



AUSTRALIAN
**GARDEN
HISTORY**
SOCIETY
Queensland Branch

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COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Meetings are to be held in the State Library, Floor 2, Room 2D at 11 am Friday 9 October, 13 November and 11 December

All members are welcome to attend.

COMMITTEE CONTACTS

Chair & NMC rep -- John Taylor
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Other committee members –
Jan Harrington
Bob Myers
Barbara Heath
Lois Closter

Newsletter

October 2009

COMING EVENTS:

Sunday 15th November - end of year event in the Sunshine Coast Hinterland

Arrive at 10 am at Kyleigh and Michael Simpson's garden "The Shambles", 85 Western Avenue, Montville. A tour of the garden will be followed by an informal launch of Kyleigh and Michael's new book "*Over the Fence and Overlooked, Traditional Plants in Queensland's Gardening Heritage*". The book is about hardy heritage plants, including roses, that are often found in old gardens and which keep growing and flowering in Queensland conditions. Kyleigh and Michael believe that that these plants are not just part of Queensland's heritage but offer so much for the future. Many of the plants featured in the book can be seen growing in "The Shambles".

At 12.30 we arrive at "Le Relais Bressin" at nearby Flaxton for lunch. A three course meal with two choices is available for \$27.50, and a la carte is also available. The restaurant is licensed.

Reserve Sunday 15th November in your diary now.

The event charge is \$10 for members and \$15 for guests (attendees to pay for lunch).
Register by 11 November with Keith Jorgensen on 3341 3933 or jorgenkg@picknowl.com.au

The committee is working on the program for 2010.

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

The new committee appointed at the AGM in August is hard at work. We thanked and farewell old committee members Susan Martin and Elspeth Douglas and welcome new ones, Barbara Heath and Lois Closter. You will note that the committee has a new chair, secretary and treasurer.

The biggest task facing the branch is the holding of the Society's annual conference in Maryborough in August 2011. We are very fortunate to have Ann Wegener in the coordinator's position. Ann brings great experience and energy to the role and will be supported by an informal committee to be formed early in 2010. While there is plenty of time there is a great deal to be done both in drawing together the content of the conference – the papers and the gardens to be visited – and the organization. Holding the conference outside Brisbane poses some special challenges, but Bowral (2008), Geelong (09) and Launceston (10) have or will overcome them and so shall we.

Of course the committee will maintain a worthwhile program of events for 2010– talks and visits to gardens – as well as advocacy on garden history conservation issues.

We welcome new members Janice Hiller, Margaret Kirkwood and Ann Moran.

Cheers

John Taylor

VISIT TO THE GARDEN OF PAULINE AND DON DAY

by Glenn R Cooke Photos by Keith Jorgensen.

The focus of the AGHS (Queensland Branch) Maryborough visit on 7 June 2009 was the tropical garden of Don and Pauline Day. Don was waiting outside as, only the evening before, they had a heavy shower and he wanted us to park on safe places on the grassy verge. They had a hand-out welcoming us to their garden which had been opened previously for the Australian Open Garden Scheme.

They moved there in October 1981 when their five acre block was covered with black-wattle and the occasional gum tree and a good loamy top-soil. The black wattles have all been removed but many of the gum-trees survive to maintain a framework for their garden. Their enthusiasm for the different varieties of plants suitable for the subtropics is evident in the diversity of their plantings. Pauline is the current president of the Maryborough Horticultural Society and their annual display was only recently completed. Pauline proudly showed us in one of their several shade houses some of the bromeliads that received prizes. The formal swirls of the bromeliad leaves must be free from all blemishes and Pauline pointed out to us several superb specimens of Vireseas which couldn't be exhibited because of minor flecks on the leaves. Their garden has won the annual best-garden on four occasions but only when the conditions were extended to include gardens within 12km of the Maryborough GPO.

At the beginning of their driveway is a pretty, soft shrub, Darwin Bells, which still bore many mauve-pink flowers although it was past its prime. Don has begun his serious pruning but saved that shrub for our visit. I assumed its name was because it was native to Darwin but I found that it actually originated from the foothills of the Himalayas (*Strobilanthes wallichii*).



Octagon Garden on the front lawn

Pauline mentioned that they had to adjust to their age and have replaced the 800 primulas that were a feature of their driveway in spring when their garden featured in the Open Garden Scheme in 2006 with Iresenes for their on-going colour. They are also using Iresenes and crotons to replace the annuals around the base of the numerous palms including golden-cane and Traveller's palms. Apart from pots

of purple and pink petunias at the back of the house they now only have one garden which uses the colour of annuals— an octagonal garden on the front lawn. It has a central water feature, in which the shrubs add structure but here they are relocating the self-sown phlox and Hypoestes and are experimenting with a border of the frog’s-foot coleus.

Don mentioned that Tom Wyatt’s advice about cutting out the small sprouts of the golden-cane palms and painting them then with kerosene has been successful in maintaining the definition of its many branched shape. They love experimenting with new plants and a specimen of the dwarf native frangipani ‘Gold nugget’ is planted nearby.

Across the lawn is a pergola and the barbeque where there has been one major change recently . . . half of the Poinciana which provided a shaded area for collections of bromeliads and other plants collapsed during recent rain. To make it safe they had to cut it back to a stump and crowd the plants into adjoining shady areas. Luckily it hasn’t been so hot that the bromeliads and other plants weren’t burned. Nearby is a rose garden with 45 examples of this favourite flower and a small orchard with lychees, mangoes, macadamias, oranges and mandarins.



‘Tasmania’ Garden



The decorative windmill

As we progressed around the property our members were interested to learn that the old shed out the back wasn’t part of the original property but reassembled from one on a dairy farm to give country character — as was the windmill which is purely decorative. They have named this part of their garden ‘Australia’ as there are sites relating to the states. They call a large triangular bed under another Poinciana, Tasmania, which is a bit quirky as it is full of colourful tropical foliage: crotons, acalyphas and graptophyllums. Pauline just planted a new croton here, with distinctive white markings, instead of the more typical yellow.

At the back of the lawn area are several boomerang shaped beds. They had trouble with hares ring-barking the newly planted trees and shrubs which they solved with chicken wire hoops. Here they have established Photinia hedge and salmon pink plumbago which looked more like a gaura to me.



Succulents in the back garden



Water feature in the forest area

Although they suffered occasional frosts in winter they have a spray system to guard against any damage in the future . . . there is no shortage of water as they have a bore. Here the several beds feature grevilleas (including ‘Golden lyre’) and other natives. This area is still green because of the good rains this year but is normally browned off by now so they are trying drought tolerant grasses and succulents such as the recently popular ‘Flapjacks’ (*Kalanchoe thyrsifolia*). They also have a variegated form of the old fashioned ‘Naked lady’ (*Euphorbia tirucalli*) which more than a few of our members were keen to add to their gardens.

The rainforest area near the house also has the majority of the surviving gums and some huge stag-horns which were given by friends when they became too big for their fern-houses. Here are planted typical tropical plants such as cordylines, draceneas, bromeliads, gingers, aralias. A water feature is the focus of a dry creek bed. Along the fence line in the open treed area nearby is a spectacular red flowered shrub, ‘Flaming beauty’ (*Carphalea kirondron*).

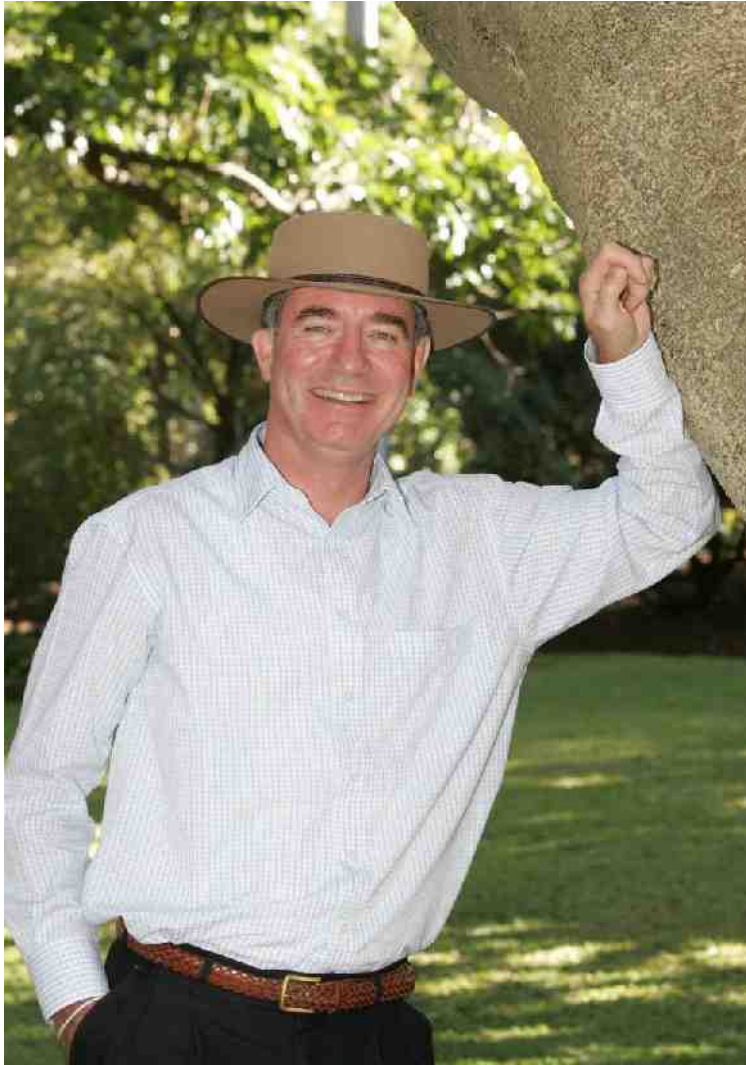
A number of cycads had been produced underneath a large cycad in the front lawn – 19 in fact were taken and relocated to form a pathway from the rainforest to the horseshoe garden. As time goes by these cycads should grow together forming a hedge on either side of the walkway. The Days hope they are around to see it.

Our group was rather late departing as the Days were ever ready with secateurs to provide our members with cuttings of some their treasures and some departed literally peering through foliage. Our thanks to Pauline and Don for a plant filled morning.

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**A TRIBUTE TO ROSS MCKINNON,
CURATOR IN CHARGE OF THE BRISBANE BOTANIC GARDENS**

In mid-June this year Ross McKinnon AM, the Curator-in-Charge of the Brisbane Botanic Gardens – has just reached a personal milestone as he held this position for more than twenty-six years. Walter Hill was the Brisbane Botanic Gardens' first Curator – from 1855-1881 (26 years, 8 days) and Harold Caulfield was Curator from 1956-1982 (26 years, 13 days). Ross passed both of these records on the 15th of June 2009. Ross has actually been working in the Brisbane Botanic Gardens for thirty-six years as for the first ten years he was second in charge to Harold Caulfield.



Quarterly visitor surveys show that the Brisbane Botanic Gardens at suburban Mt Coot-tha are now the city's second largest tourist attraction after of South Bank. Reflecting on the growth of the new Brisbane Botanic Gardens during his Curatorship, Ross is most proud of the doubling in size of the Botanic Gardens from approximately 25 to 52 hectares. This includes 25 hectare Australian Native Plants Gardens, which now contains the world's largest collection of Australian Native rainforest trees, numbering more than 2,500 labelled species. The Gardens also have reputable and internationally significant collections of palms, bromeliads, cacti and succulents, ferns, exotic tropical plants, the largest public display of bonsai in Australia, conifers, cool temperate and tropical display dome

collections and a significant collection of subtropical fruiting trees. Ross remarked: ‘So equitable is Brisbane’s climate that we believe we have the ability to grow more species of plants in the Brisbane Botanic Gardens than any other Capital City Botanic Gardens in Australia’.



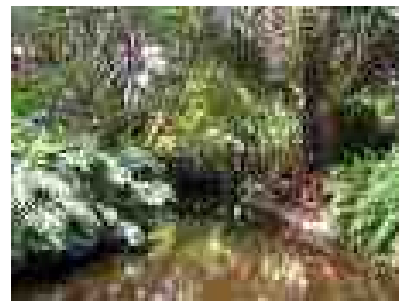
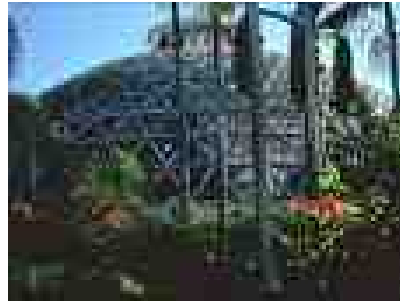
Ross counts his coup the procuring of the Japanese Gardens for the Brisbane Botanic Gardens from the World Expo '88 – site at South Bank following a chance meeting with the then Lord Mayor, Sallyanne Atkinson. He recalled: I had just introduced Sallyanne to my extended family and we were all standing in front of the Japan pavilion admiring the beautifully landscaped grounds when the Lord Mayor said ‘What a pity, Ross, that in two weeks time all of this will be pulled down and dismantled, and disappear forever’. We both then had the brilliant idea of relocating the Japanese Garden to the Brisbane Botanic Gardens. Sallyanne added: ‘I’m just going to have lunch with the Japanese Ambassador to Australia – Why don’t I put the hard word on him for us to recreate this Japan Garden? Ross, how much would you estimate it would cost to relocate the garden?’ I blustered ‘Probably around half a million dollars’, Sallyanne suggested that the Japanese Government might go halves in the deal – and as they say, the rest is history

The Japanese Garden is now the most popular garden within the Brisbane Botanic Gardens, and the site for many important cultural exchanges, exhibitions and demonstrations and has just celebrated its twentieth anniversary since relocation to the Gardens.

The Brisbane Botanic Gardens now have one of the world’s largest public education programs called “*Lessons in the Gardens*”, and in some years over 14,000 students a year access these fully self-funding education programs. Six teachers are now engaged in the gardens programs for preschoolers, right through to university students – with a heavy emphasis on the environment and sustainable living.

The Brisbane Botanic Gardens have one of Australia’s most successful Volunteer Guides’ Programs, with 87 trained Guides providing daily general and specialist walks in the Brisbane Botanic Gardens at suburban Mt Coot-tha and the old heritage-listed City Botanic Gardens.

Each weekend, some of horticultural exhibitions are conducted in the Garden’s Auditorium spawning a whole cottage industry supplying plants not generally available in the nursery trade to eager plant hunters. Brisbane Botanic Gardens now host national and international plant species conferences in conjunction with these weekend horticultural exhibitions, attracting national and international speakers.



The Richard Randall Studio is now the focus of the two-hundred strong Botanical Artists Society where they meet, hold workshops and conduct exhibitions of botanical art. This artistic alliance is reinforced with an outstanding and annual 'Arist-in-residence' program (now in it's fifteenth year) along with the Queensland Society of Sculptor's annual exhibition 'Sculptures in the Gardens'.

The Queensland Council of Garden Clubs count over 100,000 members throughout Queensland, and this huge horticultural organisation have contributed many hundreds of thousands of dollars to the advancement of the Brisbane Botanic Gardens over more than twenty years, with items ranging from arbours, shelters, seats, library books, a mini-bus, a bus shelter and contributions to the Gardens' Cacti and Succulent and Fern houses.

Ross has also been engaged through Brisbane City Enterprises in the design of Botanic Gardens and has lived in Shen-Zhen in South East China, Botanic Gardens in Rodrigues (east of Mauritius) and other Botanic Gardens and resort developments in Fiji, Western Samoa, Thailand, the Marshall Islands, and Papua New Guinea. Ross and his team have been responsible for the steering and gazetting of over thirty regional Queensland Botanic Gardens, and Ross has been Chairman of the Council Heads of Australian Botanic Gardens Group – an umbrella group representing all Australian Botanic Gardens on five occasions.

Ross has judged national and international Garden competitions and at London's Chelsea Flower Show and Belgium's Floralia – horticultural exhibition. In June 2009 Ross was chosen as only one of 150 Queenslanders to appear in a book entitled 'Queenslanders All Over', launched by the Premier of Queensland, the Hon. Anna Bligh at Parliament House on Wednesday the 24th of June 2009 to celebrate our States' Sesquicentenary.

The Queensland Branch of the Australian Garden History Society would like to extend to our good friend, Ross McKinnon, congratulation on his record of service for gardens and gardeners in Brisbane and our best wishes for his continued health and success.

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HOOP PINES AND THE BUNYA PHYLLITE by John Taylor

Ten members and friends visited the Quakers arboretum at Kelvin Grove on 25 July 2009. The Brisbane meeting house of the Society of Friends, or Quakers, is on a 1.5 acre site in suburban Kelvin Grove. The Society acquired the land in the sixties. It is very steep, falling to two gullies along the northern and eastern boundaries. Soils are thin, even in the gullies, and the bedrock Bunya Phyllite (or Brisbane schist) is very much in evidence in cuttings made for the paths and poking through the soil.



Many years ago there had been a sawmill nearby, and the miller had planted the block with hoop pine and slash pine with the aim of producing useful timber. By the time the Friends decided to replant the land in the early nineties the slash pines were in decline but most of the hoop pines were still growing strongly. A few native plants had persisted, including some rainforest species in the gullies – the largest are a silky oak and a *Waterhousea*.

The Friends decided to clean the block up and plant with native species, mainly rainforest but also some dry forest species on the ridge in the centre of the site. Work started in 1993. The slash pines were removed, along with the usual weeds – camphor laurels, Chinese elms, ochna, madeira vine and cats claw – and the hoop pines were retained. The best hoops are now 30m high.

A series of tracks, supported by granite dry walling painstakingly brought in by wheelbarrow, were constructed to provide access around the site. Many plants of many species have been planted, with mixed success, as would be expected on such a site. Plant growth has been constrained by the overstorey of maturing hoop pines, which have first claim on water, nutrients and light, and the series of dry years which Brisbane has experienced. There has been no supplementary watering and so many plants especially rainforest species have struggled. In the more open area on the ridge, where the slash pines once grew, blue quandong and Bailey's stringybark (*Eucalyptus baileyana*) have achieved a good size.



Shade under the big hoops

Landscape impressions - the hoop pines dominate the block, and the combination of their attractive trunks, the deep shade they cast and the steepness of the site convey a feeling of being in the rainforest even though the backyards of the adjoining house are evident. Growth of the plants which have been added over the last 10 to 15 years is best in the narrow gullies, where there is more moisture. It is surprising that such a wild environment can be experienced in inner suburban Brisbane.



AGHS Queensland - Annual Report 2008/9

Keith Jorgensen, Chair

I am pleased to report, on behalf of the committee, that 2008- 2009 has been another successful year for the Queensland Branch of the Australian Garden History Society. We have managed to provide members with an interesting event in most months of the year, except for the usual Christmas - New Year break. This has been made possible by the support of several members who have organised the following visits and talks.

–In July 2008, John and Susan Slaughter organised a day trip to Moreton Island where members saw the extensive gardens of Tangalooma Resort, plus a range of private gardens and the natural landscapes (and might I add, the weather) of the island.

–John and Susan also arranged a visit in September to their home *Conon*, in Lutwyche with its traditional Queensland garden, and to *Tarranalma*, Richard Slaughter's 1890 house with a younger garden in Clayfield.

–Elsbeth and Graham Douglas organised a visit to the Laidley district, then to an arboretum of native species at Rosewood, and then to the Japanese-style *Nerima Gardens* at Ipswich.

–Our Christmas event was a visit to the historic Coochin Coochin homestead and garden at Boonah organised by myself, followed by lunch organised by Anne Baster at Mt Alford Lodge plus a tour of its water-wise garden.

–Dr. Jeannie Sim provided our mid-summer lecture in the Herbarium conference room. It was an illustrated talk on Queensland bush houses and native plant displays.

–In March, Susan Martin organised a visit to *Old Bishopsbourne*, including a talk on its history, and a tour of the house, the chapel and the extensive grounds that contain many mature trees.

–In April, Anne Wegener arranged a visit to two gardens at Eumundi, one a subtropical rainforest with many species from south-east Asia, the other a country garden with many ornamental shrubs and grasses.

–In May, Malcolm Enright and Barbara Heath arranged a visit to Wilston House, where owner Ngaio Nagel described the history of the building and took us for a walk around the old Queensland garden with its many mature trees.

–In June, Adelene Walker & Glenn Cooke organised a long weekend visit to Miva and on to Maryborough, the location of the 2011 National Conference, where we viewed local gardens, some from a boat on the Mary River.

At each of this year's events, members and visitors have been provided with name cards to facilitate communication. Comments received have been favourable, so the system will be continued for the coming year, even though it does require a considerable amount of work.

I am pleased to advise that attendance at our monthly events has certainly been rising. Several of our events in the past year have had more than 30 people attending, so we must be doing something right. The Branch membership is stable however at 109, and we welcome all new members including the 5 partners of existing members who have joined in the past year.

We have conducted three promotional events this year to raise awareness of the Garden History Society in Queensland. The first event was a stand at the Australian Institute of Horticulture's Qld Garden Fair in February, the second a stand at the Brisbane Heritage Expo in May, and the third an invitation through the National Trust Heritage Festival for people to join us on our visit to Wilston house. Each

event was successful in attracting interested people, but time will tell whether they convert to new members.

The branch also purchased the pull-up banner that you see behind me which is useful for promotion, and also for reminding members and visitors of the goals of our Garden History Society.

It is a pleasure to note that the Branch's financial assets have increased by more than \$1 500 over the past year, thanks to the good support of members and friends for our Branch activities.

We have earmarked \$1 200 of the year's income for the purchase of a high quality park seat to be installed in the Calton Hill garden at Gympie. Adelene Walker and no doubt others of our keen Gympie members have played a major role in the refurbishment of this historic garden.

Members may have noticed in the auditor's report, his strong request that we need to receipt all incomes. I have explained to him how time-consuming it would be to write an individual receipt for each person who pays to attend an event, and fortunately he has accepted the option that members simply sign the attendance sheet beside the amount of money they have paid. We will need to use this recording system at all our future events.

Looking now to the future, by far the most important thing in our sights has to be the National Conference in 2011, which is to be conducted by our Queensland branch. The decision has been made to hold it in Maryborough because of that city's reputation as a Heritage city with a large number of interesting buildings and gardens.

I am sure that many of you have enjoyed attending national conferences in other states and are aware of the considerable pleasure and knowledge that a good conference provides. It is now Queensland's turn to ensure that its conference is also a success. So before you leave today, please talk to the new chair or contact the conference coordinator Ann Wegener about how you can help with the planning and work that a conference requires.

In closing, I would like to thank sincerely all members of the committee for their support over the past 12 months, in particular the office bearers, Secretary John Taylor, Vice chair Susan Martin, Treasurer Bob Myers and Newsletter Editor Glenn Cooke, but also the other committee members Elspeth Douglas, Maurice Wilson, Jan Harrington and Nina Wood. Thanks also to Gill for her continued support, and for organising the afternoon tea for all our events here at the herbarium.

We will certainly miss Susan Martin and Elspeth Douglas who are both stepping down from the committee this year. They have each made a very important contribution to the operations of the Branch and to many Branch activities.

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