



AUSTRALIAN
**GARDEN
HISTORY**
SOCIETY
Queensland Branch

CONTENTS

Visit to Old Bishopsbourne p.2

A mystery shrub p.5

Book review. p. 5

June Long Weekend, p. 6

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Meetings are to be held in the State Library, Floor 2, Room 2D at 11 am Friday on 3 April (special Conference meeting), 17 April, 8 May and 12 June. All members welcome to attend

COMMITTEE CONTACTS

Chair & NMC rep – Keith Jorgensen
3341 3933 H

jorgenkg@picknowl.com.au

Vice-chair – Susan Martin
3870 2186 H

marsix@bigpond.net.au

Secretary – John Taylor 3862 4284 H

jht@hotkey.net.au

Treasurer – Bob Myers 3878 5024 H

rjkmeyers@bigpond.net.au

Newsletter Editor – Glenn Cooke
3840-7316 W; 3846-1050 H

Glenn.cooke@qag.qld.gov.au

Other committee members –

Elsbeth Douglas,

Jan Harrington

Nina Wood

Maurice Wilson.

Newsletter

April 2009

COMING EVENTS

APRIL: Two Eumundi gardens plus Morning Tea and Lunch

- Stringybark Cottage garden has garden rooms with vine covered arches, swathes of ornamental grasses, stepping stones, rock paths and well-placed pots. Owner Cheryl Boyd is catering for our morning tea and lunch.
- After lunch, drive to Claudine Dalco's garden, a lush sub tropical garden with a great variety of plants.

Meet time: Sunday 19 April 10 am

Event charge: members \$25, guests \$30, morning tea & lunch included.

Register by 13 April to

Gill Jorgensen 3341 3933 or

jorgenkg@picknowl.com.au

Meet at: 13 Sudholz Rd, Verrierdale (UBD Brisbane - Sunshine Coast map 27: A 17). Travel north on the Bruce Highway, turn off to Eumundi (Map 26) and continue through the town on the Eumundi-Noosa Road, turn right about 4 km from Eumundi into Dean Road, at the Verrierdale Hall turn right into Verrierdale Road and continue into Pryor Road, left into Sudholz Road and drive into the second entrance on the left: 13 Sudholz Road (with a decorated letterbox).

After lunch, drive back to the Eumundi-Noosa Rd, turn right to travel east, turn left at Duke Rd opp Robinsons Family Vineyard, after 2 km turn left into Youngs Drive, then right into Marnie Crescent, first driveway on left is Claudine's.

MAY: Wilston House & Garden

- Afternoon visit to Wilston House at Newmarket, home of Ngaio Nagel to hear the history of this heritage listed 1870s house and enjoy the garden with its numerous large trees.
- Afternoon tea will be provided by Ngaio and Bee plus members Barbara Heath and Mal Enright.

Time: 2 pm Sunday 10 May.

Meet at: 47 Watson St, Newmarket

Event charge: members \$10, guests \$15, afternoon tea included.

Register by 5 May to Gill

Jorgensen 3341 3933 or

jorgenkg@picknowl.com.au

JUNE: Long Weekend Visit to Miva then Maryborough

Meet Time: 2 pm Saturday 6 June at Park near Dickabram Bridge, Miva for Meece's Rose Nursery visit.

- At Maryborough, visit Elizabeth Park Rose Garden, then dinner at Gataker's Landing Restaurant.
- On Sunday am visit the Day and Cotton Gardens. Afternoon: Mary River Cruise, then dinner at Portside Restaurant, Maryborough.
- Monday: M'boro Queen's Park or watch Race the Rattler at Gympie.

Further details inside Newsletter.

Event charge: member \$20, guest \$25

Register by 30 May to Gill

Jorgensen 3341 3933 or

jorgenkg@picknowl.com.au

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

We welcome new members: Desley Campbell-Stewart, Margaret Harper, Ralph Hobon, Denise Long, Peter Marquis-Kyle, Daniel Odin, Gordon Smith, Barbara Snelling, Sue Spork & Geoffrey Victor. Keith Jorgensen

VISIT to OLD BISHOPSBOURNE - CHAPEL – GARDENS with STONE WALLED TERRACES at MILTON MARCH, 2009

by Susan Martin (Photos Bruce Martin and Keith Jorgensen)

Brisbane is a sub-tropical and colourful city and early autumn is a good time to explore it when there is coolness in the air. Many of you have come to love it over a life time or as a child, during a working sojourn or as a student, perhaps as a visitor; everyone will have an association which endears old Brisbane to them, be it the Tropicana gardens, the lacework on our buildings, glimpses of the changeless brown river or simply a favourite pathway. Today Brisbane has become a vibrant city, its pulse has quickened, change can be exciting and, a peaceful place is hard to find.



View from 2nd floor verandah showing detail of balustrade



View of proliferating chimneypieces

The Queensland Branch visit to *Old Bishopsbourne* was one such gentle afternoon of heritage and history, with the old house welcoming on its isolated hillock, not far from the city bustle. We were met by Stephen Clarke, the Property/Finance/Administration Officer for the Ministry Education Commission known as St Francis Theological College, which has used this site for the college since the 1930s and *Bishopsbourne* itself since the Anglican See was moved to another stately old Brisbane residence, *Eldernell*, in 1964.

A marvellous historical tour of the house and chapel followed, with time to walk around the spacious grounds, before afternoon-tea was taken in a student seminar room, which buildings are gathered below the original built environment with its beautifully proportioned, encircling carriage-way.

Old Bishopsbourne, or *Old Old Bishopsbourne*, as Stephen suggests it now should be known, due to a second removal of the Anglican See from Hamilton to Ascot in recent years, is a wonderful example of a major religious work by architect Benjamin Joseph BACKHOUSE (1829-1904), who worked in Queensland for “eight years of usefulness” from 1861. He erected more than 100 buildings, including some of Brisbane’s earliest buildings of architectural pretention – noticed as “unique”, or “elegant”, or “superior”.

The first Bishop of the Diocese of Brisbane, Edward Wyndham Tufnell, was consecrated in England in 1859 and arrived in the capital of the newly separated state 1860. He acquired sixteen acres of high ground in modern day Milton where he planned to establish his official residence. An appeal, conducted in England by Bishop Tufnell himself, was successful in raising sufficient finances.

The Lodge is a large olden square two storey residence of porphyry, sandstone trim and a slate roof sprouting a forest of handsome chimneys. It is surrounded by lovely wide verandahs with Gothic arches which give an illusion of ancient English cloisters. It was built in the years 1865-68; in 1886 an extension was completed. The upper level arches had an iron balustrade designed to complement the over-all Gothic character of the building. Cedar is used for the joinery throughout and for all the most notable interior features. The walled book-cases give a stunning dimension to several spacious rooms on the ground floor where the charming atmosphere of our visit was enriched by the dulcet tones of a piano recital in the front drawing-room.



Exterior of chapel



Interior showing altar painting by William Bustard

Behind *Old Bishopsbourne*, linked to this main building by a gravel hedged path, is the 1912 Robert Smith DODS (Robin) (1868-1920) chapel, considered to be one of the finest works of this New Zealand born (Dunedin) architect, who was educated at the Brisbane Grammar School, after his widowed mother remarried in 1880 to a Brisbane surgeon. The original chapel was of timber and, soon became the subject of a white-ant invasion, at which time Bishop Donaldson commissioned a more permanent building from Dods, the newly appointed Architect to the Diocese of the Church of England.

Working in the same stone as the house, Dods created a ruggedly simple masterpiece in complete harmony with its environment. It is notable for its dominant, ventilated roof and gable decoration which became a signature of his Brisbane period, finding solutions to the problems of living and building in Queensland. The roof is steeply pitched, covered with slates, and supported by heavy dressed Oregon framing stained dark to contrast with the warm colours and natural texture of the porphyry, which has been left exposed internally and externally. The site of the first chapel has become a featured fish pond with a worn sandstone sculpture of the flute playing *Pan*, perhaps to mark it as a place of serenity or to lead one in song to the spacious tree-filled gardens.

Visually, there is nothing immediately striking about the gardens at *Old Bishopsbourne*. The eye takes a pleasurable wander across and down the landscape, which has a natural indigenous character, until it finally rests in a remnant stand of Eucalypts. Another smaller group stand guard at the squared porphyry gate posts, regal despite the loss of iron supports. Milton Road, busy with traffic and the Four X XXX Brewery, red high brick fortress, do not intrude because the original site has been conserved, a challenge well-known to the Royal Geographical Society whose rooms are to the right of the entrance.

On examination of the grey gums they are identified as *Eucalyptus punctata* (a koala food tree); the trunk has a thin mottled matt or granular bark, which sheds in large flakes, leaving a salmon/orange colour exposed, eventually fading to grey. We are lucky to catch them in flower, masses of creamy white blossom and some with exposed pink trunks. This *is* striking and pleasing to know the site was not ambushed for the building. However, there is evidence on the hillside of a large number of small

dry-stone walls and one can imagine the huge stock-pile of Brisbane schist (phyllite) which would accumulate as the house foundation, complete with cellars, was dug.

These dry-stone walls were commissioned during the 1930s, the depression years, and are well built, suggesting a master stonemason was to hand. A dry-stone wall can, at one and the same time, protect, exclude, suggest stability, or simply guide the eye from one part of the garden to another; it speaks of permanence. The ambience of *Old Bishopsbourne*, together with its chapel, is enhanced by this stone-walling with those exquisite passageways, all of which compliment a beautiful heritage site, once an important seat of episcopacy.

It seems appropriate to find the she-oak family of shapely evergreen trees in this ageing garden, abundantly planted with *Casuarina cunninghamii*, given Alan Cunningham's extensive and hard won botanical endeavours in Queensland. His well-loved hoop pine is there also, *Araucaria cunninghamii*, towering over old rose and bougainvillea plantings, the shrubbery and lawns, which soften the approach from every direction. Several jacaranda trees, a Moreton Bay fig, iron barks, acacia and the Australian cypress pine would complete the inventory for this arboretum.



We decide that the swish of the Alexandra palms (*Archontophoenix alexandrae*), the lovely arch of the bangalows (*Archontophoenix cunninghamiana*), provide wonderful pictures through Gothic arches though nevertheless evoke thoughts only of a tropical Brisbane place. No account of a Queensland Branch visit would be complete without mention of the two large white clams, partially hidden amongst the ferns near the entrance, a gift to a Bishop from far flung lands, possibly the Torres Strait or Papua New Guinea!

Indeed, every garden is a living history.

Reference Bibliography

Australian Broadcasting Corporation. *Flora's native plants*. The National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication, 2007.

Hogan, Janet. *Historic Homes of Brisbane*. The National Trust of Queensland, 1979.

Watson, Donald & Judith McKay. *Queensland Architects of the 19th century*. Queensland Museum, 1994.

White, Unk & P. Newell. *Brisbane Sketchbook*. Rigby Limited, Adelaide, 1967.

FOR THE PLANT SLEUTHS:



The mystery shrub with the dark green leaves in the garden at Coochin Coochin that had our members guessing was *Acokanthera oblongifolia*. It is called Wintersweet. Its flowers are fragrant, white and tubular, densely clustered in leaf axils and are 1.4–2cm long with five spreading star-shaped lobes. The fruit is similar to an olive but all parts of the plants are toxic. It hails from the west of South Africa which is indicated by its other common name, Bushman's Poison.

Michael Simpson, our Montville Member, thought it might be Osage Orange but thanks to him for following this up through the Queensland Herbarium which provided the pictures.

BOOK REVIEW: 'Walter Hill of Brisbane's Botanic Gardens' by Gordon Smith

by Keith Jorgensen

We have all heard of the important role that the Brisbane Botanic Gardens played in the introduction of many of the exotic plant species that fill our farms and gardens, but few of us know much about Walter Hill the man who made much of it happen. He was appointed Superintendent In 1855, when Brisbane was still part of New South Wales, then in 1859 the new government of Queensland named him Director and Colonial Botanist, and subsequently Officer in Charge of Forest Nursery Reserves.

He also played an important role in the establishment of many public gardens at Warwick, Ipswich, Toowoomba, Maryborough, Rockhampton, Mackay, Cairns, and Cardwell, and provided them with native trees such as bunya pines as well as many exotic species that he propagated at Brisbane. He is acknowledged as the person who introduced the jacaranda and poinciana to Queensland, and a participant in the first production of granular sugar in the state.

If you would like to know more about this pioneer Government Botanist, his major role in the development of the Brisbane Botanic Gardens, and his contributions to Queensland's agricultural and horticultural development etc, then I recommend that you read this very interesting new book by Gordon Smith. He has written it in the form of a very readable yarn that is based on the historical records he has researched in the archives, and the parliamentary and other government libraries of Queensland.

Copies can be ordered from Gordon Smith at gordon4@iprimus.com.au or write to him at 1/67 Earl St, Greenslopes, 4120, price \$20 including postage.

Itinerary AGHS (Queensland Branch) long weekend 6-8 June: Organised by Adelene Walker and Glenn Cooke

Saturday 6 June

2.00 pm. Meet at the park near the Dickabram Bridge that crosses the Mary River east of Miva for shared afternoon tea and a visit to Meece's Rose Nursery. The bridge is reached by taking a left turn to Gunalda off the Bruce Highway about 32 km north of Gympie, then follow the signposts for 11km towards Miva. You reach the bridge before you get to Miva.

Travel to Maryborough and visit Elizabeth Park Rose Gardens, Kent Street. Drive to Hervey Bay for accommodation, as Maryborough is fully booked with other long weekend activities.

DINNER Gatakers Restaurant Landing at Pialba.

Located in a beautiful garden setting with stunning bay views.
Enjoy cocktails while viewing the sunset over the water unique to the East Coast. And dine in the evening from our a-la-carte menu in a romantic, secluded setting.

Sunday 7 June

9.00 am Visit to the Garden of **Don and Pauline Day**. Pauline is the President of the Maryborough Horticultural Society. She and Don established their garden 27 years ago.



Day Garden Front lawn



Day garden. Shaded area

Have a substantial breakfast. Fruit juices and water will be provided but not morning tea.
11.00 am Visit to the garden of **Dr Paul and Helen Cotton**. A spectacular green garden which incorporates 500 palms sloping down to the Mary River.



**Cotton Garden. Palm cluster
Mary River**



**Cotton garden with temple, view to
Mary River**

Lunch to be organised by self prior to



2.00 pm Cruise on Mary River (\$20, \$18.00 for pensioners, includes afternoon tea). From the deck of 'The Mary' you will sail under the Granville Bridge and see birdlife, historic dockyards, and beautiful heritage homes set in landscaped gardens rolling down to the river.

DINNER Portside Restaurant, Maryborough.

The Port Residence Licensed Restaurant and Function Centre is located in historic Wharf Street and overlooks the Mary River Parklands and Portside. The charges for meals are standard for good restaurants.

Monday 8 June

Make your way back to Brisbane. Don't forget to check out the Maryborough Botanic Gardens and Noosa Botanic Gardens if you haven't already done so.

You might want to see **Race the Rattler** at the Gympie Railway Station (old one in town area). The first runners come in around 10.30 am. See who wins ...the steam engine or man.

As there are several other events at Maryborough that weekend, accommodation there is now fully booked.

Members are advised to book as soon as possible at Hervey Bay, preferably at or near Pialba, the closest suburb to Maryborough, about 30 km away.

Possible motels are:

AMBASSADOR MOTOR LODGE

296 Esplanade, Pialba

Ph (07) 4124 0044

Fax: (07) 4124 8199

Double: \$120 per night:

BEACHSIDE MOTOR INN

289 Esplanade, Pialba

Ph: (07) 4124 1999

Fax: (07) 4124 1055

Double: \$95 per night

COMFORT INN FRASER GATEWAY

68 Main St, Pialba,

Hervey Bay, 4655

Ph (07) 4128 3666

Fax (07) 4128 3802

Double: \$99 per night

GOLDEN SANDS MOTOR INN

44 Main St. Pialba

Ph: (07) 4128 3977

Fax: (07) 4128 4292

Double: \$80 per night

There are also many other motels in other parts of Hervey Bay.

Event charge: members \$20, guests \$25

Register by 30 May to Gill Jorgensen 3341 3933 or

jorgenkg@picknowl.com.au