

# **KU-RING-GAI HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY INC.**

## **HISTORICAL SUMMARY**



**1933 - 2023**



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**Photographs Opposite:**

1. Garden ramble in a KHS member's garden
2. Single and multi-day outings in a luxury coach
3. Show Bench for members to display items from their gardens

## INTRODUCTION

The Ku-ring-gai Horticultural Society Inc. (KHS) was set up in 1933 to bring together people living on Sydney's North Shore who had a love of gardening and horticulture and for the past 90 years, it has continued to achieve this objective. Meeting on a monthly basis, KHS has not only provided information and knowledge about gardening to its members but also has offered friendship based on a mutual interest and love of plants. A reading of the History of the Society demonstrates how these aims have been met through the years.

Since 2003, significant anniversary celebrations have been marked every five years - usually at the May meeting. The supper served on the night includes a special cake - some of which have been more memorable than others. For example, in 2018, to celebrate our 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we had a croquembouche, a tower of profiteroles, which required special skill to serve. The President spoke about various aspects of KHS history and members set up a memorabilia table and three floral displays.

Hortulanus, our monthly newsletter, continue to be an important feature of our Society. It is informative and colourful and since 2017 has been transmitted by email. The transition from paper was difficult for some members but was a significant time and cost saver for KHS. Trips and outings are usually well supported.

In recent years, membership has been maintained at around 150. This number includes many long- standing members. Typically, 70 members and visitors attend monthly meetings. Our website (which was set up in 2010 with funds from Ku-ring-gai Council and updated in 2019) provides an opportunity to attract new members.

The following document provides a brief outline of KHS activities over the past 90 years. Because the ever-changing methods of digital storage may make future retrieval of records difficult, we have in addition (since 2001) compiled an archive in paper form which includes copies of the KHS newsletter, Hortulanus. This Historical Summary was updated by Fiona Arnott, Rhoda Fowler, Christine Rethers and Doreen Clark. Grateful thanks to Rhoda Fowler and Virginia Fischer who helped with the proofreading and production of this document.

## **A SNAPSHOT IN TIME**

On reading this History it becomes obvious that the running of meetings, as well as the events available to members, have changed over the years. Since it is difficult to have a clear picture of how the Society was conducting its business in earlier times, the objective of this 'A Snapshot in Time' is to record how the Society is achieving its aims in 2020.

### **Meetings**

Meetings are held at 7:30pm on the first Tuesday of each month (except for January) in the St Ives Village Community Hall, Memorial Avenue, St Ives. The program usually includes:

- Two speakers, firstly a KHS member, who gives a short dissertation before the supper break, then a guest speaker who gives a talk lasting for 30-40 minutes, after the break. Since the Society now has a computer and projector, speakers may include photos and/or a PowerPoint presentation
- A Show Bench which has up to 35 classes divided into four sections: Cultural, Containers, Small Crops and Decorative. Judges are recruited from experienced members and the competition runs from July to June. The winner who scores the most points takes home a small amount of prize money, the President's Shield and a memento
- A Garden Table selling plants and cuttings donated by members. Proceeds of sales go to the Society
- A Trading Table. twice a year, members may bring in plants to sell, with 10% of the proceeds going to the Society
- A raffle at each meeting.

### **Events**

- Two to three outings a year which typically comprise two 1- day outings and one 2- or 3 - day outing
- A formal Christmas Dinner at a golf club or function centre as well as a Christmas supper after the December meeting
- An afternoon tea for the 'workers' which is hosted by the President in November
- A Spring walk through the gardens of two or three KHS members, with afternoon tea enjoyed at the conclusion.

### **Newsletter**

- We produce a monthly four-page newsletter which is emailed to members. The content covers coming events, a report on the previous meeting, details of the next speaker and advice from our gardening expert as well as a Q&A section where member's gardening questions are answered in detail
- While the above has been the pattern for several years, we are flexible and welcome suggestions and comments from members.

## **HISTORICAL SUMMARY**

### **1933**

The first meeting of the Society took place on April 27, 1933 and the name of Wahroonga Horticultural Society was adopted at the first general meeting in June of that year. Monthly meetings took place in the main hall of St John's Church in Wahroonga, while committee meetings were held in a smaller hall at the same venue. Mr A E Scanlan was the first President, Mr F Creighton the Secretary and there were 68 members.

The list of Patrons was impressive and read like a Who's Who of the North Shore; Mrs A J Horden, Sir James Murdoch, Sir Thomas Bavin, Dr W H Read, Councillor J E Rofe and others. The list later included Justice Markell, Professor Waterhouse and Sir Phillip Goldfinch.

The Mayor, Ald Cresswell O'Reilly, agreed to the planting of a tree in Wahroonga Park to commemorate the opening of the Society's first Spring Show. While the records show that Sir Thomas Bavin consented to plant the tree at 2.45pm on October 07, 1933 - there is no mention in the Council archives that the event actually took place. The first show was held and made a profit of two pounds twelve shillings and eleven pence. Over the next 36 years, five shows were held annually - and many cups were awarded (five in 1935).

### **1934**

A Constitution was drafted and adopted with the following clause added: "To make provision for the removal of any person considered undesirable". It also included a clause that any member could become a Life Member by paying a fee of ten pounds ten shillings (this clause was subsequently deleted sometime in the seventies).

### **1936**

Our longest serving President was His Honour Justice Markell who was elected in 1936 and remained in office for 16 years until 1950.

The concept of visiting members' gardens was introduced.

A committee member gave notice of his intention to propose at the next General Meeting that all office bearers should be Wahroonga residents. This was not accepted.

General meetings were run much as at present. The main speakers were rather formal and technical. Presentations - which were usually illustrated with lantern slides - were interspersed with a brief entertainment, either a musical item or a short talk by a member in order to "give the lecturer a respite." At one of the monthly meetings the entertainment included a piano solo, two songs and some bird and animal imitations.

The church authorities at this time gave us notice to remove our tables, which had been stored under the hall, as one was infested with white ants.

### **1939**

With the outbreak of war, the majority of members were engaged by war duties and activities almost came to a halt. A small group known as the "Ladies of Roseville" kept the Society going with displays for charitable purposes. Many donations were given to war charities such as the Red Cross, Wahroonga Community Service Association and to the decoration of the Wahroonga Memorial for Anzac Day.

### **1942**

The church committee asked that all materials belonging to the Society be removed from the store-room as it was required for use as an air raid shelter.

## **1945**

In November 1945, the St John's Church Wahroonga cancelled further use of their Church Hall and an approach was made by our Committee members to the Ku-ring-gai Municipal Council to sponsor the formation of a larger society.

## **1946**

In October 1946 a Public Meeting was called by the Council in the Council Chambers. The Society was revived under the auspices of the Council and became the Ku-ring-gai Horticultural Society. The Council provided free use of the Killara Soldiers Memorial Hall, Marian Street (later to become the Marian Street Theatre). The Council continued to provide tremendous support over the years.

A bank account was opened with the Commonwealth Bank at Gordon where we still bank to this day.

Several letters of thanks were received from "The Food for Britain Appeal" as we were regular donors

## **1947**

The President, His Honour Justice Markell, recorded that "We really have a very fine committee, their attendance is amazingly good - if they would only talk at our monthly meetings one tenth as much as they do in committee, members would indeed be given the benefit of much valuable experience, unfortunately they seem to lose their verbosity as soon as they stand on their feet". At that time, we had a President, two Vice Presidents, Secretary and Assistant, Treasurer and Assistant, a Men's Committee of 12, a Ladies Committee of nine, an Auditor, a Publicity Officer, Patrons and Vice Patrons and three Show Judges.

The aims and objects of the Society were to:

- Promote and encourage interest in horticulture.
- Help solve garden problems and offer suggestions for planting, cultivation, etc. mainly through the medium of the "Question Box" and "What to sow" sessions.
- Stage shows at which one may see some of the finest cultural and decorative exhibits in the state.
- Provide interesting and varied evenings for members' interest and entertainment.

At this time, it was agreed that music and entertainment be reserved for the Annual General Meeting.

Professor Waterhouse became a Patron.

## **1948**

It was suggested that the police should be notified of our "Annual Camellia Show" in case there should be traffic congestion. The reason for this was that the show was being opened by the well-known actress, Vivien Leigh in acknowledgement of the great fund-raising effort undertaken by The Society to raise funds for the Food for Britain Appeal.

A Committee Member expressed his desire to retire from the Committee as he would not be able to attend future meetings due to petrol rationing.

## **1949**

We became affiliated to the Royal Horticultural Society of England.

At this time the winning exhibitors in the show bench display took their prize cards to the treasurer and would be paid cash on the spot - first prize was three shillings and second prize two shillings. Points were also allocated for the annual prize. Much later the point system was discontinued and prize money (with a small increase) was accumulated for a once-a-year payout.

## **1953**

Mr G Travis succeeded Justice Markell with his deputy Professor Waterhouse.

President Travis wrote that the membership had risen to 464 and that The Society was the:

- Second largest in the State.
- First in the standard of its shows.
- Best known Horticulture Society in NSW.

## **1954**

Donations of £1,600 were made to charities over a period of seven years.

## **1956**

A decision was taken that the Walter Dibley Trophy (a beautiful heavy silver salver, gifted to the Society by Walter Dibley who was Vice President from 1933 to 1941) would be awarded annually to the most successful exhibitor. The winner had the honour of having his/her name engraved on the trophy. It was awarded from 1956 and won by individual exhibitors until 1976.

## **1959**

It was at this time that the Plant Table (now renamed the Garden Table) was set up at our monthly meetings and manned by Morton Westbrook and Eileen Tissot. Membership peaked at 536 during Dr Pollock's Presidency but fell to 360 just prior to his retirement. He suggested that this was due to the formation of many new garden clubs in the Municipality.

## **1961**

Laurie and Gwen Ransom joined the committee and continued as very active members till 1973. They both did a lot of the organising behind the scenes for our shows, with Gwen winning lots of prizes in the decorative area

The Council gave us warning at this time that we would have to start paying rent.

## **1962**

Mr A Hammond became President till 1964 and was then invited to become President again from 1968 to 1970. He was probably better known as the owner of the butcher shop at Gordon.

## **1964**

Major Sugden, the newly elected President, also saw a fall in membership but encouraged confidence with this comment: "The great interest shown by our Society in helping the younger new garden clubs has been appreciated by them and they now regard us as a parent body".

## **1965**

Morton Westbrook and Pat Gregory purchased Life Membership. Morton was a Camellia Research Society judge for many years and gave us all valuable help and information on camellias. Sadly, Morton passed away aged 92 but at the time of writing, Pat was still keeping in touch with us via the Hortulanus.

## **1966**

The Jean Sugden family presented the Society with a trophy which was to be awarded each year to the best entrant in the Pot Plant Section of the show bench.

## **1967**

It came as a blow when the Ku-ring-gai Council announced that it intended to lease the Killara Memorial Hall to Community Theatre Ltd so the Hall would not be available to KHS from January 1968 onwards.

## **1968**

The Society found a new home at St Johns Church Hall, Gordon. After discussion with Community Theatre Ltd it was agreed "that the Theatre would pay the difference in rentals between St Johns and the Killara hall plus cost of cartage to and from after each main show". Later, owing to the precarious financial position of the Community Theatre Ltd, this payment ceased.

After the move to St Johns, the Committee sent out a questionnaire to find out what members wanted in order to get more member participation. Results were not very helpful as there were so many contradictory replies including the following examples:

“We need more slides to illustrate the talks...but people fall asleep!”

“We would like more books for the library...but those we have are not borrowed!”

“We should have more shows.... but members don't turn up!”

Alf Self, Frances MacKinnon, and Morton Westbrook joined the committee.

The shows were losing money, so we started having a plant stall in the Gordon Shopping Centre. This continued till 1996.

The Society's Library began with the committee allocating \$40 for reference books, mainly with the intention that these be used to answer questions from the Question Box. Mrs Kay and Mrs Allen agreed to be librarians.

## **1970**

Ernie Hill became President and will be mainly remembered as the President who wanted to close the Society down due to the lack of interest of members. A group of young ladies comprising Rita King, Judy Self, Joan Hiscock and Gwen Ransom took him on and mainly as a result of their efforts, we still have a Society today. Ernie's answer to the membership drop by 15% to a low of 191 was that there were no young members coming along while older folk were moving to units. Also, the trend to “instant gardens” with perennials and to permanent landscaped rockeries was becoming more popular. Only three shows were held this year due to the lack of support from members.

Marie Rae joined the committee.

## **1971**

During this year, a major contribution made by the Society was the organisation of the Northern Districts Horticultural Association, which consisted of delegates from all garden clubs in the area from Mona Vale to Roseville to Epping.

Marie Rae succeeded Joy Kay as librarian for the next 25 years, retiring when it was resolved to cease the library facility.

Rita King joined the committee and undertook several tasks which included running the plant stall with Eileen Tissot. Rita continued with this job until taken over by Joy Courtice in 1985. Rita also wrote the monthly cultivation notes.

## **1972**

Succeeding Mr Hill was Mr K Bracher, who called himself “the reluctant President” being unable to spare the time required. Mr Bracher told a good story about Professor Waterhouse (who was such a wonderful worker for the Society running the Camellia shows for many years). His story: “His sister-in-law (Prof Waterhouse's wife's sister) had exhibited in the monthly flower arrangement section and when the speaker began to complain that certain exhibits, although of excellent quality as were hers, were not consistent with schedule rules, she replied “Well, if I have to stick to the rules, I just cannot do my best work!”

We had a coach tour to Mount Wilson and Leura and the cost was \$2.20 per person!

## **1973**

The Jean Sugden Trophy for the best entry in the pot plant section was won by Frances MacKinnon for five years in a row from 1969 to 1973. In view of this achievement, the trophy was suitably engraved and awarded to her.

## **1974**

Jacqueline (Jackie) Barclay joined the committee for a short period and agreed to look after the raffle ticket sales. She continued selling them up to early 2013 and was ably assisted by Dick Hughes.

Our paid Secretary, Mr. R. Kavanagh, retired with all subsequent executive positions filled in an honorary capacity.

## **1975**

Our John Johnson who was then with the Department of Agriculture, gave us a talk on "Citrus Oddities".

## **1976**

Nick Heath, who was President at that time, suggested the new name of Hortulanus (meaning The Gardener in Latin) for our monthly news bulletin. For the next nine years, writing and distribution of the publication was undertaken by Joan Hiscock, aided by her husband Ian.

An extract from the minutes at this time reads: "At a Xmas Party in 1976 Rita King, Joan Hiscock, Mrs Allgood and Jim Gill all worked hard in the heat to make it all look so Christmassy.... with the delicious Xmas cake made by Rita. It was so good we have had enquiries for the recipe. There was a cool fruit punch, another of Rita's recipes, she makes it all look so easy. 'I'll just fling it together' she says, and whatever it was she flung into it, it was very refreshing! Jackie Barclay got together a wonderful Xmas hamper for the raffle, ranging from a chicken to a bottle of wine and we all hovered over it, deciding just what we'd do with it all, but Jackie fooled us all by winning it herself!"

Christmas parties of this kind were held for many years, with singers, dancing, raffles, an exchange of gifts and party games.

It was agreed that, in future, judges would be our own members as opposed to paid judges from RHS of NSW. Five members, including Rita King and Alf Self, were elected to the judging panel.

## **1977**

In addition to our own shows, we commenced having displays at the NSW Agricultural Society's St Ives Show. These continued till 1996. On one occasion, John Turner built a mock-up of a thatched cottage garden and we won first prize - and on another, a Japanese Garden organised by Dorothy Smith and Hugh Myers won second prize. Our final effort was organised by Hugh Myers and was based on the 'Yellow Brick Road' from the Wizard of Oz.

## **1979**

Mr Allan Flitton, who had been an RHS (NSW) judge since 1943, became our monthly competition judge, continuing for many years and training his assistant Janet Bennett as his successor. Janet remained as a judge until 2006.

## **1981**

Joy Courtice joined the committee and became President in 1982. She continued as a committee member for the next 22 years, looking after guest speakers and then the Garden Table from 1985. Joy retired as a committee member in 2001 when she was awarded Life Membership.

John Turner joined the committee, handing over to his wife Rana in 1988. Rana continued to be a committee member until 1997. Ian Hiscock, having performed lots of other tasks behind the scene, became our Auditor and continued in this role until 1995.

The committee agreed that if the Walter Dibley trophy or any other perpetual trophy was won by an individual for five consecutive years then it should be awarded to that member. As it had been won by John Johnson from 1977 to 1981 the salver was presented to him. He continued to win this award in 1983 and 1984 and received engraved plaques and cash awards for the next two years. John was therefore our champion exhibitor for at least nine years and continued to exhibit until he retired.

## **1983**

Allan Neall became President and remained as President for 12 years! We became affiliated to the Royal Horticultural Society of NSW.

Harry Churchill became one of our judges.

**1984**

Our early guest speakers included Dr Peter Valder and Alan Seale as well as at a later stage, Don Burke and Shirley Stackhouse (before they became famous).

**1985**

The role of KHS in the Bicentennial Celebrations in this district was discussed. The Council Historian was contacted, and the suggestion made that KHS offer a History of our Society as part of Council’s activities. This offer was not accepted by the Bicentennial Authority. John Turner took over as editor of Hortulanus and continued in this role for the next ten years.

**1986**

Another interesting note in the Society’s Minutes for the AGM elections in 1986 shows a list of officers elected, very brief but to the point:

- Allan Neall .....President
- Warwick Pennington.....Treasurer
- Joan Hiscock .....Priceless!

Jean Puddicombe was appointed Secretary and remained in this position until 1992. Betty Chamberlain joined the committee and stayed until 1992.

**1987**

Northern Districts Horticultural Society was wound up and we became affiliated to the Garden Clubs of Australia.

**1989**

Life membership was awarded to Joan Hiscock in recognition of her great work over the years.

**1991**

The decision was made to incorporate the Society and a revised draft Constitution was finalised.

**1992**

Lorna Chanell was elected as Secretary. An Outings Sub-Committee was formed comprising Allan Neall, Keith Webb, Jean Puddicombe and Betty Chamberlain. This Sub-Committee organised many outings, eventually retiring in 2000. Alan Bennett, Harry and Hazel Churchill joined the committee and for some time Hazel was our Publicity Officer.

**1993**

All Society-run Garden shows were abandoned due to lack of support. A guide for the Show Bench was prepared by Rita King and John Johnson and coordinated by Janet Bennett. Alan Bennett designed name badges for members. Alf Self made a wooden slotted box which is still in use to house these badges.

**1994**

Janet Bennett prepared a history of the Society for our 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary which was celebrated one year late with Graham Ross as our guest speaker. Hugh Myers joined the committee.

**1995**

Allan Neall retired from the Presidency and Jim Sweeting was elected as the new President. Allan remained on the committee until 2000 and was given Life Membership for his years of service. Hugh Myers took over from John Turner as Editor of the Hortulanus. As a result of a questionnaire sent to all members it was decided to discontinue the library due to limited usage. All books were sold except the five reference books “Dictionary of Gardening”, currently looked after by Hugh Myers and available for members’ reference.

David Chanell became our Treasurer and continued in this role up to 2006.

### **1996**

Alf Self, a member from 1971, and John Johnson, a member since 1976, were made Life Members for their contribution to the Society.

The committee arranged for Hazel King to give a series of six talks on various aspects of gardening.

The Society put on a display called 'The Yellow Brick Road' at the St Ives Show with the figures cleverly fabricated by Hugh Myers.

Laurie Logue took charge of the exhibition points judging book from David Chanell.

Joan Logue replaced Judy Self who with Joan Tully had been looking after our evening refreshment for many years.

### **1997**

It was agreed that the partners of Life Members would also be automatically given Honorary Membership, namely Ian Hiscock, Thelma Neall, Judy Self and Dawn Johnson.

Dick Hughes joined the committee and took over the checking, photo copying and distribution of Hortulanus with Hugh Myers' new concept of a centrefold.

### **1998**

Janet and Alan Bennett retired from the committee, but Janet continued to prepare the monthly schedule and to act as a judge, a role she had performed since 1979.

Dorothy Spiller, Geoff and Patricia Ellis joined the judging panel under the tuition of Janet Bennett.

We paid a visit to the Canberra Floriade and at the same time visited the gardens of the Governor General's residence and the Lodge.

### **1999**

Rosemary and Peter Jensen took over the "Garden Table" from Joy Courtice.

Edna Cossill joined the committee, typing the committee minutes and the Hortulanus.

Margaret Hughes joined Joan Logue looking after the evening refreshments, taking over from Joan Tully.

### **2000**

We made a trip to Melbourne to visit the International Garden Show and the Dandenongs.

Jim Sweeting retired from the Presidency but remained on the committee.

Patrick Clark became the new President.

After 32 years at St Johns Church Hall, Gordon we changed our meeting venue to the St Ives Community Hall.

A new sound system was purchased.

A new Outings Sub Committee was formed consisting of Laurie and Joan Logue and Jim and Betty Sweeting.

### **2001**

Lorna Chanell retired after nine years as Secretary but remained on the committee until 2006. Christine Rethers became the new Secretary.

To reverse the declining membership, brochures setting out the Society's activities were designed, printed and distributed by members to neighbouring letterboxes and some were placed in special stands in Rast Bros and Parker's nurseries.

### **2002**

The Constitution was updated by Christine Rethers, Jim Sweeting and Edna Cossill and reprinted.

Jim Sweeting and Christine Rethers began updating the History of the Society initially prepared by Janet Bennett in 1994. This occasioned searching through many old records and asking those who had been members for a number of years to dredge their memories regarding happenings in the past.

Our Show Bench Guide, initially prepared by Rita King and John Johnson, was updated by Janet Bennett and Jim Sweeting and put into final form by Christine Rethers.

The Mayor of Ku-ring-gai, Councillor Ian Cross, agreed to become Patron of the Society, following the practice originally set in 1933.

Hazel King, a very popular speaker at the monthly meetings was accorded honorary membership for her strong support of the Society.

A new Society logo was introduced.

Following fierce bush fires in the Ku-ring-gai area, the Society had a special fund-raising drive at its August meeting and donated an amount of \$255 to the local Bush Fire Brigade for the Bush Fire Appeal.

## **2003**

The Society celebrated its 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at its August meeting. Mrs Shirley Stackhouse, well-known radio garden personality, was the guest speaker and cut the celebratory cake. Four groups of members put together four display tables, filled with all manner of potted plants and vases of flowers. A full-size colour spread of photos from the evening was included in the September Hortulanus.

The President donated a perpetual shield to be known as the 'President's Shield - 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 1933-2003". The shield is awarded to the winner of the Show Bench Competition each year, inscribed with the winner's name and is held by them for one year. The winner is given a small, inscribed memento of the award to keep.

In our Anniversary Year, the Society has a membership of 148 including six Life and four Honorary members. Laurie Logue joined the committee.

## **2004**

Our President, Patrick Clark, died in July and Jim Sweeting took over as Acting President.

Janet Bennett was accorded Life Membership in recognition of her many years of service to the Society.

Ian St Clair was invited to join the committee to fill the position of Vice President.

The Society donated \$100 for the purchase of a Rose, R. Duchesse of Brabant, to be planted in the newly refurbished Rose Garden in front of old Parliament House. In a subsequent outing we inspected this rose which was growing well.

The Society voted to increase its subscription by \$5 per membership to \$20 single and \$30 double, effective from July 2006. Jim Sweeting stepped down as Acting President and Ian St Clair was voted in as the new President at the AGM. Doreen Clark joined the committee.

## **2005**

A Trading Table - where members could sell plants they had potted up - was established, operating twice a year with the Society receiving 10% of the proceeds. The first Trading Table was held in May and voted a great success with a total of \$22.75 going to the Society. It has continued to the present day and has yielded an average of \$45 per annum.

Edna Cossill took over the complete preparation of the Hortulanus using Microsoft Publisher.

The Society developed a banner to be displayed several times a year on Ku-ring-gai Council poles in the vicinity of the St Ives Village Hall.

The Society purchased a computer and projector to be used by speakers in their presentations.

## **2006**

Lorna and David Chanell stepped down from the Committee. Lorna had completed nine years of service as Secretary and David eleven years as Treasurer.

At the AGM Life Memberships were given to Lorna and David Chanell and to Jim and Betty Sweeting. Barry Colvin was appointed Treasurer.

Ian St Clair oversaw the design of a new logo.

## **2007**

Barry Colvin resigned as Treasurer and Richard Phillips was appointed in his place.

Total membership at the beginning of the year was 162 members.

Edna Cossill designed a new name badge which was issued to all members.

The Society decided to encourage the insertion of A5 size advertising flyers in the Hortulanus at \$100 per insertion.

It was agreed that we would not renew our affiliation with the Royal Horticultural Society of NSW as they were not able to offer clubs any benefits of membership.

In order to keep subscriptions at the lowest possible level, it was decided to raise funds by running a Sausage Sizzle at Bunnings Hardware, (Belrose) on the Labor Day Weekend in October. This proved such a great success it has been repeated in subsequent years. It raises in the vicinity of \$900 - \$1100 which greatly helps to keep the membership fees as low as possible.

## **2008**

Life membership was accorded to Hugh Myers at the AGM.

Due to the big increase in the cost of printing our newsletter, it was voted that the Society increase its subscription to \$25 single and \$35 double from July 2009.

Membership at the beginning of the year was 154.

The Society celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at the April meeting with a suitably inscribed cake.

Barry O'Farrell, State member for Ku-ring-gai, was the guest speaker at the Christmas Dinner.

## **2009**

The Society took a stand at the Rotary Garden Expo held at St Ives Showground and this practice continued until 2011. Members gave out brochures and sold plants.

Jim and Betty Sweeting resigned from the Outings Committee which left Laurie Logue and his wife Joan to organise outings.

The Society took a stand at the Seniors' and Community Living Information Day at the Uniting Church, Turramurra and continued doing so until 2011. A supply of green polo shirts monogrammed with our logo was purchased for use by members at public functions. Committee members paid for their own shirts.

Linda Ross spoke at the Christmas Dinner.

The Society bought a hard disk drive on which to store Society records, thus eliminating the need for much of the paper storage.

## **2010**

Richard Hughes (a committee member for 12 years) and Laurie Logue were granted Life Membership in recognition of their many years of service. Both stood down from the committee and Ray Kench and Cristina Scott were co-opted in their place.

Ian St Clair stood down as President and Doreen Clark was elected President at the AGM.

The Society provided morning tea for the Cottage Garden Club on their visit to the garden of Christine Rethers. This raised \$300 for the Society.

The Society applied for and received a grant of approximately \$1000 from Ku-ring-gai Council to set up a website. Magic Dust was selected to set up the website, with Cristina Scott as webmaster.

Prof. Margaret Burchett was guest speaker at the Christmas Dinner.

Past President, Joy Courtice died.

## **2011**

Curtis and Sue Hill joined the committee.

The website became operational.

Christine Rethers took over organising the outings.

The Society provided morning teas to visitors to Christine Rethers' garden which was on display for the Open Gardens Australia scheme in November.

Long-time committee member and judge, Alf Self, died as did Harry Churchill.

## **2012**

A proposal to increase the number of committee members from four to six was accepted at the AGM, requiring a change in the Constitution.

Ray Kench and Cristina Scott stood down from the committee and were replaced by Peter Fisher and Ted Shaw.

The Show Bench booklet was updated by Christine Rethers and reprinted.

Members Keith and Maureen Smith organised an informal gathering of members called a Mini Ramble, intended to provide an opportunity (on an ad hoc basis) to visit members' gardens and take cuttings and seeds for propagation. It was decided that while the ramble would be open to all members, attendance at each ramble would be limited to 20 and attendees would have to be willing to open their own gardens for a visit.

The Society took a stand at the Turramurra Uniting Church Flea Market in October for the purpose of publicising the Society and raising funds by selling plants propagated by members. \$528 was raised.

Fundraising enabled KHS to keep the level of subscriptions unchanged since 2009.

Organisation began in respect of the Society's 80th Anniversary celebrations which were held at the meeting of May 2013.

## **2013**

At the start of our 80th Anniversary year, the Society's membership stood at 149 members. Of these, ten were Life and five were Honorary Members.

A party attended by some 100 people was held in May to celebrate our 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Newly appointed Executive Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust, Prof. David Mabberley was the guest speaker. Ken Bradley, President of the Garden Clubs of Australia presented Jim Sweeting with the Ann Williams Clark Medallion, in recognition of a club member who has shown outstanding service to their club. Jim then launched the updated version of the Club's history. Members created displays of memorabilia, pictorial history, plants and flowers. A new class was introduced to the show bench: "an A4 photograph of a plant or flower that cannot be brought to the meeting, taken within one month of display".

Richard Phillips retired as Treasurer after serving for five years and was replaced by Peter Fisher.

Peter and Rosemary Jensen resigned from the Club, but Peter agreed to continue as Honorary Auditor.

Sadly, we lost three longstanding members during this year: Rita King, member for more than 40 years; Edna Cossill, Committee Member for 14 years and Editor of Hortulanus, and Allan Neall, Past President.

KHS Secretary, Christine Rethers, assumed responsibility for editing and distributing Hortulanus.

The club decided to trial on-line banking for the first time, starting with the Christmas Dinner.

A new colour printer was purchased. Membership stood at 140.

## **2014**

Ian St Clair was awarded a Life Membership in recognition of his contribution as President from 2005 - 2010 and for his term on the Committee to 2014. Julie St Clair was made an Honorary Member for her significant club activities. Curtis Hill, Committee Member, passed away.

The Constitution was changed to allow subscriptions to be changed by special resolution. Peter Jensen resigned as Auditor, as auditing of accounts was no longer legally required.

It was decided to trial the distribution of Hortulanus by email in order to make significant time and cost savings. Arrangements were made for members without email to receive the magazine.

Sue Hill championed the ongoing battle with Ku-Ring-Gai Council to get the carpark lights and those around the hall repaired. New club brochures were printed.

Club members enjoyed three outings this year which included trips to the Southern Highlands, Maitland and Milthorpe.

## **2015**

Fund raising activities by means of Bunning's Sausage Sizzle and the Turrumurra Flea Market continued successfully. The Society upgraded its sound system.

The newly appointed Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust, Kim Ellis, and the Director of Horticulture, Jimmy Turner, were guest speakers, marking the 200th Anniversary of the Sydney Gardens.

Janet Pemberton became responsible for looking after new members and visitors at meetings to encourage continued attendance.

There were three well attended outings during the year to gardens in the Southern Highlands, the recently opened Mt Annan Plant Bank and the Leura Garden Festival.

The Society had 152 members.

## **2016**

Following the 2015 trial, it was decided that all members would receive Hortulanus and attachments by email. Provisions were made for the small number of members without access to email. KHS running costs were thus substantially reduced.

With the aim of encouraging gardeners, young and old, and in collaboration with the staff of the gardening section of Bunnings, Belrose, KHS launched a hanging basket competition (which was open to the public) by giving an in-store demonstration. It was judged in December by an independent expert and prizes, supplied by Bunnings, were awarded.

An ambitious and most enjoyable four-day trip to the lower North Coast was organised, as well as day trips to Mount Wilson and the Hills District. In general, members favour short trips.

In May, long standing Life Member, Betty Sweeting, died.

Peter Fisher resigned as Treasurer but remained on the Committee. Janet Pemberton also resigned from the Committee. There were 140 members.

## **2017**

It was decided that the KHS website (set up in 2010 using a grant from the Ku-ring-gai Council) needed to be upgraded and a sub-committee was formed.

Winsome Combe successfully championed the long-standing problem of repairing lights outside the hall.

Richard (Dick) Hughes, former Committee Member, passed away.

Selected KHS members hosted visits to their gardens by the Killara Garden Club. Trips to Central Coast, Leura and the Bathurst Spring Festival (including Mayfield) were well supported.

New member Robyn Brown became Treasurer while new member Rhoda Fowler offered to assist with publicity for the club and revamp our brochure. Sue Hill resigned from the Committee.

A new laptop computer was purchased. Membership remained steady.

## **2018**

In May a celebration supper was held to mark our 85<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. It featured a towering croquembouche, expertly sliced and served by Penny Whipp. The President gave a talk on aspects of the history of the Society. Hugh Myers organised a memorabilia display covering the period 1933 to 1946 while displays featuring orchids, vegetables and pot plants were set up by members.

Three trips were organised during the year: Mt Wilson gardens (1 day) in April, Southern Highlands and Canberra (2 days) in September and Bundanoon and Crookwell (3 days) in November. Canberra Horticultural Society, our Canberra trip hosts, were in turn, hosted by KHS to visit member gardens during a day trip to Sydney.

In order to bring the Society's Constitution in line with changes to the Associations Act (2016), a new Constitution was adopted based on the Fair-Trading Model Constitution, with changes suitable for our Society. A new Privacy Policy was also written and adopted.

After 21 years, Hugh Myers resigned from the Committee but continued to set up the hall for meetings. His contribution to KHS has been invaluable. Fiona Arnott joined the Committee.

Richard Phillips, treasurer from 2007 to 2012, died. Joan Logue, long serving member of the Outings Committee, also passed away.

Typically, 70 to 80 members and guests attended monthly meetings. Garden Table and Trading Table activities were well supported. Annual Subscriptions remained at \$35 for a double and \$25 for a single membership.

## **2019**

Doreen Clark, Fiona Arnott and Penny Whipp started work on updating the Society's History. Doreen and Fiona also gathered together the various Society papers and photos that had previously been dispersed between committee members, and sorted, catalogued them and put them into permanent storage boxes. These now form the Society's archives.

A new projector was purchased for use at meetings.

Ted Shaw and Christine Rethers with the help of Robyn Brown, Peter Fisher and Cristina Scott created a new website using Wix which they launched at the November meeting.

There was a 4-day trip to the Toowoomba Garden Festival and a 1-day trip to the Southern Highlands.

Penny Whipp and Fiona Arnott resigned from the Committee and Evelyn Mason joined the Committee.

Frances McKinnon, winner of the Jean Sugden Trophy in 1973, died.

## **2020**

After 10 years in the job, Doreen Clark stepped down as President but remained on the Committee. Ted Shaw took over the presidential duties until election of a President at the next AGM and Nancy Shaw joined the Committee. Peter Fisher resigned from the Committee.

The COVID-19 pandemic struck early in 2020 and meetings from March were cancelled until further notice. The St Ives Community Hall was closed indefinitely for a major renovation. The Society set up a Face Book page for use by members to keep in touch during the pandemic. Also, Hortulanus continued to be issued monthly. The cost of membership was reduced to \$15 (single) and \$20 (double) because there were no meetings. The Treasurer set up an electronic banking payment system with the Commonwealth Bank (two signatories still required). In October we held a garden ramble to three members' gardens under strict Covid conditions.

## **2021**

With an easing of Covid restrictions, it was possible to hold a garden ramble in March and a trip to the Hunter Valley Gardens also in March. The first meeting for over a year was held in June at the Turrumurra Uniting Church as the St Ives Community Hall was still under renovation.

Doreen Clark resigned from the Committee. It was decided not to require a membership fee for the year 2021-2022 because only one meeting was able to be held since March 2020. Jenny Watsford joined the Committee. The second meeting of the year was held in October in the Louise Lennon Pavilion at St Ives Showground. A third meeting for the year was held in December in the Turrumurra Uniting Church Hall with Costa Georgiadis of Gardening Australia as guest speaker. A garden ramble and plant sale were held in the garden of Christine Rethers raising over \$600 in November.

The AGMs for 2020 and 2021 were held at the November meeting and Evelyn Mason was elected President with Ted Shaw as Vice President. Jenny Watsford joined the Committee Doreen Clark was awarded the GCA Ann Williams Clark award and given KHS Life Membership.

## **2022**

As Covid restrictions were still in operation the February meeting was held electronically via Zoom with 29 participants. Two Members' Trading Tables were held in March and October. Meetings were able to proceed in the hall at St Ives for the rest of the year. Outings to the Southern Highlands, the Auburn Botanic Gardens and the Hills District Gardens were able to go ahead. A special meeting with invited guests was held in June

when Alicia Powell gave a presentation on the visit by Lady Vivien Leigh to open the Society's Camellia Show in July 1948. Many members dressed in clothes appropriate for the time which included fur coats and stoles. Mark Carter whose parents were members and office bearers in the 1960's made contact and the Committee visited his parents' garden with its original plantings of camellias before it was due to be redeveloped. A members' garden ramble was held in September. George Hoad, immediate past president of Garden Clubs of Australia, was the guest speaker at the December meeting and finished his talk with a round of Christmas carols to much acclaim.

### **2023**

With Covid restrictions now lifted, meetings resumed their normal pattern. The Society celebrated its 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at its May meeting.

**LIST OF OFFICE BEARERS OF THE**  
**KU-RING-GAI HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY INC.**

<b>YEARS</b>	<b>PRESIDENT</b>	<b>SECRETARY</b>	<b>TREASURER</b>
1933 – 1936	Mr A E Scanlan	Mr F A Creighton	Mr W R Warner
1936 – 1946	His Honour Justice Markell	Mr F A Creighton	Mr C K Cook
1946 – 1953	His Honour Justice Markell	Mr G Grainger	Mr G Travis
1953 – 1956	Mr G Travis	Mr G Grainger	Mr G Travis
1956 – 1958	Mr G Travis	Mr R Kavanagh	Mrs T King
1958 – 1962	Dr J Pollock	Mr R Kavanagh	Mr A Roper
1962 – 1964	Mr A Hammond	Mr C K Arnold	Mr A Roper
1964 – 1967	Major C V Sugden	Mr C H Carter	Mr A Roper
1968 – 1970	Mr A Hammond	Mr G C Morrison Mr C Relph	Mr A Roper
1970 – 1972	Mr E Hill	Mr G C Morrison	Mr J Stocks
1972 – 1974	Mr H Bracher Mr G C Morrison	Mr R Kavanagh	Mr E Hill Mrs R King
1974 – 1976	Mr N Heath	Mr N Wayman	Mrs J Hiscock
1976 – 1978	Mrs R King Mr J Ashelford	Mrs A Self Mrs N Nelson	Mrs J Hiscock
1978 – 1980	Mr J Ashelford	Mrs N Nelson	Mr A Roberts
1980 – 1982	Mr J Johnson	Mrs Tulloch	Mr A Roberts Mr A Neall
1982 – 1983	Mrs J Courtice	P Bennett	Mr A Neall
1983 – 1986	Mr A Neall	Position unfilled	Mr W Pennington
1986 – 1988	Mr A Neall	Mrs J Puddicombe	Mr W Pennington
1988 – 1992	Mr A Neall	Mrs J Puddicombe	Mrs R Turner Mr D Litchfield
1992 – 1995	Mr A Neall	Mrs L Chanell	Mr G Bush
1995 – 2000	Mr J Sweeting	Mrs L Chanell	Mr D Chanell
2000 – 2003	Mr P Clark	Mrs L Chanell Mrs C Rethers	Mr D Chanell
2003 – 2004	Mr P Clark Mr J Sweeting	Mrs C Rethers	Mr D Chanell
2004 – 2005	Mr J Sweeting Mr I St Clair	Mrs C Rethers	Mr D Chanell

2005 – 2006	Mr I St Clair	Mrs C Rethers	Mr D Chanell Mr B Colvin
2006 – 2007	Mr I St Clair	Mrs C Rethers	Mr B Colvin Mr R Phillips
2008 – 2010	Mr I St Clair	Mrs C Rethers	Mr R Phillips
2010 – 2013	Dr D Clark	Mrs C Rethers	Mr R Phillips
2013 – 2016	Dr D Clark	Mrs C Rethers	Mr P Fisher
2017 – 2019	Dr D Clark	Mrs C Rethers	Mrs R Brown
2019 – 2020	Dr D Clark Mr T Shaw	Mrs C Rethers	Mrs R Brown
2021-2023	Ms E Mason	Mrs C Rethers	Mrs R Brown

## Committee Members 2023

<b>President</b>	Evelyn Mason
<b>Vice President</b>	Ted Shaw
<b>Secretary</b>	Christine Rethers
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Robyn Brown
<b>Committee:</b>	Helen Gilkes
	Nancy Shaw
	Jenny Watsford

**Photographs Opposite:**

1. Memorabilia at 85<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration
2. Happy members at the Christmas Dinner
3. Supper being served at a meeting



