



Memories of Joseph Banks Native Plants Reserve, Kareela by Peter Locksley

At the Bonnet Bay Bushcare bushwalk on 10 August 2013, Peter Locksley and Maureen Langworthy of Como mentioned to Rhonda Daniels at the Australian Plants Society stall that Peter had been involved in the early days of Joseph Banks Native Plants Reserve at Kareela (approx late 1960s/early 1970s). Rhonda asked him to write down any memories and he emailed these notes on 15 October 2013.

It is a long time ago, and I can't remember details like the names of the other people who worked there with me, but I do recall that two enthusiasts approached the Sutherland Shire Council with the idea of using land set aside by the developers of that area – it was about 10% of the area being developed – as a native plant reserve. The developers set aside the most rugged and difficult area to develop into a garden, and this suited the enthusiasts and the soon-to-be-formed committee.

They modelled their ideas on the Bankstown Council's then existing nature reserve at Picnic Point [Sylvan Grove Native Garden]. I had also visited several times, the Australian Wildflower Park at Dee Why, called Stony Range.

I can't actually recall how I met up with the other people, but we used to work in the then-called Sir Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander Garden, every Sunday morning.

The work at that stage, mainly involved clearing paths and edging their borders with logs, making steps using rocks and weeding and planting.

We used to get there about 9 am and retrieve the key to the gate from a neighbour who lived nearby. We worked till about noon and then met in the corner near the fence surrounding the school. It is a small rocky area with large stones laying about to sit on. We brought sandwiches and thermos for cups of tea, and sat there discussing what was done and it was very pleasant.

As things progressed we needed extra work to be done by the Council, eg water laid on for sprinklers systems, particularly in the area for rainforest plants, ferns etc.

To do this, we attended Council meetings in the evening. These meetings were for sporting bodies committees. I recall ours was the 527 committee. Generally there was a member of the Council and the Engineer present. We had to wait whilst they went through endless questions about grass on ovals, leaking pipes, dressing rooms etc, until we could ask about our requirements.

The different areas of the gardens were laid out as eg rainforest, native mints, the circuit on the top and an area that was left as it was found. All these features remain but of course have been upgraded and expanded in ways beyond our means.

This continued until the Sutherland Council took over the work.

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