



# NEWSLETTER

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## From The President,

I tremble inwardly when asked for gardening advice because although I have built up a reasonable amount of knowledge in some areas the breadth of gardening information is as wide as the world.

The internet is a wonderful resource but I think books are still the best starting point.

Recently my son who lives in a Bondi apartment asked for advice and plant recommendations for his patio and garden beds. I was tempted to suggest artificial plants as the request was for low maintenance, no flowers, no developmental growth, drought tolerant and always attractive.

Apart from sandy soil there are very few similarities between Bondi and Strathalbyn so out came the gardening books and plant catalogues. With a limited budget the list we made was brief but a start and I am looking forward to visiting Bondi to inspect the results.

I mostly pick up gardening books at garage sales and fairs but occasionally I succumb to the advertising for new releases.

A recent purchase was "There is no excuse for ugliness" by Clive Blazey of the Diggers Club. The plant catalogue at the end of the book is similar to the seasonal Diggers' catalogues with all the useful growing information. The chapter on "Botany basics for gardening success" is very informative and the suggestions for "Creating Beauty" give a comprehensive range of do's and don'ts.

A book worth referring to often.

Norma Keily

## JOHN ZWAR VISITS NEW ZEALAND

In October 2013 John Zwar attended the 5th Global Botanic Gardens Congress in Dunedin NZ along with over 300 other delegates from 43 countries as far afield as Uzbekistan, remote China and Oman. The date of the conference coincided with the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Dunedin Botanic Gardens.

Despite only having a short time at his disposal John made the most of the opportunity to visit as many gardens as possible in NZ starting at the Auckland Botanic gardens where the climate is mild and humid. A feature of the garden is the Southern Africa plant collection of King protea, kniphofia, watsonia and flax.

The flight from Wellington to Dunedin crossed a landscape of braided rivers and gorse infestations which provide habitat for the small, ground dwelling birds.

Dunedin is 45° south with a strong Scottish heritage and has never experienced a major earthquake.

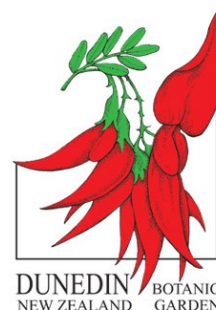
Their Botanic Gardens is large and diverse and features one of the world's best Rhododendron collections as well as having many camellias and magnolias. There is an impressive rock garden where our onion weed is nurtured and respected. Eucalypts from Tasmania are featured amongst a small collection of Australian plants.

The conference heard of the efforts by Botanic Gardens around the world to preserve their local flora for example Pakistan where attempts are being made to restore the arid woodlands. Clarence Slockee, a presenter on Gardening Australia spoke on the Aboriginal Cultural Values in Nature Conservation.

Gardens visited during his time in New Zealand included Larnach Castle, Dunedin, which is breathtakingly spectacular, Orokonui Eco Sanctuary where some of New Zealand's rarest birds, reptiles and plants live in a protected forest environment just 20 minutes north of Dunedin. All the introduced feral pests have been eradicated from the area to ensure the survival of the endangered local species.

The picturesque town of Oamaru with its heritage buildings and limitless water supply for maintaining beautiful public and private gardens was another 'quick visit' destination after the conference.

Flying out of Christchurch there was time for John to note the quality of the maintenance in their Botanic gardens despite the widespread damage still to be repaired in the rest of the city following the earthquakes in 2010 and 2014.



## PLANNING A VACATION?

**THE WEBSITE FOR THE** Botanic Gardens Conservation International

**HTTP://WWW.BGCI.ORG/** connects you to 3,242 botanic garden profiles worldwide allowing you to locate botanic gardens in your neighbourhood and around the world.

# STRATHALBYN GARDEN CLUB PROGRAM

MEETING DATE	SPEAKER/ACTIVITY	TOPIC FOR DISCUSSION
February 27th	Steve and Barbara Ward	Water Plants Yarrabee Gardens - plants for sale
March 20th	Visit Murray Bridge Garden Club	Details this page.
March 27th	Rodney Hutchinson	Ants
April 24th	Troy McKenzie (Leaf Boutique)	Companion planting
April 30th	Visit Anlaby Station	Details back page. Money to Maria Maxwell
May 22nd	Vince Davey	Neutrog
June 26th	AGM	Consider nominating for the committee
June 26th	Graham Morris	Cymbidium Orchids

## VISIT TO MURRAY BRIDGE

Murray Bridge Garden Club extends an invitation to Strathalbyn Garden Club members to join them for a day of garden and nursery visits around Murray Bridge on **Friday 20th March**.

Meeting at 10am at the Johnston Park combined clubrooms at the Imperial Football Oval ( a small white building).

We will then proceed to one of our members for morning tea and then on to one of our nurseries. We will then travel to another garden where we will have lunch and a walk around this large lovely garden.

Please bring a lap lunch, a chair and a mug, we will supply the biscuits, tea, coffee, milk and sugar for morning tea and lunch.

Jeanette Zanker

Secretary.

Register your intention to attend with Norma Keily so we can say how many to expect.  
Plan your own transport (car pool with friends) and make your own way there to meet at 9.55am.



## Gardening ABC AUSTRALIA

The television program GARDENING AUSTRALIA returns to our TV sets on Saturday March 7, 2015 with more great stories, gardening advice and know-how.

Set your timers for Saturday 6.30pm or if you miss it there will be repeats on Sunday at 1pm.

Sophie Thomson will be doing a segment on planting a pizza garden and also one on those wonderful hardy and attractive group of plants the Buddlejias.

If you subscribe to the Gardening Australia newsletter via their webpage weekly program notes will be delivered to your email.

Connecting to Sophie Thomson's Facebook page will provide behind the scenes glimpses from the photo shoots for her segments on the show.

## STRENGTH FOR LIFE 50<sup>+</sup>

Great for keeping strong and fit  
for gardening!

Run by Fleurieu Fitness and Health  
in conjunction with COTA SA

The RSL Hall, High Street Strathalbyn

Sessions Tuesday, Wednesday Thursday & Friday  
9.15am - 10.15am.

+ Tuesday & Thursday 10.15 - 11.15am  
\$7.00 per session

Each participant must have an initial assessment to  
design an individual program to suit their specific  
needs. (Cost \$25)

For more information

Or to book an individual assessment

### Contact

Paul Holdsworth 8536 2204 or  
email paulh@adam.com.au

## OPEN GARDENS AUSTRALIA

Most Gardens are open 10 - 4.30 each day.  
Entry is usually \$8 per person, under 18 free.  
More details in the Open Gardens Australia  
Guide and on their website  
[www.opengarden.org.au](http://www.opengarden.org.au)



**With the organisation ceasing to exist after June 2015 this may be the last opportunity to visit many of the gardens listed.**

March 2015

Adelaide Cup Weekend

7 - 8

**Craig Garden: 34 Cooida Cres, Athelstone.**

Tropical and foliage plants feature in a garden with a Balinese theme on a steeply sloping site. Innovative use of recycled materials.

**Frosty Flats: Corner of Mount Torrens and Muellers Road Birdwood.**

Informal cottage garden featuring 750 roses. Ornamental trees, water features, rustic ornaments and old farm machinery.

14 - 15

**Tipsy Hill: 309 Blewett Springs Road McLaren Vale**

A beautiful terrace water wise garden. Imaginative plantings, art works, spectacular views. Bougainvillea, roses, sedums, succulents and flowering gums add to the colourful Mediterranean feel.

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## GARDEN VISITS

Our Club regularly receives requests from other Clubs and groups for gardens to visit in and around Strathalbyn.

It is always a rewarding experience for the garden owners as visitors are always enthusiastic and complimentary. They do not expect perfection just a warm welcome and a home garden experience.

I currently have requests from groups planning to visit on 21st August and 14th September and in spring Strathalbyn gardens are spectacular so please consider sharing yours.

Talk to Norma Keily 8536 6276.

**GREG THE WORM MAN 0438 808 066**

Kilo packs of composting worms

Vermicast for soil improvement

Worm Farms to order

Worm Wee 3 litre & 20 litre containers

Catch me at the Strathalbyn Garden Club meetings!

# N.B.

## SIGNING IN

Members are reminded that it is important to sign the Attendance Register on arrival and when picking up your name badge for the meeting so that our record keeping for insurance purposes is accurate.

Apologies can be recorded with an A in the appropriate column.

Known future apologies can be recorded in the space provided.

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## LUCKY DOOR PRIZE

Just a reminder that the lucky winner of the door prize has first pick from the raffle table and this can be taken before the raffle draw so there is ample time to make a choice.

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## SELLER'S TABLE

To book a place at the Seller's Table contact Jackie Chapman 8536 8798. Items for sale should be relevant to the Club (ie garden related). Sellers should make a discretionary donation to the Club for the opportunity to sell and should be in attendance on the Table.

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## DONATIONS TABLE

Items of a gardening or produce nature can be donated for sale on the Donations Table. Bring on the day although if large or unusual a phone call to Jackie Chapman 8536 8798 would be helpful.

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## RAFFLE TABLE

Raffle items should be well presented and desirable.

Plants should be labelled, healthy and protected with a plastic bag if likely to drip or stain.

**SHEEP MANURE for Sale**

\$5 / bag (delivered to Strath)

\$4 / bag (collected from farm)

\$20 / collected in trailer, i.e. 6'.4'

Tania & John Richardson

Woodchester

85375011

We're happy to make your garden happy! Spread the word.

# ANLABY STATION

## COME ON THE JOURNEY

Thursday 30th April 2015

Total cost \$55 includes coach trip, garden & house tours and lunch.

Meet at the railway station 8.30am return 5.30pm (Travel via Kapunda to Hamilton)

\$20 deposit to secure a seat. Full amount of \$55 per person to Maria Maxwell by April 24th.

Special dietary requirements notified by April meeting please.

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### HOUSE:

A tour of the house takes you on a journey through the principal rooms and the servants work rooms including kitchen, scullery and butler's pantry. At the end of the tour you will have a strong sense of how the family and servants lived and worked in the house.

### GARDEN:

There are approximately 10 acres of garden. A guided walk through these historically listed gardens typically include shade house, glass house, walled vegetable garden, rose gardens and terraced lawns. The original carriageway winds past the front of the house, and down to the peacock aviary. The garden is a restoration work in progress and not all in pristine condition. The garden is of the old fashioned "English style" yet located in a dry South Australian climate and this creates challenges.... We wish we still had the 14 gardeners from 1904!!

**PLEASE NOTE:** The garden is laid out over several terraced levels and the tour includes a number of stairs. As paths are gravelled we recommend comfortable walking shoes.

### RESTORATION PROJECTS

There have been many restoration projects undertaken since the current owners took on the custodianship of Anlaby in February 2004. One such project was the upgrade of the electrical wiring. This took 18 months with very little to "see" at the end of much upheaval. With a large house and a 10 acre garden the obvious question is how to prioritise, and not become overwhelmed? The answer in respect of the garden was to start next to the house, and slowly radiate out. The first few years entailed taking out anything dead, cutting back the overgrowth that had taken over much of the garden, and removing rusty old fences to reclaim lost spaces – there were many bonfires! Once the original garden layout could be seen clearly again, the process of commencing at the house and slowly radiating out again started again. This time however it was about renewal with the planting garden beds, repairing stone walls and laying tons and tons of gravel on the many paths. HOWEVER – you need

to keep a watchful eye on the whole garden making sure that the weeds and undergrowth don't rush back in when your back is turned!

One of the greatest problems with an old house (not to mention the cottages, stables, and various sheds) is keeping water out. Therefore one of the very first projects was to identify and fix the many leaks – this is an ongoing project. No sooner is one leak fixed, than another one (or three) appear. As much as we are very appreciative when it rains in this very dry climate – it is with trepidation that every room in the house is inspected for that tell tale drip, drip sound...

Restoration and redecoration of the dining room was a very rewarding project. This entailed the removal of the 1970's green velvet curtains and matching carpet. The walls have been repainted a deep yellow, available in the 1890's, and new carpet laid in a documented 1870's design. New curtains have also been hung,

thankfully, the magnificent cedar panelled ceiling was still in pristine condition.

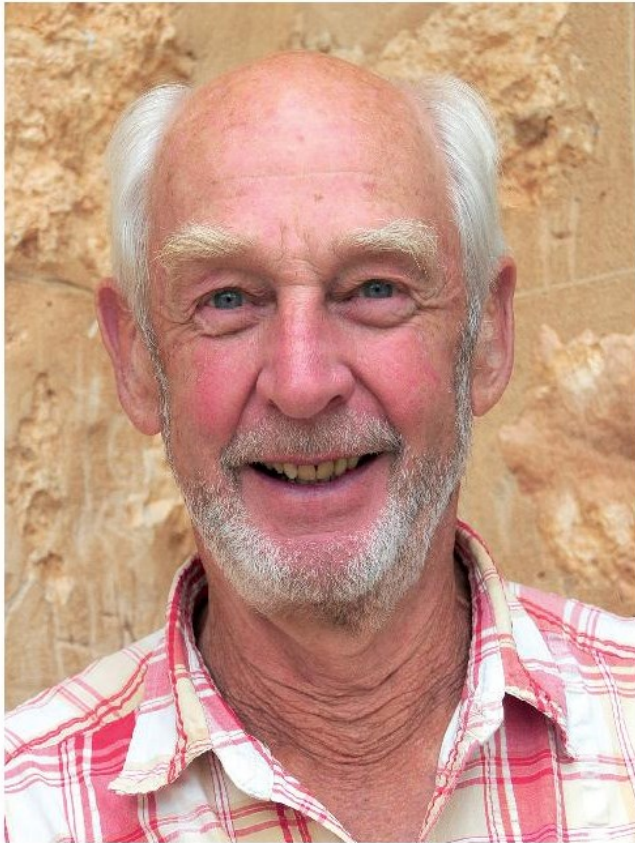
A small hallway has been redecorated with William Morris "Pomegranate" wall paper which had to be shipped from the UK, and half the timber floor of the 50 metre hall has been polished and laid with William Morris "Tulip and Lily" carpet – only another 50 metres to go! One of the most recent projects has been the restoration of the Tower Clock located in the stable quadrangle. After being subjected to over 100 years of extreme heat, cold, dust, and many generations of mice, rats and possums, the clock had not worked for at least 20 years. We asked Barossan horologist, Darrell Kaesler, to "have a look". Given the size of the project we had to wait several months until Darrell could clear his workshop. It took several more months, as Darrell pulled the clock completely to pieces, cleaned away years of accumulated dirt and grease and made replacements for worn gears, over many nights and weekends. What returned was a gleaming and beautiful brass and cast iron tower clock. It is once again keeping time in the stable quadrangle – now in a protective and insulated housing and with ongoing maintenance and careful attention it should be keeping time for another 100 years!

(Information from [www.anlaby.com.au](http://www.anlaby.com.au))





## David Thomas - February 2015



Preparing this profile turned into a most enjoyable trip down Memory Lane. I was a 'garden club widower' for many years before becoming a member in June 2014 with the question of what would happen in the bowling season remaining unresolved!

No problems so far. My family moved from the north of England to the southern seaside town of Bournemouth after the war and my earliest gardening memory is of going on the bus with my father to his allotment on Sunday mornings. I can remember holding the sticks while frames were constructed for growing runner beans and peas - presumably other 'stuff' was grown as well.

It was a community facility and very much a male domain - fathers and sons; thinking about it now the allotment system was, in many ways, an early forerunner of today's men's sheds.

The big move to what became the family home for many years came in 1953. We moved in a few weeks before the coronation and I well remember the excitement of the family settling down by the wireless to take in all the action from London.

The main feature of our new home was a large and productive garden and, led by two keen gardeners in Mum and Dad, all three children were involved - whether they wanted to be or not.

It was here that Dad's life-long passion for roses really bloomed (pardon the pun).

An early job was to remove the scant remains of a side fence and, with the agreement of our neighbour, replacing it with a beech hedge. Fences (and sheds) will be a recurring theme.

The hedge became the backdrop for a large rose bed - a row of Queen Elizabeth floribundas along the back with many different smaller bush and hybrid tea roses in front. In addition there were trellises with a variety of climbing/rambling roses. Not satisfied with this, a couple of years later a large section of the front lawn was dug out and yet another rose bed planted.

With knowledge gleaned from the Gardener's Question Time radio programme and numerous books and magazines, Dad started entering his roses in competitions and, just occasionally, prize cards were proudly displayed on the mantelpiece.

One sister recently told me that two roses he gave her 45 years ago are still going strong.

Dahlias were another favourite and one of my jobs was digging them up each autumn and covering them with ash for the winter before they were replanted the following year. Bulbs of every type pushed up from the lawn and garden beds - snowdrops, daffodils and tulips and possibly others as well.

The rear of the garden was devoted to produce. Pear and apple trees and several fruiting bushes - gooseberry, red currant and black currant were firm favourites for jams and puddings, supplemented by annual trips to go blackberrying. Other fruits were bought and preserved for winter use - no wonder I developed a sweet tooth. Again we had the peas and beans but there was no need to grow onions as the French onion sellers came across from Brittany each year. I never remember water being a problem - it just used to fall out of the sky and if there were water bills then I never got to hear about them.

After finishing school I spent many years at sea or working abroad so gardening was off the agenda and it wasn't until 1985 that I again took up the trowel in earnest.

Jenny and I bought our first home together in inner-west Sydney, no doubt partially attracted by what one shy and retiring real estate agent described as a 'large, sunny backyard'.

Once we got rid of the hills hoist, a shed and a sleep-out we found we had room for a small sitting area shaded by an extremely vigorous bougainvillea and were able to plant a lemon tree and a few native shrubs.

This was another house with a falling down fence - this time at the back and in agreement with yet another friendly neighbour it was pulled down, but not replaced. As our respective shrubs grew we were both able to enjoy a 'green' back fence which had the effect of making both our yards appear much larger than they really were. When we moved in we brought with us a very small Port Jackson Fig Tree that had seeded itself in the sandstone wall of Jenny's former home. It was put in a pot and became an accidental bonsai - thirty years later it is still with us. Once again there were no worries about water whilst we were there.

In 1996 when the traffic, people, planes etc got too much (particularly for me) we made the move to Strathalbyn and purchased 23 Commercial Road, establishing Hamilton House Bed & Breakfast.

We quickly realised that we would need to become serious gardeners and would have to forget all we remembered from England and Sydney and learn to cope with harsh South Australian conditions. We quickly learnt that any rain that fell was precious and that a rain gauge was essential if you wanted to join in any conversation about gardening. No doubt we looked very confused when we first asked "how many points last night?"

In the front was one of Strath's finest rose gardens and it was with some trepidation that we did our first pruning soon after moving in. We got plenty of advice and Dad would have been smiling when we won a first prize at the Strath Show the following year.

More fencing issues - we removed the rather forbidding cyclone mesh fence that surrounded the front yard leaving an open view of the roses.

The back yard was to be a most rewarding project. There were numerous fruit trees, some in poor health which had to go, but not a lot else. It needed a plan and first off we created some paths to give structure which in turn led to different garden beds.

Had we had time in that first winter we would have cut down the 'dead' tree that was in the way of one proposed path.

A close call - it turned out to be a very attractive Crepe Myrtle, something we were not familiar with at the time. A very large shed was 'pruned' of its various add-ons and then we did the very un-Australian thing of reducing the whole thing by about one quarter. This opened up the central area but what to do with a very large and rusting rain water tank that divided the garden in two was the next problem.

It went and we built a rotunda on the remaining base - an ideal spot to sit and contemplate. A selection of natives was planted but try as might we could never get a banksia to grow, though a lilac tree planted in 1997 is now very much a feature.

The remaining fruit trees were productive and a vegie area was developed - broad beans, broccoli, onions, beetroot, lettuce etc grew well, but rhubarb was a continual disappointment.

It was a delight watching the garden develop and mature but the time was coming when we needed to think about down-sizing - could we bear to leave and what would happen to 'our' garden which was still very much a work in progress.

We need not have worried - it could not have ended up in better hands. Joy and Chris Bourne picked up where we left off with imagination and enthusiasm and it is always a pleasure to go back and visit and see what they have accomplished, including putting up a front fence - a period design that enhances the property but they still have trouble with rhubarb.

We moved to Taylors Lane to an irregular shaped block; apart from a flowering gum in one corner we really did start with a blank canvas. The first decision, in agreement with more neighbours, was to plant a *Duranta* hedge. Other boundaries were fenced with wire mesh so that we would end up with 'green' boundaries.

"Where are you going to put the shed?" was an early question from the builder who went away scratching his head when we replied "we aren't having a shed". State Flora at Murray Bridge was visited several times and we bought mainly tube stock, most of which we were able to plant in the winter before moving in.

We have a predominately water-wise native garden but a small bed of roses continues the family tradition. One thing really pleased us - we are finally able to grow banksias.

At the rear we have established a vegie garden with apricot, pear, plum and peach trees. It is productive though the rhubarb still struggles at times and a foolish attempt to grow raspberries resulted in the predictable "I told you so." Life is busy with garden, bowling and book clubs, not to mention Meals on Wheels, yoga and dog walking but like all gardeners we can always find something to do and more importantly can always find space for yet another plant - and then, of course, we can just sit back with a cuppa and enjoy looking.