



Celebrating
50 years

of the Illawarra Regional Rose Society
1974-2024



My thanks to Colin Hollis, Judith Oyston for proof reading and provision of history. To all those who provided photographs, and the newsletter editors and minute writers over the past 25 years, my thanks for this help in a hastily written compilation of the history of the Illawarra Regional Rose Society. Apologies for any errors or omissions.

Kristin Dawson ARA

Cover - Elina- named the signature rose of the region in 2010 (Photo-Kristin Dawson)

Back inside cover- photos from the Rose Society of NSW Centenary 1913-2013

FOREWORD

As the Committee planned the celebration of the 50 years of the Illawarra Regional Rose Society, we came across the menu of the celebration of the first 25 years in 1999. Inside the menu was a brief history of these first years under the title of *“The Story of the Rose Fairy”*. We decided to add to that story in celebration of 50 years.

The history of the first 25 years remains as written by that first planning committee and the next 25 years ballooned out into a longer telling of so much energy, creativity and social connectivity around the rose up to this date. So, it comes up under the Heading of the *Next 25 years 2000-2024*

As Editor, in reading hundreds of newsletters between 2000-2024, the dedication and spirit of so many people shone through the pages. The advancement of electronic recording enabled a much easier access to the story since 2000, as I remember the old Gestetner machine, typewriters, and carbon copies, Kodak film for photos which would have been used by the executive in those first 25 years.

The first 25 years was a flourish of the excitement of new beginnings, as the early members more youthful than most of the current ones, lived with a more nomadic movement from one end of the Illawarra to the other spreading the news of rose growing and holding rose shows in many and varied places. By 2000 however, as the Regional became more consolidated, it settled as do individuals of more than 25 years of age, in a more permanent location. Kiama became the central place from which the leadership and most members emerged, and where the life and energy of the Society was concentrated. In recent years more members from the Shoalhaven have joined. The Illawarra Regional began with about 19 members, peaked at 167 in 2010 and has generally stayed around the 100 marks since 2010.

The Rose Fairy was given to Judith Oyston and the founders at the 25-year celebration. Judith will pass the “fairy” on to our youngest member- Sophia Hernandez at our 50th celebration after the cutting of the cake together.

This booklet is a tribute to all those who have worked to nurture the spirit and beauty of the Illawarra and Shoalhaven community through the love of the rose for over 50 years.

Kristin Dawson (Editor/Chair- June 2024)

PREAMBLE

FROM OUR FOUNDING MEMBER -JUDITH OYSTON OAM

50 Years

Memories taken from the 1973 Spring NSW Rose magazine in part from page17

“The Dapto Rose Society is the Dapto Methodist Ladies Aid affiliated with the Rose Society of NSW”. This affiliation was made possible by the gentle guidance of the then state executive, I especially want to say thank you to Alec and Gladys Taylor and Roy and Heather Rumsey.

“The Dapto Rose Show is the only Rose Show on the South Coast”.

I was a member of this group. The ladies Annual Fete came first, and a flower show was added over time. We noticed the same group of exhibitors with their roses each year and so the title Dapto Rose Show was born.

As history now shows it was one year after the above 1973 article that the Illawarra Regional was formed.

Commitment remains to the rose by members as they continue to take the rose to the public.

My congratulations as you celebrate this, your Golden Year.

Judith Oyston

Message from NSW Rose Society President.

Someone's 50 th Birthday is regarded as a significant occasion, a milestone along life's journey. So it is with the Illawarra Rose Society's 50 th anniversary. The regional has changed over the years just as individuals change and adapt as new events and challenges force them to. It has been this ability to change and adapt as well as realistically face new challenges that has enabled the Illawarra Regional to remain vibrant.

These challenges include new gardening techniques, smaller garden space, changing leisure patterns as well as changing weather conditions. A more recent challenge has been the pandemic from which many clubs and Societies did not survive. Illawarra Regional has always enjoyed a strong membership base resulting in many friendships evolving. Gardening knowledge has been learnt and shared, Roses admired. Various social activities enjoyed, as well as excursions bringing pleasure and knowledge.

A special thank you to Illawarra Chair Kristin Dawson for compiling this booklet. A perusal of the many and varied activities will bring back happy memories for many of us. It will also quickly show why this regional has survived over the past 50 years and is well prepared for the next 50.

Congratulations Illawarra Regional Rose Society on this special milestone,

Colin Hollis ARA
President
Rose Society of New South Wales Inc,
June 2024

CELEBRATING THE ILLAWARRA REGIONAL ROSE SOCIETY – 50 YEARS OF ROSES & FRIENDSHIP

Overview:

The Rose Society of NSW was founded in 1913 with William Herbert Ifould as the first President. For many years after foundation, members met in Sydney until in 1967 President Ted Annabel wrote: 'The objects of forming Regionals is to give members who live too far from Sydney opportunities to take part in our regular activities, a chance to attend meetings in their own districts and to encourage rose lovers in these areas, who are not already members of the National Rose Society, to take the opportunity to join through these Regionals'. [NSW Rose, December 1967, Two Regionals were established in 1967 (The Hills District, to become known as the Parramatta & Hills Regional, and now the Sydney Regional), and the Hunter Valley Regional. The next Regional to be developed was the Illawarra Rose Regional in 1974.

And thus begins the first 25 years of the Regional as described in the brief history presented at the Silver Anniversary of the Region at the celebration dinner in the Silver Room of the Portofino International in Wollongong on Friday June 4, 1974.

The first 25 years- 1974-1999

THE STORY OF THE ROSE FAIRY

Once upon a time, in the long distant past (1974) there were mutterings to be heard amongst the good people of the Illawarra....” Why have we no local Rose Society? New South Wales State have! Hunter Valley has! Parramatta and Hills have! So why should we not have one of our own?”



Some of the citizens of the Illawarra banded together and decided to go ahead to rectify this.

One June 1, 1974, the “Inaugural Meeting” was held at 2.00p.m. at the CWA Rooms in McCabe Park, Wollongong.

The State President, Alec Taylor and Mrs Taylor, together with the State Secretary, Amy Gwynne made the hazardous journey down the mountains from Sydney bearing a donation from State Council of \$30.00 to enable a bank account in the name of the “Illawarra Regional Rose Society: to be opened.

This was gratefully received by those present who were:

Executive Chairman- Arthur Watkins

Secretary – Judy Oyston

Treasurer – Mary Watkins

Committee consisting of Mr & Mrs Teale; Mr & Mrs Dempsey, Mrs Hazel Boyle, Mrs Gadd, Mrs Ngarie Halloran, Mrs Lorna Walker, Mrs Phyllis Burrows (now Webster) Mrs Martzek and Mr Taylor.

Encouraging them in their endeavours was Mr Jim Boyle and Mrs Jan Murray.

Annual fees were set at the princely sum of three dollars and fifty cents each family. The new society determined to hold a Rose Show each year during the month of October in conjunction with the Dapto Rose Show held in the Community Centre. The Show Secretary to be Jim Boyle with Hazel as his assistant.

Of the number of citizens present at the meeting. 16 became new members, the other three already being State members.

The first Rose Competition was held on October 19, 1974, with 17 competitors having 67 entries.

The meeting date for the monthly meeting to be held was changed from the first to the fourth Saturday of each month to avoid clashing with the Wollongong Horticultural Show each March and November.

At the close of the first year the bank balance had grown to \$262.82.

During the second year the Dapto Rose Show had poor support, but Godfather Arthur gave encouragement to all.

Decision was made to hold a mini point score at the monthly meetings.

The first rose display was held at the Warrawong Shopping centre which made a profit on the trading table of \$184 plus a donation from the centre of \$100. Of course, the re-sellers license had to be purchased at a cost of \$2.00.

As the years passed the Regional continued to work hard. Some of the members enjoyed success in the Australian Championships. Regional members were now graded for showing.

In March 1976 the Regional was requested to stage their first State Championship, which as held in Wollongong Town Hall. The trading table gave a profit of \$194.75. Floral Art was added to the monthly point score. By this time the average of members present at the monthly meeting had grown to 20.

During 1977 the bank balance passed the \$1000 mark. Later that year the Regional donated \$200 towards the Building Fund of the Deaf Society for the building of the hall in Coniston.

By the year 1979 the October show at Dapto had grown to 173 cultural exhibits, and 35 floral art.

Members attending monthly meetings now reached 34.



Rose Society Wake at Coniston Hall

1980 showed more growth in the Regional and a donation of \$106.50 made to the Deaf Society for the FINAL payment to be made on the land at Coniston.

1981 saw the first term deposit made. September 24, 1982, the new Deaf Society Hall was opened, henceforth the monthly society meetings were held in these premises.

During the intervening years

under the guidance of the Godfather all his helpers worked diligently until the 10th Birthday of the Regional was reached. This event was suitably celebrated by members and friends.

Total in the bank now reached over \$5000. State Championships were held by the Regional in Beaton Park, Wollongong in October 1984. The opening ceremony was performed by the State Governor, also the Lord Mayor held a reception. A pleasant dinner was held to celebrate the success of the show and the Regional.

Years passed with the Regional Members working hard to assist the Rose Fairy to spread the word of the Rose. Also, of course, to enjoy the social events as they came along.



Beaton Park 1984 Governor Rowland

The World Rose Convention was staged at Sydney University, and one of our members, Shirley Stevenson was on the organising committee. A coach took along regional members who were not staying in Sydney to assist on the trading table – also to see the roses which had withstood weeks of torrential rain.

During the same year a wooden bench was donated by the Regional as a Bicentennial gift to the City of Wollongong for the Rhododendron Gardens.

Still the years passed with plenty of work and fellowship, but the Regional required a larger hall to present the annual shows. So, in 1989 the shows were moved to Figtree High School for a most successful show.



The next year showed the beginning of the St. Valentines Day Rose for Westfield Figtree. Another way to raise funds.

By 1991, once again, the State Show was to be held by the Regional. This time at Wollongong University – more success. The celebration dinner also enjoyed at the university. All down these years displays and fundraising had continued.

With trips to various events to those in other rosarians' gardens.

The God Fairy had seen fit to enable the Regional to achieve its 20th Birthday. There was great celebration held at Carrington's Restaurant with past and present members enjoying the evening.

In 1994 to comply with a directive from the State Council to conform to the articles of incorporation the annual meeting date had to be altered to July of each year.

Once again, a change in venue for the show, Heining House, Dapto welcomed the Regional. Extremely successful and greatly admired.



Christmas bar-b-que was held at Cordeaux Dam, including Santa of course complete with his sack of goodies.

To mark the 50th Anniversary of the end of World War II members created a "Peace" garden at Heining House. Consisting of 8 Peace roses plus a variety of assorted roses. The garden was opened by MP, Colin Hollis in company with other politicians and members.



Still on went the work – displays- St. Valentines Day etc. On the social calendar saw almost 200 adults and children at the Christmas BBQ. Members attended the Annual State Picnic most ably held by the Goulburn Regional. Our Regional purchased a copier in August 1997.

As the members of the Regional were considered far and wide to be worthy participants, a request was made by the State Fairy that the National Rose Championships for 1997 be presented by Illawarra. This was done in October. After much hard toil and many conferences, a most impressive show was staged in the Northbeach Novotel, Wollongong.



Visitors from overseas and the far-flung corners of this land bestowed much praise on the members of the Regional.

Throughout all the passing of the years some of the esteemed members had travel on to assist the Great Rose Fairy. They were sadly missed by all those remaining in the Regional, to be replaced in time by new members willing to serve the Rose.

In time, hopefully all will be together again tending the Great Rose Garden in the Sky.

Until such time all must carry on with the duties in the Illawarra and continue to spread the Word of the Rose.



Here endeth the first 25 years.

Rose Hough- Secretary

PATRON David Campbell MP

Dorothy Dunstan (chair) & Judith Oyston cutting the silver anniversary cake at the dinner 4/6/1999



Judith Oyston, Shirley Morrow (hidden) Lorna Walker, Dorothy Dunstan and Rose Hough. Judith and the three founders receiving the Rose Fairy on 25 years

SOME MEMORIES OF THE FIRST 25 YEARS



Send off for Arthur and Mary Watkins January 1
Held at John Philpot's Home



Hazel presenting Life Membership to
Arthur & Mary Watkins Dec 1989



ate Championships Beaton Park 198



Rose Society member Eileen
Parkes with granddaughter
Kate Hopper aged 11 in the
rose garden of their home at
Minnamurra.

THE NEXT 25 YEARS- 2000-2024

The story continues for another 25 years with the same dedication and energetic enjoyment and action in this story of the rose in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven. This story relates to the significant events of this time, the rose shows and showing of roses on show bench at regular monthly meetings, special projects in the community, some significant members and those who received awards, other events such as garden visits, talks, stalls, promotions, and speakers; how communications changed and then the involvement of Neutrog and its importance to the members.

1. **SIGNIFICANT EVENTS**

HOSTING SPECIAL EVENTS-

2004 State Council Silver Anniversary Celebration Dinner Saturday 7 August - Kiama Leagues Club Past President Garth Guyett and Anita attended as special guests. The 25th RS of NSW AGM was held on Sunday 8 August at the home of Sue Kingsford in Jamberoo. This was one of many events hosted by the Illawarra Regional over the next 25 years.

NATIONAL ROSE CONFERENCES - With the beautiful scenery of the Illawarra coast, Wollongong and later Kiama had been chosen on a few occasions as the host to the National Rose Conference and National Rose Championships. The first time it was held at the **North Beach Novotel in 1997**, and our local member, Allan Read was the National and NSW State President.

2009: Once again **24-25 October 2009**, with the culmination of two years of planning, the Illawarra hosted the National Conference with the Rose Show and meetings at Kiama Pavilion with the dinner held at the Kiama Leagues Club. The Official Opening was by the Mayor of Kiama, Patron of the Illawarra Regional Rose Society. – Councillor Sandra McCarthy. The Rose Show involved 41 exhibitors and 386 entries. During the conference there was a bus tour of Kiam's Coast & Country Scenic Highlights, a Farewell barbecue at the Kiama Pavilion, and a bus tour to the Southern Highlands, incorporating the Nan Tien Temple at Unanderra, the Bradman Museum at Bowral, then after lunch at Moss Vale Services Club, a visit to Red Cow Farm – Sutton Forest and a drop into Fitzroy Falls on the way back to Kiama.**2000-2022 30 April-1 May** The Covid pandemic hit the nation in 2020 and Colin Hollis, who was both National and State President, kept the fires burning, as the National

Conference was once again to be held at Kiama in 2020, but was twice postponed and the National Rose Championships and related activities were held as an autumn festival in **April-May 2022**, prior to the International Rose Convention postponed from 2021 to October 2022 in Adelaide. The planning committee met regularly over a three-year period via Zoom, which now was a must in the time of pandemic.



It is now full pelt along towards the National Rose Show & Conference at Kiama 29th April-1st May. We were delighted that Her Excellency Mrs Linda Hurley officially opened the Show on 30th April singing a specially compose song and accompanied by His Excellency Governor General David Hurley. The Lord Mayor, newly elected Neil Reilly and the Lady Mayoress welcomed all visitors to Kiama during the Cocktail Welcome at 6.30 p.m. on 29th April at the Pavilion.

At long last we were able to celebrate the National Rose Championships & Conference in preparation since 2017 when Colin Hollis and I went to the Kiama Pavilion and the Kiama Shores Motel to book in the fourth weekend of October 2020 for the event.



"The Illawarra Rose Regional must be congratulated, as well as the State Conference Committee on a most successful, memorable, and joyful event. It was wonderful to see so many pitch in, not only over the four years of planning, but from Thursday with the many people present helping Joanne Fisher prepare the roses for

the floral display, (a replica of the Kiama lighthouse and blowhole in the entrance hall) to Friday with the setting up, and I thank those who helped with table carrying, placing tablecloths, organising the shelving for the exhibits, and helping prepare the floral displays. I would not be exaggerating to say that there would have been more than 30 Illawarra members helping over those two days, and then throughout the

weekend on the rose show, stewards, runners, rose prizes, entry, and raffle table, attending to catering, looking after volunteers, radio promotions, setting up for the formal dinner, clearing the decks on Sunday. Our thanks as always to Hans & Lyn Van de Haar for the transportation of the boat, oars, tables, shelves, and other rose show requirements both to and from the Pavilion. Our hard-working Illawarra Committee also had worked throughout the weekend – what a great team.

We were very concerned there would not be many exhibits because the rain had ruined most of our roses the weeks and days before the show, but thanks to Ted & Meryl Morphet, and to Gavin Woods from South Australia, as well as all those who

brought what they had – the show looked quite presentable with some beautiful roses. We also had a wonderful time at the social functions, many attended the lectures, and our visitors enjoyed the excursions. We welcome ten new members to the Illawarra” - *Kristin Dawson - May 2022 newsletter (photo judges)*



The Planning Committee through the efforts of Rosalie Vine and Kristin Dawson were able to secure a grant of approximately \$26,000 from Destination NSW to finance the event – such as lecturer, transport costs and a wonderfully entertaining 3 Tenors for the Conference dinner; and Kristin raised funds including a grant from Destination Kiama to assist in payment for printing which was high given promotional material had to be destroyed after each postponement. Colin Hollis and Kristin Dawson were also able to secure a special grant from Kiama Council for the hire of the venue, Kiama Pavilion.

INTERNATIONAL ROSE CONVENTION IN ADELAIDE – OCTOBER 2022



Significant funds were needed by the organising committee to hold this special event in Australia, and the Illawarra members with great generosity contributed a significant \$6031 to this event. This was raised through two Trivia nights coordinated by Ian Roxby (Vice Chair (2016-2019) and two Bunnings Barbecues coordinated by Lawrence Zammit (Vice Chair 2019-) We were very pleased when the National Society returned these funds at the end of the Convention.

*Photo- Intan Kallus won the competition by naming the Convention Rose- **Australian Beauty** Intan travelled to Adelaide to receive the prize.*

40th ANNIVERSARY OF THE ILLAWARRA ROSE SOCIETY- 2014



The formal dinner for the 40th Anniversary was held on 28th June 6.00 for 6.30 pm. at “Table for Amy”. The Society was honoured by the presence of three of our Foundation members. The Birthday Cake was cut by Foundation members Thelma Seath and Judith Oyston.



During the evening Robert Curll, the Illawarra Rose Chair, gave an account of the history of the Illawarra Regional Rose Society there has been a total of 18 chairpersons the longest serving being Colin Hollis (2004-12). Congratulatory emails were read out from NRSA President Kelvin Trimper, RSNSW President Colin Hollis and Ian & Maureen Thackeray Subscription Secretary (members of the Macarthur Regional). Other events were held during the year.

Joanne Fisher's winning Floral Art- 40 years of IRS at the 2014 Illawarra Rose Show

BUSHFIRES and THE COVID PANDEMIC – 2020-2022

Two events coincided in 2020 which affected many lives, the bushfire, and the pandemic. On New Year's Eve, a raging fire unlike any seen before, spread through the south coast and Shoalhaven, taking in its fury the property including the rose garden of our member Max Atkins. In the Southern Highlands, our well-known member, Sue Kingsford OAM also was affected. The Agricultural Shows in the Region also were cancelled as the showgrounds were needed for any livestock that needed to be safeguarded because of the fires.

The Covid pandemic was significant in the life of the Illawarra Rose Society as it meant that we were unable to meet in the confines of our meeting place at the North Kiama Neighbourhood Centre and the Regional Agricultural Shows, and our own Rose Shows were once again cancelled. The Illawarra Committee met via Zoom.

We had planned a visit to the home and garden of Hans and Lyn Van de Haar in March 2020, but it like so many events immediately had to be cancelled. At times we met in parks and gardens to maintain distance, but when the weather was inclement the meeting was cancelled.

The following is a message in the newsletter about the difficulties of meeting:

Unfortunately, the icy windy weather in September made it too difficult to meet at Peace Park and so we will give it another go. It is safer to meet in open spaces than in a hall where we would have to wipe down every chair and have it spaced out so far that we would only be able to fit about 15 people in the hall.



We, however, did manage to have a gathering of just on 20 members at Peace Park in Kiama for our October meeting date, despite a few light showers of rain and a little thunder. We enjoyed meeting, discussing the maintenance of the roses in the park, and most important we were able to remember Robert Curll by planting the Elina Rose as a memorial to Robert. (Robert Curll – Chairperson between 2012-2019 passed away in 2020) November 2020 newsletter

2021 saw a continuation of the pandemic, and boundaries drawn so that people were unable to travel more than 5 kilometres, and those north of Kiama were unable to travel there. Therefore, the pruning demonstrations of Peace Park could only involve members who lived in Kiama and south of the township.

2. ROSE SHOWS, ROSE DISPLAYS & SHOW BENCH

As in the first 25 years, the Rose Show was a significant event in each calendar year. In the Chair report in the newsletters Colin Hollis frequently states: “*As I have said many times, the Spring Show is our most important event. It is the public face of the Illawarra Rose Society*” (Newsletter September 2009) Throughout the years from 2000 and onwards, the tradition of the spring rose show established since 1974 continued in the Illawarra. Various venues were used over the years – in 2002 the rose show was held in the old haunts of Heining House at Dapto, Allan Read was the Chair and Deidre Swan the Secretary at this time; 2003-2005 saw the spring rose show at the Kiama Leagues Club, including an evening of Wine & Roses, and moved to the Jamberoo School of Arts Hall in 2006 after a motion was put to the Illawarra members at the February meeting in 2006. The first show at the School of Arts Hall also ended with a repeat Wine & Roses evening. There were two years during which the Rose Show was held in Gerringong whilst the School of



Arts was being renovated. The Spring Rose Show stayed within the Jamberoo Hall until 2023, except for the 2009 and 2022 National Rose Championships.

Aware that the Illawarra Regional Rose Society was becoming more focused in the Kiama LGA, a note in the 2005 January meeting stated: *"we are not just Kiama, so we are going to Corrimal Court on 29th & 30th April for the Autumn Show"*. It was at this meeting that the idea of combining with the Wollongong Horticultural Show held in Autumn and taking responsibility for the Rose Section was raised. From



2006 with the agreement of the Wollongong Horticultural Society the Illawarra Regional took over the running of the Rose Section of the Autumn Horticultural Shows. Autumn Shows were held in various venues such as: TIGS Anglican School West Wollongong in 2008, and in 2009 at Bulli Showground. By January 2010 there was a debate on involvement in the Autumn Rose Shows as

only 3 exhibitors which included Ted & Meryl Morphett entered the 2009 autumn Rose Show at Bulli. The Illawarra ceased this involvement in 2010 when the Horticultural Society of Wollongong was preparing to close which it eventually did on the year of its centenary 2012. Over the years the Rose Shows have been spectacular events drawing people from far and wide to view the magnificent roses exhibited by Master Rose Growers and exhibitors from across the State. These shows inspired many to grow roses in their home gardens and to become members of the Society. In records of newsletters dating from 2004 there was the constant repetition of the names of A Graders who travelled from Sydney, Macarthur and Nepean to exhibit their roses. Ted & Meryl Morphett, Graham & Janet Wright, Glynis & Doug Hayne, Jim Cunningham, Elwyn Notley and Steve Maher (Goulburn) were constants, and joined later by Maureen & Ian Thackeray, and Rosalie & Chris Vine. All of these exhibitors, including Mark McGuire and Alex Ross from Sydney, Judith Oyston and Colin Hollis both A Grade exhibitors from the Illawarra have been judges of the roses over the past 25 years. Illawarra members were mostly B & C Grade exhibitors during these 25 years, and represented in Championships were members including Colin Hollis, Stephen & Laila Astill, Glen McParland, Barbara Bartzcak and Jack Evans, Helen Harris, Don Parkes, Arthur Brown, Jill & John East, Ian Roxby, Robert Curll, Diane Westgate, Judy Daggar, Jill Millburn, Laurie & Bev Irvine and Kristin Dawson.

During this period of time, there have been a few different members taking a role as Show Manager, Show Secretary and Chief Steward. In the early years, Sue Kingsford was the Show Manager and Stephen Astill the Chief Steward. By 2004 a Show Committee was formed, and Robert Curll became the Chief Steward, a position he retained until 2018. Helen Curll was Show Secretary throughout this time followed by Julianne Faulks for the 2023 Show and Colin Hollis as Chief Steward after 2019. Over many years, Janet Bowden trained the Stewards and was the main assistant to the Chief Steward, preparing the scoring sheets and overseeing the results.



Floral Art became a regular and much admired section of the Illawarra Rose Show, and champion floral artists included Joanne Fisher, Rosemary Singleton, May Napier, Maureen Thackeray (Macarthur), Janet Bowden, Judith Oyston, Helen Curll, Deidre Hill, Helen Harris, Stephen Astill, Helen Henry and in 2023 our youngest member Ava Hernandez aged 12 entered the floral art exhibition.



In 2003 a photographic competition was included for the first time, and there were over 100 entries at this show. The competition has continued at various Rose Shows over the years,

Special exhibits were added to the usual exhibition schedule according to the NSW Rose Standards as a special Illawarra feature. The late Sue Kingsford in a demonstration on the bowl of old garden and heritage roses recalled that she introduced 'Bowls' as a Show Section during the time of (the late) Rose Hough in the 1990's and explained that 'Bowls' are a Show Bench Section, not Floral A. In 2012, a very active member, Judy Daggar, now residing in her native New Zealand and infamous for her beautiful Seduction roses,



introduced '*Roses in a Teacup, with saucer & plate*', and in 2014 *Roses in a Seashell* was introduced. The Alister Clark Cup was in the care of the Illawarra Rose Society, and magnificent arrangements were staged in the cup by Joanne Fisher and Janet Bowden. This continued over the years. The Alister Clark Award Prize was given to the best

container of roses by a woman exhibitor and formed part of the schedule in the Illawarra for several years with the winner's name engraved on the cup. (Photo-Rosalie Vine 's winning container of the rose **Glorious**)

In the years of the spring rose show being held at Jamberoo, photographic displays continued, and were expertly managed in the latter years by winning photographer and member Lorraine Vost. Children's art competition always featured as well as some exhibits by children. The Scouts looked after the catering in the kitchen, providing morning & afternoon teas and lunches for visitors to the rose show as a fundraising activity.

After the pandemic it was very noticeable that the number of exhibitors began to decline, as the expert rose exhibitors from Sydney and beyond aged and were unable to continue to travel to the Region with their best roses. Likewise, the number of exhibitors in the Illawarra, of which there were no Illawarra A Grade by 2010 and we lost best exhibitors such as Glenn McParland who moved to Young, as well as those with large numbers of roses in their gardens on larger properties. In 2023 it was decided that to fill the large Jamberoo Hall displays were to be set up of Heritage Roses (Intan Kallus), David Austin Roses (Esther Hernandez), Roses brought in from the gardens of the public (Robyn Hambly) and art display of roses as in a frame, a box, artist's palette etc (Joanne Fisher). The hall was magnificent and



lots of interest from the public. However, there was only 1 A Grade exhibitor being Meryl Morphet, 2 for the B Grade Championships (Kristin Dawson & Jill Millburn) and 4 other Illawarra exhibitors with some vases in various classes, and a few exhibits from Braidan Swan (Southern Sydney) totalling 121 entries. In the light of this poor involvement, the organising committee and those who worked on the rose show met for a listening exercise at the Kiama Leagues Club, facilitated by Helen McDermott, and reluctantly decided that with the declining number of exhibitors and the amount of manual work required of ageing members, a display of roses would be held in 2024 rather than a competition, and at a smaller venue. For the 50th anniversary it was decided to hold it at Burnett's Nursery Kiama in early October with workshops on rose growing and arrangement in various locations of the nursery and featuring rose recipes in the Nursery Café.

LOCAL AGRICULTURAL SHOWS



Aside from the Spring Rose Shows, the Illawarra Regional had a very strong involvement in the Agricultural Shows held in the summer. The shows the Regional was most involved with were the Kiama, Albion Park, Dapto, Berry, Nowra and Kangaroo Valley. In 2006 it was decided to offer a sponsorship of a Rose Championship at the Kiama Show, with a donation of a ribbon and \$50 to the Show Committee, later raised to

\$100. This was also granted to the Albion Park Show later and these two shows became accredited, judged by an accredited Rose Judge using the RSNSW exhibition standards. These shows were put forward as an opportunity to develop exhibiting skills to the members. Kiama Show remains the strongest in participation from the members though the number of exhibitors and standard of exhibits have fallen off over the years. *(Photo- Kiama Show 2015)*

ROSE DISPLAYS: Throughout the 50 years of the Illawarra Regional, rose displays have been a feature at various times. No stall or event was ever held without a display of roses in one or many vases. In 2002 a rose display was held at the Garden Centre at Albion Park, in 2004 Colin Hollis and Sue Kingsford looked after a rose stall at the ABC Garden Expo in Sydney, from 2005 -2009 the members were involved with a stall for St Valentine's Day at the Kiama Fair, selling roses to support the rose show expenses, and a stall and display at Warrawong Centre, a St Patrick's Day display at the Port Kembla R.S.L. Club with over 60 roses in magnificent display, and then at Corrimal Court, all in March April of 2006; in 2007 a stall at the Figtree Centre and, in 2009 Rose displays were staged at Warrawong, Corrimal, Nowra shopping centre, also the Garden Lovers fair at Berry and Spring into Corrimal. The Regional participated at the Burrawang Easter Fair, In 2022 a display at an open day held at Burnett's Nursery on Barney at Kiama, and over the last ten years have supported the stall at the Royal Easter Show.



Photo: Colin Hollis & Joanne Fisher at a stall at Burnett's nursery open day 2022

SHOW BENCH

Continuing from the first 25 years, the show bench remained an important feature of the Illawarra Rose meetings. A standardised schedule had always been provided to ensure the members could practice exhibiting so skills would be developed for



rose shows. The show bench also has been a way of promoting various roses to the members who are then keen to buy the roses they like for their garden when next ordering them. A show bench coordinator and a judge were involved during the rose growing seasons, assisting members to stage the roses and judged then with points assigned to the exhibit. Robyn Hambly was the show

bench coordinator in 2005 followed by Janet Bowden and Jill Millburn. In recent years since the pandemic, there has been an opportunity for those who are not interested in competition to bring a display of their roses for the bench, and to speak about them to the members. Prizes for those with highest point scores in the large roses, miniature roses, floral art and the perfumed rose were usually given out at the AGM or the Christmas gathering over the years.



Photo- preparing roses for showbench- Laurie & Bev Irvine, Bruce Robertson, Jill Millburn and Lyn Van de Haar -

3. SPECIAL PROJECTS

PEACE PARK KIAMA - This has been a special project of the Illawarra Reginal Rose Society over several years. In the minutes of the meeting of 28th August 2004, Colin Hollis was Chairman, it is written: *Our Rose Society are considering being part of the rehabilitation of the park. Our committee met with council representatives at the site. Council was requested to consider removal of some of the trees in order that the roses could produce fabulous blooms. We also suggested that council might consider erecting flood lights at either end of park to be mounted on street poles, which would deter vandals. The lawns would be maintained by Council. Our involvement would be to provide roses, and we would have a roster system to maintain Roses. Members who are interested can meet at the park on 8th September at 11.30 a.m. BYO picnic lunch.*

A short article in the newsletter written by the late Robert Curll outlined the early history of the garden. Robert had spent a great deal of time maintaining the garden over the years, followed on after Robert left the Illawarra by Colin Hollis who established a group of volunteers who met weekly to develop and maintain this beautiful park.

Peace Park originated from an idea of Winsom Barker, which was to be a park of Tranquillity & Reflection and that it could also provide an excellent venue for weddings. Kiama Council also supported the idea. The Kiama Council built the pathway, Kiama Garden Club planted Camellias along the boundary fence. The Illawarra Rose Society planted Roses in July 2009 and had also made a commitment to maintain the roses. Maintaining the roses at Peace Park has provided the IRS



members with an avenue to demonstrate the art of pruning and maintaining the Roses.

To provide finances Winsom Barker came up with the idea of selling bricks to line the edge of the pathway. The bricks could be either named in memory of someone or you could simply just have your name put on the bricks. Winsom has since been very successful with this venture. In 2011 the Illawarra Rose Society carried out the planting of another Rose Garden adjacent to the St. Patrick Rose Garden. This was a major event involving local Fire Brigades in the planting of the Fire Fighter roses.

Kiama Council erected a Gazebo to honour Winsom Barker for her untiring effort in promoting the Peace Park which was named the *“WINSOM BARKER GAZEBO”*

In 2012 the Illawarra Rose Society carried out the planting of yet another rose garden which includes the *“My Hero Roses”* which was sponsored by different ones from our community. An interesting activity happened on this occasion when two granddaughters assisted their grandmother in planting a *“My Hero Rose”*, since then they come back and visit the garden to smell the roses.

Peace Park is a mass of buds just about to explode into a mass of coloured Roses, pop in and enjoy the roses. - Robert Curll – newsletter 2016

Note: Winsom passed away in September 2023



The work of maintenance of Peace Park continued under the expert coordination and oversight of Colin Hollis. As reported in the newsletter 2020 when 21 members met at Peace Park during the pandemic on a meeting date: “Colin is preparing for a meeting with those interested in being part of the Friends team and sorting out a roster and plans for ongoing maintenance. He was delighted to receive a response from the Bugle of a couple in an apartment near the park just moved in who would like to be part of the team.”

“The volunteers led by Colin Hollis meet as rostered every Tuesday morning at about 10a.m. for a couple of hours. The garden is looking the best ever, as watering, deadheading,

fertilising and weeding is happening. They are gradually removing dead or dying rose bushes and planning to plant beds with new bushes. An account has been set up by the Illawarra Regional for Friends of Peace Park, to enable ongoing expenses to be covered. They are liaising with Kiama Council to implement various ideas that will make the Park even more inviting to the public.” (newsletter January 2021)



The Friends of Peace Park continue to meet each Tuesday to maintain the garden. On June 1st a climbing Mister Lincoln rose was planted. Gordon Streek, who won the rose at a raffle drawn at the Oberon Garden Club, where Colin Hollis was giving a talk on roses at the end of May. On Tuesday 15th June, the group met with members of the Kiama Garden Club to plan working together and future directions for the garden. Our annual pruning day will be Sunday 18th July at 10.00 a.m. *newsletter June 2021* Aside from the activities described in my letter, there were volunteers

pruning the whole garden over two days in July, and already the roses have begun to show life. The *Lady of Australia* Rose has been planted in the newly prepared garden bed at the entrance to the park and it will be a brilliant sight when those roses begin to bloom. Now that it is lockdown, there are a couple of Friends of the Garden that are ensuring the roses are watered during the lockdown period, especially since the weather is exceptionally dry now. *Newsletter August 2021*

The Friends of Peace Park continue to care for the garden even amid lockdown, there is watering and weeding continuing. In early September Colin organised the planting of two *Pierre de Ronsard* roses. *Newsletter September 2021* 1. Colin planting



alyssum brought by the local preschoolers for the garden and 2. Robert Coady with Jill Millburn working on the prunings in the garden.

Colin Hollis and the volunteers have continued to meet each Tuesday to maintain the garden. There have been recent negotiations with the Kiama Municipal Council to install a tap at the Eastern end of the garden. Others have worked on the garden bed where the soil needed to be replaced and the team is deciding on the yellow roses which will grace this rose bed. Efforts are also being made to find ways to fund

raise for this garden, with the hope that the brick buying scheme which originally funded the establishment of the garden can be utilised. Negotiations are underway with the Council about this. *Newsletter Feb 2022*

Lots of work continues each Tuesday morning in the park in preparation for spring. A whole bed of beautiful yellow roses has been ordered and planted by Colin Hollis and the team. A message from Colin to the small team of *Friends of Peace Park*, speaks of the dedication of Colin and the team –



The Roses arrived last Friday, so I have had their roots in a bucket of GoGo Juice solution. We will plant them tomorrow. that is except for the two standards which I planted today. The park is very wet, but they can be planted. I had a look at the park on Sunday morning and it was a quagmire but was not too bad today. I really do not want to delay planting them anymore. The rose is a Floribunda called **Golden Beauty**.

These roses are grown in many of the gardens of our members. One rose that is important here in the Illawarra is the yellow-coloured **Lady of Australia** rose. Colin Hollis sought out this rose on behalf of Her Excellency Linda Hurley to



commemorate the women who were wives of the Governors General over the decades. It is growing very vigorously in Peace Park at Kiama, the only public garden where it is planted. *Newsletter September 2022*

In July 2023, our Treasurer Robert Coady, and a Friend of Peace Park, was successful in achieving a grant for the park from the Federal Building Better Communities Grants. The work continues in in the park and the roses bloom beautifully, but there have been times this has enticed stealing of the newly planted Pierre de Ronsard and on Mother's Day 2024 the stripping of roses at 10p.m. taking all the beautiful blooms of Golden Beauty. More volunteers are always needed, and the garden brings many a joy and sorrow.

PEACE ROSE GARDEN – RIBBONWOOD CENTRE DAPTO

In 1995, the Peace Garden was established as part of the 'Australia Remembers' celebration and was sponsored with funds as a project in the electorate of Throsby by the then member Mr Colin Hollis MP. Together with Illawarra Regional Rose Society, the circular bed of standard icebergs with a central standard of Peace Rose was formed and planted. Mr Colin Hollis MP officially dedicated the Garden of Peace Roses at the dedication ceremony on 22 October 1995. However, over time it deteriorated beyond repair and demolished during recent road works. The Illawarra Rose Society was once again called upon to establish the garden. It was

replanted with the help of the Wollongong Council and Ribbonwood staff, by the Illawarra Rose Society members. However, as road works delayed the replanting, Kristin Dawson assisted by Colin Hollis, conducted four rose growing information sessions in June-July 2019 at the Ribbonwood library with the hope that local people may be involved in the care of the garden, and to promote roses and the Society. The library also erected a beautiful and informative display on roses and the Rose Society in the library over that period.

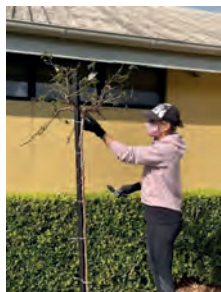
On a warm day in August 2020 during the time of the pandemic when outdoor events were legitimate, 7 Illawarra Regional rose members met to plant the roses – Colin Hollis, Judith Oyston, Jill Millburn, Jenny Swan, Rex & Marian Tate and Kristin Dawson. A beautiful, polished timber seat was installed at the park with the original plaque from the time of the establishment of the garden was inserted into the seat.

Six standard Peace roses were added and planted in 2021.



*The photo (L) shows Colin erecting the **Seafoam** weeper, with Jenny Swan assisting with the planting and Judith Oyston directing procedures.*

On 29th April 2021 the garden was once again re-dedicated in remembrance again of those who died in wars, pledging again our desire for peace. The Mayor of Wollongong, Councillor Gordon Bradbury and many visitors attended this dedication, followed by morning tea, sponsored by Woolworths, in Heininger Hall



and a beautiful display of roses by the Illawarra members. *Photo on right Mayor Gordon Bradbury cutting the ribbon to the garden after dedication speeches.*

The garden continues to be maintained by the members, and particularly by Vanessa Berends, Julianne Faulks and Kristin Dawson. *(photo: Vanessa pruning the roses and Julianne on weeding)*

WOLLONGONG BOTANIC GARDEN PROJECT

PLANTING OF ALLAN READ ROSES IN THE WOLLONGONG BOTANIC GARDENS –

Why this project:

“I came to realise that we could lose so many of our Australian bred roses if we did not find some place that they could be grown where they may still be seen by the public. I was particularly concerned about the roses bred by our local member Allan Read who at one stage was the Illawarra Regional Chair. His roses were not commercially available, and his beautiful rose, *Sarah Anne* (photo) was the first miniflora registered in Australia. So, negotiations began with Paul Tracey, the Curator of the Wollongong Botanic Garden way back in 2016, and two rose workshops were held in the Gardens in August that year. Allan Read attended the first workshop and Richard Walsh gave a presentation on the roses bred by Allan. This was the beginning of many rose workshops held in various parts of the State, resulting in the establishment of four new regions in NSW. Colin, Lawrence Zammit & Kristin facilitated all of them.



Time passed, Paul Tracey moved on from the Gardens and the project became fallow. Now we are fortunate that the new Curator James Beattie with the team member Karen Holmes has taken on the project and they are establishing two garden beds of Australian bred roses. One bed was planted last year, and this year we are planning for the planting in early August of two or three varieties of Allan's roses. These are ***Sarah Anne***, ***Shining Bride***, and hopefully, ***Lilac Festival***.

Our thanks to Jim Cunningham who has propagated these roses in preparation for the planting.” *Kristin Dawson (Newsletter July 2020)*

On Thursday 10 September 2020 we were thrilled to at last after four years of waiting, planted some roses bred by our Illawarra and Shoalhaven rose Breeder - Allan Read, in the Botanic Gardens of Wollongong. The two roses were 3 bushes of ***Sarah Anne*** named after his wife, and six bushes of ***Shining Bride***. ***Sarah Anne*** was the first registered Australian bred Miniflora and is a lovely pink rose with a sweet perfume. We were most grateful to Jim Cunningham for budding these roses and bringing them all the way down from Kenthurst.



Despite the isolation in retirement centres because of COVID, it was even more wonderful that Allan was able to enjoy the planting via FaceTime and could talk to us whilst seated with his fellow residents in front of the large screen at the Culburra Beach Retirement Centre. It was lovely to have some of our Illawarra members be present, and even share in planting the roses – Rex & Marian Tate, Barbara Bartczak and Jack Evans, Phil & Lyndel Sanders as well as Colin Hollis and Kristin. Susan and Ken Wade who were former members of the Illawarra also attended.

ABC Gardening Australia featured some of this story in their production in 2024

[Rosy Outlook - Gardening Australia \(abc.net.au\)](http://abc.net.au)

4. EDUCATION ON ROSES & SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Throughout the past 25 years education of the public and members on rose growing has been an ongoing feature of the Illawarra Regional Rose Society. This has been achieved through tours, excursions, workshops, guest speakers, garden visits, the newsletters and provision of a library. The following presents some of the highlights:

NEW ZEALAND TOUR– Two of the most memorable events during the past 25 years were the tours organised by Colin Hollis, then Chair of the Illawarra Regional, in 2008 and 2009 to New Zealand. Though members from NSW and other States were participants on the tour, many came from the Illawarra.

Preparations for the tour November 18-26, 2008, are outlined in the January 2008 newsletter.

Spend nine days (eight nights) visiting gardens in the South Island of New Zealand, with Australasia's foremost Rosarian, David Ruston as our guide. We will meet members of the N.Z Rose Society who have been involved in planning the tour.

We will commence in Christchurch for three days to see the famous private and public gardens before traveling to Timerau. As well as visiting gardens, members will be guests at the famous Timerau Rose Show. From here one night at beautiful Lake Tekapo before concluding with two days visiting private and public gardens and other sights in Dunedin. The cost will include return economy air fares Ex Sydney, twin share accommodation including Dinner and Breakfast (but not lunch). All entry fees and bus travel from arrival to departure will be covered.



Given the success of the trip to the South Island of New Zealand, another tour was requested and organised to the North Island, arriving Rotorua with a recently opened direct flight from Sydney. This enabled the group to visit the Sam McGredy rose garden near Napier. The group also attended the Waikato Rose Show at Hamilton where one of the group, Jim Cunningham was invited to assist with the judging. The tour departed from Auckland Colin had also planned another tour in 2010 at popular request but it was cancelled because of the earthquake in Christchurch.

Photo- Sam McGredy : [Dr Sam McGredy IV Tribute | McGredy Rose Garden](#)

WORKSHOPS –

DAVID RUSTIN OAM

As promoted in the February 2005 newsletter: *Illawarra Rose Society is very fortunate that one of the world's leading floral arrangers DAVID RUSTIN will conduct a workshop for us on Wednesday 20th April 200f. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to be part of a workshop conducted by this world class Rosarian. The workshop will be conducted in the auditorium Kiama Leagues Club on Wednesday 20th April 2005.*



The report on the workshop is recorded in the May 2005 newsletter. An excerpt of the report written by Colin Hollis states:

The Workshop lived up to expectations, he amazed us with his skill and his presentation was tremendous. It was a really enjoyable day and for those who attended one they will long remember.

My thanks to the helpers at the door Helen and Jenny and to Sybil who sold the raffle tickets. A special thank you to Joanne Fisher and Stephen Astill who came along to be part of the audience but were roped into helping.

Also, a big thank you to Steve Beck, David had arrived with five boxes of Roses, He collected roses and other flowers from my garden early in the morning. I was left with the challenge of transporting some 20 buckets of roses, assorted foliage, also containers and other items from Jamberoo to the Leagues Club, After a desperate call to Steve he arrived with his van and conveyed the lot to the club without spilling a drop of water he later proudly told me.



David spent the next morning with me in Kiama, he visited Peace Park, here he has agreed to be a consultant and the Mayor presented him with a wooden bowl from local timber. He then visited John and Jill East's Garden and enjoyed morning tea, then I took him to Saddleback to enjoy the view. (May 2005 newsletter)

David was invited back again to the Illawarra and conducted another well received workshop in April 2007

Photos- David demonstrating an arrangement & David with Joanne Fisher – photos courtesy of Joanne Fisher.

JAMES YOUNG- RENOWNED PHOTOGRAPHER-



Above- L.toR. DAVID RUSTON and JAMES YOUNG seated with COLIN HOLLIS looking on from behind.
This was the occasion when DAVID RUSTON released his book-
"THE JOY OF ROSES" JAMES YOUNG WITH DAVID RUSTON.
The event took place at the opening of the "OLD PARLIAMENT HOUSE ROSE GARDEN". I am privileged to have one of the copies autographed...

Australian' leading Garden Photographer, James Young was invited on 23 July 2005 to the Illawarra AGM held at the Anglican Church Hall in Kiama, to speak after the meeting to the members. With David Ruston, James Young published the "Joy of Roses" which received worldwide acclaim. His first book Classic Roses for Australian Gardens was published in 2002, Classic

Camelias' for Australian Gardens followed in 2003, and then the Simple Guide to Growing Roses. This was very much enjoyed by the members.

OTHER ROSE GROWING WORKSHOPS & INFORMATION SOURCES

The first recorded workshop was held at Kiama Leagues Club with a 4-week program of 2 hours per night held in 2003. It was titled "How to Grow Beautiful Roses and the presenters for these evenings were Allan Read for the first three sessions and Graham Wright for the fourth session. There were 51 enrolments for this program. Other recorded workshops were: 2 sessions in 2005, also at the Kiama Leagues Club, conducted by Steve Beck, and is mentioned in the April 2006 newsletter – The Annual Rose Lover's Workshop by Steve Beck at the Jamberoo Anglican Church Hall; Doug and Glynis Hayne conducted a one day rose workshop at the Anglican Church Hall Jamberoo on 17May 2008, this was well attended and they produced a booklet on growing and showing Roses which is still in use today. Day long Hands-On Rose Growing Workshop in April 2015 at the North Kiama Neighbourhood Centre; and, in 2016 two-day long workshops in August at the Wollongong Botanic

Gardens. Members also were invited over these years to provide hundreds of information session on growing roses to Garden Clubs, social clubs, in libraries and to other regional societies. Lorrie Zammit in the role of NSW Rose Education Officer (2017-2024) prepared lots of resource material in the form of power point used in the Illawarra and presented at State workshops and regional meetings.



Photo- Bruce Robertson at Peace Park pruning demo.

Pruning Demonstrations: Throughout the past quarter of a century, these demonstrations have been an annual event. Until about 2011 records show that these demonstrations were held in member's gardens. An example is of Allan Read demonstrating pruning at Lyn Brown's Garden in Albion Park, and Bob Morrow at Meryl Bradford's Garden at Balgownie in 2008, and in July 2010 at Blue Haven Kiama. In the more recent years rose pruning workshops are conducted at Peace Park, where the bulk of interest and membership is found in the southern area of Illawarra.



NEUTROG – In 2004 an agreement with Angus Irwin the owner of Neutrog fertilisers in South Australia enabled members of the State Rose Societies in Australia to order and purchase Neutrog products, particularly Sudden Impact for Roses, at a very generous

discount. Ordering would occur twice a year and be picked up by the member from the venue. For several years, Colin Hollis took carriage of the products and stored them ready for members to pick up from his property. In later years when Robert Curll was the Chair, the order was delivered to the Anglican Church grounds at Jamberoo and a set date for picking up the products was organised. From 2019, the Illawarra has been fortunate to have the products delivered to Hardware Man at Unanderra owned by member Hans van de Haar. Members including Laurie Irvine, Paul Walsh, Lorraine Vost, Bruce Robertson and Peter Goodger and Hans have all assisted in the audit and organisation of these products at the store. Ordering and collection of the payment was once conducted through the Region, which sent on payment to Neutrog, but from March 2021 ordering was conducted online directly to Neutrog.





Since 2004 there have been visits by Neutrog representatives to the Illawarra to speak about the various products at the Regional Meeting. Paul Dipuglia came to speak about the new product WhoFlungDung and February 2024 Helen Lovel presented a very well received information session on the use of the many products of Neutrog in the garden and including the new Popul8.

Photo: Hans Van de Haar unloading the WhoFlungDung ready for the presentation with Paul

Promoting Neutrog at the Show, (Colin, Jill & Janet) 3. Collection day at Curramore in September 2019

Guest speakers were invited to most of the Regional meetings and they were many and varied. Some were members of the Rose Society of NSW Executive, others related to soil and irrigation, how to exhibit or arrange roses for shows or for pleasure. Joanne Fisher has presented many a workshop on floral arrangement over the years. In recent times with the advancement of technology and the purchase of a projector and laptop for the Illawarra in 2016, members have been able to present information on various aspects of rose growing and exhibiting by preparation of power point presentations, slide shows and more recently video recordings. Lawrence Zammit has been the constant



manager of the AV equipment throughout these meetings since the purchase of the projector. (above)- Joanne assisted by Janet demonstrates floral art

Newsletters have been a source of information eleven months of every year, and throughout these years have always contained cultural notes to aid the member in managing the conditions of the season. From 2004-2009 Allan Read provided the cultural information, Robert Curll as Editor from 2004-2012 provided a short cultural note, followed by Sue Kingsford OAM with Susan Wade as Editor between December 2012 and June 2015 (Susan initiated the distribution of the newsletter by email and naming of the newsletter as **Elina**), Lawrence Zammit 2015-2018 as Editor and 2019-2024 Kristin Dawson as Editor.



FaceBook- Roses in the Illawarra – Another source of information, mainly promoting roses that grow well in the Region and recording of the events, has been the Illawarra's Facebook page. Jill Millburn suggested this facility for the Regional and Kristin Dawson established the page in December 2014. It has continued throughout this time with both Jill and Kristin as Administrators and has been a great source of information and a record of events of the Illawarra Regional Rose Society.

SOCIAL CONNECTIONS THROUGH THE ROSE

EXCURSIONS & GARDEN VISITS

Throughout the years, especially between the years of 2004-2015 there have been many excursions that have involved overnight stays organised by enthusiastic social members such as Jill East, Janice Groves, Sybil Fookes and the Vice Chair Robin Willington. The records note some of the following trips taken by up to 48 members and friends of the Society during these years. The Leura Garden Festival and to Tilba Tilba in 2008, 2-day trip to Canberra in 2009 including the viewing of the rose donated by the Illawarra to the Old Parliament House Rose Garden, the first Rose Society to do so. 2010 to Milton-Ulladulla and another to Red Cow Farm in Bowral, In November 2012a three-day trip to the Hunter Valley organised by Robin Willington. Interest in overnight tours began to fall off by 2013 when a trip to Mudjee



for their Wine & Food Festival was cancelled due to a lack of filling the quota needed. In November 2010 there was a trip to the Art Gallery to view the Terracotta Warriors, and a trip to the Bilpin Plant Collectors Fair. About 10 members joined other Regional members at the NSW Government House for the launch of the **“The Governor’s Wife”** Rose in 2017, and later in November to see it blooming in the garden on a picnic day. Some travelled to Canberra in 2021 to

Government House for the launch of the **“Lady of Australia”** rose. 2013 was the Year of the Roses and a young artist Sheree Troy painted roses from members’ gardens and had an exhibition of these paintings at the Kiama Fire Station July 23.

GARDEN VISITS



The history is full of the enjoyment of gardens and celebrations in the gardens of members, with meetings being held there as a change from a hall. Gardens mentioned were Jill & John East at Kiama, Janice & Vernon Groves at Berry, Trevor & Rosalind Phillis’ at Jamberoo; Hans & Lyn Van de Haar at Farmborough Heights, Kristin Dawson & Marg Kennedy’s at Kanahooka; Paul & Jeanna Walsh at Nowra, Gary & Judi Bickford at Tomerong and Intan and Hugo Kallus’ at Kangaroo Valley.

OTHER SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

The records show numerous social events ranging from a very regular “Christmas in July” luncheon at various places for many years; the Christmas End of Year Party held every year, even one at the Wollongong Botanic Gardens in the outdoors on the hottest day of the year during the Pandemic. Crooked River Winery was a popular venue, as were some of the local Kiama restaurants and the



Jamberoo Mountain Resort. In recent years the Christmas gathering was held at the Warilla Bowling Club with entertainment from Lawrence Zammit singing popular songs, and a surprise rendition from Ava Hernandez, one of our youngest members in 2023; and Colin Hollis



coordinating the Secret Santa giving of gifts to each other. Usually at these events prize giving to the successful show bench exhibitors or to anyone receiving an award formed part of the celebration. *(Photos- a conga line at Christmas 2022 and Lorrie singing)*

Theatre Parties – Social activities also included visits to the theatre for various productions. As member, Gordon Streek an actor and production director and involved as the Executive of the Roo Theatre at Shellharbour, there was a ready-made venue for members to enjoy many shows at the theatre. Productions such as Les Misérables, Oliver, Guys & Dolls; Run for Your Wife; The Boy from Oz; It Runs in the Family; Westside Story; and many more were thoroughly enjoyed, and many brought great humour to the members. Not only was there some local theatre but Jill East, Social Secretary at the time organised a bus trip to Sydney for members to enjoy “Billy Elliott” and “Phantom of the Opera”. As Australia began to move out of lockdown one of the first social events was a visit by 13 members to lunch at the Amarin Thai Restaurant in Warrawong and joined by several others to view “The Rose Maker” at the next-door Gala Theatre.

5. MEMBERS OF THE ILLAWARRA REGIONAL & SPECIAL AWARDS

Positions of Responsibility

Chair - Arthur Watkins (1974-1977), Judith Oyston (1977-1979), Garth Gregory (1979-1981), Alf East (1981-1983), Arthur Watkins (1983-1984), Ruth Stanford (1984-1986), Shirley Stevenson (1986-1988), Jack Smith (1988-1989), Beryl Glover (1989-1990), Colin Clarke (1990-1991), Freda Baker (1991-1994), Rose Hough (1994-1996), Frank Napier (1996-1998), Dorothy Dunstan (1998-2000), Ken Swan (2000-2002), Allan Read (2002-2004), Colin Hollis (2004-2012), Robert Curll (2012- 2019) Kristin Dawson (2019-)

Vice Chairs from 2000 included: Ken Swan (2002-2004) John East (2004-2008), Robin Willington (2008-2012), Vernon Grove (2012-2014) Ian Roxby (2014- 2019), Lawrence Zammit (2019-

Secretaries from 2000 included: Deidre Swan (2000-2004), Helen Curll (2004-2017), Colin Hancock (2017-2019), Jenny Swan (2019-2020), Jill Millburn (2020-)

Treasurers from 2000 included: Jenny Hancock (2000-2005) Pat Holmes (2005-2007) Jill Millburn (2007-2017) Robert Coady (2017-)

PATRONS - Jill & John East, Councillor Sandra McCarthy

PEOPLE WHO WORKED A LOT BEHIND THE SCENES:

Aside from those who took on leadership roles and special functions, there were those who worked tirelessly for the Society in many and varied ways and without whom there would have been no rose shows or other activities. These are some names that appear frequently in minutes and mostly from 2004-2024: Ken & Deidre Swan, Jenny & Ken Hancock, Francis Crosby, Janelle Newbury, Sybil Fookes, Robyn Hambly, Laila & Stephen Astill, May & Frank Napier, Helen Harris, David Sinclair, Elsie Heard, Beryl & Roland Glover, Ken Boniface, Yvonne Bassett, Vernon & Janice Groves, Marie Hampton, Val Sherlock, Eileen & Don Parkes (*Don was our badge man*), Bob & Shirley Morrow (*Bob developed the rose garden at Pioneer Park in Wollongong as the Council's head gardener. He was invited to the Illawarra meeting in 2002 about supplying roses for the park- he became a long term member*), John & Dorothy North, Sue Faulks, Ros Phillis, Diane & David Westgate, Dawn (Harvey) Hughes, Barbara Bartczak, Brenda Waters, Sharon Barry, Judy Daggar, Norma James, Marie Hoppo, Fran & John Proctor, Laurie & Bev Irvine, Jack Evans, Roger Millburn, Bruce Robertson, Robert & Shirley Coady (*Shirley has been a pastoral care member*), Peter Goodger, Frans Buskermolen, Jan Roxby (*spent hours helping with rose shows*), Hans & Lyn Van de Haar, Moira Etheridge, Diane Rendel, Deidre McLoughlin, Vivienne Marris, Esther, Ava & Sophia Hernandez, Rosemary Singleton, Phillip & Lyndal Sanders, Marguerite Kennedy, Geraldine Shea, Paul Walsh, Bev Emmett, Julianne Faulks, Debra Keller, *our Shoalhaven members*- Lorraine Vost, Janet Bowden, Jenny Swan, Intan Kallus, Pat & Horst Bleuel, Gary & Judi Bickford, Max & Val Atkins and Michael Fletcher. A special mention to our State & Federal MPs who have always supported our Rose Shows & activities with sponsorship and presence at functions.

AWARDS- STATE AND NATIONAL

Bert Mulley Memorial Award established in 1990

Illawarra Recipients

1996 – Sue Kingsford	1997- Rose Hough	2001 - Judith Oyston
2007- Deidre Swan	2008 – John & Jill East	2015- Joanne Fisher
2016- Kristin Dawson	2023 – Jill Millburn	

Garden Clubs of Australia Award- The Anne Williams Clark Medallion

Robert & Helen Curll - 2020

Australian Rose Award

Sue Kingsford -2015	Judith Oyston - 2013
Colin Hollis -2018	Kristin Dawson -2023

TA Stewart Award Sue Kingsford 2004

Photos: 1. Helen Curll receiving the Anne W Clark Medallion at Jamberoo in 2020 during the pandemic. 2. Helen & Robert Curll, a formidable team; 3 Jill Millburn receiving the Bert Mulley Award from State President Colin Hollis at Christmas Party. 2023



Robert Coady -Treasurer (2017-) receiving the Commonwealth Bank Appreciation Certificate at the Illawarra Christmas Party 2022.

ABOUT SOME MEMBERS

Sue Kingsford OAM, Sue was a highly acclaimed Rosarian, who from earliest years was a member of the Rose Society of NSW and grew roses on her property at Jamberoo. In March 2005 Sue moved to Fitzroy Falls where she opened a nursery named “Roses & Friends” selling many rare roses and others imported from overseas. She won many a medal at the Australian National Rose Trial Gardens on behalf of the roses she brought to trial. Sue was also an avid supporter and took key positions in the Australian Heritage Rose Society, as



well as in the Rose Societies of NSW and Australia. After a term of 18 years as Honorary Secretary, Sue Kingsford retired from this position in 2007. From 2007-2010 she served as Honorary Secretary of the NRSA.

For her contribution Sue was awarded the Bert Mulley Memorial Award, the T.A. Stewart Memorial Award and Life Membership of the RS of NSW. Throughout this period Sue remained a member of the Illawarra



Regional Rose Society contributing at rose stalls, educating members about rose arranging and assisting at rose shows. A rose bred and named after Sue: “**Little Suzie**” is planted in her honour next to the gazebo at Peace Park Kiama.

Photo- Sue receiving the ARA from Colin Hollis at Christmas gathering. He collected the award on behalf of Sue at the NRSA Conference in Perth in 2015

Judith Oyston OAM, Judith has been the heartbeat of the Illawarra Rose Society and a significant member of the Rose Society of NSW for more than 50 years. We would not have an Illawarra Regional Society without the inspiration and energy of Judith and others when it was founded in 1974. Judith, similarly, to Sue Kingsford also loved Heritage Roses and has been involved in the maintenance and preservation of rare and historic roses at the Rookwood



Cemetery in Sydney over many years. Judith's love for roses has also included the embrace of those members throughout the history of the Society and she has contributed to their memory. Judith held the position of historian in the Rose Society of NSW for more than a decade and edited the book – **The Rose Society of NSW Inc Centenary 1913-2013**. She was awarded recognition for her contribution to horticulture with an Order of Australia Medal in 2023.

Photo – Judith receiving congratulations from Shirley Coady on award of the Order of Australia Medal 2. Receiving the OAM from Governor Beasley

Allan Read, Allan exhibited both dahlias and roses when he first joined the NRS of NSW in 1957. Ted Frost, already a successful rose exhibitor from Wollongong, introduced him to Hybrid Tea roses. Because of work commitments he had a break in membership. Allan moved to Nowra, rejoined the society and started exhibiting again in 1989, and continuing as a Rose Judge at various rose shows including The Royal Easter Show. For his promotion of the rose in the Shoalhaven area Allan was the recipient of the Outstanding Senior Australian Award in 2001 to mark the Centenary of Federation. He was



President of the Rose Society of NSW from 1994-1997 and Chair of the Illawarra Regional Rose Society (2002-2004). Breeding roses took over from exhibiting for Allan. He has five Mini-Flora roses registered and made his plants available to members. **Sarah Anne** is a frequent winner on the show bench and was the first registered miniflora bred by an Australian. To preserve his roses, two were planted at the Wollongong Botanic Rose Garden in 2021.

Photo-Allan with champion Sarah Anne exhibited by Jim Cunningham at the Miniature Rose Show 16-17 March 2019; his other rose Lilac Festival exhibited by Mark McGuire is to his right.



Colin Hollis, Colin has been and still is a most significant member of the Illawarra Regional Rose Society. After 20 years as a local Federal Member of Parliament, he joined the Society in 2002. In 2004 -2012 he became the Chair of the Regional bringing lots of energy and enthusiasm for the promotion of the rose at rose shows, rose displays, media, stalls in various venues and educational workshops. Colin leads a group of volunteers in the development and maintenance of the Rose Garden at Peace Park. He also is passionate about the building of community as seen through the social activities, excursions to NZ and other trips. Colin has been an A Grade exhibitor and continues as a Rose Judge. He was involved in the staging of the National Conferences in Kiama in 2009 and 2022. Many events described in the story of the Illawarra Regional can be

attributed to Colin's endeavours. Colin has held positions of Vice President of the Rose Society of NSW and has been President since 2013 to the current year. For two consecutive years he held the position of National President of the Rose Society between 2020-2021 during the years of the pandemic. Colin has worked tirelessly to build membership and was instrumental in the development of five new regions within the rose community of NSW. His efforts have been recognised at the National level with the ARA in 2018.

Colin receiving the ARA from National President Gavin Woods at the NRSA dinner.



Joanne Fisher, Joanne's contribution to the rose and the Region is well illustrated in the Centenary book. This is a description of her wonderful creativity and energy, which has continued in contribution to the Illawarra Regional to this day.

"In 1990 Illawarra Regional member, Ollie Fischer introduced Joanne Fisher to Thelma Seath with the view to their undertaking non-competitive floral displays for the planned 1991 Rose Championships to be held at the University of Wollongong Union Hall. Joanne joined the society and, together with Thelma, prepared spectacular displays which graced the stage, foyer, corridor and walls of the hall. Joanne and Thelma's partnership

spanned 20 years. They became known as 'Thelma and Louise'. Their creativity in enhancing a show venue was sought for local regional shows, displays at BHP's Port Kembla Visitors Centre, into which they incorporated discarded pieces of steel in the designs, and Florawarra at Wollongong Botanic Garden. During their friendship they travelled with NSW members to the Rose Championships in Adelaide in 1993 where Joanne gained a 2nd placing in the pedestal arrangement class. Their highlights included floral decorations at the Australian Rose Championships in 1994 at Chatswood Town Hall and the Ramada Inn function centre. Garth Guyett presented each of them with one of the pedestals he had made for 1988. They received a letter of appreciation from Rear Admiral Peter Sinclair, Governor of New South Wales for their contribution to this event. They also decorated Novotel Wollongong Northbeach for the 1997 National AGM. In 2009, with many willing helpers, Joanne created backdrop displays for the Australian Rose Joanne and Thelma with their pedestals, gifts from Garth after 1988 'Thelma and Louise' - Joanne Fisher and Thelma Seath, floral artists Joanne, State Championships 1992, Floral Art Trophy 130 Championships at Kiama Showground Pavilion and table decorations for the Saturday night banquet at Kiama Leagues Club. She continues her display work at spring shows for Illawarra Regional. The Alister Clark Cup is featured, filled with named rose varieties from Swanes" (and in the latter days from Thornton's roses).



Kristin Dawson, for the sake of history my contribution to the Rose Society and the promotion of roses can be summarised as involved at local, state and national levels by bringing the skills learned in previous employment in organisational management. I joined the Rose Society in 2011 because of the joy of seeing so many beautiful roses at the Spring Regional Rose Show at Jamberoo in 2010. Since that time, I became actively involved in the life of the Illawarra Regional as an exhibitor and then at State level as the Webmaster in 2014, the State Secretary (2015-2022), the National Secretary (2016-2022) and Chair of the Illawarra Regional (2019 to this day). I held these positions during the time of the pandemic which was quite challenging in the need to

hold each of the Societies together through communication, which also involved the introduction of Zoom. With changing times, I have been able to build the promotion of roses through the establishment and ongoing activity of social media presence at National, State and local levels with FaceBook and Instagram pages, and a page for Australian Bred Roses and Rose Breeders.



Founding member Ray Teale



Founding member Audrey Teale



25th Anniversary Dinner - Judith Oyston (Walsh) with Chairman Dorothy Dunstan



Founding members Thelma Seath and Judith Oyston



May Napier



Hazel Boyle OAM with Arthur and Mary Watkins



Janice Groves, Jill East, Robin Willington and Barbara Barczak



Allan Read, Jill and John East



Spring Show at Figtree High School



The stars of the story

