

A HISTORY OF THE CLAREMONT FLOWER SHOW GROUP

The beginning of the Claremont Flower Show - 1985

In early-mid 1985 Rod Barwick of Glenbrook Bulb Farm and his sister Anne, a leader of the Uniting Church Boys Brigade in Claremont, believed that it would be worthwhile to hold a community-based Daffodil and Spring Flower Show for the benefit of local residents. A first show was organised and held at the Uniting Church Hall in Bristol Rd (off Wyndham Rd) Claremont in the Spring of 1985. It was a great success and a second Daffodil and Spring Flower Show (still under the auspices of the Uniting Church Claremont Boys Brigade) was held again in 1986. Both of these shows were so successful that it was felt necessary to move to a larger venue and the best option available was the Claremont Memorial Hall. Hugely successful Shows were held there in 1987, 1988, 1989 and 1990. Every one of these Shows was organised and financially backed by Glenbrook Bulb Farm (Rod, Anne and family), with the Farm paying for Hall rental, providing all prizes, and providing all morning/afternoon teas as well as all other expenses. No other body was involved in organizing these shows.

In 1991 the patriarch of the Glenbrook family, Syd Barwick, become critically ill and died in July 1992. From then until August 1996 the matriarch of the family, Phyllis Ellen, also suffered failing health and Rod and Anne were no longer able to put in the huge effort necessary to run a Flower Show on their own. Consequently in 1990/1991 an informal group got together to help with organisation of Claremont Shows thereafter. At the first gathering of this informal group which was held at Glenbrook there were, among those present, Richard and Scott Bell, Fay Smith, Barry and Lorraine Davidson, Margaret Lowry and of course Rod and Anne. Margaret took notes of the gathering and continued to do so at future get-togethers for some time.

Around 1992/1993 (date uncertain) Margaret Lowry approached Rod Barwick and said she had found a suitable Secretary for the informal Flower Show Group. This person was May Backhouse who had recently moved to Derwent Waters (apparently May had been a top-notch professional Secretary in her work career). May began taking formal minutes at Flower Show Group meetings and what is now known as the Claremont Flower Show Group was officialised then. Rod believes that the notes of Margaret Lowry and all minutes thereafter recorded by May have been kept by the Tasmanian archives.

Thus, you will see very clearly that the Claremont Flower Show Group was initiated in 1990/1991 and was a direct flow-on from the Daffodil and Spring Flower Show held under the auspices of the Uniting Church Claremont Boys Brigade in 1985 and 1986.

The accuracy of these preceding details is guaranteed for fact and truth by Rod Barwick of Glenbrook Bulb Farm and Anne Atkin of the Uniting Church Boys Brigade.

Further notes:

The history of the CFSG dates either from 1990/1991 when notes were taken by Margaret Lowry of the first informal meetings or if wished the history can be extended back to 1985 where it all began!

Highlights of our shows from 1985 to the present day

In 1985 and 1986 crowd attendance at the shows was extraordinary and the popularity of the show was immediate. The 1987 show was attended by over 1000 people and Mr George Tarry, of the English Daffodil Society, who visited the show commented that he had never seen such huge support of a Daffodil Show anywhere in England. 1989/1990 saw the first visits to Claremont of Mr John Mathews and Mr Richard Perrignon of the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Lily Group, Sydney.

Richard Perrignon has ever since written reports of the Claremont Spring Show for the Annual Journals of the RHS, London, and these reports are an important record of every Claremont Spring Flower Show from this date.

Mr John Mathews, then President of the RHS Lily Group, Sydney Branch, attended almost every Claremont Show for the ensuing 20 years. He is commemorated at our Daffodil Show by the JV Mathews Trophy for 'Seven Miniature Daffodils' and at our Lily Show by the John Mathews Perpetual Trophy for 'Best Single Lilium Flower in Show'.

In 1996 a party of 16 very prominent people of the American Daffodil Society visited the Spring Show. They were invited to participate in judging panels. On the Saturday evening the Claremont Flower Show Group hosted the visitors to a dinner at the Claremont Bowls Club with a speech of welcome by the Mayor of Glenorchy.

In 1999/2000 other renowned English and American Daffodil experts visited the Show and subsequently wrote glowing reports about their visits.

It is important to mention that from the beginning of the 1990's and for over two decades thereafter mighty contributions were made to the Claremont Flower Shows by Miss Essie Huxley of Lower Longley. Essie's exhibits in the lily and cut flower classes were exceptional and she provided superb material for stage displays by John Matthews for nearly two

decades. Essie is commemorated at our Summer Flower Show by the Essie Huxley Memorial Trophy for 'Best Seedling Lily in Show'.

It is important to mention that in the 2010's Anthony Weeding did a strong job as President of the Flower Show Group and was succeeded by Mrs Elizabeth Shoobridge who put in a stellar effort to move the show committee forward to the group it is today.

In September 2024, Rod and Anne celebrated a 40th successive Spring Flower Show in Claremont - and, if all is well, a fortieth (Ruby) anniversary show in September 2025.

Finally, it is very special to mention that the Grand Champion at our 2024 Lilium, Rose and Summer Flower Show was won by Mrs Mavis Beattie of the Derwent Valley Garden Club. Mavis is a real performer at age 92.

These notes give a shine to what is our Claremont Flower Show Group.