

**FROM - The Register Team.**

## **ANNUAL REPORT -2017 - 2018**

### **1. Introduction:**

The New Zealand National Register of Heritage Roses was created and is managed by a team of four volunteers, all members of HRNZI. The members of the team are Inger Gledhill, Murray Radka, Fran Rawling and Daphne Whitfort-Smith. All of the work we do is based on four goals; to find, register and save our lost and rare heritage roses. Last year we added a new plank, an investigation into reintroducing varieties that we have been unable to find. Where we are able, we make varieties available to members. The work we are doing has received International recognition and interest.

Members are encouraged to check the Register on line for information on the location of varieties and to contact any member of the team with information and requests.

### **2. Propagation:**

An era came to an end for the Register this year when Sue and Doug Pacey of D&S Nurseries informed us that they are reducing their operation and will have to end their connection with the project. Sue and Doug have been with us from the beginning and indeed propagated my own roses before they agreed to help the Register. Doug is a very talented and skilful budder who has had remarkable success with our often sickly and limited material. His skill has saved many roses that would not have succeeded with a less skilful propagator. We thank them both for their patience and professionalism that have been a cornerstone of the huge success of this enterprise.

It will be difficult to replace them because, while there are other budders out there who can do the work for us, not everyone is prepared to work with low numbers and often poor quality material but we are working on it and trying out a number of new possibilities. It may not be possible to meet all requests in the short term until we have a new system in place.

### **3. Requests:**

In the past year ninety five roses were ordered from the Register, forty two from members and fifty three from public gardens including The Jessie Calder Garden, The Trevor Griffiths Garden, The Timaru Species Garden the Wellington Botanic Garden and the Northern Cemetery. We are delighted to be able to assist the public gardens to replace or add roses to their collections that are no longer available thus ensuring that the heritage collections are kept intact and not replaced with modern or Austen roses as happened in the past.

In addition to the above in excess of twenty five roses were potted and donated from Brandy Hill to two of our reserve gardens in Wellington and most of the public collections.

With few exceptions the plants and bud wood for requests has come from the collection at Brandy Hill and all are roses that are not available commercially.

As the number of roses available commercially decreases the value of Brandy Hill, the public collections plus other mother plant gardens and the service offered speaks for itself and more than justifies the minimal costs to the organization to create and maintain the Register.

Until we have clarity over a new propagator we shall not offer a list of roses that may be ordered from us this year. If any member is anxious to acquire a rose that is not available commercially, you can email your request to [roserequests@gmail.com](mailto:roserequests@gmail.com).

### **4.Events:**

In addition to the work Inger has done with the Register the Team has focussed on surveying and maintaining each of our Regions.

**Dunedin:** Fran has been exploring and doing work with some of the old Dunedin gardens which reason tells us could be a rich source of old varieties.

**Timaru:** Daphne has been working with the Council and Staff in Timaru and is very pleased with progress to renew and invigorate the Species garden and plans to improve growing conditions in the Trevor Griffiths Garden.

*"The Rose Species Collection at the Timaru Botanic Gardens has had a major assessment and rejuvenation . Gary Foster, Liaison Officer for the Timaru District Council was inspired by listening to Murray's talk at the Kindred Day last*

autumn, followed by a tour of the devastated Northern Cemetery. Gary came home to Timaru determined to protect the Collection and make sure it was in the best of health.

In May a team consisting of Gary, Peter Thomson (T.D.C. Horticultural Officer), Shirley Smith (HR SC Convenor), Daphne Whitfort-Smith (Rose Register Team), and Neville Capil (Park Manager for the contractor Midland) did two intensive days of assessing the Collection with far-reaching decisions being made :

roses not fitting the species theme to be removed to other borders in the Gardens

- seedlings and suckers to be removed and grown on as replacements or for swapping
- removal of three large trees in the borders to reduce competition for light and nutrients.
- additional new plants of species to be sourced to add to the Collection
- all plants to be fed with trichopel and blood and bone
- the computer records, the labelling, and interpretive materials to be reviewed

Since then all tasks except the last have been completed. I can say without a doubt that the plants have never looked healthier. As an example. *Rosa pomifera* syn *R. villosa*, has produced a glorious crop of hips, where previously only one or two miserable hips could be found. Now it only remains to ask if any members are able to add more species to this unique Collection". Daphne.

**Central Otago:** For two years, I have been working with a local woman from an old Central Otago family who knows the area well and obscure places to search for old roses in ruins and small cemeteries. Dozens of roses, mostly unidentified, have been uncovered and have joined the collection at Brandy Hill.

**5. Discoveries.** Our prediction that the number of new finds of rare and endangered roses would reduce over time has proven to be correct but our philosophy that the Register is a living document that will be added to indefinitely still holds.

Although smaller in number the new discoveries this year are as exciting as any we have made.

The top of the list for me is **Rosa hemisphaerica 'Flore Pleno'** that was discovered right here in Central Otago growing around an old mud brick farm house. The family has the date of introduction because an ancestor brought the rose on a sailing ship from Scotland. It has taken me a year from learning of this rose's existence to confirming its identify at flowering time in October. I viewed it one magical evening at twilight amidst the glory of Central Otago's scenery and was hard put to decide if the pleasure of confirming this rose or watching one of the most stunning sunsets I have ever witnessed was the more memorable. I had feared from the verbal description that the rose may prove to be **Rosa foetida persiana** but my mind was put to rest the moment I viewed it from the distance in the four wheel drive that took me to its location. It is very double and deep golden yellow. The family is very protective of it but allowed me a sucker that is flourishing now at Brandy Hill.

Other wonderful finds are:

**Daphne** - a long sought Pemberton Musk also found in Central Otago,

**Rosa giraldii**, sent to me by mistake as something else

**Rosa canina 'Pfander'**, a chance find in Dunedin labelled as something else

**Ruskin**, a lost double red rugosa hiding in full sight under another name. Very beautiful.

**Polly**, a lovely hybrid tea of the 1930s. Gifted by a member

**Louis Phillipe**, a rare China I discovered also labelled incorrectly.

**Bouganville, Anne-Marie Cote, Emilia Plantier** - Noisettes we can add to **Annie Vibert** as rare examples of that family and part of the stock of a local nursery no longer in operation. I suspect that many more varieties will emerge from this source in time.

**Aimable Amy** - a gallica that has not been offered for many years. I discovered this, along with a rugosa still to be identified, in the Maniototo near an old cemetery. Known by the locals for years as the Gimmerburn Rose.

**von Scharnhorst** - The last rose bred by Peter Lambert the skilled German breeder and available today from just one German nursery. It is a *Rosa foetida* hybrid crossed with a hybrid perpetual and named by Lambert to honour a German general who fought against Napoleon, one hundred years after his death. Was discovered by a local person

in an abandoned garden in Central Otago that was created by two sisters between the wars. A number of interesting varieties, still to be identified, have come from this garden. I suspect that one is Amy Robsart a Penzance hybrid.

**Henri Fouquier** - gifted by a member. A gallica no longer in production or in any of the public collections.

**Nanette, Jenny Duval, Nestor** - all gallicas that have been mixed up in past years. I have finally sorted them in this garden and can confirm that I have the three different roses. **Jenny Duval** exceptionally beautiful.

**Rosa mollissima**. - Found years ago in a public collection labelled '**Euphrates**' - clearly incorrect. Identified just this year.

These roses are all safe at Brandy Hill and will be offered to members in time when we have sorted the propagation.

## **6. The Future -**

As well as the loss of D&S Nurseries to propagate our roses, supply options for old roses has taken a major hit with the rationalization of their catalogue by Tasman Bay Roses who have withdrawn a large number of heritage varieties from propagation due to lack of demand.

I did a quick count of SNA (Sorry Not Available) printed on line and counted 114 varieties within the heritage families.

In an act of great generosity the Pratt family has offered to donate many of the withdrawn varieties to the collection at Brandy Hill and this offer has been gratefully accepted.

Most heritage rose lovers have bought roses from Tasman Bay over a period of many years and our organization acknowledges the support and personal interest the Pratt family has always given to us.

Inger will do a thorough stock take of varieties that have been withdrawn and compare them against the Register to see what we have lost. Hopefully most of them will be held at Brandy Hill or in other collections throughout the country.

This is clearly serious for us but we can take comfort that we created the Register before this happened and just have to design a plan now to deal with the new circumstances. We will need member assistance in time but more on this later.

## **7. The Register:**

The Register is updated each year and the next update will take into account the recently withdrawn varieties from Tasman Bay Roses.

**NB. Members who would like to assist our work can help by giving a list of the old roses they grow to their Convenor who can collate and provide Inger with an area list. It doesn't matter how common or few the number of roses is that each member grows. In addition to these lists we would appreciate a list of heritage roses grown publicly in each region. Finally, keep an eye out for roses in old gardens, cemeteries and on road sides.**

**Murray Radka**

**for The Register Team.**