

**CLAREMONT FLOWER SHOW GROUP INC 2016**  
**SPRING FLOWER SHOW**  
**SPEECH BY HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR**  
**THE HONOURABLE KATE WARNER AM,**  
**GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA**  
**CLAREMONT MEMORIAL HALL SATURDAY 3 SEPTEMBER 2016**

Good afternoon everyone. I am delighted to have been asked to be here today to open this 2016 Spring Flower Show.

I begin by paying my respects to the traditional and original owners of this land – to pay respect to those that have passed before us and to acknowledge today's Tasmanian Aboriginal community who are the custodians of this land.

I wish to acknowledge the Honorable Elise Archer, Speaker of the House of Assembly, Alderman Kristie Johnston Mayor of Glenorchy, Mrs Selina Le Fevre, President, Mr Stan Walker, Secretary, members of the Committee and distinguished guests.

I also note the contribution of the Tasmanian Daffodil Council, the Camellia Society, the three garden clubs – Glenorchy, Claremont and Lenah Valley, which I am informed are also wonderful supporters of this show – and all the exhibitors, including the children who are exhibiting today. Well done to all of you.

I can't quite believe that I have never been to a Claremont Flower Show before! After all, New Norfolk where I lived for most of my life is not half hour away and I love flowers and I am a keen gardener; albeit now more of the observing, appreciative kind than the weeding, pruning, digging and hoeing variety.

In my opening speech to you here today I thought I would examine the origins of my love of flowers and gardens. My mother was a keen gardener, and she redesigned a rather neglected garden at our home in South Hobart. She was helped by a garden designer and flower arranger, Kitty Henry, who

lived in an old house in Sandy Bay with a large conservatory/flower room, interesting plumbing and an enchanting woodland garden with masses of hellebores, tiny cyclamen and snow drops. This garden has gone unfortunately, subdivided and built upon. Kitty and Mum's favourite plant nursery was Mrs Doyle's, which I think was in Barossa Road or Tolosa Street. I remember Mrs Doyle always had her hair in rollers and a net when we visited, which was often. One of Mum's garden beds was called the Gold Coast because of the money Mum had spent on plants for it.

My godmother, Judy Lewis, also had a beautiful garden, Mawhera, in Sandy Bay. Unusually for the time, Judy trained as a gardener at Burnley Horticultural College in Melbourne, and she created a gorgeous garden for her family of six children. Reading your history of the Claremont Flower Shows I noted that Judy Lewis was responsible for introducing a display by the Camellia Society at your show in 1987. Of course Judy's garden had wonderful camellias. And she like my mother was excellent at flower arranging.

When I married and moved to Valleyfield, I embraced the idea of having a garden. My first job was to tackle the tall couch grass which had invaded all the garden beds around the cottage and to clear the paved path. After days of digging out couch I planted some daisy bushes from Devon Nursery and a few punnets of Sweet William seedlings. The sweet Williams grew vigorously but were mainly magenta and dark red and clashed horribly with the yellow daisies. This combination is best forgotten and I am sure it made Gertrude Jekyll turn in her grave, but the memory is preserved in the background of a photograph of my daughter Emily taking her first steps.

Over the next few years we gradually got rid of some twenty or so scraggly radiata pines which had been planted around and between the two houses at Valleyfield. A few treasures beneath had survived, a stunted Magnolia Grandiflora and some old bearded iris. And there, 40 years ago, I created my first large garden bed, with everything I liked from my childhood: forsythia, winter sweet (*chimonanthus praecox*), a pale pink sasanqua camellia, a mollus azalea, pink apple blossom Japonica, a Cecil Brunner and an Iceberg rose. And daffodils.

Thirty years ago or so Dick and I moved to the main house at Valleyfield and I suddenly had a much larger challenge. However, gardening at Valleyfield has two advantages, wonderful soil (mostly) and a river at the bottom of the garden with an endless supply of water. And I should mention the wonderful trees framing the garden.

In the 1880s, the Shoobridges planted a selection of some fifty exotic trees, a giant sequoia (redwood); a bunya pine (*Araucaria bidwilli*) and a deodar cedar, these three all impossibly close together but creating a marvellous canopy. They also planted a weeping or funeral cyprus, cabbage trees (*Cordyline australis*), other unusual conifers and a couple of European ash trees. Interestingly, these trees were part of a consignment of trees ordered by the Royal Society, some of which were ordered for the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens. We have a photocopy of the original list, which lists the trees, their purchasers and the prices. The Valleyfield garden is bordered by a row of poplars to the east and west, the river to the south and the Lyell Highway and a hawthorn hedge to the north. Dick's father added maples, golden ash, silver birches and a lot of camellias to the garden, all of which are now mature trees and his camellias have thrived.

Dick and I made many changes to the garden, including replanting many box hedges from cuttings from an old shrubby two metre tall English box. Two of our most ambitious projects are what we call Monet's garden and the espaliered garden. Our Monet's garden is a copy of the Grande Allee at Giverny, with six arches spanning an avenue with parallel beds leading to the river with climbing roses over the arches starting with red then pink and ending with white. And the espaliered garden is a square bordered by sides each of trellised grapes; espaliered Bechtel crab apples; espaliered pears and apple trees and an apple espalier step-over on the fourth side.

What about daffodils at Valleyfield? When I moved there in 1972 there were very few Spring bulbs, just a few clumps of old-fashioned double raggedy yellow daffodils and some indestructible snowflakes, the odd jonquil. I am pleased to say we planted hundreds and hundreds of daffodils, most of them from David Jackson at Surges Bay. We have a range of colours, including pink and white trumpets, and my favourites, the apricot cupped, white-petalled scented daffodils. They have multiplied of course

and the largest drift of them overlooking the blackcurrants has survived being mown before they had fully died down in summer, and even being ploughed up in error.

But now: back to this gorgeous Flower Show! It gives me great pleasure in declaring open the 2016 Claremont Flower Show Group Spring Flower Show open.

Thank you.