

THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HERITAGE ROSES

Annual Report from The Register Team for the May Journal and 2016 AGM of HRNZI.

Murray Radka - radka@es.co.nz

Fran Rawling - wylde.willow@xtra.co.nz

Daphne Whitfort-Smith- d.whitfortsmith@xtra.co.nz

Inger Gledhill- ingerjgledhill@gmail.com

It has been an active and productive year for the team and we gathered for our last meeting of the season at Wylde Willow on 19 February to discuss progress, report on individual activities and to look to the future.

Inger reported her continued recording of new rose lists which can take considerable time as she checks each entry against her references of which there are several. She also checks supplier lists for new and deleted varieties in order to keep the Register up to date.

Inger is in an excellent position to realize the changes that occur from year to year and warns us all of the risk of complacency once a Region has recorded its roses. Such lists are not static. It is inevitable that changes will take place in individual and even public gardens and it would be very helpful for her if each region was to keep track of those changes and update her annually if possible.

Inger also reported that a new edition of the Register for publishing online will be with the Executive by the beginning of April. We are very grateful to her for her work which continues all year round even when the rest of us are able to take a break.

Daphne continues to be active within her Region working alongside the powers that be in the Council and on the Parks and Reserves to monitor the health of the Species and Trevor Griffiths Gardens in Timaru and to advocate for their advancement. Members need no reminding that these gardens are two of our treasures and it is imperative that they are protected and maintained to a very high standard. We have seen how quickly we can lose rare varieties, even in public collections, and so to have someone of Daphne's knowledge and experience working in this manner is a priceless asset to our group. She has been innovative in developing a mentoring role with a young man who works in the Trevor Griffiths Garden and has a love for his work and the roses. Daphne recognized these qualities in him and has encouraged them by supporting him in the garden once a week and using her time there to educate him. Old teachers never die, they simply change their classrooms.

Developing strong relationships between HRNZI and managers and staff of heritage collections is something the team wants to foster in all of our Regions.

Fran reported similar activity in Dunedin. With her encouragement, the Northern Cemetery heritage rose volunteers are anxious to add as many of the saved roses to their collection as possible. The cemetery has an impressive collection already and with the addition of the saved roses will be of international importance in time. Fran has also been working with staff at the Dunedin Botanic Gardens to advise and support the manager and carers of the heritage rose garden and to maintain that relationship so important in allowing us an input into these public collections. Upon checking on a very rare rose I asked her to inspect she discovered that a protocol at the Botanic Garden specifies that rare plants must be propagated to ensure survival. We didn't know this before but have been invited to identify these rare roses for the staff which will hopefully ensure their survival. The rose in question is to be propagated.

At the end of November an event, I believe to be unique in our movement occurred when Noeleen and I hosted a group of twelve people at Brandy Hill for three days to inspect and label the collection. The group consisted of Paula Lollback and Rachel Solomon from the Auckland and Wellington Botanic Gardens, Gregg Lowery with his friends Pamela and Michael Temple from California and members of HR from throughout the country. This project was

inspired by Lyn Henry who saw the labelling as another important step in protecting the roses and she, along with other members from Northland to Southland organized the planning and resourcing of this project. Sadly, space does not allow a detailed account of what proved to be a productive, rewarding and very entertaining three days but we are profoundly grateful for the support of all involved.

In January, Noeleen and I journeyed throughout the South for several days collecting bud wood of rare varieties to be propagated. Twenty three varieties were sent for budding (our limit) and the remainder have been potted up as cuttings by a propagator in Central Otago who offered her services. In all sixty varieties were budded or potted as cuttings this season. Most of these are varieties we haven't tried before, some are replacements and some are unidentified roses. I was asked to help save two rare roses from the Bolton Street Cemetery collection and five rare roses from the Totara House garden in Northland which have not been identified. If successful these roses will be returned to these gardens and added to our collection and we wait for news of their success. I must acknowledge the support and contributions from the North Island this season. Many people have sent me bud wood and cuttings of roses we saw when we visited last year and these have been added to the southern contributions.

Forty one new varieties will be added to the Brandy Hill collection this winter as a result of last year's propagation. Not all of these are new, a number are unidentified but warranting further investigation and some are very exciting known rare varieties including Ormiston Roy a spinosissima hybrid which has not been available for many years, Rosa sempervirens minor, Rosa rugosa Sakhalin form raised from seed, Rosa amblyotis, Rosa pisocarpa and a possible Rosa hemesphaerica 'Flore pleno'.

Project Rescue, the research project I undertook with the Pratt Family Scholarship awarded under the last Executive is complete and will be with the printer before the end of March and hopefully with the Executive not long after that. This is an account of the early years of the work of the Register Team, its genesis, birth and development. It has taken longer to complete than anticipated, mainly for health reasons but also because I expanded the parameters to include the work of our predecessors who have done so much to promote and save heritage roses in this country. As well as being a short history of our movement I hope that it will prove to be an entertaining insight into the work of a number of our iconic rose people.

Finally, a reminder to members who want to order roses from the Register. As a first step check the Register online to see where you can obtain the rose you want. If it is in a private collection contact one of the team. I will place your request on a waiting list and will make every effort to have it propagated for you as soon as possible.

Murray Radka for the Register Team
Brandy Hill
March 2016.