

Seven Life Members represent 200 years of commitment to Maleny Garden Club and the community.

A total of 200 years of commitment to the local community was on show at a gathering of Life Members of Maleny Garden Club at Witta. Whilst the Club may be 65 years old it is certainly not ready to be pensioned off.

The Maleny Garden Club President Marnie Trass said "It was an exciting time to sit down together with five of our Club's Life Members who had gathered to have a cuppa and share their memories. Together these ladies represent a total of 200 years of commitment to our Club. As we are preparing for this years 'Gardening on the Edge' it is good to remember all the hard work done by our members in years past. At this time of the year our Life Members would have been busy with the Autumn Fair, the first of two events that our Club sponsored in each year."

Among the group were a Foundation Member, Past Presidents, Vice Presidents, Secretaries, and Treasurers who had made gardening their passion whilst helping the local community. Marnie said, "There was so much chatter recalling past events that it seemed like they had happened yesterday, bus trips, Christmas break-up parties, treasured memories of members who had passed on, some funny stories, the pleasure that they gained through raising funds for the community, but most of all the feeling of enjoyment in each others company. Nothing was ever too much for them to take on. The Club honours the hard work put in by these ladies."

It all started with Olga's memories of the first Floral Carpets, "After working so hard on making the Floral Carpet after the Fair had closed the dance band was set up and we danced the night away, so much fun. Funds were raised by placing a coin around the carpet edges." Olga remembers "Making the Floral Carpets was a long process. Pine branches had to be stripped of all the needles which were then used as the base on which the flowers were laid. Most carpets were 4.5m long x 3.5m wide and that took so many flowers. Members worked on the designs for often months before the carpet was made, it always featured a relevant theme, whatever the members decided." Carpets ranged from the "Flying Carpet' made on a frame off the floor complete with Persian slippers to the 'Colours of the Rainbow' It showed the generosity of the members that they could give up so much of their gardens to make such a beautiful thing.

Corinne said 'Working together on the carpet where those creative souls put everything in its place and we with the scissors and secateurs handed things to them was such good camaraderie, it was great to all stand back and look at the finished article. These are all wonderful memories."

Nurseries were not so abundant as they are now so most flowers and shrubs in the gardens were there because of someone's green thumb. These were obtained through having the Club meetings in members' homes, sharing lunch and then a walk around the garden of the hostess when cuttings were taken. The Club still encourages members to a 'Sip-N-Snip' and

get together each month, share a cup of tea, then walk around the gardens getting cuttings of plants they may not have in their gardens.

A lovely memory of Thalia Skerman was written after she had passed on, "We will never forget Thalia because every time someone says 'where did you get that plant' we would say, 'Oh that, it came from Thalia's garden,'" So the practice continues today. It is a lovely way to remember our friends.

Marnie said, "Imagine if we were to see two ladies dressed in period costume walking Maple Street with baskets full of Tussie Mussies handing them out to passers-by to advertise the different Fairs, what a great idea."

Memories of Colin Campbell were many, including one where one member was in hospital just chatting with some visitors and in walked Colin and Beverly with a bunch of flowers much to the visitors' astonishment, another recalled Colin sitting in a bamboo hut at an Autumn Fair where he sat and answered visitors garden questions. Colin was a much loved Maleny Identity.

Marnie said, "When we discussed our present 'Gardening on the Edge' event Pat Powell made a lovely comment, 'We are not displaying "perfect" gardens rather "attainable" gardens showing what everyday gardeners can do whether on acreage or a town block.'

Norma remembered going to her first meeting and bringing a lupin for the flower competition that she was rather proud of and being told, "That's not a flower," so she put it down and sat down. 25 years later after having served as Treasurer for many years she can still laugh about it. As treasurer Norma remembers during the years that she was in charge of the books a total of \$33,000.00 was given to the Community Centre. If we convert all of the donations that have been made to the local Community since 1952 it would be in excess of \$250,000.00 in today's dollar terms.

There were many other memories, Val recalled one member who spoke each month about the names of plants and at one meeting making everyone laugh. The talk was interesting, entertaining and humorous as usual and he was able to convert to a biblical meaning the fact that he had a Naked lady growing under his apple tree and a red flower on a ginger plant nearby.

June who was unable to be at the morning tea said, "The best times of my life have been in Maleny." Jo was unable to be there also but her hard work and happiness was remembered with fondness.

Marnie said, "We will celebrate our 65th year in September and look forward to giving as much pleasure to others as we have received ourselves, through our motto 'Friendship through Gardening.'"