

# Australian Garden History Society ACT Monaro Riverina Branch

Newsletter October 2009



Australian Garden History Society  
[www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au](http://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au)

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## BRANCH DIARY

## Forthcoming Events

16 – 19  
OCTOBER

AGHS National  
Conference, Geelong

SATURDAY 28  
NOVEMBER

Visit to Braidwood (incl  
Manar) and end of year  
drinks

### VISIT TO MANAR AND END OF YEAR DRINKS SATURDAY 28 NOVEMBER

Manar was granted to Dr Matthew Anderson in 1825. The present building at Manar is a combination of a cottage built by Dr Anderson some time before 1835 and the house built by Hugh Gordon and his wife Mary (formerly Macarthur) who purchased it in 1841. Hugh Gordon described the cottage built by Anderson as a 'very nice cottage for a visit of a few months, but not for a settled residence', being a simple weatherboard structure, with a verandah at the front and rear and a hipped roof. A stone building at the rear of the building, with a loft above, also dates from Anderson's time and contains the original kitchen.

The house built by Gordon in about 1841 is attached to one end of the cottage and connected by doorways. It includes an attic storey with dormer windows. Manar is a roomy, comfortable house 'with the indescribable atmosphere of a home that has been cherished by several generations of the one family'. It is currently occupied by another Hugh Gordon, his partner Kimberley Evans and their two children Cesca and Ella.

Hugh Gordon was an avid gardener who obtained oak, elm, beech and hawthorn seeds from the family home in Scotland for the garden at Manar. Cuttings were also obtained from the extensive nurseries at Camden Park, the home of Mary Gordon's cousin William Macarthur. From 1844 onwards Manar was a productive garden and full of lilacs, hawthorns and honeysuckle.

Well known Australian gardener Beatrice Bligh was a regular visitor to Manar as it was the childhood home of her father Jim Gordon. She acknowledged that the garden at Manar had a major influence on her work. In her book, *Down to Earth*, she wrote that 'this large, romantic, natural place where I spent so many blissful, irresponsible days became my ideal'. The current owners hold a similar view.

## FOR SALE

Early Ainslie Gardens,  
\$15

Fifield Garden, \$10

Durham Hall Garden,  
\$10

Recording Gardens,  
\$10

Planting the Nation,  
\$20

Studies in Australian  
Garden History, Vol 2,  
\$20

**Documentary Film: A  
Gardener's City**  
\$34.95 Members;  
\$39.95 Others, postage

**Directions:** Manar is located between Bungendore and Braidwood. Manar Road is approximately 5 kilometres towards Braidwood from the Goulburn Road junction. Turn right into the road and veer to the right at the first turning where you will see a sign to Manar. It is approximately 2 kilometres to the house and garden.

**Time:** 3.30 – 6.00pm.

**Cost:** \$10 members, \$20 non-members including end of year drinks - booking form page 4

We have chosen Saturday 28 November as it is the date for **The Airing of the Quilts** in Braidwood – more details at <http://www.braidwoodquiltvent.org.au> and four gardens are open in Braidwood as part of the **Australia's Open Garden Scheme**

- 116 Wallace Street, Braidwood
- Lisdaleen, Bombay Rd, Bombay
- Mona, Kings Hwy Braidwood

\$7.95

- St Omer, Nerriga Road Braidwood

## EVENTS IN 2010

Your Committee meet in September to start planning a program for 2010. A newsletter will be out in early 2010 with details.

## Branch News

### 2009 AGM

The 2009 AGM was held on Thursday 27 August at the Discovery Centre, CSIRO. In his report, the President, Tony Byrne outlined the activities during another very successful year and thanked the members of the committee. He made special mention of the work done by Madeleine Maple and Max Bourke in enabling our branch to prepare a condition assessment of the English Garden and to produce an interpretation pamphlet and signage. He also thanked Jill Scheetz who has resigned from the Branch Committee after eight years. Jill has made a very significant contribution to the AGHS both as a Committee Member and as the Branch's representative on the National Management Committee.

After the very short AGM we were treated to a wonderful illustrated talk by landscape designer and artist Catherine O'Neill. Catherine is now a member of our branch so we hope to see more of her.

### 2009-2010 BRANCH COMMITTEE

Tony Byrne, Chair  
Helen Elliot, Vice-chair  
Nancy Clarke, Secretary (and Branch Representative on the National Management Committee after October 2009)  
Robyn Henderson, Treasurer  
Judy Pearce, Newsletter Editor  
Rod Holesgrove  
Kay Johnston  
Linda Spinaze

We would welcome a couple more committee members so if you are interested please contact our chair, Tony Byrne on [tonybyrne@effect.net.au](mailto:tonybyrne@effect.net.au), phone 6247 3642. We promise you it is a lot of fun.

## Recent Events

### SHERWOOD SPRING WALK: 12 SEPTEMBER

The weather was perfect for our spring walk to Sherwood – even a bit unseasonably warm. We drove first to Blue Range Hut, the site of an internment camp for Italian prisoners of war during the Second World War. It's a beautiful spot and it's easy to understand why some of the prisoners were reluctant to leave at the end of the war.

We then drove on to a locked gate where we left the cars and walked the last several kilometres to the Sherwood site – the best way to arrive there. Although the homestead and other farm buildings have long since gone, the surviving plantings still give a sense of the pioneering lives in this remote location. We know that Sherwood was settled by Henry Phillips and his wife Eliza in 1863 and that the family occupied the site until Eliza died in 1922. Henry built the property up to around 500 acres, but he also worked at the nearby Uriarra property as postmaster, tutor and bookkeeper. He died in January 1913.

An interesting postscript to the family history is the listing of Henry Leslie Phillips on the ACT Memorial website. He was born in 1898 and his address on enlistment in 1915 was "Sherwood" via Uriarra, so presumably a grandson. He survived the war but not without drama. He was shot in the left thigh in action near Villers-Bretonneux in April 1918 and evacuated to England for treatment. He returned to his unit in August 1918 but on 1 September 1918 he was wounded in both legs near Peronne resulting in the loss of his right

leg. A younger brother, Bertie, is also listed on the website.

The Sherwood site is marked by many exotic mature trees including an oak, a cedar, hawthorns willows, elms and a range of fruit trees. Uriarra creek runs nearby and a highlight for us was to visit the site in time to see its blanket of daffodils and jonquils in full bloom. It is a wonderful place to relax with a picnic.

Thanks to Gillian Bellas and Judy Pearce for organising the visit and to the National Trust who joined with us on this event.

**Tony Byrne**



## Of Interest

### FRIENDS OF THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDENS

#### LUNCHTIME LECTURE SERIES

Lectures on a variety of topics are offered at 12.30pm on most Thursdays. Details on all the lectures can be found at <http://www.anbg.gov.au/friends/calendar.html>. Of special interest:

- Thursday 12 November, *The Canberra Arboretum – 2013* with John Mackay
- Thursday 19 November, *Charles Darwin – Botanist Extraordinaire* with Rosemary Purdie

### AUSTRALIAN OPEN GARDEN SCHEME

The booklet is now available for the 2009-2010 season. Our members might be interested in the ***Spirit of the Land*** event, Lockhart, Saturday 10 & 11 October, which includes three open gardens as well as Australia's National Farm Sculpture Award (where entries must be created from recycled or new farm materials or natural elements of the land), and the annual Weekend Festival features art, performance events, food and wine.

**BOOKING SLIP**

Booking slips need to be returned no later than one week prior to the event to assist committee with planning.

Names \_\_\_\_\_

Contact phone: (Evening/W/E) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Tick	Event	Cost	Numbers attending	Amount Incl \$
<input type="checkbox"/>	Visit to Manar & end of year drinks (28 November)	Members of AGHS \$10 Non-members \$15		\$ _____

Return with payment to:

**AGHS, P O Box 5008, Lyneham ACT 2602**

Make cheques out to **Australian Garden History Society**