wyatt occupied 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> places respectively, whilst Geoff Bush won that Section devoted to part native garden. This last effort does not fully reveal the extent of Geoff's success for his 2<sup>nd</sup> in the State-wide SGAP competition was capped by a major prize in the Sydney Morning Herald competition.

'Native Plants', official publication of NSW Region for SGAP included articles by NSG members. Indeed, Editor John Wrigley, could be accused of mild arm-twisting, as Pat Stanley, Ross Doig and Alan Nielsen all contributed.

At Regional level, Helen Ramsay took on the onerous task of providing a state-wide Plant Identification Service. John Wrigley became Scientific Group Leader and Phil Leak undertook the position of Publicity Officer/Advertising & Sales Representative concerned in the main with our national publication 'Australian Plants'. He was destined to hold this position for many years, literally as right hand man to Editor, Bill Payne. Joan Doney was elected Minutes Secretary.



Office bearers Ross Doig, Pat Stanley and Alan Nielsen continued in office in 1965 with Geoff Edwards taking over the role of Delegate to the Region. Subscriptions remained at 5 shillings.

The February meeting saw a new member already known to us for his outstanding work for the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden - Alderman George Nicol, and the President invited him to speak on this subject. George responded by foreshadowing projects which the Wildflower Garden Sub-committee and the Council had in mind for 1965. The meeting proceeded into the now traditional Plant Swap mode, an activity which produced not only great excitement but also realised £2/10 shillings towards the cost of providing supper, with a modest surplus going to KWG tea amenities.

Our new venue for this meeting, Marian Street Hall, was described thus by the Secretary/Newsletter Editor, Pat Stanley when reporting the February meeting in the March newsletter:

"The Killara Memorial Hall is divided into 3 sections. The Upper Hall is the venue for a dancing lesson Friday nights, and soft music provides a diverting background for the Wildflower Talk in the room below."

The March meeting in the Memorial Hall gave us a chance to welcome Charles Taylor, NSW Region President and he, in turn, after appropriate words, introduced Mr & Mrs Frank Stone to us. Charles spoke of their gift of 'Waratah Park' at Bilpin as a reserve for the development of native flora, and during the evening members had the opportunity to thank the couple for their unusual gesture. To conclude a memorable evening Mr & Mrs Jack Joshua entertained us with slides of flora, accumulated after years of travel, mainly in outback areas of NSW, and a fascinating range of plants, many little known to the coastal dwellers present. Very impressive were the many pea flowers which some saw as highly desirable garden plants (Not available in nurseries at the time, they are still largely unavailable.)

In 1964 we had entertained a fellow SGAP group at the Wildflower Garden and in April 1965 we repeated this by inviting other City groups to visit. Rain could not dampen the enthusiasm and interest shown and it was a relieved group of our ladies (after seeing the numbers) that saw Alderman Nicol and Council staff providing afternoon tea.

The opportunity to mix with SGAP members from other

groups was taken at the May meeting when NSG combined with the Hills Group to descend upon the magnificent showplace set up single-handedly at Annangrove by Sid Cadwell. Ostensibly a nursery - and certainly there were many plants for sale - Sid had converted an orchard into a wildflower sanctuary. W.A. *Grevilleas*, flowering mallees, and *Melaleucas* from all over Australia flourished in built-up beds enabling us to see plants not grown before in Sydney. The NSG already owed a debt to Sid who, in his contacts with John Wrigley, Ross Doig and Pat Stanley, had showered upon them cuttings and plants to try in their own gardens and the KWG. (In early 1994 Sid was hospitalised and infirm, and what is to become of his second great Wildflower Park at Rylestone is anybody's guess.)

In June Marian Street featured Ted Duncan (home-grown NSG member) on his favourite, dare we say obsessive, subject - Australian Orchids. An all-encompassing talk, even fascinating to the non-orchidist members - specimens, slides, diagrams, explained culture, characteristics, differences. At this meeting we learnt that one of our members, Dr M R Lemberg, of the Institute of Medical Research, Royal North Shore Hospital, was to be congratulated for having been awarded the James Cook medal by the Royal Society of NSW for outstanding scientific work.

We went south in July, on a Saturday afternoon, as the guests of Mr Leo Cady, well-known orchid authority, who met the 40 of us at the Blowhole at Kiama. He escorted us to Saddleback and thence into dense rainforest where ferns, climbers, creepers and orchids abounded. A long trip but plenty to talk about on the way home, particularly for those to whom the rainforest was a new world.

The KWG provided the venue for the August meeting and again, it being Spring and a peak flowering period, other SGAP groups were invited. Some who had been present in April were astounded at the development in a few months, but were even more impressed at the wide variety of plants in bloom throughout. In spite of many plants from other States in flower, it was the tremendous showing of local plants which stole the show in this Garden of varied habitats.

September brought around garden inspection time again, and this meeting saw visits to Dr & Mrs Lemberg and Geoff Bush. The Lembergs kindly provided members with cutting material, and plants from their propagated stock, but it was the landscaping and naturalness which really impressed. Geoff again demonstrated how to grow a lot very well in a small space.



In October, with group membership now about 70, outdoor meetings continued and we combined with the Hills Group again, to explore bushland in the Cliftonville area (near Wiseman's Ferry) seeing during the day many plants familiar to us on the Northern Sydney area but also other significantly different, e.g. *Acacias*, pea flowers, *Angophoras* and colour variants of species in our local area.

The November meeting was unusual in taking place in late October owing to special activities at the KWG and the Group met at Katandra Bushland Sanctuary with the Warringah Heights Group to explore the unique 20 acres of bush developed by Harold Seymour. A product of Harold's later years and an aspect of his deep love of nature (also borne out by his newly discovered painting skills under art teacher, Ross Doig) it was a fitting memorial to a man with the unlikely background of an adult working life spent as a dealer in Renault cars. Today a Trust watches over his enduring monument (and it is hoped that the 1994 bushfire which swept the area will not have done irreparable damage.) Seen this day was heavy forest supporting Cabbage Palms, *Boronia thujona*, *B. pinnata*, *B. floribunda* and *B. mollis*, epiphytic orchids, signs of wallabies, goannas and lyrebirds. As Pat Stanley summed up in the newsletter:

"All of this in Mona Vale."

The December meeting brought the year to a close and member assembled at Marian Street for a Christmas Party and "Just Talk".

### Other activities in 1965

'*Native Plants*' continued to receive contributions from NSG members:

- ◆ Pat Stanley - articles reported the Regional Meeting for November; detailed progress at KWG; commented on specimen plants brought to the March Region meeting; a feature on *Platytheca verticellata*.
- ◆ John Wrigley - had two fine articles on propagation, the first raising plants from seed and the second propagation from cuttings.
- ◆ Ross Doig - wrote on *Hakea bakeriana* and growing Kangaroo Paws from seed.
- ◆ Ted Duncan - expanded his talk to the NSG in a highly informative article on Epiphytic Orchid Culture.
- ◆ Mrs F M Officer - contributed notes on compost and experiments with raising particular natives from seed.

In the May 1965 issue of '*Native Plants*', Region President, Charles Taylor, had this to say about the North Shore Group:

"As the numerical strength is increasing so is the range of practical work being encompassed. The North Shore Group, who with Ku-ring-gai Council is developing the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden has now found it necessary to use a public hall for their meetings. This group now has a membership of over 50."

Two 1965 events are also of note. In the Annual SGAP Garden Competition Ted Duncan achieved 2nd place for part native garden. In December Dr Lemberg was awarded the Encyclopaedia Britannica Award (Science) enabling him to travel overseas.



ROSS DOIG - FOUNDATION MEMBER AND EARLY  
PRESIDENT, AND PROPAGATEUR EXTRAORDINAIRE.

Ross, brought up in the Western Australian wheatbelt town of Lake Grace, nurtured a love of wildflowers during a boyhood wandering the sandplain heath and mallee hills. But it was not until he joined SGAP in 1959 that this love was to manifest itself in an active way. At that time the influence of John Wrigley, Max Hewett, John English, Pat Stanley, Phil Leak and John Evans engendered a camaraderie born of common purpose - learning together, a swapping of ideas and working together for the newly formed SGAP.

Ross joined the NSG at its second meeting in April 1960, became President in years 1964 and 1965, and was one of the small group who brought the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden into existence, serving on the Council Advisory Committee for several years. In 1976, pressure of work led him to resign from both SGAP and the NSG regretfully giving up propagating natives and his much loved native garden. In 1989 he 'retired' and re-appeared as a 'Blast from the Past' in 1990, rejoining NSG and at the same time the Parramatta/Hills Group, having old friends from the early '70's in both groups.

Probably from those early days Ross will be remembered for the part he played in planning exhibitions such as the inaugural SGAP Spring Festival at Anthony Hordern's in 1963, the Lower Town Hall Festival, the Farmers' SGAP festival and the two large murals, one at the Royal Show and another in the Lower Town Hall, one featuring *Banksias* and the other a pot-pourri of native flowers. Propagation fascinated him and cartons of plants appeared at NSG meetings for members and visitors to grow in their gardens.

Since 1990 he has re-established his propagating particularly from cuttings, and has distributed over

1000 plants to members and community groups. His love of local pea flowers, notably *Pultaneas*, is sparking (hopefully) a renewed interest in this neglected family. A fluent speaker in the early days, (according to Alan Nielsen) he made a new start giving a talk on propagation from cuttings at a NSG meeting and acting as Plant Steward at Hills group meetings, in addition to preparing articles for newsletters and *Native Plants*.

Another Doig activity has been a passion to acquire knowledge of individual species, most notably in the Sydney area, and this has led, on excursions and at meetings to the cry "Ross, what's this one called?"

Finally, it is as a collector of plant material that Ross will be best known, a seemingly insatiable curiosity to discover whether this will grow from cuttings. This appears to have led him to 'rescue' material from almost any physically accessible area and to indulge in philosophical and moral discussions on the desirability of collection with almost anybody who raises an objection concerning 'protected' areas. Official custodians seem to attract him in this regard. Asked for his ideals, he has replied:

"I have a firm belief that one of the original slogans of SGAP - preservation by propagation - is still true today. Survival of a great many natives depends not only on holding what we have in National Parks and Reserves against the ravages of bush-fires, development, flood and recreation demands, but on active propagation, cultivation and replacement. We must replace BEFORE more plants, animals and birds extend the list of extinct species."



## THE YEARS 1966 & 1967



### 1966

In 1966, Ted de Brabander was elected Group President, with the continuing support group of Pat Stanley (Secretary), Alan Nielsen (Treasurer) and Geoff Edwards (Delegate).

The 1966 Group subscription rate remained at 5 shillings, becoming 50 cents with the introduction of decimal currency. The indoor meetings continued at the Killara Memorial Hall. The good offices of Alderman Nicol enabled us to be relocated to the East Side Room, where the sounds of light music and less than light dancing feet were not as intrusive!

The year's program began in February at Killara. This was an Annual Election and Swap meeting, with officers elected as shown above. Two additional members were elected to assist the principal officers - the beginning of Committee membership.

In March the Group visited Waratah Park at Bilpin, an area previously owned by Mr Frank Stone and of which the group became aware in 1965. While Waratah were the great attraction, SGAP groups were invited to plant designated areas. The Hills group planted an *Acacia* grove, whilst NSG was asked to plant *Proteaceae*. This was done by a small, but enthusiastic, group with the shrubs doing well initially. Frank took the visitors for a 'hair-raising' ride around 114 acres on a movable platform attached to his tractor.

At the April meeting, held at Killara, the Guest Speaker was Group member Lorna Heap. Her talk, illustrated with slides, covered travels through the Northern Territory and Western Australia in search of wildflowers. Lorna Heap will be specially remembered for her connection with *Hibbertia stellaris*, the Apricot Guinea Flower, a Western Australian gem. Lorna sent back cuttings from Bunbury, W. A. which prospered initially, particularly in Pat Stanley's hands, and became much sought after as a rock garden plant. Unfortunately, *Hibbertia stellaris* has proved generally to be a difficult NSW garden subject.

The May meeting, again at Killara, featured prominent and knowledgeable NSG members. Joan Doney spoke on seed germination, John Wrigley and Ross Doig on propagation from cuttings and Don Dove showed slides, with a recorded commentary and musical background.

### TED (EDVARD SIMON PETRUS) DE BRABANDER.

Ted joined NSG in November 1963 and became Group President in 1966. He was a Garden Competition Judge in the 1970's.

Ted was always a forthright, down-to-earth person with a strong sense of order and what is right and proper, characteristics he credited to (or blamed on) his Dutch ancestry.

An expert propagator he was probably responsible for the PET bottle technique of striking cuttings. He gave away plants, providing many for sale at the annual KWG Wildflower Shows and in addition gave talks on propagation and native orchids. Native orchids fascinated him and he was responsible for epiphytes placed on rocks and trees in the KWG. In fact as recently as 1996 he established a 'colony' of epiphytic orchids adjacent to the Fernhouse creating a spring display to be admired.

Although Ted de Brabander's direct involvement with NSG ceased in the mid-1970's, over four decades he and his late wife, Ruth, together with Pat Stanley and Ross Doig (more recently) maintained the KWG Knoll as a show-piece for Australian plants. The Kangaroo Paws remain a feature. Ted's native plant garden was an entrant in the years 1999 and 2000 Ryde City Council Garden Competitions.

Despite major heart surgery in the 1980's, Ted remained very active, with wide-ranging social and community involvement here and abroad. He had a good working knowledge of Bahasa Indonesia and was a frequent visitor to the Republic. On his latest and last visit to Indonesia, Ted died suddenly on October 19<sup>th</sup> 2000. He was 91 years old. His lasting monument will be the steps he and Pat Stanley constructed at the Knoll from local stone they quarried, transported and laid which has already endured for 30 years without any deterioration.



1966 was a significant year in the development of the KWG and is best illustrated by two special reports by the Group Secretary, Pat Stanley, which are now included.

### **News from Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden - May 1966**

*The fact that no mention has been made of the 'KWG' in our Group notice this year, should not be misunderstood. It is because we have not had space on the sheet, and not because there is a lack of activity there. On the contrary, the 'Garden' is a centre of great activity. The shadehouse for accommodating the ferns and orchids is practically completed, and an ingenious watering system installed.*

*At the moment of writing, the activity has shifted to the Amenities Block, situated close to Mona Vale Road, just west of the present boundary fence. Here, in ideal bushland setting, the Honorary Architect, Mr John Daubney, has designed the building, consisting of a variety of colourful Australian timbers and dressed stone. The timber will come from areas under the control of the Forestry Commission.*

*Both the Forestry Commission and the State Transport Department have acted with commendable generosity in this venture. The Forestry Commission has charged the lowest royalty allowable on the timber, and the Transport Department has waived the road tax on its transport. Mr Arthur H Gillott has generously offered to transport this timber. This, with the remissions above, represents a tremendous saving on the construction cost of the building.*

*The concrete for the base of the Amenities Block - 32 cubic yards - is being delivered at cost. Combined Apex clubs are laying this, under the supervision of one of their members, an engineer. Dressed stone from the demolition of several buildings has been donated, as has coloured stone from the Roseville Bridge works, and also stone from the widening of the Mona Vale Road.*

*Other items such as necessary furnishings, toilet requisites etc., too numerous to mention, have been donated or installed at cost. All these will be acknowledged in the proper place in due course. But the quick run through here gives some idea of the generous response by the public to this project.*

*It is only just that we should mention Alderman G R Nicol, the Vice-Chairman of the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden committee in this report, although we know he would prefer to omit this paragraph. However, it is through his intercession with Government bodies and private individuals, that the KWG has been saved*

*thousands of dollars. How much time he spent on this undertaking only he - and perhaps Mrs Nicol - would know. To Alderman and Mrs Nicol we say 'Thank you'.*

*Due acknowledgement must also be made to Mr R Bruce and Mr R Burrows, the Parks & Garden Superintendent and his Deputy respectively of Ku-ring-gai Council. Until the KWG came into being, their weekends would have been relatively peaceful. Now we find them out at working bees, committee meetings, and consultations. Only people with a love of our bushland would be prepared to sacrifice so much of their leisure, and they have our gratitude.*

*We must thank, too, the Ku-ring-gai Council for their loyal support and trust in the Committee of the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden.*

*Now, at the Garden itself, in mid-autumn, we have the *Banksias* in full bloom and the *White Heath* (*Woolfsia pungens*) also in full fragrance. The red *Five Corners* (*Styphelia tubiflora*) is already introducing a colourful note, in the underbrush around the Knoll. The regeneration of *Flannel Flowers* here is quite a feature. *Golden Kangaroo Paws* (*Anigozanthos pulcherrima*) have been very showy in the beds at the base of the Knoll for a couple of months, and we doubt if there has been a better display in Sydney this summer. *Thryptomene denticulata*, also from W. A. and also growing in these beds, is another shrub at present covered in deep mauve flowers. On the south side of the Knoll, beside the elevated pathway, and sheltered by the rocks, a selection of *Boronias* is doing well, especially the *Native Rose* (*Boronia serrulata*). Recent additions are: *Boronia crenulata* from W.A., and a special form of *B. deanii* from Victoria. *Boronia mollis*, a rare local species is now well established.*

*In Tree Fern Gully we have planted several rainforest trees, also *Dryandras* and *Banksias* from the Stirlings in Western Australia. This was following advice from a recent visitor from Western Australia, well-acquainted with Western flora. He told us that the area is almost identical with the Stirlings; not content with noting his similarity he, upon his return, sent us cuttings of plants from his own garden. These were the beautiful *Mountain Bells* (*Darwinias*), so that we may grow them at the KWG and demonstrate the undoubted possibilities of this area. The tree ferns are, of course, perfectly at home here, and we would remind members that many of these are gifts from local residents.*

*And then there is that family of Quail at the Knoll that appears with dusk... But that's another story!"*





## News from Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden (No 2) August-September 1966

Since the last 'News', Autumn with its *Banksias*, has changed to Winter. The flowering of *Boronias* in early July, together with the perfumed white *Woollysias*, was a promise of Spring. And now, even before the official commencement of Spring, the enclosed area is indeed a wildflower garden. The remarkable resurgence of *Eriostemon lanceolatus* is proof in itself of the wisdom of a redoubtable fence, and the prolific growth and flowering of *Boronia ledifolia* is further evidence of the value of this safeguard. The fence has undergone a change of direction since the approval of the Lands Department of the extended boundaries, now some 275 acres. That portion of the fence going north, beneath the power lines, is being removed and erected along the southern boundary of the Garden (along Mona Vale Road). The new gateway has been erected at the official entrance, and the fence continues from here, still in a westerly direction, until eventually it turns northwards, enclosing the western boundary.

The foundations for the Amenities Block were laid some time ago, chiefly by Apexians. Some committee members were there to help, and working energetically in the wet slurry of concrete were Alderman White and Alderman Small. In charge of the commissariat, and practically everything else, was Alderman Nicol, assisted as usual by Mrs Nicol. With Mr Bruce were several men of his Department all helping to keep the ready-mixed concrete trucks rolling. And this on their day off! Council had prepared the foundations of the block beforehand, and full credit must go to Mr Burrows and his staff for a really competent job, in face of natural difficulties.

The Amenities Block is a most important feature in the whole plan of the Wildflower Garden, but what is going to take the public eye is the shadehouse. For this one is going to set a standard for all shadehouses. We are happy about this because we were confident that Mr Burrows was capable of designing something of such beauty, and our confidence has been vindicated. It will take time before this construction has acquired the mellowness of a fern glade, but the transformation is progressing rapidly.

The Knoll is now completely surrounded by a footpath. This track links up with the original one, which led past the *Boronia* beds, to the summit. The newer path leads past a little tree fern glade, on the south side of the Knoll, past some rounded rock features, with ferns and shrubs placed so as to emphasise these boundaries. In fact the whole of this path is a procession either over rock pavement, or alongside the natural rock base of the

Knoll. In Autumn and Winter the *Banksias* bordering this pathway are alive with Honeyeaters and other birds. The new track, on the north side of the Knoll, reveals some wind-worn caves of immaculate beauty, and on this sunny side bordering the track, shrubs from the Australian outback areas have been planted, where sufficient depth of soil is available.

A section of the Garden is to be set aside between the Knoll and the proposed site of the Ranger's cottage, which is to the west of the Knoll, and the highest point of the Garden. This area will be known as the Banksian Garden, and it is suggested that it be left more or less in its natural state. This would be a very good example of the indigenous flora that Sir Joseph Banks would have walked amongst, and collected, at Botany Bay almost 200 years' ago. Footpaths will lead through this area, which is even now colourful with *Boronias* and *Eriostemons*, and richly endowed with scribbly gums and various *Banksias*.

While it may be felt that a variety of projects should be undertaken, it is well to remember that finance is the limiting factor. Only those necessary works, such as the Amenities Block, fire trails, roads and parking facilities, fencing, and ranger's cottage, can be proceeded with; and even these have to be adjusted, according to financial resources. If any commercial enterprise would like to assist this purely Australian venture, then we feel that the Vice-Chairman, Alderman Nicol, would be happy to hear of it. As has been mentioned, many gifts have already been made, and if we may instance one, it is the enormous amount of detailed work prepared by the Honorary Architect, Mr John Daubney.

It may be well here to recapitulate a few points in relation to the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden. The Garden is directly under the control of the Ku-ring-gai Council. It is a fact though that the original move for this undertaking came from the North Shore Group of SGAP and that originally the committee of the KWG was composed of Aldermen of Council and representatives of this Group. However, since then the committee has been enlarged by adding more Aldermen, more members of SGAP and some interested residents of the Municipality. This committee meets quarterly and makes recommendations to Council relating to the KWG. We are happy to say that these have all been adopted by Council."



## BROTHER JOSEPH PATRICK (PAT) STANLEY

Pat, a Victorian, joined the Jesuit Order at the age of 24. Subsequently he was transferred to NSW and after a brief period at Riverview College, where among other duties, he taught nature study, he was transferred to Canisius College, which appointment proved to be permanent. As a result he was able to bring to fruition his evolving interest in and love of native plants. In the grounds of the College he grew to advantage a variety of specimen plants in the formal garden section and established plantations of trees and shrubs, some of which were cultivated in NSW for the first time. Some of these remained in 2001 as a reminder of his early efforts. (Many members got their first glimpse here of the brilliant opportunities that lay ahead for native plant culture.)

Complementary to his Newsletters, Pat regularly contributed to 'Native Plants of NSW' concerning the happenings of the NSG and the activities at KWG. Over the years he submitted many knowledgeable treatises on Australian Plants to 'Native Plants' and 'Australian Plants'. He addressed NSG and Regional meetings on frequent occasions and gave freely of his time in imparting knowledge to SGAP members and the public generally. Reference has been made in this history, year by year to a considerable number of his talks and written submissions.

In the course of time Pat established and maintained his own extensive nursery in the College precincts. He had long been interested in the propagation of uncommon and less amenable flora and he developed great skill in the propagation of many W.A. species and rare plants. Indeed he pioneered the successful culture of several species, among them *Grevilleas*, *Leschenaultias*, *Hibbertias*, *Hakeas* and *Eremophilas*.

Many members have benefited from Pat's success in propagating Australian plants, and from his generosity over a long period in providing potted plants to NSG and Regional Festivals of Wildflowers. A great number of his plants were domiciled in the KWG and many more have been given to NSG for sale or for swap meetings. Accordingly the Group was been rewarded financially through his generosity over many years. His plants and cultivation expertise was passed on to nurserymen in NSW and in other States, benefiting a much wider range of growers than just NSG members.

Pat initiated the idea of establishing the KWG and together with a small band of NSG members was the leading light in its promotion. His interest in this project ranged from working behind the scenes to Committee membership for many years to hands-on development of the Garden's Knoll area. Even in his eighties he engaged regularly in maintenance work in the Knoll area in the company of long-time friend Ted de Brabander and more latterly Ross Doig. He planted innumerable plants in this area, supplied freely from his own nursery.

For many years an esteemed member of the KWG committee, he was a tireless advocate for the Garden, on occasions escorting local, interstate and international visitors through the grounds. His travels around Australia in all States, and particularly his 'outback' trips, provided him with a bounty of information concerning the diverse flora of Australia. On these excursions he formed many friendships and made contact with various nurserymen enabling him to introduce new plants to the Sydney area.

Respected widely for his knowledge of Australian plants, their propagation and cultivation, Pat Stanley, a quiet achiever, devoted time and energy freely to the successful implementation of SGAP aims and objectives.

Pat, a life member of the NSG, was further honoured when at the 1993 Annual General Meeting of the NSW Region he was awarded Life Membership of the Society in recognition of his dedication to the cause of promoting Australian native flora. Ross Doig provided the citation with an impressive list of Pat's accomplishments. The full text of this is recorded in the September 1993 publication of 'Native Plants'.

In 1996 physical incapacitation forced Pat to give up work at the KWG and to close his beloved nursery. However, he maintained his interest in SGAP and Australian plants through continued membership of the NSG and NSW and Victorian Regions and had much to say to visitors to Canisius about articles in their publications which caught his attention. Pat died peacefully on the morning of 26<sup>th</sup> September 2000 at the age of 88 years, a true disciple of that other great lover of nature, St Francis of Assisi.



The Group's 1966 June newsletter, in addition to reporting the May meeting, contained two following noteworthy items.

President de Brabander offered to obtain small plastic propagating pots, 2" (50mm) by 3" (75mm) in quantity for members. The cost? - 1 cent each.

Joyce Ward was anxious to contact people willing to lend a hand for a few hours at the Wildflower Show, September 7-10, in Farmer's Blaxland Galleries. (Once contacted they would not and could not refuse). The duties? - opening packages of flowers from Australia all over as arranged by Joyce, checking sender's names for acknowledgement, adding the flowers to displays and dealing with visitor questions.

The June meeting, at Killara, featured Max Hewett, Region Plant Recording Officer and sometime NSG member. Max explained his recording system, based on plant details obtained from Report Forms contained in the July 1965 issue of 'Native Plants'. Ensuing discussions focused on *Boronias*, especially *B. serrulata* and *Lechenaultias*. A wide ranging agenda also included the President's thanks to Alderman Nicol for Council's action in refunding the Killara Hall rental in the light of our connection with the KWG; acceptance of the West Pymble Garden Club's invitation to assist with the staging of their September 3<sup>rd</sup> Show and Joan Doney's brief description of the bog plant technique of dealing with seeds of such genera as *Callistemon*.

The plants on show were described by Ted Duncan and Alan Nielsen, Alan's *Melaleuca fulgens* and Phil Leak's *Grevillea thelemanniana* receiving special mention. Ambient noise was again evident.

The July meeting was an excursion to the Hallstrom Reserve at Cowan, led by John English, an old friend of the Group, and a trustee of the Reserve, Ken Metcalfe the Ranger and Lindsay Sweeney. 78 signatures were added to the Visitors' Book, some belonging to Warringah Heights Group members. The sights included spectacular views of the Hawkesbury Valley and Berowra Creek, an Aboriginal carving and the sandstone flora with *Boronia ledifolia* outstanding.

The August newsletter reminded members of the Garden competition to be held in September, sought helpers for the Wildflower Show at Farmer's Blaxland Galleries on behalf of Joyce Ward and Violet Murray, reported the cancellation of the West Pymble Garden Club Show, noted the group had 95 financial members, sought suggestions for Group activities in 1967 (nothing is new!) and canvassed advice on possible new venues for evening meetings.

In September, the Group returned to the outdoors for two Garden Visits. The first was to Les Scott's Castle Hill property, unusual in that it featured a well-developed garden which concealed the house. The Secretary's report singled out *Kunzea baxteri* in flower, an espaliered *Melaleuca nesophila*, a Christmas Bush (*Ceratopetalum gummiferum*) to remember, and the Mint Bush (*Prostanthera* spp) tang in the air.

The Group next moved to Sid Cadwell's Wildflower Garden at Annangrove, an amazing tribute to one person's labours. *Grevilleas* and *Hakeas* were obviously favoured by Sid. Among the former *G. lavendulacea*, *G. pteridifolia*, *G. synapheae* and *G. bipinnatifida* were particularly noteworthy. The *Hakea* collection featured a number of rare species in flower as well as a brilliant *H. bucculenta*. Sid's *Lechenaultias* attracted much attention.

The September Newsletter, written by the Secretary in a Melbourne suburb, contained further mention of the KWG, its *Banksias*, and a recent Council allocation of \$12,000 for ongoing works.

The Group's annual KWG visit was made in September. The President thanked Council for approving the visit before the Garden was opened officially and Alderman Nicol, Bob Bruce and Ron Burrows for their co-operation. Warringah Heights Group and other SGAP members were in attendance. Interest centred on the fernhouse, with strong new plant growth evident. The Amenities Block was also seen to be rising from its concrete foundations.

Katandra Bushland Sanctuary at Mona Vale was visited as the October meeting, with Warringah Heights Group as our hosts. The Newsletter reported a riot of pea flowers, especially notable being *Gompholobium latifolium*, *Boronia floribunda*, *B. mollis* and *B. thujona* were at their peak. *Olearia dentata* was a feature, while a Mint Bush (*Prostanthera* sp) ran riot among the *Boronias*. A beautiful Red Passion Vine (*Passiflora cinnabarina*) said to be indigenous to the district, was in evidence. In the President's absence, Delegate Geoff Edwards thanked Harold Seymour and the Warringah Heights group.

Congratulations were offered to Lee & Ethel Wyatt as Novice Prize winners in the NSW Region section of a garden competition. The Group and Region judges of the Garden Competition, Brian and Diana Snape and Alan Nielsen were thanked for their efforts. Mrs Mills, Mrs David and Mrs Ward were thanked for their endeavours to secure a meeting hall for 1967.



At the November meeting the President congratulated Lee & Ethel Wyatt on their Garden Competition success, and announced that the 1967 night meetings would be held at Willow Park Memorial Hall, Edgeworth David Avenue, Hornsby. This venue was still being used in 2003.

In a re-scheduled meeting, John Wrigley described a recent trip to Harrington on the NSW mid-north coast and to regions accessible from this base; Ted Duncan described methods of attaching orchids and ferns to suitable supports; Ted de Brabander gave a vivid account of his trip to the Barrington Tops area and Pat Stanley reported on a visit to the Pilliga Scrub and the Warrumbungles. Don Dove managed the slides. The regular plant description was in the hands of Alan Nielsen and Phil Leak ("No gardener should lack a sense of humus"). Lorna Heap triumphed with a specimen of *Verticordia huegelii* while a sprig of red Geraldton Wax (*Chamelaucium uncinatum*) stood out among a great variety of flowers, including orchids. The membership milestone of 100 financial members had been passed and called for comment.

The 1967 Christmas meeting was agreed to have been the best yet, with the Secretary's Newsletter report thanking the many people who helped to make the evening such a success, and including a special vote of thanks to the "Donkey Orchid" (John Wrigley) and the "KWG Ranger" (Ted Duncan). Pat Stanley paid particular tribute to John Wrigley, reminding members that 18 Mt. Ida Street, Gordon was where most of the Group policy was worked out, and that so much was owed to John's guiding hand in establishing the Group's firm foundation. It was also John Wrigley who spoke from the floor of Council when the concept of a 'Kuring-gai Wildflower Garden' was first debated. The Secretary recorded the Group's gratitude to Marcia Wrigley for her ongoing supporting role, particularly in relation to the Committee's discussions and the need to refresh flagging spirits. On behalf of the Group he wished the Wrigley's every success in Canberra.

In addition to the already reported activities at Group level, NSG members were involved through 1966 on the wider scene. Issues of 'Native Plants' the year record the participation of more than a dozen members. John Wrigley, 'Native Plants' Editor in 1966, wrote about care when pruning and with Ross Doig contributed an article on Mallees; Ross Doig was also sole author on Kangaroo Paws (*Anigozanthos*), drainage in small containers, Pea Flowers and commentator on *Lechenaultia macrantha*, *Eucalyptus macrocarpa* and *Eremaea beaufortoides*. Pat Stanley contributed Group Notes to *Native Plants* and articles on *Grevilleas* and

*Crowea saligna*; Ted Duncan wrote about Mallees and North Coast plants; Ted de Brabander on plant labelling and *Eucalypts*; Brian Snape on *Eucalypts* from cuttings; Mrs F M Officer on Bottle trees (*Brachychiton rupestre*) and Alan Nielsen on *Melaleucas* (notes of a talk to a Region meeting). Mrs P Mills contributed a report of the Group's Waratah Park visit, and Lorna Heap commented on Pea Flowers. Joyce Ward and Violet Murray received honourable mention for their Spring Exhibition (Joyce was also Show Secretary), Mrs Heap for her specimen of *Verticordia huegelii* and Alan Nielsen for a talk to St Phillip's Garden Club, Eastwood. He also featured anonymously in an item called 'Adding Insult to Injury'. Phil Leak remained 'Australian Plants' Publicity Officer and a Pat Stanley article on small *Grevilleas* appeared in that journal.

## 1967

The Group year opened with the first meeting at Willow Park, successful despite our having been issued with an incorrect key, and followed the established pattern of Election of Officers and Swaps. The elected officials were "the same crew as last year", with, in addition, a committee formed of no less than 10 notables to assist them. The Group was indeed in many good hands. Perhaps it was at this meeting that Ted de Brabander recalled a well-meaning member tabling a fine specimen of *Pavonia hastata* as a swap. As the Swap organiser and plant recipient, Ted Duncan's vocal response was muted, but his facial expression remained clear in Ted de Brabander's memory more than a quarter of a century later. The listing of *Pavonia hastata* in the Seed Bank as recently as 1993 might elicit a comparable response. Plant description was led by Ted Duncan and John Wrigley.

The Group's annual outing to Waratah Park constituted the March meeting. Persistent rain affected attendance and hampered activities. Nevertheless, the occupants of more than 20 vehicles took part in a guided walk, conducted by Frank Stone. *Lechenaultias* were growing in raised beds, with *L. biloba* prospering but *L. formosa* not doing well, Flannel flowers (*Actinotus helianthi*) flourishing and Kangaroo Paws (*Anigozanthos* ssp) looking quite happy far from home. Other plants worthy of note were *Pultenaea flexilis*, *Boronia microphylla*, *Tetratea thymifolia*, *Stylidium graminifolium* and a colony of pure blue mushrooms with caps almost 3" (7 cm) in diameter. While the East Hills Group's *Acacia* plantation was developing well, the North Shore's *Proteaceae* section was poor in compari-



son. It was hoped it would be helped along by the afternoon's additional plantings.

In other news Joyce Ward reported she had attended the inaugural meeting of the Northside Festival of Arts Committee and that our Group was to be given space at the Festival's floral section, In August, at St John's Hall, Gordon.

Max Hewett was Guest Speaker at the April meeting held at Willow Park. He spoke on aspects of his recent Western Australian trip, with special reference to plants likely to succeed in the North Shore and North-West Sydney regions. His talk was illustrated with slides taken on his trip. This was the last meeting attended by John and Marcia Wrigley, and provided an opportunity for members to farewell them.

The Secretary provided a KWG newsletter for April-May included here:

*A new phase in the management of the KWG has begun with the appointment of a ranger, Mr James Shawyer. This appointment fulfils a long felt need - the necessity of having a man on the spot with a thorough knowledge of the locality. Mr Shawyer is well versed in horticultural ways, having been with Arthur Yates & Co Pty Ltd for many years.*

*It is expected that tenders will be called for the construction of the Amenities Block and the Ranger's cottage very soon. A clearing has been made for this cottage on the elevation above the Amenities Block, with a magnificent view of almost the whole area.*

*It will be recalled that the track leading to the Knoll from Mona Vale Road, is a fire trail. This trail continued beyond the Knoll in a northerly direction and ended at a great rocky rampart. Within the last few weeks the Outer Sydney Bushfire Committee has continued this track, which now runs parallel to this rocky projection until it is opportune to swing around and return along this ridge to a point near the official entrance gates. The extension of this fire trail opens up some fine reserves of the natural flora. Along the lower section are to be seen *Boronias* and *Croweas* (in flower at present), and growing plentifully; while along the ridge, *Eriostemon lanceolatus*, *Wedding Bush* and *Flannel flowers* are just as numerous. Mr Shawyer advises anyone walking this trail to start at the entrance gates, thus descending most of the way. Having walked it the other way we heartily endorse Mr Shawyer's advice.*

*In the last "News" we referred to the Banksian Garden, between the Knoll and the Ranger's cottage. This area is to be left in its natural state, with paths winding through it. Since then a party of Apexians have cleared*

*paths through this area, and like the other paths and tracks, these have revealed the hidden beauty of rock and plant life.*

*Those who saw *Rhododendron lochae* in flower recently, in the fernhouse, could not but be impressed with the beauty of the flowers of this sole Australian rhododendron. This plant was a gift from Mr Charles Taylor, Federal President of SGAP. Many other gifts of plants, ferns, etc. are in the fernhouse and throughout the garden. *Rhododendron lochae* is typical of a fast-vanishing flora. This plant is found only in a very restricted area in Queensland and could easily have been destroyed by indiscriminate grazing and shared the fate of *Grevillea williamsonii*, once found in the Grampians. Another plant now growing in the Garden is *Grevillea shiressii*. In its natural habitat (the Hawkesbury River area) there would be possibly no more than a dozen plants. Still closer to home is a very specialised colony of *Boronia bakeriana*, at Barra Brui, St Ives. Previous to this finding, *B bakeriana* was thought to be confined to the Blue Mountains. Maybe this is a distinct form... time will tell, for by good fortune some cuttings were taken and slowly, so slowly, have rooted. And what of the original few plants? They have vanished with the spread of building in this once remote area. This then is one of the reasons for the establishment of the Kur-ring-gai Wildflower Garden: to preserve for posterity the floral beauty we still have.*

*Apart from the fernhouse, perhaps the greatest introduction of plants has been on and around the Knoll. *Boronia serrulata* continues to flourish on the shaded southern side, and no plants seen in the bush - very rare indeed - have the great lush experience of these introductions. Now, on the northern side of the great rock, exposed to the full strength of the sun, some of the best of our flora have been planted: the Warrumbungle Mint Bush (*Prostanthera nivea*), *Grevillea insignis*, *Hibiscus huegelii*, and others. While it is expected that these shrubs will attract attention, care has been taken not to lose sight of the magnificent rock feature. These shrubs have been planted in built-up terraces, for the Knoll is almost solid rock, and for the most part the soil around the Knoll is fairly shallow. Along the extended fire trail mentioned above, the situation is quite different, and soil of considerable depth is found below the rocky ridge. A *Waratah* growing here, not far from the end of the track, measures about 14 feet in height. The vigour of this shrub is only equalled in Mr George Brand's *Firewheel tree*.*

*On account of the rocky nature of the whole area, little is known of the Garden, apart from the section close to the Knoll, and down in Tree Fern Gully. It is known though, that by following the rocky ridge in a northerly direction, and descending almost 500 feet, one comes to*



the confluence of 3 streams. One is from the Showground area, one from Tree Fern Gully, and the other from the west. Within the last week Mr Shawyer, in following this westerly stream, came to a waterfall about 30 feet high, in a series of falls. We will hear more about this later on - meantime we can speculate on what else may be found in this remarkable locality. And perhaps we can be thankful that the Garden is so inaccessible, otherwise the *Angophoras* in the gullies, with their purple-brown trunks, and the Lyrebirds scratching in the knee-deep leaf mould would not give the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden the completeness that it undoubtedly has.

In May, the Group visited Kurnell and Cape Solander, led very ably by Dr & Mrs Bartholomew. This outing had special significance in that it took place at the time of year when Cook, Banks, Solander *et al* arrived in Botany Bay. The 35 members visited the monument and stood on the rock said to have been Isaac Smith's landing place. After inspecting local flora, the Group moved to Cape Solander, stopping at interesting sites en route. Plants observed included *Baeckea crenulata*, a *Scaevola*, *Eriostemon buxifolius*, *Cryptandra amara*, *Hemigenia purpurea*, *Bossiaea heterophylla*, *Epacris longiflora* and *E. microphylla*, *Darwinia fascicularis*, *Banksias* (perhaps *B. ericifolia*, the best), *Hakea gibbosa*, *Persoonias*, *Philothea australis* and *Hibbertia volubilis*. This was an interesting tally given that we know from Banks' journal that 94 specimens were collected here.

Joyce Ward, responsible for the Group display at the Northside Festival of Arts sought, via the newsletter, collections of *Helichrysum bracteatum* for a massed display.

In June, at Willow Park, the Group welcomed Don Sands, a former secretary of the NSW SGAP Region and previous visitor to the Group. Don's topic was *Boronias* and he concentrated on the NSW species, illustrating his talk with slides of and foliage specimens from his Newport garden. Don covered propagation and mentioned some apparently lost species, *Boronia deanii* from Fitzroy Falls, *B. bakeriana* from St Ives, or rare species - *B. ruppii*, a Gosford form of *B. pinnata*. Don indicated he still had *Dryandra polycephala* growing and flowering, *Banksia coccinea* several feet high but not yet in flower, Sturt's Desert Pea (*Swainsona formosus*) and *Lechenaultia biloba* "growing like a weed." Don Dove projected the slides, including some his own featuring Warrumbungle scenery.

The Newsletter also noted the sudden departure of Brian and Diana Snape for Melbourne, occasioned by

Brian's employment. They were not lost to SGAP however. Diana developed her interest in garden design, wrote a book (*Australian Native Gardens: Putting visions into Practice*) and used her research to found and resource the Garden Design Study Group in 1993. Brian and Diana were in Sydney for the 1993 ASGAP Conference. The interest in Australian plants developed during their valuable contributions as NSG members was obviously well maintained.

A programmed July outing to Cowan became a visit to the Royal Botanic Gardens, courtesy of Colin Slade, a staff member. Although his day off duty, Colin kindly escorted Group members around the Gardens, allowing us to include areas not regularly seen by the general public. All that with informed commentary as a bonus.

In 1967 features of the Botanic Gardens were the Giant Fig (*Ficus* sp), *Casuarinas*, *Eucalypts*, a fine Firewheel Tree (*Stenocarpus sinuatus*), *Hakea constablei*, *Grevillea punicea (speciosa)*, *Kennedia prostrata* and *Sollya*. Colin pointed out where Australia's first wheat was grown and led us through the fernery and glasshouses. The fernery contained *Microstrobos fitzgeraldii*, a Blue Mountains native conifer growing to about 2-3 feet (60-90 cm). Unfortunately this outing resulted in a rare blot on the Group's escutcheon. A female member removed a leaf from a foliage plant usually propagated by leaf cutting, resulting in Colin Slade's righteous and extreme indignation. Nevertheless, a plant of *Microstrobos fitzgeraldii*, Colin's gift to the Group as a souvenir of the visit, flourished in 1994 at the KWG.

In the 1960's officers of relevant Government Departments were most protective of their charges, flora and fauna, even to some obsessively so. The power of the Law and Regulations were often quoted forcibly. Ted de Brabander recalled a Region meeting where Colin Slade, as sometime Plant Description presenter, laid frequent and heavy stress on the protected nature of several of the benched plants. Unable to contain himself, Ross Doig declared forcefully his belief in the SGAP policy of 'preservation through propagation' and his practice of taking cutting material wherever and whenever appropriate, since a sudden bushfire could take fatal toll of an endangered species. Some leopards do, indeed never change their spots, and in justification of this approach, the situation of *Grevillea caleyi* on the Mona Vale Road area during the January 1994 Sydney bushfires was very relevant.

The newsletter also drew attention to Joyce Ward's request for assistance at the August 18th SGAP display in the St John's Hall, Gordon, as part of the Northside Festival of Arts.



Stony Range Reserve was the venue for the August meeting. Identification problems prompted the Secretary to record a need to consider distinctive badges for members. Floral features of the Reserve included *Eriostemon lanceolatus* (now *australasius*), *E. buxifolia*, *Boronia ledifolia* (one plant at least 30 years old), *B. serrulata* and the much photographed clumps of *Dendrobium speciosum*.

In the Newsletter the Secretary congratulated Joyce Ward and her helpers on the great success of the Group's input to the Northside Festival of Arts. Pat Stanley recalled that plant sales money reached significant proportions. The temporary custodian, Violet Murray, sent the package for security via her husband, Ray, to be deposited in a local bank's night safe. Ray took Pat Stanley (in clerical garb) with him as offside/bodyguard. The money was deposited but the night safe would not initially close despite the expenditure of significant effort. As Ray Murray told the story, all that saved him from acute embarrassment was the obviously respectable presence of a clerical gentleman, so that a desire to deposit and not withdraw illegally would be evident! There was also a note indicating Geoff Edwards' proposal to form a Bush Explorers Group "for active people who are prepared to camp out or sleep out in their cars."

The September meeting was a Garden Inspection outing, re-visiting the Doigs at Turramurra (soil improvement a feature), the Leaks at Wahroonga (*Brachysema aphyllum*, *Grevillea thelemanniana* notable plants), and the Duncans, also at Wahroonga, and featuring *Grevillea ericifolia*, *Lechenaultia laricina* and Ted's Australian orchid collection.

An excursion to the Lower Blue Mountains was scheduled for October to be led by Alan Nielsen.

In November Bill Allen spoke to the Group meeting on the study of Kangaroo Paws (*Anigozanthos* spp) in W.A. Illustrated by a superb set of colour slides, the cultivation of these plants was covered fully, with the most interesting feature of Bill's talk being the growing of Kangaroo Paws from seed using applied heat in the form of burning rubbish.

A Newsletter note indicated the KWG would open in 1967 on a restricted basis, while the Secretary who had been botanising around Tumbarumba and Canberra, reported on developments at the Canberra Botanic Gardens.

The December meeting was, as usual, the very successful Christmas party, with the Leaks, Mrs Officer, Geoff Edwards and the Wards making significant contributions

to that success.

NSG members appear prominently in the 1967 edition of 'Native Plants'. At the March Annual Meeting, John Wrigley was succeeded as Journal Editor by Ted Duncan, while a number of members received honourable mention for various contributions. Max Hewett's Plant Recording Notes listed *Conostylis involucrata*, *C. discolor*, *Dryandra pteridifolia*, *Eremaea beaufortoides*, *Hibbertia stellaris* (all grown by Ross Doig), *Darwinia nieldiana*, *D. taxifolia* var. *grandiflora*, *Grevillea dielsiana* (John Wrigley), *Eriostemon lanceolatus* (Phil Leak), *Scleranthus biflorus*, *Myoporum debile*, *M. humile* (Brian & Diana Snape), *Eucalyptus macrocarpa* (Bill Cook) and *Dryandra formosa* (Alan Nielsen's "quick kill" method of cultivation).

Ross Doig's Region talk on 'How to Grow *Hakeas*' was reported fully in 'Native Plants' as were his notes on "Other *Myrtaceae*" and his participation as a Panel of Experts member. The Region President's Report incorporated the farewell to John Wrigley and recorded his award of the first Honorary Life Membership of the NSW Region of NSW. The Report also mentioned the contributions of Joyce Ward, Violet Murray and Joan Doney as retiring Minutes Secretary. John Wrigley provided the Newsletter Editor's Report, giving honourable mention to Pat Stanley and Brian & Diana Snape, and from Canberra provided an interesting article on the Bird Lime Tree (*Heimerliodendron brunonianum*).

The 1966 Garden Competition Report, published in the 1967 *Native Plants* included the gardens of Lee & Ethel Wyatt, John Wrigley and Ted de Brabander, while Pat Stanley contributed a KWG Report, Group notes and an article on *Boronia bakeriana*. Geoff Edwards began his 'Comments on the Seed List' contributions in the November edition, an on-going feature until March 1971.

*Australian Plants* in 1967 also had a touch of NSG. Phil Leak was again Assistant to the Managing Editor and Advertising & Sales Representative for NSW, while Ross Doig featured in the December issue, writing on *Kennedia*, *Marianthus* and *Sollya fuciformis* (syn. *S. heterophylla*).

To Ted de Brabander, the years of his NSG Presidency were indeed the "good old days". Ted likened the Group at that time to a happy and harmonious family organisation, even with membership reaching over 100 for the first time, and one night meeting attendance totalling 78. Ted was full of praise for his Group officers; led by Pat Stanley, for whom he felt no commendation was too great, and also for the many willing helpers who made his leadership task an enjoyable and rewarding one.



## THE YEARS 1968 & 1969



1968

The NSG list of office bearers had a new look. The incoming President was Geoff Edwards, who had completed 3 years as Group Delegate. The new Secretary was Joyce Ward, replacing Pat Stanley who had held the position for 4 years. Joyce had been Region Show Secretary, local Flower Festival organiser and a regular helper in Group projects and endeavours. 1968 was the first of Joyce's 13 consecutive years as NSG Secretary and Newsletter Editor, far and away the most significant tenure of office in the Group's history. Alan Nielsen remained as Treasurer, while former President, Geoff Bush, became Delegate. In 1968 the Group subscription was raised to \$1.00.

The 1968 program opened with the traditional February Annual General Meeting and Swap night, the venue for night business meetings being as for 1967 and thereafter, i.e. the Willow Park Community Centre. In her first NSG newsletter, Joyce Ward entrenched her unique style of writing, a trademark for many years to come. Of the retiring Secretary, Pat Stanley, she wrote, in part:

"...we wish him success in his ramblings both in written articles he hopes to pursue and in the Wildflower Garden, planting his delightful gems."

The March meeting was the annual outing to Waratah Park, a working bee this time, to prepare for its incorporation, together with 500 acres of Crown Land, into the Blue Mountains National Park. The workers came from a number of SGAP groups and as they laboured, were able to appreciate *Boronia floribunda*, *B. serrulata*, *Lechenaultia biloba*, *Telopea speciosissima*, *Actinotus helianthi* and plantings of *Grevilleas*, *Acacias* and *Eucalypts*. All these against a background of *Pultenaea scabra*, *Indigofera australis*, and *Tetratheca thymifolia* topped by Mountain Gums (*Eucalyptus dalrympleana?*).

The April meeting at Willow Park featured a showing of slides belonging to Mrs Daniell of Esperance, W.A. with commentary by Pat Stanley. Mrs Daniell, from a grazing property out from Esperance, had corresponded with Pat for some time and sent him cutting material. The depiction of local flora, the slide quality and the knowledgeable commentary made for a high quality evening.

Storm clouds and constant rain marred the May meeting, an all-day outing to Parry's *Floralands* Nursery at Kariong. Only the President and 5 ladies braved the elements. The weather made inspection of the large nursery area difficult and unpleasant. Nevertheless, *Eriostemon myoporoides*, *Crowea saligna*, *Hibiscus sp* and the Parry's splendid *Lechenaultia* collection were admired through the rain.

At the June Willow Park meeting, John Teulon, Swane's Nursery chief propagator, spoke on some of the techniques used in a big commercial nursery to produce healthy container-grown plants. Ted Duncan's report of the talk indicated Swane's major reliance on propagation from cuttings to ensure uniformity of growth, habit and colour. The preparation and treatment of cutting material was dealt with in a comprehensive way and included a number of pointers for our small scale Australian plant cultivation. Nine inch high (23cm) Waratahs in bud and ready to flower were real eye catchers.

During 1968 the group introduced the practice of rewarding the best benched flower with a free choice from the Sales Table. The Newsletters also featured a reminder of the September Wildflower Exhibition at Gordon and the needs for member input.

The June Newsletter contained reminders of the forthcoming Photographic and Garden Competitions.

In July at Willow Park Group member, Joan Doney, talked about and demonstrated the art of propagation from cuttings for the home gardener. Joan covered the taking of cuttings, their preparation and hormone treatment. Demonstrations involved individual members and material brought by them. Despite a cold night and petrol restrictions, the meeting was well attended.

The August Newsletter recorded the death of Frank Stone, donor of Waratah Park. In August the Group once more visited Katandra Bushland Sanctuary, a gift to the community by Harold Seymour. The 25 acre (10 ha) area contains a diverse flora in varied habitats. In evidence were *Boronia mollis*, *B. thujona*, *Prostanthera denticulata*, *Epacris longiflora*, *Acacia oxycedrus*, *Ceratopetalum gummiferum*, *Actinotus helianthi* and several orchid species.





In the absence of a report on a September meeting, the October Newsletter reported fully on the Wildflower Exhibition at Gordon. The Exhibition was very successful in terms of both presentation and financial return. This was the first occasion on which the Flower Club of NSW presented flower arrangements using wildflowers at a Group exhibition. Comment in the report covered flowers (including orchids) and ferns against a background of *Banksia serrata*. The supply of interstate flowers at the Exhibition proved to be an embarrassment of riches, with Queensland (orchids), Tasmania (*Eucalyptus globulus*, *Elaeocarpus cyaneus*), Western Australia (*Macropedia*, *Kochia*, *Ptilotus*) and the Northern Territory (*Alstonia constricta*, *Cycas*, *Verticordias* and *Quandongs*) outstanding. Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales were also well represented. The State Emblems were a special feature. The Official Opening of the Exhibition featured Jenny Bush presenting Mrs Davis (President of the Garden Club of Australia) with a floral bouquet.

The October meeting was scheduled originally as an outing. However, this proposal was changed to three visits to established gardens at Pennant Hills (Brian Baker), Mt Ku-ring-gai (Max Hewett) and Mt Colah (Lindsay Sweeney). Brian's garden featured *Grevilleas*, *Eucalypts*, *Hakeas*, *Acacias*, *Phebalium* and many ground covers. A large *Lechenaultias biloba* was a photographic focal point, as was a *Swainsona galegifolia* in full flower. A new section featuring alpine species added much interest in Max Hewett's garden, in an area bright with *Prostantheras*, *Anigozanthos*, *Callistemons* and *Scaevola aemula*. Other noteworthy plants were *Boronias*, *Olearia*, *Hardenbergia*, an immense *Pimelia ferruginea*, *Melaleuca fulgens* and heavily pruned *Ceratopetalum gummiferum* putting out riotous growth. Lindsay Sweeney's garden was highlighted by a 5 foot (1.5m) specimen of *Dryandra sessilis* in full flower and a *Correa reflexa* tangled about a 4 ft (1.2m) *Boronia muelleri* and an *Eriostemon hispidulus*. *Thryptomenes*, *Prostantheras*, *Grevilleas*, Christmas Bush and orchids (*Dendrobium* spp) in a natural rock formation made a pleasing perspective, while a white *Boronia floribunda* took pride of place at the back door.

Project projector had been launched, with funding to be assisted from Plant Sales.

At the November Willow Park meeting John English was Guest Speaker, his topic "Rockeries and Pools". John constructed an imaginary rockery and waterfall for his audience. The plants to be kept in mind for appropriate settings included *Boronia serrulata*, *Correas*, *Acacia fimbriata*, *Hardenbergia violacea*, *Kennedias*, *Sollya*, *Scaevolae*, other *Boronias*, *Dampieras*, *Lechenaultias*,

*Anigozanthos*, *Thysanotus*, Tree Ferns, Terrestrial Orchids and practically any of the heath plants. For the outskirts, *Grevilleas*, *Hakeas* and *Prostantheras* could provide shade and protection.

Phil Maloney brought in some interesting ground cover plants, also suitable as rockery subjects. They included *Disphyma australe* (now *clavellatum*) and *D. crassifolia*, *Lotus corniculatus* and *Wahlenbergia*.

A pleasant December meeting and Christmas Party at Willow Park was well attended, assisted by the efforts of numerous members and overall much enjoyed. The Newsletter recorded special thanks to Colin Slade (a performer on 'New Faces') who delivered an entertaining recitation of 'Young Albert & the Lion' (Parts 1 and 2). Screening of films, including 'Menura' added to the entertainment.

As to the written record of Region thoughts and activities 'Native Plants' featured input from a number of NSG members. Ted Duncan continued as 'Native Plants' Editor, Phil Leak as Publicity Officer and Joyce Ward as Show Secretary. January's 'Native Plants' contained Mrs F M Officer's comments on *Acacia pycnantha*. Reference was also made to Geoff Edwards' leadership of the Fern Group. The March edition contained an editorial on 'Fire - Friend or Foe', comment from Mrs P N Mills on *Eucalyptus luehmannii* and Geoff Edwards on the Seed List. Notes from the March 1968 General Meeting discussion on Ground Cover Plants featured in the May 'Native Plants'. The notes were provided by Ted Duncan who, with Geoff Edwards, had led the discussion. The Editor's Report for the Annual Meeting gave honourable mention to Pat Stanley and other NSG members for their assistance in packing the Newsletter. Geoff Edwards 'Comments on the Seed List' was now a firmly established Newsletter segment.

The July 'Native Plants' gave notice of the 1968 Wildflower Exhibition and the Show Secretary's role therein. Mrs K R Makinson wrote on 'Yeast and Native Plants', Ted Duncan was present at a discussion on Restoration of Mineral Sand Mining Areas at the offices of Mineral Deposits Pty Ltd., and was co-author of the subsequently published report on the discussion.

NSG members were prominent in the pages of the September 'Native Plants' with John Wrigley returning to speak on the Canberra Botanic Gardens, with subsequent report. Joyce Ward publicising the 1968 Wildflower Exhibition and Mrs Makinson providing further information on 'Yeast and Native Plants'. The death in July of Frank Stone was recorded. Pat Stanley



provided 'Some notes on wildflowers from the Australian Encyclopaedia and the Journal of Sir Joseph Banks', while Mrs P Mills wrote on *Abutilon auritum*.

The November issue of *Native Plants* reported on the Wildflower Exhibition in September in Gordon, thanking Joyce Ward and her helpers for their efforts. The results of the 1968 Garden Competition included Whole of Garden: Novice - Ros Lambie of Castlecrag, and Part Garden: 2nd - Violet Murray of East Killara. It was noteworthy that the 1968 judges were Mr Bob Bruce and Mr George Brand of the Ku-ring-gai Council Parks & Gardens Dept. Geoff Edwards was one of three judges of the Selected Species Culture Competition. Violet Murray won the *Verticordia plumosa* section. Geoff's 'Comments on the Seed List' had reached the letter 'C'. Inez Armitage wrote on *Boronia pinnata*.

Pat Stanley's *News from Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden* brought developments up-to-date and included the official opening and the disastrous bushfire of 26<sup>th</sup> November. The official opening of the KWG was a momentous occasion for Foundation Members of the NSG, Aldermen of Ku-ring-gai Council, Council staff and guests. Apart from the importance of the official opening it was a major event and social gathering with the Governor, Sir Roden Cutler and his wife mingling with and conversing freely with those present. The full text of the report follows: [p.5, Vol.4, No 7 on Jan. 1969]

### **News from Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden**

*The Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden was officially opened by His Excellency the Governor of New South Wales, Sir Roden Cutler on October 4<sup>th</sup> 1968. At the same time he unveiled a plaque commemorating the outstanding contribution of Alderman Nicol to this project.*

*The Ku-ring-gai Municipal Council has the sole control of the Wildflower Garden, and this body should have the gratitude of all who are genuinely interested in the preservation of our flora. Isolated, but stern criticism has been levelled at the Council from time to time in regard to expenditure related to this Garden. It is to the credit therefore of the Council that, in spite of this criticism, they have brought this Wildflower Garden, and especially the various amenities, to the standard that was seen by thousands, on and about October 4<sup>th</sup>, the opening day.*

*A brochure published by Council gives a very good account of the early history of the area, and outlines the steps taken to preserve it for the future. It includes also sections on the flora, fauna and geological features, found in the Garden.*

*On Thursday, November 28<sup>th</sup>, as is now well known, disaster befell the Wildflower Garden. A fire that had been burning to the north-west, and well outside the Garden, suddenly flared up, and with a strong wind behind it, overran the Garden within minutes. Thanks to valiant efforts of Council staff, firemen and others – including some Aldermen of Council, no building was damaged. It seems almost incredible to see the Ranger's cottage standing on its eminence in a wilderness of blackened sticks and trees. Down at the Amenities Block the lawns and shrubs are as green as ever, but only just so, to the edge of the lawns. Going on from here cross the parking area and down to the shadehouse is a scene of absolute desolation. The roadway, or pathway, wound through dense scrub previously; after the fire it is a nightmare scene: the blackened hills on either side, ahead, everywhere. It comes as a shock then when the road turns, near the shadehouse, to a broad expanse of green lawn with the unscathed group of waratahs in the centre. Some of the trees and shrubs on the perimeter of the lawn have escaped. Apart from some minor damage to the Sarlon roofing of the shadehouse, little damage was done, certainly less than the damage sustained by the severe winter frost this year. Strange as it may seem, a few days after the fire, birds were singing and feeding from the Kangaroo Paws at the foot of the Knoll. Among the calls could be heard the grey thrush, the New Holland honeater, the rufous whistler and the Koel cuckoo.*

*In less than a week, heavy saturating rain has fallen, and this should cause the regeneration of larger shrubs and trees. But with the smaller plants it will be regeneration by seed. It will be interesting, in view of Dr Jaede's letter (*Native Plants*, January 1967) to study the effect of the fire on the few known places where *Boronia serrulata* was growing. The plants on the Knoll have been wiped out, but these were too young to have dispersed seed. Committee members have replaced these however, and many other offers have been made to Council of plants and seeds.*

*This then is the picture of the Wildflower Garden at the beginning of December 1968. And what of the future? Referring again to the brochure mentioned, we find: 'The present Trustees and Committee, and those in the future, will continue to work to achieve the thoughts of the original founders: that the Garden be an invaluable heritage and a source of enjoyment to forthcoming generations.'*

In 1968 Phil Leak remained Assistant to the Managing Editor of 'Australian Plants' and Advertising & Sales Representative for NSW. Ross Doig wrote on 'Two Small Acacias' (*A. alata*, *A. decorata*), Pat Stanley on 'Toothbrush Grevilleas', Mrs P M Mills on *Stenocarpus sinuatus* and Mrs F M Officer on Bottle Trees (*Brachychiton* spp).



## THE YEARS 1969 to 1980



1969

The 1969 list of Office Bearers contained two changes from the previous year. Don Stitt replaced Alan Nielsen as Treasurer and Alan Ward became Delegate in place of Geoff Bush. They joined President Geoff Edwards and Secretary Joyce Ward. Group subscription remained \$1. A free choice from the Sales Table for the owner of the best cut flowers or potted plant continued to operate at Willow Park meetings. A Committee of 6 was elected to assist the Office Bearers.

The February meeting at Willow Park was the Annual General Meeting at which the members listed above were elected to their respective offices, followed by the traditional Swap night. The Newsletter report also mentioned Mrs Officer's correspondence with Mrs G Jackson of Kingscote, S.A. (Kangaroo Island) re an exchange of cutting material. The Newsletter reported a successful meeting of fern Group at Colin Slade's home in the Botanic Gardens.

A Working Bee at the KWG constituted the March meeting, resulting in the feeling that much was achieved. Ku-ring-gai Council also allocated areas for the Group to plant and foster as an aid to the rehabilitation of the fire-ravaged Garden. The Group proposed working groups meet at the Garden on the last Saturday of each month.

Vincent Serventy was Guest Speaker at the April meeting at Willow Park. A prominent conservationist, Vincent's theme was 'Continent in Danger' exploring issues related to preservation, development, tourism and education. The thought-provoking discussion was illustrated by quality slides.

In May the Group held a field day with Newcastle Group, exploring north of Peat's Ridge in an area where there had been good regrowth after bushfires. Newcastle's Don McNair and Dr Gordon Cousins led members through bushland regenerating rapidly. Attention was attracted by terrestrial orchids (*Pterostylis nutans*, *Caladenia carnea*), patches of *Lobelia gracilis* and *Droseras*. Also prominent among the *Angophoras* were *Boronia fraseri*, *B. pinnata* (mature plants and seedlings), *Styphelia laeta*, *Ricinocarpos*, *Gompholobium latifolium* and *Grevillea capitellata*, while *Tetratheca ericifolia* edged the pathways.

The Group was back at Willow Park for the June meeting, a Slide Night managed by Don Dove. The slides covered plants from Western Australia to the Australian Alps to Queensland and the Northern Territory, and also included many flourishing in members' gardens.

The July Newsletter gave notice of the Garden Competition and reported Working Bee progress at the KWG, with Phil Maloney of Glenorie, Pat Stanley and Ted de Brabander receiving specific honourable mention.

The July Willow Park meeting welcomed back John Wrigley, Curator of the Canberra Botanic Gardens, as Guest Speaker. John's talk, illustrated by slides, covered the landscaping of the surrounds of Australia's Exhibition Hall at Osaka, Japan in preparation for Expo '70, and the on-site establishment of plants. In a dramatic change of scene, John then took members to Western Australia to collect cutting material, with particular reference to potential as rockery plants. *Anigozanthos*, *Calytrix*, *Dampiera* and *Ptilotus* featured.

August's Newsletter recorded a suggestion for the establishment of a Group Library, with discussion of the project scheduled for the September meeting. Ted de Brabander and Don Dove were elected to register available cutting material and to arrange its distribution. The Newsletter also contained an appeal for helpers to assist in the organisation and mounting of the September Wildflower Exhibition at Gordon.

In August the Group's meeting was an excursion to Bowen Creek (Mt Irvine area), with all SGAP members invited. There was a good attendance, including a teacher and students from Windsor Primary School, on a clear warm day. The outing, beginning at Bilpin, took in a sharp downhill progression to Bowen Creek and featured *Leptospermum lanigerum* var. *macrocarpum* (large yellow flowers), *Prostanthera lasianthos* overshadowed by Coachwoods and White Cedars (*Ceratopetalum apetalum* and *Melia azedarach* var. *australasica*) and ferns. *Ranunculus glabrifolius* was abundant on the climb to Mt Wilson. The walk was highlighted by the Cathedral of Ferns, *Polystichum proliferum* predominating, while lichens were well in evidence under the cover of large *Eucalypts* and Tree Ferns. Moving into more open country, *Acacia botrycephala* (*A. terminalis*), *Boronia microphylla*,



*Prostanthera caerulea* and *Grevillea laurifolia* attracted mention. On the Mt Banks road, *Eriostemon obovalis* was a significant heathland component.

The September Newsletter included requests for assistance at the Wildflower Exhibition and KWG Working Bee, for advice on cutting material requirements to Don Dove and for more Garden Competition entrants (12 listed so far).

The September Wildflower Exhibition at Gordon was again a great success, with over 800 specimen flowers from all States named and displayed. Ferns and orchids were a highlight as were the floral arrangements by the Flower Club of NSW. Dorothy Hasluck, Mrs Bellamy, Susan Heins, Ruth Milton and Mrs F M Officer received special mention for services rendered.

A Field Excursion to Heathcote Creek and the Heathcote Primitive Area was also conducted in September. In the Creek area, *Eriostemon scaber*, *Pseudanthus pimelioides* and an unidentified *Grevillea* (*G. capitalata* complex) were of great interest. In the varied and numerous heathland segments of the Primitive Area was another *Grevillea* (possibly *G. sphacelata*), *Pultenaea* spp., *Eriostemon lanceolatus* (*australasius*) and *E. scaber*, *Dampiera* spp, terrestrial orchids, *Boronia serrulata*, *Calytrix*, *Philothea*, *Lambertia*, *Ricinocarpos* and *Darwinia*.

Floral contributions to Interstate Wildflower Exhibitions in Melbourne, Perth and Albany (W.A.) received October Newsletter mention. The Newsletter also recorded the death of Ray Murray. It also made reference to 'the three lonely ladies' constituting the September KWG Working Bee.

The 1969 NSG Garden Competition results showed the winners as Ted Duncan (Open), Violet Murray (Part), Joyce Ward (Novice Part) and Geoff Edwards (Plot).

November was the month for the regular garden visits. The first was to the Hurstville garden of Frank and Jean Hatfield, winners of the 1969 Garden Competition (Open Section). The Group visitors saw about 20 different *Eucalypts*, advanced Christmas Bushes, *Acacias*, *Boronias*, *Hibbertias*, *Dampieras*, *Prostantheras*, *Thomasia petalocalyx*, *Brachycome multifida* and many more charming ground covers.

The Group then moved on to Bankstown Municipal Council's Yerambi Native Garden for an inspection arranged by Eric Packer. On display were *Boronias*, *Leptospermums*, Waratahs, Kangaroo Paws, *Hibbertia scandens* and the unusual yellow *Anthocercis littorea*.

A combination of new plantings and areas of natural bushland attracted much comment. The latter featured masses of *Eriostemon scaber*, *E. lanceolatus* (*australasius*), *Ricinocarpos pinifolius*, *Actinotus*, *Banksias*, *Casuarinas*, rainforest trees (including *Elaeocarpus cyaneus* (= *reticulatus*), ferns and staghorns, terrestrial and epiphytic orchids.

The November Newsletter noted an October trip to the National Botanic Gardens in Canberra, organised by North Shore's Wal Knowles. 60 SGAP members were welcomed by John Wrigley and enjoyed two sessions in the Gardens.

It was back to Willow Park for the November meeting where Guest Speaker, Thistle Stead, spoke on the Alpine Flora of Tasmania and NSW Southern Alps. Mrs Stead's slides set the spectacular background scenes for the flora. On view were *Ranunculus*, *Stackhousia pulvinaris*, *Celmisia longifolia* (Silver Snow Daisy), *Helichrysums* (Paper Daisies) and *Euphrasias*. Mossy areas were home to *Richea continentis*, *Epacris paludosa* and *Gentiana diemensis*, *Craspedia uniflora* (Billy Buttons, = *C. glauca*) and *Podocarpus lawrencei* (Mountain Plum Pine). The flora of the lower gullies and protected high altitude basins included rainforest trees and shrubs, typical being *Eucalyptus niphophila* (sub-species of *E. pauciflora*).

The Newsletter for December recorded interest in cutting material from the November meeting and foreshadowed attention to this aspect of propagation in 1970. A further record indicated formation of a Library Committee (Geoff Bush, Wal Knowles) to investigate the possibility of establishing and operating a Group library. Sales of Society Name Badges were to be undertaken.

A successful Christmas Party was again the form taken by the December meeting at Willow Park, Mabel Cook receiving special mention for her 'sparkling beverage'.

The pages of *Native Plants* during 1969 continued to feature contributions by NSG members to the NSW Region of SGAP. Ted Duncan continued to edit '*Native Plants*' for the first 3 issues in 1969, while Phil Leak continued as Publicity Officer, Joyce Ward as Show Secretary and Max Hewett as Plant Recording Officer, with Geoff Edwards elected as Program Committee Convenor.

In January 1969 *Native Plants* reported the November 1968 Region meeting discussion on 'Native Gardening on Heavy Soil' led by Geoff Edwards, Max Hewett and Ted Duncan. Also Violet V Murray featured in the



1968 Selected Species Culture Competition winners list with her *Verticordia plumosa*. Ted Duncan appealed for 'Native Plants' copy and the 1968 Garden Competition Judges' (KMC's Bob Bruce and George Brand) Report made favourable mention of the gardens of Ros Lambie and Violet Murray. Inez Armitage wrote on the propagation and cultivation of *Acacia drummondii* at her Duffy's Forest property, and Geoff Edwards' wife, recorded her post-bushfire KWG impressions.

*Native Plants* for March mentioned John Wrigley's involvement at Expo '70 in Osaka, Japan and Mrs Officer's comments on *Acacia pycnantha* and *A. decurrens* also appeared. Also featured were Inez Armitage's experiences in growing *Native Plants from Seed*. A report of John Wrigley's March talk to Region was included in the May *Native Plants*, together with honourable mention of Show Secretary, Joyce Ward, in the Region President's report. Mrs Officer wrote on *Brachychiton australe*. John Wrigley's article on 'Ground Covers' appeared in the July issue of 'Native Plants'. In its September issue 'Native Plants' included further comments from Mrs K R Makinson on 'Yeast and Native Plants.' The November 'Native Plants' included Joyce Ward's report on the Wildflowers of Australia Exhibition and noted the assistance of Ted Duncan and Alan Nielsen in a group discussion on the cultivation of plants and cut flowers on display at the September Region General Meeting.

The results of the 1969 Garden Competition at Region level contained the names of four NSG members - Ted Duncan (Open Garden Novice Prize); Alan and Joyce Ward (Part Garden Novice Prize); and Geoff Edwards (200 sq. ft Area 1<sup>st</sup> Prize). Ted Duncan also had the Best Specimen Plant at time of judging (*Boronia elatior*). The judges (KMC's Ron Burrows and George Brand) report, in addition to coverage of the winners' gardens, made special mention of Violet Murray's garden.

The pages of *Australian Plants* for 1969 show Phil Leak continuing as Assistant to the Managing Editor and NSW Advertising & Sales Representative. Ross Doig contributed articles on 'A Sand Bed' and 'Clay in Built-up Beds'.

#### GEOFF EDWARDS

Geoff Edwards was prominent with NSW SGAP from 1965 to 1976, with a last recorded NSG appearance in 1979. Geoff, a professional engineer by training and longtime employment, made a significant career change at the end of the 1960's, becoming a self-employed landscaper and nurseryman. This change eventually restricted his availability for NSW SGAP activities.

Geoff was NSG Delegate in 1965, 1966 and 1967, prior to his period as President. A Committee member in 1970, he was Vice-President in 1975 and 1976. In addition, Geoff was Information Group Leader in 1972 and a Guest Speaker on aspects of landscaping in 1972 and 1976.

In November 1967, Geoff Edwards' regular 'Comments on the Seed List' first appeared in *Native Plants*, continuing until March 1971. Geoff was a frequent participant in Region activities and his contributions included acting as discussion leader at Region meetings, as a Species Culture Judge (1968), and as Program Committee Convenor (1969). Geoff won the 1969 Garden Competition Section for 200 sq. ft part gardens.

In 1970 Geoff became Secretary of the NSW Region of SGAP, resigning in July 1971 due to pressure of business. He re-appeared as the 1972 Region Plant Steward.

Some of Geoff Edwards' specific interests were reflected in his attempt to form an SGAP Bush Explorers' Group and his association with the Fern Group. NSG members visited his Fern Houses at Glenhaven in March 1979. Then a Queensland resident for some years, Geoff attended the 1992 SGAP Conference at Armidale where, with Joyce Ward, NSG members enjoyed a talk over old times.



NSG President in 1970 was John Lee, with Joyce Ward, Don Stitt and Alan Ward continuing as Secretary, Treasurer and Delegate respectively. They were supported by a six person committee.

The 1970 Group Program scheduled 10 monthly meetings at Willow Park Hall, with September to feature the Captain Cook Bicentenary Exhibition of Wildflowers at St John's Hall, Gordon. Outdoor activities were to be additional and advised on a month to month basis, since 1969 attendances had not been good. The Group subscription remained at \$1. KWG Working Bees were set for 1.30 p.m. on the last Saturday of each month.

The February General Meeting considered the formation of a Group library following a report from Wal Knowles and Geoff Bush. Decision was deferred to a later date. Mrs Coutts offered to organise the supper supplies and Don Dove spoke on the cuttings service available for members. Plant sales and discussions were to be regular meeting aspects.

Harold Seymour was the Guest Speaker at the March meeting, his subject "Through the Centre". Per medium of his light-hearted commentary and his slides, Harold took the Group to Ayers Rock, the Olgas, the Western Macdonnell Range and Palm Valley. Indigenous plants featured included Ghost gums (*Eucalyptus papuana*), *Eremophila maculata*, *Ptilotus*, *Dononaea*, *Senecio*, *Cassia wilsonii*, *Rumex vesicaris*, *Clianthus formosus* (= *speciosus*), *Hibiscus*, *Swainsona*, *Rhagodia* and *Gossypium sturtianum* (Northern Territory floral emblem). The vicarious tour also included bird slides and returned via the Warrumbungles.

The April Newsletter congratulated Ted Duncan and Geoff Edwards on their election as NSW Region President and Secretary.

A panel discussion on propagation was the April Willow Park meeting's presentation. Panel members Ted Duncan, Geoff Edwards, Phil Maloney, Alan Nielsen and Alan Ward dealt with the range of propagation methods using seeds, cuttings and plant divisions. The discussion ranged across techniques, cultivation methods and labelling. In company with Sutherland Group members and led by Mr T Duncan, the Group enjoyed a visit to Kurnell Reserve and adjacent sand dunes. The varied floral communities encountered included dune plants, "hanging swamp" flora, salt-water plants and the entirely different heathland.

At the May Willow Park meeting, Max Hewett, the Region's Plant Recording Officer spoke on 'Soils in Relation to Growing Australian Plants.' Max stressed the need to understand the natural conditions from which the wildflowers originate, giving numerous examples from his own experience and also referring to Sid Cadwell's Annangrove nursery.

The June newsletter emphasised the need for more cutting material, flowers in season and plants for sale to be brought to meetings, the last being important with respect to recent purchases of a Duplicator and a cabinet for storage at Willow Park. The need for more Working Bee helpers at KWG was also signalled.

The June meeting at Willow Park was a members' slide evening showing in the capable hands of the Dons, Stitt and Dove. A dozen contributing members received newsletter mention, with slides featuring home garden specimens as well as recording trips through NSW, Tasmania, Kangaroo Island, S.A.'s Flinders Ranges and W.A. The newsletter also recorded a marvellous display of seasonal flowers at the meeting.

The July Newsletter highlighted coming attractions in addition to the regular July meeting, namely an August visit to Stony Range, the August meeting (Panel discussion of growing problems and cultivation techniques) and the September Wildflower Show (a Captain Cook Bi-Centenary Program feature).

Pat Stanley was Guest Speaker at the July meeting, his topic *Callistemons* and *Lechenaultias*. The slide illustrated *Callistemons* included *C. montanus*, varieties of *C. citrinus* and *C. pollandii*. Pat included some history in his introduction to *Lechenaultias*, proceeded to cultivation hints and incorporated slides of *L. formosa*, *L. biloba*, *L. laricina*, *L. superba*, *L. tubiflora*, *L. macrantha* and *L. chloranthes* into his presentation.

Information in the August Newsletter indicated the popularity of Don Dove's cutting material table at the Willow Park meetings, gave notice of an August visit by NSG to the Glenbrook Reserve at the invitation of the Blue Mountains Group and also advised a September excursion to the Canberra Botanic Garden Annexe at Jervis Bay (coach cost \$4.50 per person) organised by Wal Knowles. Seeds were to be made available at the August meeting and members were encouraged to visit Katandra Reserve.

In August, the Willow Park meeting featured a Panel discussion of Australian plant cultivation problems. Panel members were Ted Duncan, Ross Doig, John English and Phil Maloney, with Alan Nielsen as Chair-



man. The Panel considered pot cultivation, best planting times, planting methods, and cultivation problems (collar rot, chlorosis, viral infections, borers, scale insects, leaf curl). The growing requirements of *Waratahs* also received attention.

Activity in September was concentrated on the Wildflower Show, there being no meeting for that month and hence no September Newsletter.

The October Newsletter indicated programmed Garden Inspections on two Sundays. Two prize gardens were scheduled for the first day (Max Hewett, ?B Baker), with twelve gardens of members open on the second day. This Newsletter also recorded an approximate average meeting attendance over the year of 75.

As recorded in the November Newsletter, the October emphasis was on Garden Inspections, with great interest taken in the prize winning gardens and significant value evident in the inspection and related discussion associated with the visits to members' gardens.

A Newsletter note highlighted *Cassias*, indicating efforts to procure seeds of *C. sturtii*, *C. artemisioides*, *C. microphylla* and *C. schultzei*.

There was also a report of an excursion to Barren Grounds, organised by Illawarra Group and also attended by a small number of NSG members, headed by Wal Knowles. Significant flowerings in evidence included *Sowerbaea juncea*, *Boronia barkeriana* and *B. thujona*, *Epacris longiflora*, *Dampiera stricta*, *Melaleuca squarrosa*, *Isopogons*, *Blandfordias* and *Telopea speciosissima*.

The Newsletter for November contained information on the ongoing cutting project and an appeal for material, notice of the KWG Working Bee, a reminder of the Xmas Party and the expectation that members attending would make and wear hats representing Australian flowers, and an invitation to contribute constructive criticism, preferences and ideas to assist planning for the 1971 program.

Alec Blombery, author and Stony Range stalwart was November's Guest Speaker at Willow Park, his topic "Plant Habitat". Alec traversed Australia during his presentation, including geological development, related weather patterns and development and adaptation of our indigenous flora. Illustrated by slides, Alec's talk also included the capacity for Australian plants to harmonise with local landscapes, given availability of and control over an appropriate water supply.

December's Newsletter recorded completion of a built-up garden section at the KWG and the planting of some 40 plants.

The December meeting and Xmas Party was again a great success, notable features being Mabel Cook's Punch, Addie Lee's Xmas Cake, Inez Armitage's Game and the array of headgear constructed for the occasion. The Hat judges found flower identification not always easy, let alone deciding on winners among the many species depicted.

The list of new members to the Society contained in the January 1970 issue of '*Native Plants*' included Betty Batty and Mr & Mrs Jack Shaw who joined NSG in the previous year.

NSG members were again significant contributors in 1970 to SGAP at Region level. Office bearers included Ted Duncan (President), Geoff Edwards (Secretary), Phil Leak (Publicity Officer), Joyce Ward (Show Secretary) and Alan Nielsen (Plant Steward), while '*Native Plants*' records numerous other involvements.

Ted Duncan was a Garden Competition Judge with Ron Burrows, contributed three reports on 'The Scene in the Shade House' and reported on the Captain Cook Bi-Centenary Wildflowers of Australia Exhibition.

Geoff Edwards provided his regular 'Comments on the Seed List', completing one coverage of the full list (3 years, 18 issues of *Native Plants*), and was noted as contributing a major article to the June 1970 Australian Home Journal on growing Australian plants.

As Show Secretary, Joyce Ward was responsible principally for the Captain Cook Bi-Centenary Wildflowers of Australia Exhibition and subsequent report. As President, Ted Duncan acknowledged Joyce's contribution to the staging and success of the Exhibition. Joyce also provided a set of NSG notes, reporting on 1969 activities and an increased membership to 125 (approx.). Joyce's Garden Plot entry was placed Second in the 1970 Garden Competition.

Alan Ward featured in '*Native Plants*' as leader of the Boronia Study Group and in providing a Study Group Report. Max Hewett, Plant Recording Officer mentioned 5 NSG members in his report, Pat Stanley and Phil Maloney (an experiment with Nitrophoska), John and Marilyn Mason (*Hypocalymma robusta*) and Phil Leak (*Oreocallis wickhamii*). Pat Stanley also contributed plant notes on species less commonly found in gardens or rockeries (*Baeckea*, *Beaufortia*, *Boronia*, *Crowea*, *Grevillea*, *Hibbertia*, *Lechenaultia*) and 'News from the KWG'.



Geoff Bush's Garden Plot entry took 1st Prize in the 1970 Garden Competition, John Wrigley wrote on 'Rockery Plants for Canberra Gardens', Ros Lambie entered the 1970 Photographic Competition and also sought to correspond with country SGAP members, Wal Knowles reported on the October 1969 Canberra Botanic Gardens visits and the September 1970 Field Trip to the Jervis Bay Annex of Canberra Botanic Gardens and Ron Burrows, as a Judge, provided 'Some Comments on the 1970 SGAP Garden Competition'.

Apart from recording the Office Bearer roles of Ted Duncan, Geoff Edwards and Phil Leak in SGAP, the only NSG contributor to 'Australian Plants' in 1970 was John Wrigley (Life Member) with articles on 'Wildflowers for the Rockery', 'A Small Capillary Bed for Seed Germination' (Joint Author), 'A Killer Disease of Native Plants' and 'Banksia'.

## 1971

NSG administration in 1971 remained in the hands of the 1970 office bearers, i.e. President John Lee, Secretary Joyce Ward, Treasurer Don Stitt and Delegate Alan Ward. Again, a six person Committee assisted. Annual subscriptions became \$1.50 for single membership, \$2.50 husband and wife, and \$1 for membership with fixed incomes.

The 1971 Programme for NSG followed the established combination of AGM and Swap Night, Guest Speakers, Excursions, Wildflower Exhibition, Garden Inspections, Panel Discussion and Xmas Party. The KWG Working Bees were again scheduled for the last Saturday of each month. Don Dove continued to act as agent for the propagation of cuttings.

A February newsletter recorded a book presentation to Pat Stanley in recognition of his contribution to NSG prior to his transfer to Melbourne. There was also a note of Ted de Brabander convalescing after breaking a leg on holidays. These losses diminished significantly the KWG work achievements. The February Swap Night section of the meeting was, as usual, most successful.

The March Newsletter reported an excursion to the Boyd Plateau and Kanangra Walls following an invitation of the Colong Committee. The occasion was arranged and led by Bill Cook and was well attended. The Colong Committee aims to extend the boundaries of the current National Park and thus prevent exploitation per medium of pine plantations and limestone quarries. The awareness of Group members was aroused as they traversed the plateau and viewed the mountains, gorges

and river valleys. Flora in evidence included many diverse species such as *Pterostylis concinna*, *P. decurva*, *Chiloglottis reflexa*, *Wahlenbergia gracilis*, *Helichrysum bracteatum*, *Senecio lautus*, *Viola betonicifolia* and *Craspedia uniflora* (*C. glauca*). The Kanangra Walls area yielded *Utricularia dichotoma*, a prostrate *Westringia*, *Actinotus forsythii* and *Styloidium graminifolium* in addition to better known sandstone plants. SGAP assistance was sought for the Colong Committee's endeavours.

Sisters Betty Maloney (SGAP Seed Bank Curator and artist) and Jean Walker (artist and photographer) were the March Guest Speakers at Willow Park. Betty spoke of the Seed Bank's operation and Jean showed and talked to fine quality slides of a safari to the Centre and W.A.

The April Newsletter encouraged members to propagate plants from seeds and cuttings for personal use, plant sales and the KWG, while Alan Ward, the Boronia Study Group leader, enclosed notes aimed to encourage and facilitate cultivation of the genus.

An orientation visit to the KWG for newer NSG members made up the April meeting. Members inspected the Knoll, the Fernhouse, the Amenities Block (including taking Afternoon Tea) and noted plants in flower or promising well for the future.

The May meeting at Willow Park enabled members to welcome back Pat Stanley as Guest Speaker. Pat made a special trip to talk about and show slides of the flora of W.A.'s south-west coast. Visual highlights included *Hakea victoriae*, *H. trifurcata*, *Regelia velutina*, *Banksia coccinea*, *Grevillea nudiflora* and *Pimelia physodes*, as well as the background of beautiful coastline, off-shore islands, mountains and roadside vistas.

May activities also featured Sunday walks in Ku-ring-gai Chase's Lambert Peninsula. Led by Arthur and Rene Cooper, the two walks, Morning (valley) and Afternoon (heathland) were most successful with some fifty members, children and friends enjoying the outing. The heathland promised a riot of colour for Spring from *Boronia serrulata*, *B. ledifolia*, *Eriostemon australasius*, *E. hispidulus* and *E. buxifolius*, while *Banksia ericifolia*, *B. asplenifolia*, *B. marginata* and *Utricularia dichotoma* in flower supplemented the background views, a glorious sunset and many Aboriginal rock drawings. A further excursion was voted for.

The June Newsletter drew attention to the damaging potential of nematodes and a way to counter their depredations. Dr J S Beard, Director of the Sydney





Botanical Gardens and former Director of King's Park, Perth was welcomed as June's Willow Park Guest Speaker, his topic being the cultivation of W. A., plants. Dr Beard spoke about King's Park and its goals, while his slides also showed specimens of the W.A. south-west area flora in their natural habitat. Dr Beard also discussed the introduction to cultivation of W.A.'s spectacular plants, with emphasis on soil preparation and the use of seeds and cutting material.

The Secretary appealed for cuttings of *Dampiera hederaceae* for the KWG and reminded members of Don Dove's cutting material exchange service. Willow Park was the venue for the July meeting, the Guest Speaker being John Steenson, Chief Ranger of Muogamarra Nature Reserve, to talk about research and experiments being carried out in the Reserve. John began by relating the history of Muogamarra as a Reserve, outlining the establishment roles of naturalist Mr J Tipper and philanthropist Sir Edward Hallstrom. John Steenson illustrated his talk with many fine slides. Eucalypts were prominent (*E. haemastoma*, *E. eximia*, *E. punctata*, *E. capitellata*), with the associated *Angophora costata*, *Syncarpia glomulifera* and Banksias (*B. serrata*, *B. ericifolia*, *B. robur*, *B. aspleniifolia*, *B. integrifolia*).

The July meeting was soon followed by an excursion to Muogamarra, where some sixty members and their children enjoyed a wonderful day taking in scenic views, speculating on the Spring festival of heath flowers and admiring the glorious golden blossoms of *Acacia adunca*, a planting project of Mr Tipper in the Reserve's early days.

The August Newsletter had notes on members of long standing, reporting the departure of Lorna Heap, a foundation member of NSG, from the district, a letter of thanks from Joan Doney for flowers sent to her in hospital and the receipt of cards from Ros Lambie while travelling overseas. Members were also reminded of the Garden Competition closing date, of a forthcoming excursion to McCarr's Creek and of the need for assistance with the September Wildflowers of Australia Exhibition.

Willow Park's August meeting centred on a Panel discussion of propagation, diseases and specific problems. Led by Chairperson, Max Hewett, and assisted by Inez Armitage, Alan Ward, Ted Duncan and Phil Leak, the Panel traversed the causes of plant death and the need for these to be studied, with particular reference to collar rot, nematodes and *Phytophthora cinnamomi*.

Special record was made in the September Newsletter of the comments by Inez Armitage on the sowing of

seeds and the potting on of seedlings and of Alan Ward's demonstration, with discussion, of propagation by cuttings. This Newsletter also contained a renewed appeal for Wildflower Exhibition assistance.

The September meeting at Willow Park continued August's Panel discussion, with Max Hewett again leading the team. The Panel dealt with growing *Eriostemon australasius* from cuttings (Mrs Cromanty) and successful cultivation of *Dryandra formosa* and *D. praemorsa*, together with *Banksia coccinea* and *B. grandis*, at Baulkham Hills by Janet Ball. An "exceptionally absorbing" discussion of the flowers brought to the meeting (including orchids) also featured.

October's Newsletter reported a most successful Wildflower Exhibition, with the flower and fern collection, the Flower Club's presentation of arrangements, species identification section and the background of bird calls, native garden film and fossil display all receiving accolades. The assistance of all helpers was grateful acknowledged.

NSG Garden Competition results for 1971, as per the Newsletter, were:

Whole Garden	1. Dr L Lawrence	2. Ted Duncan
Part Garden	1. Alan & Joyce Ward	2. Mrs Sid Hume
Plot	1. Mrs R Hill	2. Mr Strong

At the October meeting at Willow Park, Dr L Lawrence, Professor of Geology at the University of NSW and recently joined NSG member, spoke about the Hawkesbury Sandstone and its associated flora. Professor Lawrence covered the geological and chemical makeup of the area and the consequent botanical structures. The November Newsletter provided a comprehensive resume. The Newsletter failed to report outcomes of Garden Inspections scheduled for October. Gardens open were those of Dr L Lawrence of Epping, the Armitages of Terrey Hills and the Harveys of Wahroonga.

There was a report, however, of the October visit to the Barren Grounds Faunal Reserve, an occasion organised by Wal Knowles and with an invitation to all SGAP members to visit. The previous and current extremely dry conditions precluded a riotous display of wildflowers. Nevertheless, the newsletter reported Waratahs (*Telopea speciosissima*), *Grevillea rivularis* ('Carrington Falls'), *Prostanthera howelliae*, *Olearia erubescens*, *Epacris longifolia* and the Boronias (*B. barkeriana*, *B. anemonifolia*, *B. floribunda*, *B. thujona*).

A Slide Night was the form taken by the November meeting. Contributing to the diversity of subjects and



environments displayed were:

Alan Ward - *Boronias*

Sid Hume - *Waratahs and other garden subjects*

Don Dove - *Glenhaven Dam Arboretum, Warrumbungles, Compositae, Bangalow Palms at Port Macquarie, Barren Grounds rock formations*

Ros Lambie - *Eastern Simpson Desert and Cooper's Creek*

Arthur & Rene Cooper - *KWG, Lianjarra Falls in the Budawang*

Mr & Mrs Wright - *Northern Territory prostrate Acacia and Grevilleas*

Mr Williams - *Thysanotus, Styliidium, Actinotus, Lambertia and orchids (microphotography)*

Eric Toombs - *W.A.'s Stirling Ranges and King's Park*

Mr Frankham - *Katandra*

Mr & Mrs D Coutts - *Kanangra Walls Utricularia and Actinotus forsythii, West Head rock carvings, their own prize-winning garden*

Don Stitt - *Recent Wildflower Exhibition*

Ruth Milton - *Northern Territory and Geraldton, W.A. Gwyn Knowles contributed an item on carnivorous native snails (*Rhytida strangesta*).*

The December meeting, as usual, took the form of a Christmas Party at Willow Park. There were the familiar ingredients of drinks by Don Stitt and Arthur Cooper, amusements by Inez Armitage and a contest involving the identification of members' foolscap sheet size drawings of flowers, shrubs, trees or other garden related subjects.

In 1971, NSG members were very much in evidence in contributing to the effective functioning of the NSW SGAP Region. Ted Duncan (President), Geoff Edwards (Secretary to July), Arthur Cooper (Editor of '*Native Plants*'), Phil Leak (Publicity Officer) and Alan Nielsen (Plant Steward) were all involved as office bearers, while Joyce Ward was Exhibition Secretary.

The Region Annual Garden Competition results for 1971 had a strong NSG flavour:

Whole Garden 1. Dr L Lawrence 2. Mr & Mrs D Coutts

Garden Plot 1. Geoff Bush 2. Mrs R Hill

Best specimen Mr & Mrs D Coutts - *Grevillea juniperina rubra*

Special mention: Ted Duncan's orchids; Alan & Joyce Ward's ferns; Mrs Nicoll's red and green *Anigozanthos*; Geoff Bush's white *Bauera* and *Eriostemon*.

NSG provided nine contributors to the 1971 editions of '*Native Plants*', including the Editor. Their wide ranging contributions were: Ted Duncan: President's Annual Report; Five sections of his 'Scene in the Shadehouse';

Report of Dr J S Beard's talk to the January SGAP General meeting on the history of botanical gardens in general and the functioning of King's Park, Perth in particular. Geoff Edwards: concluded his 'Notes on the Seed List' in the March *Native Plants*, having dealt finally with *Xylomelum pyriforme*. Arthur Cooper: wrote editorials; articles on Soil Testing, Nitraphoska, Hibbertias and Nematodes; reports on speakers (Dr Lawrence; discussion panel on terrestrial orchids - Alan Ward, Ted Duncan, Geoff Edwards). Pat Stanley: A look at the Mount Barren Ranges., W.A - contributed from Loyola College, Wasting, Victoria. Ted de Brabander: Artificial Fertilisers for Native Plants. Alan Ward: Boronia Study Group Report. Joyce Ward: As Exhibition Secretary and as provider of NSG Annual and ongoing reports. Inez Aromatise: In Praise of Wattles; Not All the Best Come from the West (*Acacias*); Acacia Study Group Report; Alice in Orchardland (*sic*). Wal Knowles: As organiser of the Barren Grounds Faunal Reserve visit.

*Australian Plants* references to and input from NSG in 1971 were few and far between, consisting solely of noting Phil Leak as assistant to the Managing Editor and NSW Advertising and Sales Representative and recording Inez Armitage (*Acacias*) and Alan Ward (*Boronias*) as Study Group Leaders.

## 1972

A report compiled by Arthur Cooper in January 1972 concerning the Garden Competition and Garden Visit Scheme emanated from a NSG *ad hoc* committee in respect of these matters. Very briefly, the Group considered the Garden Competition, as conducted in the past, should be abandoned due to certain shortcomings. It proposed instead a Garden Visit Scheme, to allow comparison between member's gardens and offered to do a pilot run on the Scheme during 1972. The offer and the details of the scheme were submitted to NSW Region for consideration.

A new President, Bill (A.B.) Cook emerged at the February Annual General Meeting and for the first time a Vice-President was elected. Inez Armitage, a member for some years assumed this position. Joyce Ward remained Secretary, Don Stitt Treasurer, and Alan Ward Delegate. An extract from the March Newsletter in respect of the previous period read:

"During the past two years, led by the retiring President, John Lee, the Group has increased in numbers, and has participated in all matters of importance to Regional interests. Excursions, garden inspections were



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a feature and all meetings were most enjoyable and interesting. We wish him success in his new role as Seed Bank Curator of the NSW Region. (We shouldn't know this but Mrs Betty Maloney has been grooming him for this position for a long time.)"

The February meeting was as usual a Swap Night. Subscriptions for the year were fixed at \$1.50 singles, \$2.50 husband and wife and \$1.00 for fixed income. At this meeting it was decided to draw up a set of Rules (Constitution) and also to seek a member to audit the accounts. A comprehensive program of activities for 1972 was devised.

The theme of the March meeting was the "Imparting of information on subjects encountered constantly". For this purpose, a large panel of 'experts' drawn from members was enlisted to cover a wide-ranging series of problem areas and matters of general interest.

Also in March, there was an inspection of Mr and Mrs D Coult's garden in West Pymble. It was a very pleasant garden, well laid out and artistically built up with a mixture of sandy loam over clay.

A feature of the April meeting was the availability of new name tags for members. Guest Speaker at the meeting was Professor L. Lawrence who spoke on the subject of 'Groundwater'. Garden inspection for the month was at the Turramurra home of Geoff and Jean Bush.

Mrs Thistle Stead needed no introduction for her talk at the May meeting, for she was known personally, many members being familiar with her books on Australian Flora and her environmental activities. Mrs Stead's subject was "Elementary Botany", including Plant Identification and was illustrated by slides.

A garden inspection took place at the home of Mrs S Hume and those few who attended on a rainy day enjoyed a garden in a delightful setting with waterfalls and pools amidst lush growing shrubs, trees, ferns and ground covers. The Group also spent a rewarding day at the home of Mr & Mrs Withers of Pearl Beach and enjoyed exploring the environs and a quick trip along a track at Girrakool.

Guest speaker in June was Mr Keith Ingram, his topic being "Rainforest Flora". His talk was based on wide experience, from forestry work years ago in New Guinea to his hobby of remaking a rainforest at Mt. Tomah which had been destroyed by logging, quarrying and fire (refer N.P. July 1972 for detail).

Mr & Mrs Milton J Larvin were noted as being new members of NSG at the June meeting.

By way of an outing, a large party of members enjoyed a Sunday meander in the gullies of Ku-ring-gai Chase, led by Phil Leak.

The program for July embraced an outing along the upper waters of McCarrs Creek and environs led by Joyce Ward. Speaker for the evening meeting was member, Geoff Edwards. Geoff spoke from experience on the topic of 'Landscaping'. To illustrate his talk he showed slides of natural bush scenes where rock and plants blended.

It was decided to circulate members with an amended draft of the proposed Group Rules in the next Newsletter with the purpose of considering their adoption. President Bill Cook mentioned that the Region's Constitution was being used as a basis for compiling the draft NSG Rules.

A very capable scientist, Dr E Lassack entertained members at the August meeting with a discourse on the chemistry of Australian oil bearing plants. He dealt with the use of oils in identification of species and the economic uses of those oils. Dr Lassack submitted an abstract of his talk.

Excursion for the month was to Glenbrook as guests of the Blue Mountains Group. To be seen were cascades of *Bossiaea heterophylla*, patches of *Logania floribunda*, and *Boronia anethifolia* (cousin of *B. ledifolia*) and masses of bloodwood (*Corymbia eximia*).

Guest speaker in September was Max Hewett, who delivered advice on how, what and when to prune with specific reference to many well-known and popular plants. Garden inspections were made of Max's prolific garden at Mt Ku-ring-gai and Miss Janet Ball's garden on Wianamatta Shale. This garden had successful plants of *Dryandra formosa* and *Dryandra praemorsa* amongst others, attributable partly to natural water articulation.

The Region's Annual Wildflower Exhibition held at St John's Hall, Gordon, was reported to be the most successful to date, even though conditions for the supply of flowers from most parts of Australia were unsatisfactory due to adverse weather patterns. NSG members were thanked for their help in making the exhibition a success.

Dr H Adamson took the Group at the October evening meeting on an interesting verbal ramble through the divisions of the plant kingdom, explaining the many differences between the various categories. Also at this meeting the NSG Rules & Regulations were adopted.



Geoff Bush recalled with pleasure some of the details of the outing for this month, the Group spending the 8-hour weekend at Hawk's Nest. Some members camped at Legges Camp and others stayed at various motels. The camp on the edge of Myall Lake had its share of wild life, some campers having their routine interrupted by a large black prowling goanna. Highlight of the trip was the climb up Johnson's Hill but the reward was worthwhile with a magnificent view over the various lakes in the Myall Lakes complex. Plants observed included *Boronia falcifolia*, *Melaleuca nodosa*, *Phyllota*, *Aotus*, *Pultenaea* (various), *Oxylobium ilicifolia*, *Callistemon citrinus*, palms and *Macrozamia*. In the centre of the village there were spectacular stands of Flannel Flowers (now gone forever) whilst the road through to Mungo Brush abounded with a plethora of wildflower species. (See also January 1973, N.P)

The traditional slide night was held in November. Many interesting slides were presented by the two Dons (Dove and Stitt). The former was unofficial photographer and slide presenter for NSG over a number of years during which he was a hardworking and valuable member of the Group who was much missed when he transferred to the Harbourside Group. The newsletter noted that space had been allotted in the Amenities Building (KWG) to feature 'Eucalypts of the Sydney Region', the work of Ted Daniels. The new Parramatta-Hills Group was invited to join NSG at the Wildflower Garden to inspect progress on the same Saturday in November as the Working Bee occurred. (It is of note that throughout the year members took part in a Working Bee at the KWG on the last Saturday of each month.)

There was no formal meeting in December. However the Group partied in the Amenities Building in the pleasant surrounds of the KWG, where many members had worked so hard during the year. Members were asked to wear a hat fitted out to represent a native flower, tree or plant. There were games, a marvellous short film by S Scotchmere of Katandra Trust, bright music capped off with a scrumptious meal and plenty of punch (Arthur's brew). Invitations to the party were issued to Harbourside and Parramatta-Hills Groups and the Mayor of Ku-ring-gai. A friendly possum was not an invitee.

Interesting information concerning the Group and its members was to be obtained from perusal of 'Native Plants' throughout the year. The January issue reported that John Wrigley was elected Federal President at the SGAP Conference in 1971. Arthur Cooper wrote a summary of a lecture given by Dr L Lawrence at the November 1971 meeting and continued his article on

Rutile Mining. Regional President Ted Duncan contributed *A Native Plot for your Garden* with an appropriate illustration. Inez Armitage wrote on *The Annual Show*. To quote her first words "No, not the one at Gordon, the one in our garden".

In March Rene and Arthur Cooper provided a follow up on the garden plot subject with their article "Not so much a plan of a plot - More a plan of attack", with illustration. Max Hewett wrote at length on "The Case For Objective Gardening" and Inez Armitage wrote a short article on "Fertilisers" and "Wattles for Wet Places."

The May 1972 issue recorded the election of Regional Officers; President E Duncan; Publicity Officer P Leak; Editor Native Plants A. Cooper; Steward G T Edwards. Ted Duncan reported on the Annual General Meeting (March). He mentioned that the garden competition was under review and that the executive would consider a very interesting proposal submitted by members of the NSG.

Arthur Cooper submitted an article on "Growing Native Plants from Seed" and Max Hewett "Inquests, Please." July 'Native Plants' called for volunteers for the September Festival of Wildflowers which was to be opened by Mr W S Steel, Asst. Director (Wildlife) of the National Parks & Wildlife Service. Arthur Cooper was to provide a special film on wildflowers. Mrs Officer contributed an article to the Newsletter entitled "Obituary for a Tree" and Arthur Cooper provided a number of items "Native Plants in Pots", "Plants from Seeds - A Bit More" "Garden Plants" and "Using Cans as Pots." September 'Native Plants' reported on a discussion on *Boronias* at the July Regional Meeting by Alan Ward and Max Hewett. Inez Armitage contributed an interesting treatise on "Some Prostrate *Acacias*". Arthur Cooper wrote "Washing those *Eriostemon* seeds in Running Water" and R D Withers a scientific article on "Root Disease in Australian Plants."

The November 'Native Plants' publication recorded that Max Hewett was placed third in the 'Prestige Garden' section of the Region competition. Contributors to this issue were Brian Harvey "New Tree Climber" (which happened to be *Chorizema cordatum*); Arthur Cooper "Aerial Layering" and "A Big Garden"; Inez Armitage "Despite the Drought" and "Alice in Wonderland, Part Two" and Mabel Cook "More about Flannel Flowers". Many other subjects were covered by 'Native Plants' Editor Arthur Cooper in his Editorials and sundry articles revealing much of Arthur's scientific and practical mind.



Contributions to 'Australian Plants' in 1972 comprised: John Wrigley "Native Ground Covers", "Australian Terrestrial Orchids from Seed" (the latter with G J Veitch and D K McIntyre) and "Guide Lines for Study Groups" (with D K McIntyre); Max Hewett "A Discussion on Plant Collapse".

## 1973

In previous years the annual program was issued on a typewritten foolscap size sheet. 1973 marked the advent of the smaller, more artistic folding card type program. This contained additional information such as Office Bearers, Working Bees, and an invitation to bring friends to the meetings at Willow Park Community Centre. The emblem depicted on the card was the NSW Christmas Bell (*Blandfordia*)

Office Bearers at the Annual General Meeting remained unchanged and the usual Swap meeting ensued. At the March meeting members were asked to bring along their problems for discussion. Secretary Joyce reported that "this year's summer conditions have caused havoc to many plants" (Still a familiar cry?) Past President Ted de Brabander led a panel established to help solve any problems forthcoming. He was assisted by Ted Duncan, Phil Maloney, Inez Armitage, Alan Ward and Geoff Edwards. Thanks were extended to Gwyn Knowles and Rene Cooper for their helpful work in carrying out Group activities. A letter was forwarded to Ku-ring-gai Council registering the NSG's opposition to the proposed route of the highway through the KWG.

There were visits to John and Addie Lee's garden at Castlecrag and Mrs E Hickey's garden at Lane Cove. Each of these had its individual charm and beauty, the former set on a steep slope under a canopy of trees (mostly *Eucalypts*, *Eleocarpus* and *Banksias*) with undercover of *Prostantheras*, *Croweas*, ferns etc. Mrs Hickey's garden featured massed displays of flowering *Banksias*, *Grevilleas*, *Epacris* and many others.

Pat Stanley addressed the April meeting, his topic being "The Wildflower Scene, inland and above Geraldton, WA". His talk was illustrated by a fascinating series of slides taken around Meekatharra, Geraldton and the Murchison River. His slides encapsulated drifts of everlastings, a gallery of *Grevilleas*, *Dampieras*, *Scaevolae*, *Lechenaultias*, *Thysanotus*, *Ptilotus* and many others, including the little known colourful *Pityrodia oldfieldii* (fox glove) and the bizarre *Anthotroche blackii*.

"Ways of improving and selecting the best of Species"

was the topic adopted at the May meeting, the leader being Max Hewett, assisted by Miss C Waites, Messrs John Lee, Don Dove and Sid Hume. Many plants were discussed, a selection being *Homoranthus darwinioides*, *Grevillea obliquastigma*, *Callistemon polandii*, *Pileanthus peduncularis* and *Eucalyptus forrestiana*.

Garden visits were made to the homes of Mr and Mrs A Cooper, Turramurra and Mr and Mrs F Simons, West Pymble. Noted in the Cooper's garden were *Boronia*, *Epacris*, *Hovea* and *Ricinocarpos* (Wedding Bush). The Simons' garden featured *Hemiandra pungens*, *Pimelea ligustrina* and *Clianthus formosus*.

Dr L A S Johnson, Director and Chief Botanist, Royal Botanic Gardens, addressed members in June on the subject of "Origins of Australian Flora" with accompanying slides. As a follow up to this talk, botanist Tony Rodd escorted a large party through the Royal Botanic Gardens and drew attention to many fine examples of rainforest trees, some of which Dr Johnson had referred to e.g. *Casuarina cunninghamiana*, *Hibiscus insularis* and *Casuarina glauca*. Hosts Dr Johnson and Dr Mary Briggs gave the Group a warm welcome and introduced members to the Herbarium and explained its future.

In the same month the Group was welcomed to Telopea Nursery by Mrs Greeves and son Ian and shown a great diversity of plants. This was followed by a walk through surrounding bushland.

"Concepts of Plant Ecology" was the subject chosen in July by Guest Speaker Dr Truda Howard, Plant Ecologist, University of NSW. Special reference was made to her researches in a *Nothofagus* forest in Victoria and in the Royal National Park, NSW. Member Dorothy Hasluck invited the Group to the reserve which her house overlooked at Cheltenham and members enjoyed the feeling of so much bushland so close to the City and also were appreciative of Dorothy's gracious hospitality.

In August Professor L Lawrence spoke on "The Origins of Australian Soils" describing how our soils, which are all ultimately derived from rocks, came to have their present forms. He contrasted the poor nutrient content of the local sandstones with the richer soils derived from volcanic origins and mentioned the way in which certain species of plant are associated with chemicals in the soil. As a practical demonstration the Professor conducted a coach tour (arranged with Mrs Kripts) into the Blue Mountains on the following Sunday to see and explain the subject at first hand. Apart from the topography and the geology knowledge imparted, the mountains were alive with many wattles (e.g. *Acacia decurrens*, *A. linifolia*, *A. oxycedrus*, *A. elongata* and *A. terminalis*).



*Grevilleas* sighted at Mt Banks included *G. laurifolia* and *G. gaudichaudi* (prostrate).

Guest Speaker in September was A L Bertus, Plant Pathologist, NSW Dept of Agriculture, his subject being "Diseases of Australian Plants". He covered a wide range of plant diseases, referring to the differences between parasitic and non-parasitic diseases, and discussed nematodes, mildew, phytophthora cinnamomi and sundry virus diseases.

Amongst visitors listed as being present at the meeting were Mr & Mrs F Hersey.

The Wildflower Exhibition was most successful. "Not to date has an Exhibition attracted so many visitors, nor been better presented, nor has one had so much co-operation from so many helpers."

The October meeting was intended to be a film night. However the required film was not available from the CSIRO and instead there was a discussion on "Easy to Grow" native species. A list of such species (90 in all) had been enclosed with the Newsletter. President Bill Cook selected species from the list and interviewed growers of several plants as to their cultural requirements. Members responding included Phil Maloney, L Frankham, Mrs Officer and Mrs Hickey.

Gwyn and Wal Knowles were enthusiastic members and workers in NSG for many years. Wal Knowles had planned long and hard to make an excursion to Canberra a success and the Group was privileged to special treatment through the influence of John Wrigley. Amongst the many plants viewed were: *Correa lawrenciana*, *Eucalyptus rossii* and *E. mannifera*, *Boronia heterophylla*, *B. pulchella*, *B. subulifolia*, *B. pilosa*, *B. serrulata*, *B. thujona*, *B. floribunda* and *B. citriodora*. The Group also visited gardens of some of the members of the Canberra Group, viz. Mr & Mrs Bell, Dr David McGrath, Mr & Mrs Jens and President Henry Nix.

According to custom members' slides were presented in November by the competent duo Don Stitt and Don Dove.

The year finished with a Christmas Party at the KWG Pavilion with the usual merriment, food and drinks. It is noted that Don Stitt was to look after the bar.

As in the past NSG members were keeping 'Native Plants' Editor, Arthur Cooper, busy with contributions to the Newsletter throughout 1973. Main contributions to the publication were: January: Inez Armitage -

Report for 1972 on the Acacia Study Group and Arthur Cooper on the NSG trip to Hawkes Nest. March: Gwyn Knowles wrote about the native carnivorous snail (*Strangesta capillacea*); Ted Duncan at his last meeting as President of NSW SGAP gave his report on the 1973 Annual General Meeting; Mrs Officer's talk on *Baeckea*s was reported and Arthur Cooper wrote on "Mulch being a Robber". Office Bearers elected for the year included from the NSG - Senior Vice President (also Steward) Max Hewett; Vice-President Alan Ward; Official Photographer Don Dove; Publicity Officer Phil Leak; Seed Bank Curator John Lee; Editor of 'Native Plants' Arthur Cooper. The last, a mentally energetic member, continued his persuasive editorials throughout the year. July: This issue reported that Ted Duncan, still with reserves of energy and enthusiasm after 3 years as President of Region, had taken on the job of Programme Organiser. A contribution was made by Alan Ward, Leader of the Boronia Study Group and mention was made of Wal Knowles giving a talk to the Harbourside Group (Wal and Gwyn Knowles were members of that Group in addition to NSG). Also Inez Armitage, leader of the Acacia Study Group, was mentioned in reference to her interesting talk to the April Regional meeting. September:

With the emphasis on the scheduled Wildflowers of Australia Exhibition at St John's Hall, Gordon reference was made to contributions by NSG members Rene & Arthur Cooper, Geoff Edwards, John & Addie Lee and Joyce Ward. The July Regional meeting was reported and included Phil Maloney's "Five Minute Talk" on *Boronia floribunda* and Max Hewett's rewarding plant description session. Arthur Cooper provided a lengthy progress report on *Phytophthora* and a shorter article on the problem of weeds. November: Results of the Garden Competition conducted in September and judged by Shirley Stackhouse were reported. Arthur Cooper contributed several items - "Using a Botanical Key", "And the Birds and Insects" and "Is it a Native?" Regular NSG member (before moving to Narrabeen) Brian Harvey wrote "The New Can-Can Act" explaining an effective way of removing native plants from cans.

In the March 1973 copy of *Australian Plants* there was a joint article by D K McIntyre, G J Veitch and John Wrigley "Australian Terrestrial Orchids from Seed - Improvements in Techniques and Further Successes".



#### BILL AND MABEL COOK

Bill and Mabel Cook were regular active members of NSG for many years. Bill's career and experience gained in 37 years on the administrative side of the Anti-TB Association was of great assistance to him in his role of President of NSG in 1972-73. He brought a new approach to the management of the Group and was responsible for a number of innovations as reported on previous pages.

Bill and Mabel maintained a practical interest in the native plant environment. In retirement they spent many hours of labour, albeit enjoyable and worthwhile, in the preservation of the bushland gully near their home in Roseville, as participants in Ku-ring-gai Bushcare.

Bill recalled with pleasure the friendly social contacts in a native plant context and the rewarding exploratory outings they experienced as members of the NSG.

#### 1974

The first meeting was in February at Willow Park and the printed program listed ten meetings for the year. In addition six Sunday excursions were noted. Following tradition Office Bearers were elected with the Presidency being assumed by Dr Alick Hobbes, the Secretaryship by Joyce Ward and Frank Simons became Vice President, and a committee of three was appointed. Subscriptions for 1974 were set at \$1.50. The Bun Rush, known as the annual "Plant Swap", followed and a new feature, a Book Review of Australian Flora publications introduced by Inez Armitage, M Kennedy and Joyce Ward.

Joyce noted in the Newsletter that so much interest had been shown in flowers brought in for discussion that (space permitting) the Newsletter would record them and pursuing this aim a brief description of *Pandorea jasminoides*, *Grevillea rivularis* ("Carrington Falls"), *G. bipinnatifida*, *Acacia subulata*, *Helichrysum bracteatum* "Dargan Hill Monarch", *Correa mannii*, *Crocea saligna*, *Calostemma purpureum* (the garland lily), *Sollya heterophylla* and even at this date the disputed immigrant *Pavonia hastata* was included.

In March Inez Armitage undertook the phenomenal task of bringing alive by description and slides her round-Australia trip. Begun primarily to study *Acacias* it took in a vast range of genera and species as she travelled (alone) through rainforests, swamps, heathland and desert via Nth Queensland, the Beeg Road, the Hammersleys to Geraldton. Plants featured were so numerous that to record them here is impossible, suffice it to say that in her presentation Inez did not get as far as SW Western Australia.

In this month Phil Leak, Jill Whitebrook and Joyce & Alan Ward threw open their gardens for a Sunday inspection. To propagators the highlight of the visits was the feast of cuttings that Sid Cadwell had given to Alan for distribution to members.

April - no meeting was held it being Good Friday. However, the excursion for the month was held at the garden and ferneries of Mr & Mrs Best at Kenthurst. Ray, an acknowledged expert, guided members through his fernhouse where botanical drawings under glass emphasised his explanations of fern history, propagation, structure and cultivation. Tree Ferns and ground ferns from such genera as *Cyathea*, *Dicksonia*, *Adiantum*, *Todea*, *Gleichenia*, *Sticherus* and *Davallia* graced both glass house and shaded bushland of the property. Our hosts had also put on display specimens of their delightful and clever art works.



The May meeting played host to Max Hewett, Region President, who addressed members concerning the future of the Society dealing with such aspects as the need for closer communication between members and groups, the hosting of Regional meetings by Groups and the need to do more about plants difficult to grow such as some *Boronias* and *Eriostemon australasius*.

Guest lecturer, Don Blaxell from the National Herbarium came with slides and specimens to discuss the genus *Myrtaceae*. He dealt with the two major groups within the family and led on to floral types, aromatic oils, leaf variations, fruits, habitat and characteristics of *Melaleuca*, *Callistemon*, *Darwinia*, *Eucalyptus*, *Leptospermum*, *Angophora* and *Thryptomene* to name a few.

Also in this month Professor Lawrence masterminded a bus excursion to Norah Head taking on the task of "geologising" history through the Hawkesbury Valley and up the lagoon and rock outcrop areas of the coast. Perc and Ollie Parry did the botanising making for a day packed with information and interest.

Guest speaker in June was Mr Jim Armstrong from the National Herbarium whose subject was *Rutaceae*. Slides helped illustrate the variety of the Family and special characteristics of species within such genera as *Boronia*, *Correa*, *Zieria*, *Geijera*, *Flindersia*, *Eriostemon*, *Crowea*, *Philotheca*, *Asterolasia* and *Phebalium*. Of particular interest were largely unknown, to members, W.A. genera such as *Chorilaena* and *Geleznovia* which contained many attractive species hopefully with potential for cultivation.

Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> June was chosen for an excursion along the No 8 West Head track to America Falls (Ku-ring-gai Chase). *Banksias*, *Dillwynias*, *Phyllota*, *Acacia suaveolens* and *oxycedrus*, *Bauera*, *Dampiera* into an area of ferns. *Boronia rigens* was a new plant to many and Aboriginal carvings and Pittwater views added to the "glitter" of the day.

To quote Secretary Joyce Ward in the Newsletter for August: "The highlight (of the last meeting) was Dr Peter Myerscough's descriptive address of his and three other distinguished botanists' journey to North Queensland and Arnhem Land. Tropical legumes, grasses and sedges and the genus *Goodeniaceae* were to be collected and studied. From his maps and slides the journey through grasslands and woodlands, lagoons and swamps, savannah, claypans and rainforest was traced and a great diversity of plants illustrated. Shots of habitat particularly in swamps and lagoons revealed the glory of our aquatic flowering plants."

In a short illustrated session Mark Tweedale revealed his garden beginning with an initial Master Plan and by using an overlay demonstrating the final layout. He brought in specimens of *Eucalypts*, *Callistemons*, *Melaleuca* and other plants to give weight to his progress in a few short years.

August introduced Mr David Trough, an entomologist, on the subject of insects and pests and their relationship to native plants. Fascinating slides of all manner of little "beasties" and lower life organisms illustrated his talk. He spoke of beneficial insects, of pests from the insect, fungal and viral worlds and elaborated on control methods available. He emphasised in conclusion that the plants grown in unsuitable sites - wrong aspect or soil, low nutrient areas - could be kept relatively free of pest attack by judicious use of fertilisers to improve health and vigour.

On the last Sunday of August a visit was made to Bankstown Wildflower Garden, a project of Bankstown Council under the direction (almost single-handedly) of Mr Eric Packer. In an area of 3 acres, a developed creekland rainforest mingled with clay and sandstone areas allowing a wide range of plants to be grown and landscaped in relation to a network of pathways. Beds of native daisies, *Grevilleas* and various *Eriostemons* were among the plants noted.

Steve Clemesha came as September guest speaker to speak on Terrestrial Orchids and it is worthwhile to quote Joyce Ward's opening lines to give an idea of the fascination he brought to this subject:

"Much has been written in *Australian Plants* about Terrestrial Orchids but to the average reader names and descriptions do little to unveil the mysteries and beauty of these gems. After watching the fascinating parade of curiosities - a tiny duck, a green slipper, helmets of varying styles, a horned animal, clowns in striped trousers, a smooth bird with a green beak, a long legged spider and, best of all, a king in his carriage, and listening to expert knowledge of them, surely it stirred enthusiasm to observe these little plants more closely."

The month's excursion centred on Warrah Trig in Brisbane Waters NP. Jack Higgs, Superintendent of Girrakool NP and Ross Worrell of Narara Research Station met the visitors and between them as the track was traversed pointed out the gems of this Sydney Sandstone area so rich in a wide range of flora. A highlight was the patches of Waratahs in bloom.

The talk dominating proceedings in October was given by Mr Keith Ingram whose passion from an early age





had been *Eucalypts*, so much so that throughout his academic career he has become a recognised authority. The great number and diversity within the genus has seen botanists from the early days to the present contributing papers on classification and taxonomy. Von Mueller, Bentham, Maiden, Blakely, Andrews and Carr, and more recently Dr Johnson of the National Herbarium and Professor Prior from ANU Canberra have all fallen under the spell of the genus and made (and contributions are still being made) additions to our knowledge of the humble gum tree.

A Sunday walk in KWG was referred to in the Newsletter and disappointment expressed at the small number who attended considering the special relationship of NSG with the Garden. It was pointed out that the extensive pathways, the great variety of flora, the rock formations, the hilltops and the gullies all provided two or three hours of enjoyment for those who visited.

November meeting had no speaker listed, instead the Annual Slide Evening took place under the guidance of Don Stitt and allowed members to revive memories, show flora, depict gardens and display geological and mammalian wonders. Contributors were Pat Stanley - the wonders of KWG; John Lee - the flora of northern Rainforests; Bob Goldsack - Alpine Flora to Barrington Tops and Queensland's Bunyip Park; Mrs Hill and Mrs Horsburgh showed beautiful plants from their own gardens; Max Thiele, Kim Wright and Ian Murray rounded off the visual spectacular with plants which had impressed them from a wide geographical area and varied habitats.

This evening continued in extravaganza vein with a magnificent collection of flowers from members giving Pat Stanley and Phil Leak a very busy time discussing them. Only a few could be noted such as *Hibbertia stellaris*, *Eugenia wilsonii* (now *Syzygium wilsonii* subs. *Wilsonii*), *Leptospermum rotundifolium*, *Melaleuca decussata*, *Brachycome multifida*, a *Pelargonium* sp., *Helichrysum bracteatum* 'Dargan Hill Monarch', *Pandorea jasminoides*, *Grevillea sericea*, *hookeriana*, *juniperina*, *tripartita* and 'Robyn Gordon'.

The December meeting saw the Pavilion at KWG the scene of great merriment and good fellowship as members and guests gathered to celebrate the year's end. Superb show of Australian Bird slides by Stan Scotchmer, a lovely supper and, as the Newsletter had it, light and not so light beverages made for a memorable evening.

In the wider Region field NSG members continued to make significant contributions. Max Hewett was Presi-

dent of the Region, Phil Leak maintained his long tenure of the office of Publicity Officer, Fred Hersey was Country & Lone Member Representative and John Lee was Seed Bank Curator.

As Editor of *Native Plants* Arthur Cooper dominated that publication through his Editor's Page and the following articles: Sound & Picture Shows of Native Plants, Oddments from SGAP Publications, Getting a Native Garden Started, The Blood and Bone Position is Serious, Botanical Gardens, plus at least as many articles to which he did not sign his name. In his capacity as Scientific Officer one article set out what he hoped this position would contribute and another under the heading of 'Scientific Project No 1'. Others who featured in '*Native Plants*' were: Pat Stanley - North Shore Group Report; Max Hewett - SGAP Past, Present and Future; John Lee - Treating a large tree; Mrs M Officer - The Geology of Individual Gardens; Alan Ward - Flora of Kosciusko District.

## 1975

The February Newsletter included the Program for 1975 and a brief review of 1974 which stated that co-operation had been the key to success - at meetings, garden visits and excursions, but regretfully not so much at the Working Bees at the KWG. The President and his staff extended their gratitude for jobs well done.

The meeting proceeded to the election of officers and the re-election of Alick Hobbes as President, Joyce Ward as Secretary and Treasurer Don Stitt. Brian Walker became the new Delegate to Region. Vice President Geoff Edwards and a Committee of 3 completed the list of office bearers for 1975. Subscriptions for the group remained at \$1.50.

It was decided that the Working Bee for March at the KWG would take the form of an appraisal of Group activities for the year. As in recent years a plea for more help was made. The traditional SWAP on this AGM night resulted in a perceived need to give more information in the Newsletter of the following plants - all *Hibiscus* - *tiliaceus*, *heterophyllus*, *diversifolius*, *splendens*, *huegelii* and *huegelii* var *Wrayae*. After the swap, Arthur Cooper showed his new audio-visual on compost, which proved to be a most comprehensive coverage of a subject really essential for any dedicated native plant garden.

The March meeting featured, prior to the main speaker's address, a short racy dissertation on the collection and storage of seeds by John Lee. It was mentioned to



the meeting in connection with KWG that more paths were planned and name tagging of naturally occurring species was being considered. The experts would proceed to do these things in April.

Steve Clemesha returned as Guest Speaker and on this occasion arrived with about 50 of his carnivorous plants which provided the springboard for his talk on the characteristics of these extraordinary plants. Most were from America but included Australian examples like the Albany Pitcher Plant. The various traps, many lidded, others like old-fashioned clappers with spikes, the sticky juices among hooked spikes, the special digestive juices, the varied habits were facts which all combined to have members agree with the 18<sup>th</sup> century naturalists who said that carnivorous plants were truly a "miraculae naturae".

Narara Research Station tucked away among wooded hills at Gosford provided an outstanding venue for the excursion day. Ross Worrell (Superintendent) and his wife guided participants through the large propagation house where experiments in new strains of plants dominated, thence to the Waratah propagation house where heat and mist spray allowed cuttings 6 inches and longer to root readily. Experiments with fertilisers and fungal disease problems were also being investigated. Pasteurising of soil was explained in another large building and finally wide ranging experiments in grafting were viewed.

In April the Group's association with the National Herbarium continued with guest speaker, Mr N Landers, Botanist, exploring the family *Compositae* (now *Asteraceae*). He revealed that this family is the largest flowering family and in Australia is very well represented by about 800 indigenous species. To make clearer the characteristics of various genera, Mr Landers distributed illustrated sheets. He dealt with many species selected from such genera as *Craspedia*, *Olearia*, *Helipterum*, *Helichrysum*, *Brachycome* and *Senecio*, and the Herbarium specimens exhibited underlined the range and diversity of the family.

Garden visits made up the Sunday excursion, firstly at the home of Addie & John Lee whose garden Joyce Ward described as "cool and lovely", and secondly the barely four years old garden of Beverley Blacklock notable for its sheer diversity.

In May the guest speaker, Dr Margaret Burchett (Institute of Technology) took us back to basics with her highly erudite and informative exposition of 'Plant Structure' - photosynthesis, transpiration, respiration, the part played by light, growth control through auxins,

water and nutrients, soil temperature, reproduction - all were explained as part of the amalgam of factors required to sustain plant life. Illustrated leaflets distributed helped explain the subtleties of the subject more clearly.

The Sunday excursion to GIRRAKOOL was programmed with a thoroughness for which Alick Hobbes, the organiser, was well known. He co-opted Dr K Mason (Pres. Royal Zoological Society) to talk about birds of the area and Bob Withers, Geology expert, to reveal the nature of rock formations. A day of "Sunshine packaged with a wealth of flora, deep gorges, sparkling waterfalls, grottoes of ferns, remnants of rainforest and birds - all that Alick had promised, materialised. *Banksia oblongifolia* & *ericifolia*, *Styphelia tubiflora*, *Epacris longiflora*, *Boronia fraseri*, *serrulata* & *anemonifolia*, *Tetradthea*, *Gompholobium*, *Phebalium*, *Oxylobium* were listed." Attendance was large owing to the presence of members from Warringah, Central Coast and Newcastle groups.

"Ask the Panel", an activity guaranteed to arouse spirited discussion was the main feature of the June meeting. Pat Stanley, Geoff Edwards and Arthur Cooper took centre stage and fielded such questions as: 'Germination of *Acacia* seeds', '*Grevilleas*', 'Borers and Pruning', 'Heights of particular *Hakeas*', frost bite on *Brassaia actinophylla*', 'Difficulties of identifying *Hakeas* (an un-named wit from the floor suggested trained parrots or a shotgun)', 'Mist spray in propagation' and 'Trace Elements'.

The Group at KWG was discussed and re-appraisal put in train. The Committee divided the area into 10 x 10 segments in order to list species, to assist in making pathways, and eliminating unwanted plants. Members were asked to participate in measuring, identifying and plotting segments.

*Hakea bakeriana* was featured at this meeting as a result of its flowers being highlighted at the Group's and Region meetings.

Alan Nielsen contributed the icing on the cake of an interesting evening by giving a short talk on the cultivation and care of specific orchids.

Inez Armitage returned to the spotlight in July (after her 1974 talk on her round Australia trip), this time to deal specifically with *Acacias*. From the 700 species she selected typical examples from the 8 main sub-families, making observations where relevant on cultivation, small species for the Sydney area and selection of species for all-year round flowering. Illustrated sheets helped to



categorise the main groups of *Acacia* and assist in identification in the future.

The short talk, by now an almost regular feature, was given by Don Stitt on seed propagation using papier-mâché egg cartons, a method with which he had had outstanding success with a wide variety of seeds.

The Committee was moved to chide members for lack of support for the field days at the KWG and the small number responding to the appeal to supply plants for Region Plant Exhibition at the King's School in September.

August: Dr D Graham of CSIRO chose a seldom aired subject, 'Primitive Plants' as his lecture subject and began by saying that some present day examples retained features developed three thousand million years ago. He traced plant origin from the sea via one-celled organisms to multi-celled plants, the Bryophytes (liverworts and mosses), Pteridophytes (ferns and fern allies) to Gymnosperms (Cycads and Conifers). Reproduction systems from sperm to spores and seeds, dispersal methods, and finally the significance of plants to life on earth. Slides illustrated the interdependence between such forms as fish and coral with algae and algae and coral associations.

The Sunday visit was to Western Sydney University Experimental Farm at Cobbity. SGAP member Professor Bill Tongue (in charge of the farm) conducted members through the large area reserved for natives pointing out the heavy shale nature of the soil and the windswept flat land which necessitated staking of all plants and growing many closer together than the average gardener would contemplate. Hence groves of wattle were used and in their shelter grew many WA shrubs and a wide variety of Eastern States plants.

In September Dr Carolyn Pettigrew (botanist) spoke with great enthusiasm on a difficult (for the layman) subject, Taxonomy. Regarded by many as a dry subject Carolyn made classification come alive as she traced the hierarchy of taxons (groups) through species, genus, tribe, family and order and revealed as she did so how the ancient Greeks, the herbalists of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance alchemists led to Linnaeus who finally produced the present system. The two great gardens, Kew in England and the Jardin des Plantes in France completed the story as they became centres for scientific study of plants and arrived at the modern classification system.

The excursion this month was to one garden, that of Brian Harvey, thrown open for the day. It was re-

marked that it was a pity that it had not been entered for the Part Garden Competition as winding paths under Turpentine, Blue Gums and Blackbutts framed a rainforest community of planted tree ferns, bird's nest ferns, ground ferns and *Prostantheras* among many other plants.

In October the results of the Garden Competition were announced (for North Shore Gardens Pat Stanley, Ted de Brabander and Ron Burrows acted as judges). In the North Shore area the Whole Garden section resulted in a tie for 1st place - Addie & John Lee of Castlecrag and Sue & John Hunt of Berowra. In the Part Garden section Joyce & Alan Ward were successful and Geoff Edwards won the section for a Garden Plot. The winners were then eligible for entry into the Region Garden Competition with the result that Addie & John Lee were 1st and Sue & John Hunt 2nd in the Whole Garden section. Ron Burrows commented thus on the NSG gardens:

"The Lees - a beautiful and challenging garden, created under the care of artistic, imaginative owners. A garden and home with views akin to nature. Besides a delightful sloping front massed with shrubs and ferns, there is a steep down slope at the rear generously covered with trees and tree ferns under which winding paths pass by flowering *Prostantheras*, big and small, more and more ferns among rocks and boulders and a miscellany of plants to a pretty creek deep down below."

Of the Hunts:

"A created garden, the result of plenty of thought and planning. The judges were impressed by its layout, permanency and culture. The wide range of plants looked happy and healthy which is surely the purpose of any garden. This garden is not yet mature and has great potential for a champion garden."

Professor Laurie Lawrence spoke on 'Remote Sensing', a subject surely unique for any SGAP Group! The influence of remote sensing on plant communities comes about from the applied use of the various forms of radiation - panchromatic or white light, coloured light, heat, gamma rays, radar and radio waves - components of the electro-magnetic spectrum which may be considered in terms of their wave length. Remote sensing is a new science recording various features of the earth's surface by photography - spectral, infra-red, electronic devices which 'image' objects on video-contape by heat emission, radar etc. Objects



unseen by conventional means including the human can now be made visible. Professor Lawrence went on to show how these techniques applied to aerial photography, including satellite recording of large scale vegetation distribution, botany, forestry and agricultural use of infra-red, radar revealing terrain surfaces and thermal imagery to measure ground moisture content.

An excursion of Muogamarra drew a good attendance. Fred Hersey had taken great trouble by producing a printed sheet setting out features along the chosen track - details of Peat's farming activities, geological and volcanic data, various plant communities of note. Many plants were in flower but most noticeable was the vegetation difference between hill top heath, woodland and rainforest in the two crater areas.

The Secretary drew attention to a cheque for \$158 received from Region's Committee for the Native Plant Exhibition in September. This represented a rebate on the 840 plants supplied by 15 NSG members.

The November meeting was devoted to the annual Slide Night with Don Stitt in charge. (After some of the year's lectures Joyce Ward remarked that this was a particularly relaxing evening, with no facts to absorb!) And what a visual feast! Bob Withers the S-west coast of W.A., Alan Ward the wonders of the High Alps, Allan Lush Australian natives in San Francisco, Betty Horsburgh natives photographed in Tasmania, Don Stitt a magnificent parade of ground and aerial shots of parts of Central Australia. Others were Pat Stanley, Dr Jaede, Bob & Gail Goldsack, Wilma Riordan and finally Arthur Cooper's superb production on the creation of Brian and Margaret Walker's garden from chicken farm to a wonderful native garden.

It was announced that success has been achieved in scheduling a Festival of Wildflowers at KWG in September 1976 and that Ku-ring-gai Council having given permission to work on propagating plants for sale to help with expenses and make this first project as impressive as possible should be in full swing.

The December meeting was described in the first newsletter of 1976 thus:

"1975 finished with the accustomed joviality at the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden"

but no further comments on the nature of the joviality were forthcoming.

During this year Region SGAP reflected a NSG flavour through the following Office Bearers - Joyce Ward as

Lecture Team Organiser, Fred Hersey Country and Lone Member Representative, Joan Doney Vice President, Phil Leak Publicity Officer, John Lee Seed Bank Curator, Arthur Cooper 'Native Plants' Editor and Scientific Officer.

Every issue of 'Native Plants' featured NSG members: January - Inez Armitage 'Gems for the Hawkesbury Sandstone': Fred Hersey - Country & Lone Member Representative page; March - Inez Armitage - 1974 Acacia Study Report; May - Arthur Cooper - A Trio of Visits and A Year as Scientific Officer; July - Arthur Cooper - A Dissertation of NPK and Fertilisers. Max Hewett - Region President's Report to the 1975 AGM; November - Joan Doney - Possible Plant Sanctuary in Arcadia.

## 1976

The Annual General Meeting in February registered an attendance of 80 members. Retiring President Alick Hobbes sadly relinquished his office, but before doing so said many complimentary things about the Group generally and the help he had received from his Committee and Office bearers. In his search for new ideas and his spontaneous enthusiasm, he has left undoubtedly an overwhelming success story of a good leader. The 1976 elected officers were:

President Don Stitt, Secretary Joyce Ward, Treasurer Maurice Robertson, Delegate Alan Ward, Vice President Geoff Edwards and a Committee of three.

The 'Plant Swap' occupied the larger part of the meeting. The Festival of Flowers (KWG in September 1976) was reported as being under way with Jim Riordan announcing that the number of plants registered for sale was already up to 1100.

John and Penny Rose (Parramatta-Hills Group members) of the Forest Nursery were featured in the Newsletter for the tremendous range of plants available and for their willingness to visit SGAP members to take cuttings from plants thought worthy of wider distribution.

Discussed were several plants of interest per Geoff Edwards: *Eugenia wilsonii*; Jim Riordan *Callistemon salignus*; Joyce Ward *Eriostemon difformis*; Gwyn Knowles *Prostanthera cuneata*.

March meeting: Guest speaker Don Blaxell spoke on the world famous Kew Gardens where he had worked on research into Australian Plants for a year. He was still obviously filled with wonder at what he had seen. A



complex which had grown from 11 to 700 acres, a showpiece with magnificent landscaping of trees and plants from all over the world, with spectacular glass-houses filled with tropical and temperate area plants and repositories for massive botanical collections housed in several herbaria. Also nearby the Linnean Society had been established by John Smith for botanists to study the Carl Linneaus herbarium collection. Great names in 19<sup>th</sup> century botany abounded. Don specialised in Australian Flora in particular the early history and the contributions of such pioneers as Cook, Banks, Solander, Parkinson, Caley and Bauer. Slides helped illustrate an introduction to the work of a herbarium in storing, classifying and preserving. In thanking Don it was made clear how much the NSG appreciated the contributions made to our meetings by botanists from the National Herbarium.

Interesting plants grown by members featured Phil Leak's *Oreocallis wickhamii*; Eunice Stewart's *Persoonia chamaepeuce*, and *Calothamnus sanguineus* grown by the Group at KWG.

Meeting in April: there was to have been a talk by Geoff Edwards but at the last minute cancellation was forced on Geoff and Inez Armitage stepped into the breach to conclude her epic journey around Australia. She continued from Meekatharra to mid W.A. and botanically progressed via Kalgoorlie, Norseman, Esperance to the Gulfs and the York peninsula in South Australia to Wilson's Promontory and back to NSW. She repeated the motivation for her epic trip was the search for *Acacia purpureapetala* in North Queensland. She was unhappy to report that seed sent back had not resulted in plants growing on in the NSW environment.

Don Stitt took over from Inez to talk at length of his investigations into fertilisers and for more knowledge of soil chemistry, the need to analyse soil to determine the effectiveness or otherwise of particular fertilisers.

Geoff Edwards contributed to the evening with slides to illustrate the landscaping of a steep site which he dealt with by terracing with railway sleepers and rockeries to achieve an attractive garden using natives.

A garden visit was organised as the Sunday outing and John Hunt's prize-winning example was first on the agenda. Members were able to see at first hand what had inspired Ron Burrows to write in such glowing terms in the October 1975 newsletter. A hundred *Grevilleas* were dispersed among other plants!

Over the year countless visitors have wandered through Max Hewett's garden, benefiting from the blend of

aesthetic sensitivity and scientific logic which makes this garden unique. The supposedly impossible local plants which flourished were testimony to Max's ability to learn from nature and transfer that knowledge into his garden.

The third garden, that of Margaret and Brian Walker was moulded from a steep gradient dropping from the roadway to a creek below. Set in Sydney sandstone woodland with *Angophora costata*, *Banksias* and *Acacias*, paths of stepping stones wind through a riot of colour and varied foliage provided by indigenous and non-indigenous species.

In May Hugh Stacey came to the meeting to talk on Eastern States *Hakeas* (ignoring the 130 or so from W.A.) and concentrating on the less than a dozen locals. However he had studied his subjects in depth and was able to provide information not available in current literature. For example, all grow within 150 miles of the coastline, they are not drought resistant, they have no lignotuber, no means of storing water, are without a tap root and are shallow rooted. Their foliage enables them to adapt to long dry periods. Hugh used display boards to show variations of foliage and fruits, and slides to show flowering.

Details of planning for the Festival of Wildflowers at KWG were given - the need to raise plants for sale, posters printed to be distributed by members, volunteers for escorted walks during the Festival, flowers from local and interstate sources, Flower Club of NSW acceptance of the invitation for their members to arrange flowers to be obtained by NSG.

At our June meeting Jim Armstrong from the National Herbarium gave his talk on a highly specialised subject 'Pollination'. His interest in this subject stemmed from the study of the early works of Alexander Hamilton, Irishman and teacher, and later a naturalist, who made the subject his life's work in the early part of the century. His writings were copious and indeed one paper was found at the National Herbarium. The importance of research into pollination is shown by the fact that Jim is one of four botanists working in this field at the Herbarium. He went on to explain the special pollinators involved in the evolution of our native plants - the birds and insects - and the plant adaptations in habit and structure to accommodate them. The part played by flower colour, nectars, scents sweet and unpleasant (to humans) and structures encouraging wasps to pseudo-copulation!

In contrast to Jim's subject, a visitor, Dr Bailey (an anaesthetist), gave a short talk on plants with latex properties that warranted further research and used a



*Euphorbia* species of herb which possessed narcotic properties to illustrate the points he made.

The success of the KWG escorted spring walks introduced by Alick Hobbes in 1975 led him to continue these this year and to extend their duration by 2 weeks. Six members would be required for each Saturday and Alick had prepared a leaflet to assist volunteers in their descriptive tasks.

In the Group area at KWG it was reported with satisfaction that paths of wood blocks edged with leaves and chips had been completed, the road about the area was sealed and posts at entrance points were being erected with information about identification of plants by name plates along the pathways.

The July meeting saw Dr Carolyn Pettigrew talking on the 'Ecology of the Vegetation in the Sydney Region', a subject dear to the hearts of many. The *raison d'être* of her theme could be summed up as the relation of plants to the environment under favourable conditions. Her studies concerned the way in which different plant communities of associated plants grow together and how the physical features of each habitat determine the types of plants it can support. As an example of plant succession she instanced a creek in a mangrove swamp where mud builds up to a mud bank, debris holds silt, mud dries out and mangroves are replaced by saltmarsh. As sand builds up, *Eucalyptus robusta* and *Casuarina glauca* arrive. She cited further examples through brackish lagoons subject to sand deposition, sandstone rock areas starting with mosses and moving on to include shrubs in pockets of moss and soil. Also disequilibrium was instanced by fires, drought, flood and unfavourable soil condition in low mineral content areas.

The excursion of the month was the result of an invitation from the Eastern Suburbs group to visit the grounds of Bunnerong Power Station escorted by Errol Thurston. It was a pleasure to wander over the large complex and see the previously desecrated area replanted with native trees and shrubs and to observe the regrowth of native grasses and herbs.

For the August meeting Jim Shawyer was unavailable so Pat Stanley undertook to substitute with his 'Jottings about KWG' in words and slides. Pat traced the history of the KWG from its inception, highlighting contributions to its development by the Council and the NSG, up to the point where Sir Roden Cutler (Governor of NSW) officially opened the complex in 1968. He went on to discuss plants, beginning with typical HSS flora such as *Banksias*, *Hakeas*, *Gompholobiums*,

*Bauera*, *Callistemon*, *Epacris*, *Tetradlea*, *Woolisia* and proceeded to plants from other regions singling out for comment *Hakea bakeriana* from south of Newcastle, Queensland *Grevilleas*, Western Australian *Boronias*, *Lechenaultias*, *Dampieras*, *Grevilleas*, *Acacias* and Kangaroo Paws. His camera captured with superb photography many local and introduced plants. Some memorable shots - a curled up Echidna in slumber, odd looking caterpillars, a legless lizard, a large goanna, queer toadstools, friendly birds, rock formations and caves - added weight to the impression of how fortunate we were to have this area where people can relax and be at one with nature.

A visit to Katandra attracted a good number whose impressions can be summed up by the Newsletter article about the excursion:

"Even to skim through Katandra Bushland Club's Brochure is a treat - as a reference while walking along the Sanctuary's tracks it was very enlightening to the curious. 'What's that?' was quickly answered. The area contains some of the most beautiful Hawkesbury Sandstone bushland and is unique because of the tremendous variety of flora and fauna. It has some open forest, woodland/forest, heathland, deep gullies where ferns and water gums grow in profusion, massive rock outcrops and fascinating sandstone caves."

In September the guest speaker was Alan Nielsen and as the Newsletter Editor had it:

"It needs the pen of Neville Cardus to do justice to Alan Nielsen's address woven with botanical and horticultural knowledge and laced with humour and his particular rhetoric. His subject was of course orchids."

Epiphytic orchids were described in botanical terms, their habitat dealt with, their special root adaptation to cope with a forested arboreal existence. Identification of genera led to a description of particular species and finally in some detail cultivation requirements were given for general and particular species.

There was no excursion this month as the Group was heavily involved in the first Festival of Wildflowers at KWG and also the Region Festival of Plants.

Evan Weatherhead (Blue Mountains Group) came down from the mountain to speak in October and enlivened the meeting with his enthusiastic talk on *Grevilleas* he had grown. He spoke of his conversion whilst living at Bexley, resulting in grubbing out his roses. On moving



to Blaxland his interest increased and he has 50 species under cultivation. He emphasised many are adaptable, mingle harmoniously with other natives, can be grown as specimen plants, as ground covers, rockery, hedge background and even espaliered. Some flower for long periods. Distribution, variation in size, the range of forms, cultivation, pests, pruning, propagation from seeds and cuttings was explained. All in all, a most comprehensive coverage concluded by many slides which showed examples growing in his garden.

The Garden Competition for the Northside was again judged by Ron Burrows, Pat Stanley and Ted de Brabander and resulted in a 1st for Sue & John Hunt, and 2nd for Gail & Bob Goldsack in the Whole Garden section, and in the Part Garden section Nancy and Frank Simons' took out 1st and Mr & Mrs Davey 2nd.

The September Festival was declared a resounding success. 2,500 visitors attending many of them picnicking and going on walks. Expressions of delight at the presentation, the very existence of the Gardens and their environs were gratifying. Sale of plants realised \$1,750, door tickets \$632, door money \$132, and donations \$20. Expenses amounted to \$490. New friends to the Group were made and the efforts of the Flower Club of NSW members who created such extraordinary displays earned our thanks for the interest created.

Ross Donaldson caused interest among *Boronia* fans by his discovery of a white *Boronia pinnata* with exceptionally large and waxlike flowers. Cuttings have been taken. Ross also reported 100% strike with the difficult *Boronia ledifolia*.

The 1976 Region Garden Competition saw Mr & Mrs John Hunt 2nd in the Whole Garden section and Mr Frank Simons of Pymble 1st for Part Garden.

It was reported in the February 1977 Newsletter that the Christmas party in December took the form of a barbecue - voted unanimously a great success with nearly a hundred members and guests enjoying a tip top night.

## 1977

Fred Hersey was elected Group President for 1977, Joyce Ward was re-elected Secretary and Maurice Robertson Treasurer. Ross Donaldson was Vice-President and Delegate and the Executive was supported by a four person Committee. Membership fees were \$7.50 (Fixed income \$4) to belong to SGAP

Region and \$4 (Fixed income \$2) for the Group. The first Group meeting for 1977, held at Willow Park Community Centre, Hornsby featured a short talk on 'Propagation by cuttings' given by Rene and Arthur Cooper. The talk was followed by the regular annual swapping of plants. The Annual General Meeting followed after a short interval.

(In addition to giving the above agenda, the February Group Newsletter mentioned the 1977 Program, policy on Region plant sales for 1977, availability of cutting material from Kangaroo Island, S.A., an offer of 5 plants to the East Turramurra Primary School (commended by School Garden Competition judges), and the great success of the 1976 Christmas Party.)

Importantly, the Newsletter records a forwarding of plans and specifications for a Shade House at the KWG to Ku-ring-gai Council, at their request. The submission was prepared by Jeff Howes. The Group Balance Sheet for 1976 showed a small surplus. Major expenditure related to postage, printing and stationery.

The March Newsletter advised the March Guest Speaker would be John Wrigley, his topic the Iron Range area of North Queensland, supported by a report on plant propagation activity at the Canberra Botanic Gardens. The March Newsletter included a report of the February Annual General Meeting, recording retiring President Don Stitt's specific mention of the success of the 1976 Festival of Wildflowers, the need for ongoing significant 'member participation' and his thanks to the 1976 Office Bearers and Committee.

There was also Joyce Ward's advice of a propagation proposal to develop plants for the 1977 'Festival of Wildflowers'. Treasurer Maurice Robertson considered his Report showed the Group did not need to increase 1977 subscriptions. He claimed assistance from Ron Little, a chartered accountant, and his own wife, Julia, 'the true Treasurer', reduced his position to "mouth-piece" status only.

Further information was given on cuttings from Kangaroo Island, forwarded by Mrs Jackson (author of '*Wildflowers of Kangaroo Island*') and to be dispersed by Mrs Officer and Joyce Ward. The cutting material would relate to both limestone and ironstone rubble areas of Kangaroo Island. Proposed walks and garden visits also received mention.

The April Newsletter contained a number of notes of interest. President Fred Hersey brought along a live Brown Tree Snake and Fred spoke about this and the Green Tree Snake.



At the KWG a new garden had been all but established at the beginning of the road leading to the Knoll and Fernhouse site, with plantings of *Grevillea* and *Hakea* species. Ku-ring-gai Council had approved the plans for a Shade House to be erected with Don Seedsman responsible for co-ordinating Group input into the project. Ross Donaldson was co-ordinating another project, to establish 3000 plants from cuttings.

The NSG provided flowers for a Royal Service at St Andrew's Cathedral, receiving acknowledgement from the Dean of Sydney in his letter of thanks. The Flower Club of NSW ladies arranged the Group's flowers, which came from the Simons, Armitage and Ward gardens, with Fred Hersey helping.

The principal April Newsletter item was a report of John Wrigley's talk on Iron Range and its flora, a comprehensive coverage enhanced by slides which precluded time being available to cover developments at Canberra Botanic Gardens. John was accompanied by wife Marcia, with audience members including a number active during the 1960's.

The April Guest Speaker, John Teulon, of Swane's Nursery was listed to speak on 'Commercial Propagation'. Due to the 1977 Easter period, the meeting was relocated to a Wednesday night at the Pymble Community Centre. John Teulon's talk was reported comprehensively in the May Newsletter. The report covered potting soils, cutting preparation (including optimum timing for collection of material, location on the parent plant and use of chemical assistance), meristem culture, grafting and budding.

Other Newsletter items referred to KWG activities. The Shade House site had been cleared, 320 rooted cuttings had been potted on and the Knoll was being developed further.

Mention was made of the School Garden Competition, following which plants supplied by members were delivered to Roseville East, Castle Cove and North Turramurra Primary Schools as prizes.

The Newsletter also recorded local resident complaints of undue noise as Group members left the Willow Park Hall! The slamming of car doors and the revving of car engines were to be avoided.

An article reprinted from the SGAP South Australia Journal on Burrendong Arboretum was also included.

The May Guest Speaker was scheduled to be John Rose from Forest Native Nursery, speaking on the Grampians.

Garden visits were also programmed for May 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, to include the gardens of Betty & Trevor Batty, Ailsa & Colin Ferguson, Joyce & Alan Ward, Nancy & Frank Simons, and Rene & Arthur Cooper.

John Rose's May talk was reported fully in the June Newsletter. His audience learnt of the Grampians geology, history and floral habitats, with specific references to many of the 1,000+ plant species found there. John recommended Roger Elliot's book '*An Introduction to the Grampian Flora*' as an effective guide. John illustrated his talk with quality slides.

Newsletter notes for June reported good progress with the Shade House at the KWG and the assembly of an impressive collection of rooted cuttings (over 500).

The Group was reported as submitting native plant notes for printing in the local *Advocate* newspaper. The first notes appeared in mid-May.

An excursion to the Myall Lakes was foreshadowed for the October long weekend, President Fred Hersey to lead.

Members were urged to save the new types of plastic bag provided by retailers for use at the Festival of Wildflowers sales tables.

Group members were scheduled to attend the Flower Club of NSW June meeting to identify and speak about native plants.

The May newsletter reprinted two articles from Interstate journals, '*Why Drummond?*' by E.C. Rogers and '*My Association with the Cycadaceae*' by Len P Butt.

This Newsletter also noted that the June meeting would be the last for Inez Armitage, in the process of moving to Queensland. Inez's contribution to the Group was acknowledged and a special supper foreshadowed.

The June Guest Speaker was notified as Dr Carolyn Pettigrew, her subject '*The Royal National Park*'. The report of Dr Pettigrew's talk in the July Newsletter revealed her comprehensive interest in and involvement with the Park. She addressed its history, geology, settlement, tourism, logging, the introduction of exotic animals and the varied floral habitats (heathlands, tropical rainforest, coastal rainforest).

The July Newsletter also contained an article on a natural hybrid *Crowea (exalata x saligna)* which appeared in some numbers in the Cooper's garden. Rene and Arthur looked to Group members to assist with the





development of this potentially valuable hybrid. (This was later to become *Crocea* 'Festival') *Hakea propinqua* also featured in a Newsletter segment.

Volunteer helpers were sought for the SGAP Region Exhibition (September 10, 11) and the North Shore Group Festival of Wildflowers (September 17, 18). Mention was also made of the proposed October Myall Lakes Excursion, with accommodation to be arranged at the Hawkes Nest Motel.

John Waterhouse, University of NSW Botanist was listed to speak on 'Palms' at the July meeting, while Rene and Arthur Cooper were to lead an exploration of KWG's Fraser Walk on July 10<sup>th</sup>.

The August Newsletter reported John Waterhouse's talk, with particular emphasis on the Bangalow Palm (*Archontophoenix cunninghamia*). John and a colleague were conducting a research program into its growth. The talk covered the history of palms, their world range, their life history and function. John used slides in illustration of members of the palm family and concluded with a slide of *Xanthorrhoea*, another plant with a long life span after slow early growth.

In general reporting, the Fraser Walk was most successful, with plenty of winter flowering plants to admire. *Boronia ledifolia*, *Styphelia tubiflora* and *Psilotum nudum* received special mention, together with rocks, cave formations and waterfalls.

The forthcoming Festival of Wildflowers was given prominence, with appeals for helpers, transport, containers and dispersal of posters. Joyce Ward, Alick Hobbes, Jeff Howes, Ross Donaldson, Betty Batty and Don Seedsman were designated persons with responsibilities.

Geoff Edwards and Fred Hersey were recorded as involved with preparations for the SGAP Region Exhibition. A further note mentioned *Bauera rubioides* (an excellent form from Adelaide Spencer-Maggs) and *Eutaxia obovata* would be on sale at the Festival (150 of each).

The Newsletter reported hard to get plants currently available from John and Penny Rose's Forest Native Nursery - *Melaleuca micromera*, *Beaufortia sparsa*, *B. purpurea*, *B. schaueri*, *Darwinia leiostyla*, *Epacris impressa* and *E. longiflora*, *Boronia pinnata* and *Ricinocarpus pinifolius*.

The Christmas Party, Myall Lakes Excursion and the Garden Competition received brief mention, while Ian

Vimpany from the Biological and Research Institute was listed as the August Guest Speaker, his subject being 'Soils'. Ross Donaldson was to lead an excursion along the Cowan Trail at Duffy's Forest.

As reported in the September Newsletter, Ian Vimpany, the August Guest Speaker, took a scientific approach to his subject 'Soils'. Initially he spoke of types of terrain, depths and types and soil and specific soil characteristics. In doing so he covered comprehensively sandy, loam, clay and arable soils. He then related this coverage to Australia's very old and leached soils. Ian covered the nature of our local soils, i.e. Hawkesbury and Narrabeen Sandstones and Wianamatta Shale, emphasising components of good growing soil, essential elements, fertilisation, PH and essential and trace elements.

The Newsletter's general notes included suggestions from Penny and John Rose as to suitable ground cover and low growing plants. These included: *Darwinia grandiflora*, *D. homoranthoides*, *Scaevola striata*, *S. ramiosissima*, *Grevillea 'Pink Lady'*, *Baeckea astarteoides*, *Hibbertia obtusifolia*, *Melaleuca violacea*, *Prostanthera denticulata*, *P. saxicola var. montana*, *Pultenaea subspicata* and *Alyogyne* (formerly *Hibiscus*) *huegelii*.

Other September Newsletter notes related to the Festival of Wildflowers (including a need for *Eriostemon verrucosus* and Wattles), the success of the Ross Donaldson led Cowan Perimeter Trails walk and the need for Garden Competition entries to be notified.

Chris Betteridge, Resource Investigation Officer, N.P & W.L.S was listed to speak in September on 'Essential Oils for Industry from Australian Plants.'

The October Newsletter reported Chris Betteridge's talk, which concentrated on the extraction of essential oils from *Eucalyptus spp.* The talk traced some of the history of relevant research by the Botany Department of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, outlined features of the world essential oil market and situation, and examined the Australian industry, where production is centred on the Blue Mallee (*Eucalyptus polybractea*), treated as an agricultural crop. Other *Eucalyptus* species receiving specific mention were reported as *E. goniocalyx*, *E. radiata*, *E. sideroxylon*, *E. leucoxyton*, *E. viridis*, *E. andreana* (= *E. elata*), *E. macarthurii* and *E. citriodora*. *Melaleuca alternifolia* was also featured. Slides illustrated various aspects of Chris's talk.

Among other Newsletter notes and reports, Geoff Edwards was commended for his display in the Fern



Section of the Region Plant Exhibition, Alec Blombery's rules for maintaining a plant's attractive appearance were quoted and John & Penny Rose offered to propagate rooted cuttings for Festival of Wildflowers No 3 (Ross Donaldson, Betty Batty and Joyce Ward to liaise).

A major note concerned the September Festival of Wildflowers, recording its great success, gross takings (\$3,754), large number of visitors (some 6000 estimated) and appreciation of the efforts of the Flower Club ladies, Chief Ranger Jim Shawyer and Poster designer Milton Larven and its printer, Mr Doug Alexander (friend of Julia & Maurice Robertson).

Plants which made a significant impression at the Festival included *Thomasia petalocalyx*, *Grevillea floribunda*, *Clematis aristata*, *Eugenia wilsonii* and *Nymphaea gigantea*. Interstate and intrastate contributions of flowers were acknowledged with thanks.

The Newsletter concluded with Arthur Cooper's article 'More about Nomenclature - This time for Ordinary People' - a personal view of scientific nomenclature and common naming. The Newsletter noted with sadness the death of member Bob Withers.

For November's Group Meeting, the Newsletter listed a program substitution, a film entitled 'Nectar Eaters' and an expert panel answering members' questions. As the November Newsletter related, a panel consisting of Geoff Bush, Phil Leak and Ross Donaldson dealt with a number of problems at the October meeting. These included yellowing leaves on *Bauera rubioides*, galls on *Eucalyptus cinerea* and *Callistemon citrinus*, seed problems (*Hakeas*, *Eucalyptus*, *Thysanotus* collection and germination) and removal of *Banksia* cones from the parent plants. Pests came under consideration, with borer and nematode attack addressed, while Ross Donaldson addressed in detail propagation from cuttings.

Fred Hersey showed a film on spiders - not the programmed 'Nectar Eaters' but still a pleasant diversion.

The Fred Hersey led Myall Lakes Excursion, one of the best in the opinion of the participants, a rating in no small part due to Fred's planning, organisation and leadership. Comments and suggestions for the 1978 Group Program were sought, while a workshop proposal was under consideration.

The November meeting was to be a Slide Night with each member invited to bring up to 12 slides for presentation by Maurice Robertson. Should time permit, Don Stitt had a movie of his recent Cape York journey, part of a 19,000 mile safari.

The November Slide Night proved to be much appreciated. Photographic highlights included the work of Max Thiele, Paddy Pallin, Phil Leak, Geoff Bush, Frank Simons, Bob Goldsack, Arthur Cooper, Mrs Officer and Geoff Edwards. There proved to be time for Don Stitt's recorded adventures in Cape York Peninsula and beyond. In the Newsletter's view "a very pleasant night". In a continuation of vicarious travelling, the Newsletter recorded the details of a 5-week holiday, which took Wilma & Jim Riordan to N-W NSW, N-E South Australia and S-W Queensland, in part in company with Inez Armitage. The 'towns', the countryside, the flora, the birds, the cattle stations, the presence/absence of water all featured in the report.

Other Newsletter notes commented on Geoff Edward's pot of *Helmholtzia glaberrima*, an unaltered \$4.00 Group subscription for 1978, Rene Cooper's distribution of *Crowea spp* seedlings (*exalata x saligna*) for study and future recording and Fred Hersey's mention of the Committee's feeling that there should be some form of booklet on the KWG flora.

The next Group meeting was scheduled for December 16<sup>th</sup>, the Christmas Party at the KWG. Betty Batty and Joyce Ward were listed as co-ordinators. In the event, over 100 persons attended, Jim Shawyer received a water jug in appreciation of his help over many years and in many ways, and a great time was had by all.

'Native Plants', the Region Newsletter, was produced 6 times in 1977. North Shore Group members received honourable mention in the issues of 'Native Plants' during the year, in connection with offices held and Region activities.

Arthur Cooper as Scientific Officer and independently, contributed five articles, Fred Hersey was Country and Lone Member Representative and the producer of a Brown Tree Snake at a Region Meeting, Phil Leak was Assistant to the Editor of 'Australian Plants' and Publisher's Representative, Frank Simons took care of Seed Sales at General Meetings, Joyce Ward was Lecture Team Leader and Geoff Edwards was associated prominently with the Fern Group. An abridged story of the North Shore Group's history from 1960 to 1977 appeared in the May issue of 'Native Plants' (Vol. 11, No 3, pp 10-12). North Shore Group's contribution of flowers for the Royal service at St Andrew's Cathedral was acknowledged, while Phil Leak (*Syzygium wilsonii subs. wilsonii* and *Elaeocarpus reticulatus* and Joyce Ward (*Ceratopetalum gummiferum*, *Acacia subulata*, *Eriostemon difformis* and a natural *Crowea* hybrid [*saligna x exalta*]) produced flowers of note at Region Meetings.



N.B. The above mentioned *Crocea* was later identified by Jim Armstrong of the Sydney Herbarium as a form of *Crocea saligna*, thought worthy of cultivation.

## 1978

The 1978 February Newsletter placed emphasis on the coming program of events and Group projects, old and new. The range included Meeting nights, bush walks, garden visits and a Workshop. Fred Hersey's good offices in obtaining Guest Speakers was acknowledged. Specific mention was made of:

- ◆ An August Region bus tour to the Canberra Botanic Gardens Jervis Bay Annexe
- ◆ KWG Working Parties, with a specific need to pot up rooted cuttings for sale
- ◆ A KWG Storage Shed
- ◆ Plant propagation by seeds and cuttings, with Penny Rose involved with the latter
- ◆ The University of New England Ecofest, focused on caring for and sharing our environment.
- ◆ The Group's Balance Sheet for 1977 showed a surplus of income over expenditure of \$1,786.36, courtesy of a Festival of Wildflowers profit of \$2,265.62.

Arthur Cooper contributed a significant article 'Let's Do Some Experiments', in which he appealed for a group of members to take a team approach to the scientific propagation and cultivation of interesting species.

As usual, the scheduled February Meeting was to combine the Annual General Meeting and Swap Night.

As a result of the Annual General Meeting, the March Newsletter recorded the 1978 list of Office Bearers. Retiring President, Fred Hersey, reported the numerous and varied successes of the Group's activities in 1977. He indicated also that, due to work commitments he would not be able to offer himself as President for 1978. Jan Braund proposed a vote of thanks to Fred for his contribution as President and also referred to the Committee's support and the Group's co-operative spirit. Fred Hersey was replaced as President by Don Stitt (President 1976, to be President again in 1981 - a unique three time winner!), Colin Cashman replaced Maurice Robertson as Treasurer, Jeff Howes replaced

Ross Donaldson as Delegate, and Joyce Ward began her eleventh consecutive year as Secretary). A three person Committee was elected to support the Office Bearers.

The Newsletter reported a successful KWG Working Bee where 18 enthusiastic members endured high temperatures to pot on about 600 rooted cuttings and a coming excursion to Ray Best's Fern House at Kenthurst.

A paper delivered by Dr R L Specht of the University of Queensland at the University of New England's 1977 Burrendong Dam Ecofest was reprinted, the title 'Native Plants and Soils.'

The March Group Meeting was to feature the University of Sydney's Dr Peter Valder, speaking on 'Association of Micro-organisms and Native Plants.'

Peter Valder's talk was reported at length in the April Newsletter, focusing on the role and function of different fungus types in relation to plant growth. Peter's references to bacteria, blue-green algae and proteoid roots were covered also, as was the beneficial contribution to plants of an ongoing supply of humus. Slides illustrated Peter's talk.

A number of small items of information received Newsletter coverage: 500 rooted cuttings at the KWG Shadehouse needed potting on; small ferns were needed to be potted up for the 1978 Festival of Wildflowers; a Store Shed for the KWG was on President Don Stitt's drawing board; the visit to Ray Best's Fern House was rained out and to be re-programmed; a May Workshop Program was being developed.

Arthur Cooper's Experiment group decided to investigate the cultivation of *Eremophila maculata* and *Epacris longifolia* by growing them in the garden and in pots.

Forest Native Nursery decided to allow 10% discount on book purchases by NSG members.

In a re-programming move, Tony Rodd from the National Herbarium was listed to speak on 'Australian Conifers and Cycads' at the April Meeting, exchanging Guest Speaker dates with Roger Goode.

Tony Rodd spoke to the April Meeting about the gymnosperms, concentrating on Cycads (*Zamias* and *Macrozamias*) and Conifers (*Araucariaceae*, *Cupressaceae*, *Podocarpaceae*, *Taxodiaceae*) but mentioning other interesting gymnosperms.



The May Newsletter also reported Garden Visits to the homes of Roger & Helen Davey (plantings less than 4 years old) and Lizl Grossman (native plants surrounded by long established specimen trees).

Arthur Cooper provided some notes on the need for a scientific approach, emphasising validity and reliability, to achieve effective experimentation. Mention was also made of the CSIRO Division of Soils publications under the heading of 'Discovering Soils' and the rescheduled visit (Sunday, 7<sup>th</sup> May) to Ray Best's Fern House.

The proposed Native Plant Workshop was set down for Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> May at the KWG with members urged to attend as helpers and participants. Jim Armstrong from the National Herbarium was the scheduled May Guest Speaker, his subject 'Zierias'.

Jim Armstrong's talk was reported comprehensively in the June Newsletter. Jim at the time had been working for a Ph.D. on the *Rutaceae* for several years. His work embraced propagation and cultivation and included studies of pollination and susceptibility to disease. Jim traced early knowledge of *Zierias* (*Z. smithii* 1775), geographical distribution (Australia, New Zealand, New Caledonia), close botanical allies (*Boronias*, *Correas*) and gave information on the growth habits and locations of interesting genera. He also gave exhilarating descriptions of field trips into areas off the beaten track in search of significant specimens (*Z. montana*, *Z. minutiflora*). These trips included Mt Finigan (north of Rockhampton), Tully Falls (Herbert River) and Mt Cala in New Caledonia. With respect to cultivation, Jim described dealing with cuttings (propagation, potting on, fertilisation, dealing with fungus and pests). He had produced healthy and vigorous plants of several species to illustrate his talk, together with numerous quality slides, including records of an experiment in grafting (*Zieria* as stock, *Boronia* as scion).

The June Newsletter reported a most enjoyable afternoon spent at Ray Best's garden and Fern House, with the visitors appreciating Ray and Marie's hospitality, knowledge and plants. Arthur Cooper contributed an article on Phytophthora and Nematodes, addressing the state of the problems with these garden scourges, precautionary actions to minimise incursions and the use of chemicals to treat them.

The Workshop at the KWG was quite successful with 800-900 visitors! Arthur Cooper's audio-visual presentation; Ross Donaldson (cuttings) and Mel Dyer (seeds) on propagation; plant sales and raffle; Pat Stanley and Ted de Brabander at the Knoll; the Fern House; the walks and John and Penny Rose (stock

plants for display) all received honourable mention as contributing to the success.

This Newsletter also made mention of the garden competition to be a component of celebrations associated with the Golden Jubilee of Ku-ring-gai Council and of the donation to Region funds of approximately \$50 from plant sales at the last Region Meeting. The next Group meeting was to feature 'Vegetation of the Centre'.

On a sad note the Newsletter recorded a tribute to Dorothy Hasluck on the occasion of her untimely and unexpected death at the age of 82.

The June Guest Speaker was as programmed - Alan Fox of the National Parks & Wildlife Service in Canberra. He took as his topic the complexities of Kakadu National Park. [The report of his talk makes interesting reading in the mid 1990's.] Alan spoke of Arnhem Land's long association with man, uranium mining issues, tourism, the rights of traditional owners and effects on local wildlife. Illustrated by superb photographs, Alan's commentary on the present and his vision for the future canvassed issues of ongoing significance and relevance.

The July Newsletter noted President Don Stitt's suggestion to the June Group Meeting that the Workshop Display area be enhanced by flower photographs. Entries for the Native Plant Garden Section of Ku-ring-gai Council's Competition were encouraged with Joyce Ward available to combine entry notifications, while promises of assistance to sell plants at the Region Native Plant Exhibition were also sought. The Newsletter included two reprinted articles - 'Tracking the Scribbler' described and accounted for the 'scribbles' on 'Scribbly gums' (*Eucalyptus haemastoma* and *E. racemosa*), while Part I of Lester Hawkins' paper 'Landscape Uses of Australian Plants in California' described successful Australian plant adaptation to the Californian environment. A postponement of July's Bush Walk to Lady Davidson Park to August 20<sup>th</sup> was advised, leader Paddy Pallin feeling more flowers would be in evidence at that time. July's Guest Speaker was announced as Rosemary Buchan, Archaeologist from NP & WLS to talk on 'Vegetation Associated with Aborigines'.

Rosemary recounted Aboriginal use of plant material for food, medicine, ceremonial usage, shelter and canoes. The abundance of available plant resources rendered their domestication unnecessary, with suggestions in evidence that the totem system may have aided conservation. Rosemary's list of food plants included at least seventeen species yielding fruit, seeds and even spore cases.



The August Newsletter sought the assistance of Group members in undertaking responsibilities at the September Regional Exhibition (plant sales), and the Festival of Wildflowers two weeks later. Nominations for the Region Garden Competition were also invited. The August Bush Walk date was confirmed. The reprint of Landscape Architect Lester Hawkins' paper was concluded, with Lester describing effective usage of a number of Australian plant families and species which adapted to California's climate and flowered well, even continuously. Lester also referred to his work in landscaping a city garden and a housing development using Australian plants, as well their use in his own and other private gardens and in special situations e.g. rock gardens. Roger Goode, Research Officer from CSIRO in Canberra was to talk to the August meeting on 'The Effect of Fire in National Parks.'

As reported in the September Newsletter, Roger Goode spoke in general terms of the effects of fire on plant communities, with some reference to his particular area of interest and expertise, sub-alpine regions. Roger covered topography of five affected areas, weather aspects and plant regenerative capabilities. He made specific mention of *Eucalypts*, *Angophoras*, *Proteaceae* species, *Acacias*, *Casuarinas*, *Xanthorrhoea australis*, *Bossiaea foliosa* and *Ranunculus anemoneus*.

The discussion of seasonal flowers at the August meeting was reported by Ross Donaldson, with *Grevilleas* and *Acacias* predominating. Specific mention was made of *Grevillea baueri*, *G. caleyi*, *G. jephcottii*, *G. linearifolia*, *G. mucronulata*, *G. pilulifera*, *G. polybractea*, *G. sericea*, *G. shiressii*, *Acacia prominens*, *A. spectabilis*, *A. vestita* and *Epacris purpurascens*. The September Newsletter also featured a short article on the cultivation of *Pterostylis* terrestrial orchids (*Pterostylis curta*, *P. nana*, *P. nutans*, *P. pedunculata*). The article included information on pot culture, soil composition, positioning, fertilising and watering.

House-keeping notes included a Shade House Working Bee, the Festival of Wildflowers duty lists and timetable, SGAP Group Conference (29<sup>th</sup> October - North Shore Group to host) and the SGAP Biennial Conference (August 1979). Les Taylor, President of Blue Mountains Groups, was the scheduled September Guest Speaker, *Prostantheras* to be his subject. His talk was reported in the October Newsletter.

Les Taylor, a lover of *Prostantheras* and ferns and a driving force behind the Blue Mountains Glenbrook Reserve, illustrated his talk with numerous slides and potted specimens of *Prostantheras*. He described their affinity with herbs and garden plants (*Coleus*, *Salvia*),

their growth and flowering habits and cultivation requirements. Of the more than 66 known species of *Prostanthera*, Les made specific mention of *P. aspalathoides*, *P. caerulea*, *P. incana*, *P. incisa*, *P. lasianthos*, *P. ovalifolia*, *P. rotundifolia*, *P. saxicola*, *P. scutellarioides*, *P. sieberi* and *P. striatiflora*. Cultivation problems (collar rot, nematodes, borers) were balanced by ease of propagation from cuttings, natural occurrence of seedlings, adaptation to pot culture and profusion of flowers.

A pleasant coincidence with Les's talk was Phil Leak's provision of copies of George Althofer's '*Cradle of Incense*'. Les was hopeful that a *Prostanthera* Study Group would be established to further the cause of these beautiful plants, a cause he espoused in inspirational fashion.

General matters referred to in the October Newsletter included a Festival of Wildflowers wrap-up (gate money \$1,000 - two thirds of the takings; plant sales/raffle \$2,200 - less expenses; Jim Shawyer's ice cream and scone sales \$1,000+) and a further appeal for help with the October 29<sup>th</sup> Group Conference. Additionally, the Newsletter had a short article by Les Nesbitt on repotting Greenhoods (*Pterostylis* spp), a book list by Bob Goldsack (including Inez Armitage on *Acacias*), a plea to collect seeds, an urging to visit The Knoll at the KWG and view the results of the labour of Pat Stanley and Ted de Brabander, a request for member input for the 1979 Group Program and notice of Sutherland Group's Excursion on November 4-5<sup>th</sup> to Canberra Botanic Gardens.

October's Group Meeting was to hear Margaret Betteridge from the Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences speak on 'Australian Flora in Art'. The report of her talk indicated that while not really linked to growing Australian plants, the audience was nevertheless captivated. Margaret traced the history of depicting Australia's flora by craftsmen, engravers, glass blowers and ceramic artists, reaching a peak around the time of Federation and being exemplified, for example, by the establishment of numerous community Arts & Crafts Societies. The roles of the then Technological Museum and Sydney Technical College were also explained, with the use of the Waratah motif a feature. The Group was delighted with Margaret's delivery, exhibits and slides.

The November Newsletter also contained an itemised statement of financial involvement with the recent Workshop and Festival, the bottom line being a net profit of \$2,861.28. The Newsletter also contained a number of short items relevant to the Group's activities



i.e.

- ◆ A proposal to produce a Guidebook to the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden.
- ◆ Availability of a booklet "500 Australian Native Plants" produced by Victoria's Maroondah Group.
- ◆ An appeal for assistance with the Biennial Conference/Seminar to be held in August 1979 at Sydney University's Women's College.
- ◆ Ferns from the Shade House and *Borontas* to be sold or raffled (Val Donaldson as raffler).
- ◆ Region was appreciative of North Shore Group's assistance with the October Groups' Conference. Group Committee thanks went to Mel Dyer, the Cashmans, the Donaldsons, Alison Stitt, Dorothy Griffiths, Addie Lee, Gwyn Knowles, Janet Fairlie-Cuninghame, Jan Braund, Alan Ward and Jim Shawyer. The Knoll floral display was much appreciated, a tribute to Pat Stanley and Ted de Brabander.
- ◆ Advice on pruning/taking of cuttings to be had from Ross Donaldson or Jeff Howes with 1979 Festival plant sales in mind.
- ◆ An index to Australian Plants was rapidly nearing readiness for publication, with orders to be made through Region and firm Group numbers needed (cost \$1-\$1.50)
- ◆ There were no suggestions for the 1979 Group Program.

The November Group Meeting was to feature a Slide Night (12 best per member, Fred Hersey to present) and a set up to provide formal exchange of information, elicit suggestions and answer members' questions.

Six members presented slides at the November Group Meeting. Bob Goldsack included *Leptospermum nitidum*, *Astroloma humifusum*, *Caladenia patersonii*, *Thelymitra antennifera*, *Corybas diemenicus*, *Banksia coccinea* and a *Diplolaena*, as well as a fallen but living River Red Gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*). Paddy Pallin's slides featured *Boronia thujona* and Waratahs from the Barren Grounds, *Grevillea baueri* from the Budawangs and *Richea scoparia* from the Tasmanian Alps. Other stand-out slides showed the sun's rays piercing the crown of a giant Red Cedar (*Toona australis*) and a Snow Gum (*Eucalyptus pauciflora*) set in snow. Geoff Bush produced an unusual growth formation (an easily discerned horse's head) in a *Eucalypt*, *Kunzea parvifolia*, *Dampiera hederacea*, *Helichrysum retorta* and a hybrid *Grevillea* (*G. buxifolia* x *G. lavandulacea*). Ian Murray's trip around Australia yielded a varied collection of slides, including Western Australia's Esperance Wax Flower (*Chamelaucium axillare*), masses of *Hovea* from the Jarrah forest and areas of pink everlastings. Closer to home were

*Xanthorrhoea australis* from Gilgandra, rampant *Hardenbergia* from Ben Bullen, and Christmas Bells (*Blandfordia* sp) from Wyong. Allan Ward, back from the Grampians, added *Epacris impressa*, *Grevillea dimorpha* and *G. lavandulacea*, *Bauera sessilis*, River Gums (*E. camaldulensis*), King Ferns, *Micromyrtus ciliata*, *Leptospermum nitidum*, *Calytrix sullivanii* and *Thryptomene calycina*. Max Thiele's 'professional' photography showed an end-on view of *Banksia ericifolia*, *Dryandra formosa*, *Isopogon dubius*, minute grass flowers, *Kunzea baxteri* and paper daisies, all from Western Australia, and a ballet-like depiction of *Clematis* seed cases from the Flinders Ranges.

An easy walk for persons with disabilities was advocated for the KWG. Council undertook to provide road resurfacing with consequent availability of areas for plantings.

Opportunity for owner comment on the seasonal flowers at Meetings was proposed. Mindful of time constraints, the Committee was to examine the proposition.

It was suggested that plants for sale at meetings carry the donor's name to facilitate availability of cultivation advice.

One member suggested a seed exchange, with the response favouring exchange or sharing at Group Meetings, Plant Sales to handle some seeds and the balance to go to the Region Seed Bank.

The December Newsletter also contained a discussion of problems raised by members:

*Oxalis*: Arthur & Rene Cooper's solution *Weedex*.  
Control of ants: *Chlordane* or *Dieldrin*. Yellowing of leaves:(a) chlorosis - *Iron Chelates* concentration of salts - plain water to leach out the fertiliser over-supply.  
Nematodes: *Nemacur* granules

A further note was included in relation to the proposed KWG Guidebook, Arthur Cooper indicating the proposed inclusion of 'Aims & Objects', a History, a Map (including descriptions of tracks and trails) and a 'Plain Language Key' to the trees and plants.

Finally the Newsletter foreshadowed the return of a "Beginners' Corner".

The December Meeting was advised, the regular Christmas Barbecue at the KWG, with the usual request for salads, sweets and flowers. As later reported, the happy event was as successful as in previous years.



The North Shore Group contribution to Region and nationally during 1978 was limited as recorded in 'Native Plants' and 'Australian Plants'. Phil Leak remained assistant to the 'Australian Plants' Managing Editor, Region Editorial Committee Representative and producer of quality plants (e.g. *Melaleuca thymifolia* and *Eugenia wilsonii*) at Region meetings. Joyce Ward was Region Lecture Team Leader and Arthur Cooper was Region Scientific Officer until replaced at the March Annual General Meetings. In that rôle, Arthur wrote on the relative merits of common versus botanically correct names when referring to Australia's flora. Later in the year, he contributed an article 'Audio-Visual Shows' to *Native Plants*.

## 1979

The initial Newsletter for 1979 (February) provided an objective basis for the oncoming Year as may be seen from the following extracts:

*"The Region celebrates its 21<sup>st</sup> year since it had its inaugural meeting in 1958. (NSG held its first meeting in March 1960. We should be proud of our early founders, Phil Leak, Geoff Bush, John Wrigley, Ross Doig, Ted Duncan, Bro Stanley, Lindsay Shepherd). The Region will be host to the Biennial Conference/Seminar in August and will be seeking help- in its demanding duties."*

*"Growing in years, the Region's Council sees fit to revise its Constitution and after it has been discussed at the AGM in March. NSG will need to adapt its rules etc. with any alterations and additions."*

*"Very important is the Group's Festival of Wildflowers in September (preparation has already begun by contacting propagators to supply cuttings of chosen plants)"*

*"Progress has been made on the Booklet of the KWG and it will need your support."*

Retiring President Don Stitt indicated that the final draft of the Region's Constitution would be included in the March issue of 'Native Plants' for all members to consider.

Treasurer Colin Cashman's Report (audited by Wal Knowles) showed that there was a profit of \$2,628 in 1978 of which the Festival contributed \$2,261 and the accumulated fund rose to \$6,909. This would allow the Group to build a storehouse at KWG adjacent to the existing Garden Staff facilities near the Shade House and further to plan the new KWG booklet in collaboration with Ku-ring-gai Council.

The Annual General Meeting represented a complete turn of the circle for newly elected President, Geoff Bush whose previous term of office in this capacity was in 1962-63. Maurice Robertson and Joyce Ward were re-elected as Vice-President and Secretary respectively. Colin Cashman accepted the position of Treasurer and Don Stitt Delegate. There was a solid Committee of Mel Dyer, Jeff Howes and Don Seedsman. Fred Hersey was asked to program excursions. Swap night was conducted as usual in this month. An information corner was scheduled with Rene and Arthur Cooper to demonstrate their method of propagation by cuttings. Membership at this stage was 175 with meetings averaging 75 attendees. No change was made to the annual subscription.

The March Newsletter mentioned that the NSG sponsored the Region's Group Conference and contributed \$50 by selling plants at a Region Meeting. Donations, each of \$5, were made to the Herbarium and the Flower Club. The Group collected flowers for Armistice Day for St. Andrew's Cathedral and the Guiders' Conference. Plant prizes were donated to schools in the area following the Garden Competition. In the Region Competition, a North Shore Garden gained 2<sup>nd</sup> place and in the Ku-ring-gai Council Golden Jubilee Competition was placed in the Native Garden Section.

Guest Speaker was well-known fern authority Gerry Parker (Fern Study Group) who had a fine lot of slides to illustrate her points. A very informative talk on the many aspects of fern culture was followed by an evaluation of fern gardening by John Lee. Ferns were the dominant feature of John & Addie Lees' garden and John explained something of the topography of their block.

On the Sunday following the meeting Geoff and Moriet [sic] Edwards kindly opened their garden and fernhouses at Glenhaven and played host to a good gathering of members who enjoyed their hospitality and afternoon tea on the lawn under a spreading *Eucalypt*. Geoff was able to display a wide variety of assorted ferns.

Neville Marchant's article on Scientific Names was continued in the April Newsletter, which also featured an article by Rene and Arthur Cooper on a practical method of creating home made potting soils. Working Bees and 'potting up bees' were to be continued as usual at the KWG.

No evening meeting was scheduled for April due the advent of Easter. However, an excursion was mooted to take in the Fraser and Mueller Trails at the KWG with lunch to be taken at the Waterfall.



Prominence was given in the May Newsletter to the proposed NSG Festival in September. The Shade House was full of plants with some 14 to 16 members diligently potting up rooted cuttings and seedlings on the working days. These members were the backbone of the Festival. Their services were so necessary for the promotion of native plants on an occasion which attracted about 5000 visitors in the previous year. A large stand was being made by Don Stitt to display a variety of wildflowers. Attention was also drawn to the forthcoming Biennial Seminar in August, giving information concerning registration, venue, excursions and the requirement for NSG to assist in the preparation of afternoon tea, serving lunches and the identification of flowers.

Other items included: an article from the Victoria Regional Journal by Mr A McD. Riddell on the 'Why's and How's of our Autumn Colours'; a comment by Bill Cook on Borers; information by new member Margaret Ann Tongue on a fungus growing in the Shade House - *Anthurus muddleramus*; a visit by the Lees and Wards to the Burrendong Arboretum; a proposed visit to the new Wollemi National Park advocated by Collin Ferguson "our ardent conservationist".

Guest speaker was Don McGilvray of the National Herbarium who was, at the time, occupied with the mammoth task of revising the genus *Grevillea*. A full account of his talk (supported by slides) which covered his extensive travels in Western Australia, was written up in the June 1979 NSG Newsletter.

This issue also provided details of a visit by the Group to Wollemi Wilderness led by Rodney Falconer of the National Parks Association. Plants mentioned as having been sighted included *Pultenaea reflexa*, *P. cunninghamii*, *Eriostemon hispidula* and *Boronia anethifolia* amongst many others. Other articles appearing in this Newsletter were "Making Compost" by Rene and Arthur Cooper and "Requiem for the Rural Gum Tree" an extract from 'Ecos' CSIRO February 1979. Additional items related to progress of the KWG Booklet under the guidance of Arthur Cooper and the organising of Winter Walks by Alick Hobbes. New members welcomed to the Group were Irwin Palmer and Margaret Ann and Bill Tongue.

Guest Speaker in June was the delightful Paddy Pallin, who for quite a number of years was a NSG member. He enthralled members with his recounting of a venturesome journey on skis from Mt Bogong to Mt Hotham. Traversing the Victorian Alps, he reproduced for the Group spectacular pictures of Alpine flora and slopes covered with Billy Buttons (*Craspedia uniflora*),

Eyebright (*Euphrasia collina*), Snow Daisies (*Celmisia longifolia*), prostrate *Pentachondria pumila*, *Helichrysum bracteatum* and *Prostanthera cuneata*.

Some 15 members planted over 60 trees and shrubs at the KWG in June and the next 'working bee' day was scheduled for the planting of *Acacias* near the Entrance Gates.

Alick Hobbes reported in July that over 60 visitors took advantage of the Guided Walk in June at the KWG and that "Next Walk Walkabout", as published in the Advocate Courier, will be considerably larger in numbers as many enquiries have been received and 2JJ, 2UE, will be broadcasting in detail." Other items covered in July were "Composting", a booklet by CSIRO, "Looking for Groundcovers?" listing some non-invasive groundcovers; a further reminder and more detail concerning the Biennial Seminar.

Well-known Landscape Consultant, Judy Messer, was the Guest Speaker in July, her subject of course being 'Landscaping'.

Dr Miller, Entomologist at the NSW Institute of Technology, gave a valuable address in August on 'The Wogs that trouble us and the way to detect and destroy them'. His talk referred mainly to the insects that trouble gardeners most, i.e. the leaf eating insects, and many were clearly depicted on some excellent slides. Dr Miller preferred the use of manual methods to spraying, but if such was necessary then the least toxic effective sprays should be used.

An interesting extract from the *West Australian* of October 1974 (author D. Dover, Maroondah Group Victoria) appeared in the September Newsletter. The article titled 'In Search of the Elusive Underground Orchid' refers to the white daisy-like orchid which never sees the light of day. It is the subterranean *Rhizanthella gardneri*, a very rare plant. Only one other species of underground orchid is known. Detailed information was provided and reference was made to an excellent book on the origin of generic names of W.A. plants published by the University of W.A. Press, the author being the past State Librarian, E.A. Sharp.

The Region's Plant Exhibition was held on the 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> September and NSG's own Festival at the KWG on 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> of the month. Extracts from Newsletters concerning the latter were as follows:

"September. The Festival of Wildflowers is on the horizon and your help en masse is needed. Jeff Howes will be the Chief at the Gate" "Don Seedsman - if your





*aptitude is for orderly car-parking; Colin Cashman and Mel Dyer to sell plants; Alick Hobbes for those who wish to guide visitors along the trails; Joyce Ward in the flower display to meet and talk to visitors about the flowers the Flower Club will have displayed so beautifully".*

*"October. Our effort once again achieved a fine result considering a vicious wind deterred many people from coming on Sunday afternoon. Among the flowers from W.A was *Crowea dentata* with white flowers, the only one of the species growing in the West. There was also a collection of ground covers consigned from Alice Springs from Dr Vines who visited Sydney for the Seminar. From Brookvale Park, Toowoomba came a superb consignment of *Eucalyptus* blooms and many *Grevilleas*, also *Melaleuca nematophylla* with terminal 2" balls of mauve blossoms, a great eye catcher; from Townsville water-lilies from the lagoons, *Hoyas*, *Eugenia wilsonii* and *Tecomathe hillii* (a climber with pendulous *Christmas Bell-like* flowers) and rainforest foliage."*

*"The orchid display was exceptionally good and had as always a mass of admirers. The orchids were from the glasshouses of Ted Duncan and Alan Nielsen. The basket of *Dendrobium kingianum* that hung over the Fern Garden almost needed a guard such was the interest. It was Geoff Bush's treasure."*

The financial result was approximately \$2,000 profit.

Guest speaker in September, John Teulon, Horticulturist of Swane's Nursery spoke on 'Native Plants in Containers'. His preferred mixture for native plants in tubs was interesting viz. Clay 5% to 10%, Sand 44%, Radiata Pine Chips 25%, Hardwood Sawdust 25%. He nominated many plants suitable for container culture too numerous to include herein.

In the following month there was a unique presentation by Don Blaxell of the National Herbarium about 'Cinderella Plants'. He referred to a collection of odd species that he felt was largely ignored by growers of native plants yet had potential for cultivation. He described these plants, many of which were rare and unknown to members. Also scheduled for October was a further visit to Max Hewett's garden at Mt Ku-ring-gai.

Matters referred to in the November Newsletter included inter alia: the practicability of holding the Wildflower Festival in 1980 - President Geoff indicated that the work load involved in the presentation of the Festival usually fell on the shoulders of a willing few. Members however decided that the work involved was worth the effort and the Group would continue to plant

for 1980; a list of plants considered desirable for growing by members for sale at the Festival was produced by Colin Cashman; suggestions were required for the 1980 program of activities; cancellation of the scheduled trip to the Barrington Tops area; congratulations to Arthur Cooper on the contents and presentation of the KWG Booklet. Members of the NSG who assisted in the preparation of the KWG Booklet under the guidance of Arthur Cooper included Geoff Bush, Rene Cooper, Bob & Gael Goldsack, Fred Hersey, Peggy Muntz, Paddy Pallin and Joyce Ward. From the staff of Ku-ring-gai Council were Ron Burrows (Director of Parks), Stuart Doyle (Protocol Officer) and Jim Sawyer (Chief Ranger).

November was member Slide Night, scheduled to be presented by Gael Goldsack. Ian Murray, Jenny Annet, Phil Leak, Geoff Bush, Don Stitt, Joyce Ward and Max Thiele contributed to a diverse pictorial presentation of Australian flowers, animals and scenery. Another landmark for the Group occurred on this night: NSG became the proud owner of a Rollei projector with auto focusing, this evening being an appropriate one to prove its worth.

The December Newsletter contained an article on the use of lime for West Australian plants, There was a request for members to strike cuttings for the 1980 Festival and also news about members who were 'packing up' or had departed the area. Dorothy Griffiths and Mrs Griffiths who had given generous help to the Group were moving to Port Macquarie. Enthusiastic ex NSG members Betty & Trevor Batty sent greetings from Lake Cathie. (Their enthusiasm carried through to great work for SGAP in their new domicile). There was regret that Inez Armitage's husband, Harry, was very ill in England. Inez, who was a long-time and helpful and knowledgeable member of NSG and SGAP and author of 'Acacias of NSW' had previously moved to Kempsey. Adelaide Spencer-Maggs (near 4 score years and 10) was welcomed to the meeting. Members looked forward to having Rev. Len & Dilys Williams at the Christmas Barbeque (Len had been ill for some time).

The Christmas Barbeque marked the end of another year. Members of the Flower Club and representatives of other SGAP groups were invited. Delicious salads and sweets were provided by members and the Group contributed luscious steaks, wine and fruit punch; appetites responded well to a delectable spread.

A few NSG scribes were busy writing articles for 'Native Plants'. The March 1979 issue featured Secretary Joyce Ward's account of a coach tour to the Dorrigo



area, on the Australia Day weekend, by Metropolitan, Central and North Coasts, Newcastle and Northern members. The May issue included a note about borers by Bill Cook reprinted from a NSG Newsletter. There was also an extract from the same source referring to impressions gained by members (Lees and Wards) from a visit to Burrendong Arboretum. In July information concerning the Annual Wildflower Garden Competition, to be held in September, was provided by Joan Doney. Office bearers were reported and of significance to NSG were: Federal Publishing Representative - P Leak; Publicity Officer and Lecture Leader - Joyce Ward; Editor Newsletter - Milton Larven; Scientific Officer - Max Hewett; Country & Lone Representative - Fred Hersey. References in the September issue were to Max Hewett's talk on *Boronias* to the Harbourside Group in June and to the commissioning of John Wrigley by the Coffs Harbour Shire Council to draw up plants for Coffs Harbour Botanic Gardens. The results of the Regional Garden Competition were reported in November, winner of the whole garden section being Max Hewett (Joan Doney was one of the judges). Also a Newsletter Editor was required due to Milton Larven's inability to continue.

Of interest, '*Australian Plants*' published extracts from John Wrigley's new book *Australian Pea Flowers: Their Cultivation*. Listings included Phil Leek as Assistant to the Managing Editor and Joan Doney as leader of the Calytrix Study Group.

## 1980

The Group year began with the customary Annual General Meeting and Swap night in February. Election of Office Bearers saw the Presidency go to Geoff Bush, a unique event, for Geoff had been not only an inaugural Group member but its second President in 1962-63. Joyce Ward continued as Secretary, Alick Hobbes took on the Vice-Presidency and Colin Cashman continued as Treasurer. Don Stitt was appointed Region Delegate and Ron Little auditor. In accordance with Regional Rule changes, the President, Vice-President and Secretary became the Group Trustees. At the same time the number of Committee members was increased from 3 to 5.

At this meeting the Committee saw fit to propose a number of amendments to the Group Rules, specifically those relating to Objects, Life Members, Subscriptions, Election of Office Bearers and number of Committee Members. All amendments were accepted by members present.

Treasurer Colin Cashman presented the accounts for 1979, showing a profit of \$2,160. The accumulated funds of the Group stood at \$8,492 and included investments of \$4,352 and Cash at Bank of \$630.

The February Newsletter contained a brief resume of significant 1979 events among them being:

- ◆ The publication in collaboration with Ku-ring-gai Council of the KWG booklet, its success largely the result of the work of Rene and Arthur Cooper in compiling and editing its contents.
- ◆ The success of the Wildflower Festival (featured this year by ABC TV in a 5-minute prime time documentary)
- ◆ The annual Christmas barbeque for 1979, considered to be both a relaxed event and a culinary success.
- ◆ The proposed 1980 program enclosed with the Newsletter, seeking members comments on a coach visit to Burrendong Arboretum, National Botanic Gardens, Canberra or other suitable venue.
- ◆ A report on the recent fires which severely damaged some parts of the KWG, with praise given, not only to Jim Shawyer and his staff, but also to members who mounted night patrols to assist the volunteer and service fire fighting units who had done such a marvellous job. It was suggested a donation to the Mayor's appeal to help the local brigade replace lost equipment would be a worthwhile gesture.
- ◆ A note that extra working bees would be required in 1980 to help in regeneration and rehabilitation of the Gardens.
- ◆ An official farewell to members Margaret and Ian Murray upon their resignation to take up residence on the Central Coast.

The March meeting highlight was the account by Phil Leek, Pat Stanley and Jim Shawyer of their trip to the Centre. Organised by the Horticultural Society it was conducted by Bill and Doreen Hann (who incidentally conducted such tours up to 1995). To an enthralled audience, places like Coober Pedy, Mt Connor, Ayers Rock, the Olgas, Angus Downs, Alice Springs, Eastern and Western MacDonells, Hartz Ranges, Georgina River, Boulia on the Bourke River, Birdsville on the Diamantina, Betoota, Quilpie, Thargomindah, Cunnamulla, Eulo, Bourke, Nyngan, Dubbo were featured with botanical, geological and human interest incidents.

The Newsletter regretted that the combined Souter's Fern Nursery visit to Winmalee and garden visit to Betty and Sam Jacks' garden at Warrimoo had to be aban-



done due to inclement weather and petrol shortages. Referred to also were some interesting plants featured at the February meeting, e.g. *Beaufortia sparsa*, *Clerodendron tomentosum*, *Persoonia pinifolia*, *P. isophylla*, *Regelia ciliata* and *Rhododendron lochae* (grown as a pot plant by Rene Cooper). Finally of great interest to the North Shore native plant growers an updated article by Rodger Elliot on *Phytophthora cinnamomi* in the Maroondah (Vic) Newsletter was reprinted in full.

In April, Guest Speaker at the meeting was Bill (A.S.) Lane, ornithologist, his subject Birds in our Gardens. Drawing upon knowledge accumulated over many years studying birds on land and the many islands off the NSW coast, he described the banding process of birds as small as silvereyes and as formidable as albatrosses. Fascinating were his comments on the migration of birds from as far away as the Arctic Circle. Bill had brought along many curious looking and beautiful bird nests and a collection of slides depicting such diverse and beautiful birds as the Rainbow Bird, Cat Bird, Satin and Regent Bower Birds and various delightful Fairy Wrens.

The April Newsletter mentioned that the suggested donation to the Ku-ring-gai Fire Brigade had become a reality and \$100 had been forwarded to that organisation in gratitude for the part they had played in the disastrous December fires. Reported too, with great enthusiasm, was Joyce Ward's account of the Watagan State Forest outing led by Fred Hersey wherein she marvelled at the ferns, tall forest trees, Mint bushes and Proteaceae verdant between the burnt out and drought stricken trees.

As foreshadowed earlier, Guest Speaker for the May meeting was Ross Horne from the Forestry Commission, his subject being Fungi. It was a pity that a night of atrocious weather limited his audience, for his informative talk, punctuated with humorous stories, and made intelligible by donated pamphlets was revelatory to those whose knowledge of the subject was limited to Mr Heinz and the local fruit and veg shop. The walk for May into the Cumberland State Forest was cancelled on this night as conditions after continued heavy rain would render the tracks unsuitable for walking. The outing was re-programmed for Queen's Birthday weekend in June.

Of interest in the May Newsletter: a lyrebird was seen scratching among mulch at the Knoll; suggestions from Arthur Cooper that colour prints be displayed on slide nights as so many members no longer take slides and that exhibition methods be devised; Alick Hobbes, former President and former Vice-President, suffered a

fall while working at hospital, and is at the moment waiting for a small bone to knit before being mobile again.

In June we were favoured by yet another speaker from the Forestry Commission - George Baur - his subject Rainforests, their Flora, Fauna and Ecology - timely in view of the recent interest in this subject among native plant growers. He described the various types of rainforest - Sub-tropical, Dry, Warm, Temperate, Cool Temperate and elaborated on the types of trees, vines, stranglers, epiphytes, ground plants, fungi, palms, ferns to be found therein. Slides, some of quite beautiful subjects, brought to life the diversity and splendour of the rainforests of the Eastern States, fragile areas now down to a third of their original area. A thoroughly enjoyable evening.

From this month's Newsletter: birthday wishes to Adelaide Spencer-Maggs on her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday; several members were able to join Lizl Grossman at her home to celebrate the occasion and Adelaide has since thanked all members for their kind thoughts; Margaret and Brian Walker have moved out of their lovely garden home and have left us for a Melbourne domicile following Brian's transfer.

Perhaps the highlight of the year occurred in July with the Guest Speaker, Foundation President John Wrigley. His visit was followed by a barbeque at KWG with Marcia and John as guests and special invitees including foundation members who shared the first years of NSG with them. John had intended to take 'Cultivating Better Forms of Native Plants' as his subject, but having recently returned from Arnhem Land where, in the company of other botanists, he participated on behalf of the National Parks & Wildlife Service in the evaluation of the Flora of Kakadu National Park. Replanting of mined areas and areas in which amenities were to be located with endemic plants was envisaged but authorities had almost no knowledge of the flora of the area.

From April, almost daily, 800 cuttings and seeds of plants were despatched to Canberra and Jervis Bay for propagating and growing on. Many plants discovered were unnamed, the areas comprising the Park being extremely diverse and largely unexplored - sandstone escarpments, open forests, mangrove swamps, deep sandstone gorges, rainforest - in various sections of the Park. It is hoped that a comprehensive report will be published on this evaluation as it would prove invaluable to SGAP libraries.

The Newsletter recorded the month as a busy one with comment on an interesting array of plants in the Shade



House, smaller in number than expected and from a surprisingly small number of propagators; Betty and Trevor Batty reported on their European holiday which so far had progressed through 5 countries; the NSG accepted a request from the Newcastle Group to act as guides through the KWG and play the part of host on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> August; a combined West Head outing in August with Sutherland, Blue Mountains, Warringah, Harbourside, and North Shore was planned; a July winter walk on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> July at KWG, advertised in North Shore Times. Request by leader Alick Hobbes for members to act as guides; Region Plant Exhibition 6/7 September at Peakhurst. Request for NSG to assist in a variety of capacities; the Wards and Dyers visited Les Taylor's predominantly *Prostanthera* garden and returned loaded down with cuttings to be propagated.

At the August meeting, in the words of Secretary Joyce Ward "A large number of members were present to enjoy Alan Nielsen's excellently presented talk on Orchids. We were entertained and informed on many aspects as the identity and cultivation of these dainty, colourful and often sweetly perfumed attractive plants as Alan tossed specimens here and there talking to them as individuals".

On Sunday August 10<sup>th</sup> the Newcastle Group spent the morning visiting Max Hewett's garden, coming to KWG for lunch after which, guided by Alick Hobbes, a pleasant walk was enjoyed. The afternoon was completed by NSG hosting afternoon tea.

The KWG Festival on Saturday and Sunday 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> September received special mention in the August newsletter, with the Committee detailing at length all the contributions and services required of members to make it a success. Several members contributed to Arbor Day at Mt Colah Primary School and in addition helped to plant trees.

Guest Speaker for the September meeting was Roger Goode from CSIRO who returned to speak, this time on Endangered Plants. He did so through presentation of his paper on the 'Unique Character of Australian Flora on the World Scene'. Among the points he mentioned, the following are worth recording. Within Australian flora, two elements are involved, one in the Eastern half, one in the West, as a result of long separation by inland seas. 80% of all Australian flora is endemic to the continent due to its isolation from other land masses. Forests cover only 7% of the continent and recent widespread modification of that habitat through destruction has brought many flora species to the verge of extinction. Pressure placed by commercial

exploitation of native plants for cut flowers has caused severe depletion pressure on some species, but fortunately increasing appreciation has led to cultivation for local, interstate and international trade. There are 2053 plants listed as rare, endangered or vulnerable and of these 221 (30% in W.A.) are endangered, 544 vulnerable and only 561 species adequately conserved in viable populations. Roger concluded with 5 specific guidelines outlined for conservation of these endangered species.

A barbeque on Saturday September 13<sup>th</sup> at 5.30 pm at the KWG was held to say farewell to Allan and Joyce Ward who had been active NSG members for many years, Joyce having been Secretary for a record 13 years. (The October Newsletter later recorded that members old and new attended to show their appreciation and to wish both well at their new garden home at Mt Glorious in Queensland). It was noted in the August Newsletter that no less than 3 people (Mel Dyer, Joyce Brister and Julie Randell) were to share the secretarial duties between them, a measure of Joyce's superb efforts.

The September Newsletter featured a number of native annuals, among them *Brachycome iberidifolia* (Swan River Daisy), *Hibiscus trionum*, *Isotoma axillaris*, *I. anethifolia*, *I. petraea* and the Rottneest Island daisy (*Trachymene caerulea*).

In October, under the title 'Plants of the Western Plains', Alan Fox from NPWS showed a collection of beautiful slides which illustrated the effects of environmental changes on the development of different species of plants. Ice Ages, separation from other continents, sea level fluctuations causing pockets of rainforest, arid desert areas, well watered coastal areas varying from temperate to monsoonal rainfall patterns, all serve to explain a 'survival of the fittest' in operation over millions of years. Summed up - a fascinating look into a world we take very much for granted.

The Newsletter detailed the success of the September Festival of Wildflowers and featured in particular the arrangements by the ladies of the Flower Club of NSW in a prodigious display in and around the Pavilion; a spectacular display of orchids; a desert scene; guided walks; plant sales; children's table with nature studies and painting easel courtesy of Margaret Ann and pupils of Mt. Colah Public School; the raffle which raised \$300 for the National Trust for their campaign to save the Rainforest; all contributed to interest visitors. \$2869 profit bettered the returns in 1978 and 1979.



## JOYCE WARD

Joyce was the most prominent NSG figure from 1968 and throughout the 1970's, and the Group's longest serving Office Bearer to date. She was supported actively by husband Alan, if not always in full agreement or unquestioningly. In his own right, Alan was Group Delegate to Region (7 years) and leader of the Boronia Study Group.

Joyce Ward was a mover and shaker of indefatigable energy. If one was slow to be moved, one was shaken until the required movement moved. Confronted by a task, Joyce was a consummate 'volunteer' of assistance, although only at a level short of her own high range commitment.

In addition to Group Secretary duties, Joyce wrote the monthly Group Newsletter, in a style unique and the antithesis of Pat Stanley's and often little comfort to the history researcher needing to read and decipher these essential records. Joyce also compiled the Group's Annual Report to Region. Joyce's list of local, SGAP and Region credits make impressive reading. It features in part:

- ◆ Local Flower Festival organiser
- ◆ Group prize-winning gardener
- ◆ KWG Festival of Wildflowers (from 1976)
- ◆ Region Show/Exhibition Secretary
- ◆ Annual Native Plant/Wildflower Exhibition; Festival of Plants.
- ◆ Enlisted the support of the Flower Club of NSW to construct flower arrangements (1968 on).
- ◆ Arranged an Australia-wide supply of flowers with reciprocal local support.
- ◆ 1970 Captain Cook Bi-Centennial Wildflowers of Australia Exhibition.
- ◆ SGAP Lecture Team Leader/Publicity Officer

In October 1980 Joyce and Alan 'retired' to Mt Glorious in south-east Queensland. Joyce was replaced as Secretary by a three-person secretariat.

Some members of the group met up with Joyce at a SGAP Conference in Armidale in 1992. Also present were ex-NSG members Trevor and Betty Batty, Geoff Edwards and Joyce Brister.

Joyce Ward died in November 1997. She was pre-deceased by Alan, who succumbed to long-standing health problems.

November featured a slide night - an opportunity for members to show their 10 best slides of the year or to display labelled and mounted colour prints. For the first time prints were displayed (by Rene and Arthur Cooper) nearly 70 photographs making an interesting focus at one end of the room. Slides ranged from flora of Western Australia to that of West Head, Port Kembla blast furnace area and Wildflowers in USA, Canada and England. Members spoke about the flowers they had brought in for the display table. Outstanding blooms of *Syzygium wilsonii* subs. *wilsonii*, *Eucalyptus lehmannii*, *Kunzea recurva* var *montana*, *Baeckea crenulata*, *Dampiera* sp and pink *Elaeocarpus reticulatus* were noted. A short talk on propagation was given by Don Stitt in preparation for striking cuttings for the 1981 show and suitable plant species were suggested, to which Col Cashman added his suggestions for easy to grow plants from seeds, cuttings and division.

The November Newsletter features were: the by now customary admonition from the Committee to members to start cuttings for the 1981 festival and hopefully equal the 3000 plants we had in 1980; a note from Joyce Ward in thanks for the farewell party for her and Alan, regretting being forced to leave so unexpectedly and recalling the many happy years of involvement with North Shore SGAP; for the attention of new members and prospective propagators, a survey would be held at the November meeting to assess interest in 30 minute talks on propagation at meetings during 1981; best wishes to Brian Walker who has been very ill in hospital and hopes for a speedy recovery now that he and Margaret are back home in Melbourne.

The December meeting followed the annual custom of a Christmas Party and in the words of Geoff Bush "Members rewarded themselves with a Christmas Party. A cold dinner of ham and chicken with ravishing garnishings was substituted for the usual barbeque ritual. Cakes and sweets provided by members were superb and embellished with quantities of orange juice and other liquid refreshment. The Christmas festivities were commensurate with the ending of the decade, and a generation of progressive development by the North Shore Group. This sense of being the end of a unique era was highlighted by the departure from the Group of a number of valuable members in recent years including long serving Secretary Joyce Ward. For Geoff Bush it virtually marked the end of a further term as President (although statistically not until the change-over in February 1981). The new year would bring forth a new team of Officers and Committee, new ideas, renewed enthusiasm and a progressive outlook on all the objectives of SGAP."



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## POSTSCRIPT - 1998



Geoff continued as an active member of NSG during 1981. However, later in that year he suffered a massive heart attack and underwent extensive surgery during a 3-month sojourn in hospital. He retired from his position as Treasurer with the Sydney City Council in 1982. Although restricted physically he continued his gardening and cultivation of wildflowers together with modest propagation activities. Geoff delivered occasional talks on ornithology and native plants to various associations included NSG and assisted with plant sales and advice on cultivation at festivals. Geoff had a continuing interest in supporting conservation and environment movements. At the time of writing he had 34 years of continuous membership with the NSG of SGAP.

Within weeks of having written the activities for 1980 Geoff suffered a severe heart attack and died 4 days later on June 4<sup>th</sup> 1994. Although unwell he had persevered with this task to make certain that the NSG history of the 1970's was complete.

We (Alan Nielsen and Ross Doig) would like to record our debt to Geoff who organised us, kept our noses to the grindstone, curtailed our garrulous reminiscences, fed us refreshments and set us tasks we may never have set ourselves. We will miss his friendship and wise counsel.

## POSTSCRIPT - 2003



It is with great shame that this first part of our Group's history has finally been printed. Geoff, Ross and Alan enlisted my typing skills from the outset, but despite the very best of intentions it has taken me this long to present to you their labour of love. It has been a great honour to have known so many of the people mentioned herein, and it is sad that some are no longer with us, but the legacy of their enthusiasm for the birth and continuing growth of both our group and the organisation we are part of, must be preserved and nurtured. It now rests with myself and the 'second wave' to bring our Group history up to the present day, but I am determined it will not take so long.

*Julia Robertson, NSG President 2003*





This history relates, predominantly, to people who are or have been, members of the North Shore Group of the Australian Plants Society (formerly the Society for Growing Australian Plants). It embraces their contributions to the Group and to the Society and their involvement generally in the promotion of Australian native plants.

Covering the period 1960 to 1980, this book deals with, to a large extent in chronological order, the activities of the Group in relation to meetings, speakers, outings, foraging expeditions, experiments, garden competitions, working bees, festivals, and projects. In addition, it covers events, personalities, achievements and the year by year pursuits of the Group over two decades.

We hope the story that unfolds in this book is as enlightening and interesting to the reader as it has been to us in compiling it.



*"No history of the North Shore Group can be written without first paying tribute to those far-sighted pioneers who conceived and brought to fruition an Australia-wide Association, devoted to growing Australian plants"*

