

# BRANCH CUTTINGS

Issue 30 - October 2009

This branch is affiliated with the Royal Australian Historical Society & National Trust of Australia (NSW)

## TURKISH TREATS – Centuries of Civilizations.

The number of tourists who visit Turkey each year is staggering – in 2008, 26.5 million tourists – almost one third of the total local population of 71.4 million people.

Bob and I returned to Turkey again this year to join a small group looking at trees and archeology in the south western region. Led by Lady Patricia Daunt, who is not only an ardent tree lover but also a brilliant amateur archeologist, we had a fascinating introduction to some of the extensive ancient treasures of this country.

So many glorious memories are now stored in our minds – thousands of snowdrops growing wild in a field in front of a huge lake. A patch of poppies on a hillside – but these were special poppies in many colours ranging from black to dark maroon! Roman baths still standing in today's countryside with a huge clump of enormous old palms next to them. To name but a few.

One archaeological site that was most entrancing was Pinara. It was easy to see why it is Lady Patricia Daunt's favourite site. The excavators have not started on it as yet and so the city is still virtually intact. There's a Roman theatre (odeon), of course, and all the usual Roman things – an agora (market place) and baths. But most interesting of all, for plant lovers, there is a stream running through the whole site which has ancient plane trees growing in it. Surrounding this stream, are Lycian rock

tombs carved into the cliff face which date back thousands of years. Some are even as old as 1,500 B.C. To wander among such ruins was one of life's incredible experiences – eerie and yet absolutely astounding and truly unforgettable!

Another site that I liked best of all was Sagalassos

– each year, during the summer months, excavations are still taking place here with exciting discoveries. Only two years ago, in 2007, the head of Hadrian was brought to the surface and more statues are expected to be discovered this year. It was at this site – on the opposite hill, that Alexander the Great fought a battle in 334 BC

and conquered this mighty city. And mighty it was indeed in those days. We climbed up the hill to the theatre and one of the members of our group gave a singing recital – even today, amongst the surviving ruins, the acoustics are remarkable.

Another day Bob went off with the group to see the oldest cedar of Lebanon in the world. Dating back 2,000 years, it grows high up on the snowline and that day dark red peonies were blooming nearby just to add to the effect. I didn't experience this delight. Instead I chose to wander around the village of Emali where we were staying, intending in the first instance, to look for roses. But they were still budding up and so I wandered a little further out of town up the mountain thinking I might even reach the top to take a photo of the

panoramic valley spread out before me with the



The stunning solitary splendour of an old Roman archway still standing in fields once occupied by the city of Patara



Wild poppies that Bob spotted first in Turkey. Naturally, seed was then collected by everyone in our group!

## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Dear members & friends

In July we relished a 'Garden of Memory' with John Pearman. Members may recall John regaling us with stories which produced peels of laughter about visionary William Hardy Wilson's ideal city, Kurrajong, at our seminar in Richmond a few years ago. John grew up in Arncliffe and knew the mansion garden of *Cairnsfoot* well and its two matron owners – as shown in 1940s photographs by Alan Evans. Again John didn't disappoint. This talk was a rare treat.

In early August we had a short AGM electing the committee – welcome to Prue Anthony – anyone else interested in joining, let us know! We then enjoyed a talk by landscape architect Bruce McKenzie. Better known for big-scale work on parks, education campi and malls, Bruce talked about a number of private gardens he has designed in a range of scales and situations: most illuminating.

At the end of August we explored Cremorne Point to Mosman Bay with historian, Joan Lawrence. This stretch of harbour-front land was won for a reserve by public lobbying and has a fascinating garden made by residents Ruby & Rex Graham. Knockout views and scenes from Heidelberg School paintings came to life.

In September we ambled around Little Bay's former *Prince Henry Hospital* – inspecting Landcom's progress making a new residential suburb. Architect James Adcock and heritage consultants Chris & Margaret Betteridge explained its public art and interpretation, evoking its layered past.

Don't miss '*Orange Blossoms*' - the first garden history exhibition in this city, from 19/9/09-1/11/09, funded by Arts NSW. Curated by member Elizabeth Richards and hosted by the *Orange Regional Gallery*, it explores gardening, garden art and design: from pioneers in Fredericks Valley; the town's gazettal after the discovery of gold at Lucknow in the 1850s to today's 'colour city'. Four seasons, fertile basalt soils, usually reliable rainfall and a legacy of gardens bring much to enjoy. I'll be giving a couple of talks on the weekend of 10-11/10/09 when there's also a tour of Byng gardens. More information at [www.orange.nsw.gov.au](http://www.orange.nsw.gov.au)

The Branch has joined the History Council of NSW which brings benefits - members can access the website [www.historycouncilnsw.org.au](http://www.historycouncilnsw.org.au) and its member section – use Username = member and Password = ushabi to access 'Announcements' of upcoming events. All AGHS events will be posted here too. History Week just past in September is the key event each year but others occur regularly. Have a look!

*Paddington Reserve Gardens* has just won the Australian Award for Urban Design. *Monument* magazine's 8-9/09 issue nominates it, along with Pymont *Water Police Site's* new park as amongst Australia's finest public architecture (they might have added 'landscape'). It's an imaginative reuse of a defunct reservoir and gas station as 'managed ruin' and sunken park where the hubbub of Oxford Street traffic is barely discernable. No surprise, it's popular. AGHS plans a Paddington day in 2010 which will include this. We may well repeat our Pymont walk which can now include this exciting new waterfront park. Bravo Sydney City Council, Tonkin Zulaikha Greer and Judith Rintoul, who did the initial historical research!

The NSW Government has announced both an Upper House committee inquiry into Rural Wind Farms and that it is fast-tracking their installation: mixed messages! The submissions deadline has passed, but AGHS has made one urging the Government not to neglect prior 'best practice' community consultation about where these go, their scale and impacts. Some 'best wind spots' are also within historic rural landscapes, around significant historic towns and properties (Lake George; Guyra; Crookwell; Taralga and in Victoria). NSW could do worse than adopt the 'best practice community consultation' approach developed by AusWind, the wind industry's national organisation - that assesses community values of landscapes affected. For more info see <http://www.auswind.org/landscapevalues/> : click on the National Assessment Framework. More on the inquiry at <http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parlment/committee.nsf/V3ListCtees> - click on Rural Wind Farms.

Good news in the Rudd Government's Jobs Fund handouts: *Everglades* at Leura received \$112,000 to upgrade walking paths through the garden and the interior. I hope the 'spade ready' project is sensitively done without compromising the character of the place. Society chair Colleen Morris and others are working on an updated conservation management plan, which augurs well (if consulted) for a good outcome via the National Trust (NSW).

The NSW National Trust also received \$2 million to fund *Old Government House* Parramatta repairs and conservation. This includes restoring original features of its landscape (like Mrs Macquarie's lemon hedge along the ridge of the Crescent) in preparation for Macquarie Bicentenary celebrations in 2010. The expert assessor for UNESCO recently visited all 11 Australian 'Convict Sites' nominated for world heritage listing (4 in NSW, including *Old Government House & Parramatta Park*). If successful, this will be Australia's second 'designed landscape' on the list: after the *Carlton Gardens*, Victoria. More importantly, the Macquaries' landscape park and Phillip's *Government Farm* where convicts 'fed the colony' will be so recognised. The nomination is at [www.environment.gov.au/heritage/publications/about/convict-sites.html](http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/publications/about/convict-sites.html) . Cross fingers ... Another event members may want to attend in November (apart from our *Rookwood* walk) is the 15th Heritage Rose Festival on 15/11/09 in *Parramatta Park's Rumsey Rose Garden*. The bushes will be in full bloom, with displays by a range of groups including AGHS, talks and more. The park is worth exploring any time but especially winter & spring. Info will be posted on [www.ppt.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ppt.nsw.gov.au) so watch out for it.

Stuart Read. Tel: 9326 9468 or email: [stuart1962@bigpond.com](mailto:stuart1962@bigpond.com)

### NEW MEMBERS

The Branch would like to extend a warm welcome to the following new local members:  
Susan Critharis, Holly Fitzgerald, Peter Lawson, Wendy McCready, Melissa McMullin, David Murray,  
Roslyn Poole, Heather Soane, Tony Spring, Phil Stevenson, Pattie Sticpewich,  
Strathfield District Historical Society Inc, Anne White, Alan Yuille

## AGHS FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### OCTOBER

**Date:** Thursday 8th October 6.30pm for 7pm - 8.30pm

**Event:** Charles Darwin as the *Gardener at Down House*, Surrey - talk by Max Bourke AM



Think he was just a scientist? This talk presents a side few have focussed on – his home environment and garden. Learn about private Darwin – at home, studying plants and the natural world in situ every day; tending his garden, glass house, daily walking the ‘sand path’ thinking, observing...over four decades from 1842.

Charles Robert Darwin FRS (1809-82) had a long, productive life as a gardener. From childhood he loved growing plants. This developed into gardening and serious interest in plant breeding and botany. Charles was an extremely good plant physiologist and experimenter. He worked at answering questions avid gardeners today still ponder. In doing so he provided ways of bolstering the big idea of transmutation by natural selection. His 15 years at *Down House* writing ‘*On the Origin of the Species*’ used both garden and environs as laboratories.

*Down House* in Surrey, south of London, is today a museum interpreting Darwin’s home-study-garden-environment as a whole ‘working environment’.

Max Bourke AM has been involved in agriculture, science and cultural history for over 40 years. He has worked as a jackaroo, scientist, ABC broadcaster, public servant and farming entrepreneur. He has been an executive member of the Australian Garden History Society and past chair of its ACT branch.

**Venue:** Annie Wyatt Room, National Trust Centre, Observatory Hill

**Cost:** AGHS members: \$20 Guests: \$30 includes light refreshments. **Bookings essential** - tickets not available at the door.

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16th-18th October National Conference in Geelong Victoria. Booked out

### NOVEMBER

**Date:** Sunday 8th November 2pm - 4pm

**Event:** Siobhan Lavelle will lead a walk around *Rookwood Necropolis*, one of the world’s largest cemeteries - the roses will be out

**Venue:** Meeting point to be confirmed on booking Rookwood is a couple of minutes along Railway Street from Lidcombe Station.

**Cost:** AGHS members: \$15 Guests: \$25 includes light refreshments. **Bookings essential.** More details Pages 4 & 5.

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**Date:** Sunday 29th November 2pm - 5pm

**Event:** Talk and tour of the Botanic Gardens depot and historic glasshouses restoration with Sean Johnson, Brad Horan and Ian Stapleton.

**Venue:** Meeting point to be confirmed on booking

**Cost:** AGHS Members: \$15 Guests: \$25 includes light refreshments. **Bookings essential.** More details Page 6.

### DECEMBER

**Date:** Sunday 13th December 4.30pm - 8pm

**Event:** Bush Christmas - again in Dural - this time at Jo Hambrett’s sister’s house - she lives in their grandparents original 1928 timber farmhouse which has some of her grandmother’s garden left. The packing shed is still there and the original garage ( for grandfathers 1932 Oldsmobile – sadly not there!) The house is called *Glenroy Cottage* after the family property up the road - the original *Glenroy*

**Venue:** *Glenroy Cottage* 1 Glenroy Road, Dural. If any member needs a lift, please get in touch and we can make arrangements

**Cost:** Members \$20 Guests \$25 includes light refreshments. **Bookings essential**

### FEBRUARY 2010

**Date:** Wednesday 17th February 6.30pm for 7pm - 8.30pm

**Event:** Tiger Balm Gardens - talk by Jill Matthews

**Venue:** Annie Wyatt Room, National Trust Centre, Observatory Hill

**Cost:** Members \$15 Guests \$25 includes light refreshments. **Bookings essential.** More details Page 6.

**Bookings & enquiries for all events above: Telephone: Jeanne Villani: 9997 5995 or Email: Jeanne@Villani.com**

**PLEASE NOTE: Payment confirms Booking** Payments for all events must be made prior to the event by cheque to

Australian Garden History Society and mailed to: Peter Cousens, 93 Lennox Street, Newtown, NSW, 2042 or

by **Internet** bank transfer to: Australian Garden History Society Sydney & Northern NSW Branch, ANZ Bank, Centrepoint Branch.

BSB 012 040 Account 1017 62565 Payment must include your name and the function you are booking for.

**An Individual Membership entitles only that member to the Members Rate.**

**Members with Household Membership are entitled to Members Rate for anyone living within that household**

### OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST

**24 October - 1 November 2009** -Artisans in the Gardens. A vibrant exhibition by some of Australia’s most exciting artisans in *Lion Gate Lodge* in the *Royal Botanic Gardens* Sydney. Free entry.

**15th November** - 15th Heritage Rose Festival in 150-year old Parramatta Park’s (more recent) *Rumsey Rose Garden*, in association with Heritage Roses Australia. Roses, food, wine and music together with the opportunity to purchase rare heritage plants makes this a not to be missed event. Situated on the site of Parramatta’s convict powered lumber yard, roses bloom where convicts once sweated in the making of Australia. Free event. AGHS will have a stall. More info: [www.ppt.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ppt.nsw.gov.au) Sue Clunie 8833 5020 [clunie.susan@ppt.nsw.gov.au](mailto:clunie.susan@ppt.nsw.gov.au)

**More email addresses please!** If you are receiving this newsletter in it’s printed form we are wondering whether perhaps you have an email address where we could send it. **Pluses for you** - emailed - it is in full colour **Pluses for AGHS** - it saves the cost of printing and postage - better spent on conservation projects - Jeanne would love to hear from you at [Jeanne@Villani.com](mailto:Jeanne@Villani.com)

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**LOST** - we seem to have mislaid the green pull-out AGHS banner that is used for the front of the lectern when we have speakers or to let people know who we are when we exhibit at shows etc. We are wondering whether someone offered to transport it for us and still has it hiding somewhere - if anyone can throw any light on its whereabouts please call Jeanne on 9997 5995 or Stuart on 9326 9468.

Don’t forget to have a look at our website -  
**[www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au](http://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au)** It can now be used to check for updated details of events, membership renewals, conference bookings including by direct debit, gift purchases and routine enquiries.

## Rookwood Necropolis by Siobhan Lavelle

*Rookwood Cemetery*, or to use its formal name – the *Necropolis* (City of the Dead) – forms its own suburb occupying almost 3 square kilometres between Strathfield and Lidcombe in Sydney’s central west. Recognised among the largest burial grounds in the world, *Rookwood Necropolis* is a place of outstanding cultural and environmental heritage significance.

In early NSW the disposal of the dead was haphazard, with at least three burial sites used in the initial years of British settlement. *The Cathedral Close, Town Hall Cemetery* or *Old Sydney Burial Ground* was used from 1792 until 1820. The site was ‘cleared’ in 1869 to enable the building of the Sydney Town Hall, with some remains removed and re-interred at Rookwood (C of E, No.1, section A). The next site, the *Sandhills* or *Devonshire Street Cemetery*, was so overcrowded by the late 1840s that its use was largely discontinued. The need for a new cemetery to serve the needs of Sydney was under discussion by the government throughout the 1840s. The situation became increasingly urgent in the 1850s despite the establishment of a number of churchyards which served local parish populations. In 1860 the government advised that it wished to purchase land suitable for a new general cemetery adjacent to the existing Railway. 200 acres of land was purchased from Edward Cohen in 1862 at a cost of £10 per acre. The site was ten miles by rail from Sydney. The *Necropolis Act* of 1867 established the management of the new cemetery with separate trustees for each denominational cemetery who were responsible for the internal arrangements, ornamentation, fees and rules for monuments in their area. The plan for the cemetery included a siding from the railway "to be taken with a sharp curve across the middle of the ground and to terminate in a circular plot in the centre, which is ... reserved for ornamentation". The layout selected for the original seven cemeteries at the Necropolis, a central circle with radiating roads between separate areas, was a classic gardenesque pattern derived from overseas precedents, particularly the English garden cemeteries such as *Highgate* established 30 years earlier. Charles Moore, director of the *Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney*, was involved and he may have conceived the radial layout. The fulfillment of this design involved the construction of elegant brick kerbs and gutters defining the edges of gravelled carriageways and pathways between sections; large and small brick canals, and the erection of various chapels, pavilions and waiting sheds. Also provided were residences for cemetery employees such as managers but sadly none now survive.

Most of the denominational cemeteries also incorporated elaborate ornamental plantations and formal planting along roads and avenues. Extensive remnants of these are still apparent and form a significant cultural landscape setting. Chris Betteridge has noted that *Rookwood* includes about 400 species of plants and trees, of which about half are native species. In the nineteenth century popular sentiment endowed plant species with symbolic associations. Thus, the plantings chosen for cemetery sites were both meaningful and decorative landscape elements. In addition to the use of traditional species such as cypress, lily, palms and laurel trees, Australian species with similar attributes were also introduced. Dark sombre *Araucaria* trees, now grown to an enormous height, grace the skyline of the old sections and are



Landscape in the No.1 Anglican. Araucarias on skyline and timber lattice rest house.



Avenue planting of palms beside Necropolis Drive.

prominent in landscape views. Other formal avenue plantings include Canary Island palms, cypress and pine trees. Parts of the Anglican ground are dominated by native kangaroo grass and eucalypts, and these areas now provide a significant habitat for native birds and fauna. In the Independent cemetery sections (Congregational, Presbyterian, Methodist) lower scale shrubs and grave plantings include numerous old roses, Indian hawthorn and creepers such as periwinkle.

*The Great Serpentine Drain* built in the 1870s in the Anglican section, extends for nearly 500 metres. It is 900mm wide and 1.7 metres deep. A major engineering feat, the Serpentine featured ornamental urns, bridges, fountains, and gardens. These gardens included plants such as camellias, magnolias, palms, and japonicas, as well as daffodils, jonquils, and freesias. The timber lattice shelters or 'rest houses' in the Anglican section were probably introduced by Simeon Henry Pearce, the manager in the 1870s-1880s. Pearce visited cemeteries in the USA and Europe in 1881, and was influenced by major sites such as *Green-Wood* (Brooklyn, New York). He returned with seeds of additional exotic plant species and probably introduced the *Magnolia grandiflora* trees. Connections with the *Sydney Botanic Gardens* were re-established by J H Maiden who became a trustee of the *Necropolis* from 1904-1913. He offered trees from the Gardens and suggested various landscape works.

Another integral feature for the first 80 years was the railway link with the rest of Sydney – the most efficient and modern form of transport available at the time. This involved the construction of a branch line and several later extensions into the cemetery and the erection of railway architecture with an appropriate sombre, yet functional design for the dispatching and receiving stations at Sydney and the *Necropolis*. These were designed by the Colonial Architect, James Barnet. The rise of motor vehicles in the twentieth century displaced rail as the preferred means of travel for funeral parties. Weekday funeral trains ceased by 1936 and the branch line closed in 1948. The *Necropolis* Mortuary Station was sold and transported to Canberra where it was rebuilt as the All Saints Church, Ainslie. The remnants of the rail spur have gradually been removed, with the land gained used as extra burial space, particularly for vaults.

Today the *Necropolis*, or *Rookwood Cemetery* as it is known, is one of the largest Victorian era cemeteries in the world. *Rookwood* has remained in use through the allocation of additional area, and now comprises some 780 acres (c300 hectares).

The use of the site for more than 140 years has produced a diverse layering of monumental types and styles. Monuments range from the elaborate headstones and vaults of the Victorian period to the standardised and simple memorials in the present day lawn cemeteries. Containing the graves of more than 1 million people, *Rookwood* displays the humble beside the ostentatious, the austere beside the extravagant.

Dr Siobhan Lavelle OAM is a member of the *Rookwood Necropolis Trust*.

Sources used include: D.Weston (ed), *The Sleeping City: The Story of Rookwood Necropolis*, 1988; Historic Houses Trust, *In Memoriam: Cemeteries and Tombstone Art in NSW*, 1981; Public Works Department, *Rookwood Necropolis Plan of Management*, 1988.



*Watsonia* and Indian hawthorn, now 'naturalised' across much of the Anglican cemetery.



Brick kerbs and gutters formed part of the early landscape detailing. Also note large evergreen conifers.

## TEASERS FOR SOME COMING EVENTS

### Tiger Balm Gardens talk

AGHS member, Jill Matthews, lived in Hong Kong for 18 months in 2000-02 when she was half way through her studies for a Diploma in Horticulture (Landscape Design) at Ryde TAFE. While there she joined the Hong Kong Gardening Society and with its other members, did many hours of voluntary work rescuing the private *Tiger Balm Garden*, then recently saved from demolition by developers. Later she advised the Hong Kong Antiquities and Monuments Office concerning possible strategies for conservation and restoration of the garden. Upon her return to Australia the results of her extensive research into the history and plants of the garden became her thesis for her TAFE studies.

Jill returns to Hong Kong from time to time and maintains her interest in the Hong Kong Government's plans for the *Tiger Balm Garden*. She has also developed an interest in the other major surviving historic garden in Hong Kong, the *Dragon Garden*. This garden, made famous in the West as the setting of many scenes in the James Bond movie, *The Man With the Golden Gun*, faces similar issues of conservation and restoration and threats from developers in densely populated Hong Kong.

In her presentation she will show us photos of the two gardens as they now are, and as they have been in happier times, and discuss the particular issues relating to the preservation of such gardens in Asia. She will also compare and contrast the issues facing such historic Asian gardens with those facing historic gardens in Australian.

Jill will be speaking at The National Trust Centre on February 17th 2010  
See page 3 for details



The Tiger Balm Garden.



The Dragon Garden

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### Botanic Gardens glasshouse & depot secrets revealed

You may know and have visited the 1876 palm house in *Sydney's Botanic Gardens* – more latterly a venue for art and crafts exhibitions. You may've been in the fernery and wondered what's over that wall...or peered in the gates from the palmetum. Go further - enjoy a special privilege for AGHS members – our November tour 'behind the scenes' in the working heart of *Sydney's Royal Botanic Gardens*: its central depot and glasshouses. Garden's Director Brad Horan along with heritage architects Ian Stapleton & Sean Johnson from Clive Lucas, Stapleton & Partners will take us for a tour of this usually off-limits core of our oldest garden. Once the '*Governor's cabbage patch*', later vital support to the *1879 Garden Palace Exhibition and gardens*, it has since played a vital role in providing plants and supporting staff for the *Sydney Gardens and Domain*. See what great work has recently been done to repair, adaptively reuse and update several historic glass houses, the old stables and central depot buildings, cold frames and more. Along with archaeological testing for earlier layers of site history, recent works have ensured the depot and glass houses continue to serve the gardens' many active programmes. Don't miss this rare opportunity to learn more about early glass house technology and what goes on in them these days. See page 3 for details.

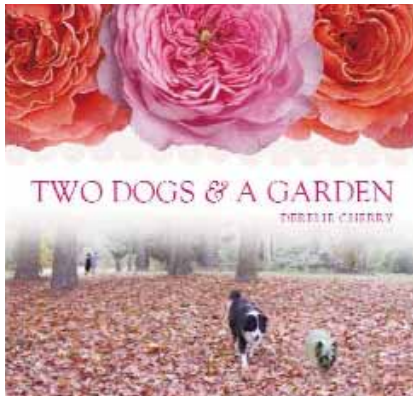


Bush house 1914



New glass houses

## Two Dogs and a Garden - A little gem by Derelie Cherry



It is a brave writer indeed whose opening line is “*Once upon a time, about 5,000 years ago...*” and closes by humanising the family pets, unless of course the book is a fairy tale. Here is a writer who is not only brave, but also clever, passionate and very knowledgeable. Indeed here is a book that is, to a large extent, implicitly a fairy tale, a love story. *Two Dogs and a Garden* is an homage by Derelie Cherry to her gallant adventurer husband, to the spectacular beauty of nature, and of course to their garden and two dogs. However, beyond that, it is a little gem of information about plants, planting, plant collecting and plant breeding, set with travel anecdotes and bustling with photographs.

Bob Cherry is an inexhaustible hunter gatherer. He has travelled far and wide, to places inaccessible to most, collecting new plant species to embellish the gene pools of Australia’s gardens. He is widely lauded as a breeder, particularly of camellias, lavender, *Prunus*, *Polyanthus* and roses. Many years ago, he

established his burgeoning nursery, *Paradise Plants*, down Cherry Lane in Kulnura, an hour north of Sydney. It is a capital landmark on the Australian horticultural map, renowned for the cultivation of new and glorious hybrids on a grand scale. There in *Paradise* he also created an extraordinary personal garden, beset with follies. All this gave him a very unfair advantage when he set about wooing Derelie some ten years ago. He succeeded hands down, of course, and they married. This book tells their tale, and Derelie recounts the bunches, nay buckets, of blossoms with which he won her, and their subsequent adventures.

Woven into these tales is a very valuable thread of pragmatic horticultural information and a potted history of plant breeding in Australia. This is a book that will gently impart knowledge as you are absorbed by the author’s adventures in Spain, China, Iran, Armenia and of course *Paradise*. What better bonus than gardening tips from Bob Cherry?

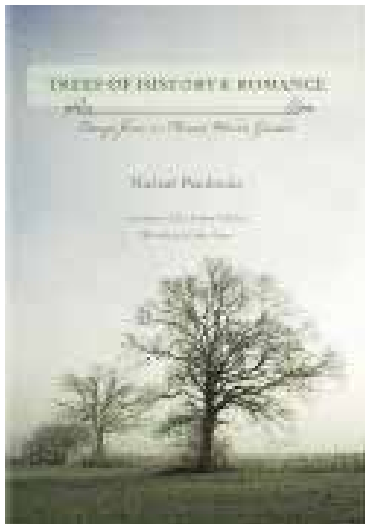
Derelie Cherry is a publisher of some note, and the quality of this book no doubt fills her with great pride. Beautifully printed and bound, it is equally at home on the bedside table, coffee table or on the library shelf. The photographic colours are lavish and true to life. It is well indexed and boasts a charming preface from the ubiquitous Leo Schofield. Give it to your mother, your best friend, your children, or better still, to yourself.

Paradise Publishers, Sydney 2009 240pp. 400 colour photographs. Recommended.

Review by Leigh Stone-Herbert

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## Trees of History & Romance – essays from a Mt. Wilson Garden by Michael Pembroke



This is a beautifully written essay on our fascination with and inspiration from favoured exotic trees – taken from each tree of note within the author’s garden *Hawthorn* at Mt. Wilson. It muses on a number of long-favourite trees – both deciduous, evergreen and conifers. Each has a chapter, discussing its history, uses, associations and folklore, how it is used at *Hawthorn* and a favourite poem noting that tree in some way.

With an introduction by favoured son Peter Valder on the evident spell of that Blue Mountain retreat, evocative and sensitive pencil sketches of close ups of each tree by Libby Raines – long time local resident, botanical artist and nurserywoman, and Michael’s thoughtful prose, this is easy and rewarding reading.

Trees of choice are the apple, ash, aspen, beech, birch, cedar, chestnut, cypress, elm, hawthorn, holly, laurel (bay), linden (lime), maple, oak, pine, plane, spruce, sycamore, willow and yew.

A delightful introduction explains how the Pembrokes came to live at least on weekends on Mt. Wilson and the author’s long attraction to gardens and land, from an incidental to an increasingly deep connection with the earth and growing things.

Ancient habits of having and enjoying country retreats are mused upon to start and

the conclusion addresses the surrounding eucalypt forest: ever-present frame, presence and perhaps threat too.

Appendices explain the key people quoted: naturalists, poets, lists of the trees in Hawthorn’s garden, the birds and animals found on Mt. Wilson and intriguingly wide lists of reading: reference and inspiration.

Teasingly there is no plan or image of Hawthorn. The odd statement is debatable: Melbourne and rural Victoria are not the last bastion of Australia’s elms: rural NSW and central Tasmania still hold many. But mere trifles! Members might note copies can be obtained at a special price via AGHS.

Bloomings Books, 2009, 266pp. Recommended.

Review by Stuart Read.

## Easy Care Gardening

### - celebrating 21 years of service to the community by Wendy McCready

At 87, Mrs Beryl King is “still pretty good on my feet”. Bob, her husband of 60 years, died two years ago and Mrs King is happy to stay in the home they moved to soon after their first child was born. The Kings had been keen gardeners until Bob started to get ill five years ago.

Mrs King could see that the garden was a mess but didn't know what to do about it. “Pretty good on her feet” wasn't good enough. She couldn't afford to pay for a gardener. Her children live interstate and overseas. Her lovely neighbour had been mowing her lawn every few weeks and insisted he didn't mind. It was this neighbour who heard about Easy Care Gardening and phoned to find out whether Mrs King would be eligible for the service.

Five years of neglect was obvious. Mature camellias, azaleas, privet and ochona, were blocking light and sunshine into windows making the home dark and damp. Paths to the front gate, clothesline and bins were overgrown and mossy. Weeds had invaded all of the garden beds and the garden generally looked neglected.

As a pensioner Mrs King was eligible for help and a team of eight Easy Care Gardening volunteers were able to work in the garden removing weeds, pruning and mulching garden beds. They made sure that paths were easier for Mrs King to negotiate and the home was again filled with light when shrubs were pruned back. Mrs King baked scones, made tea and coffee for the volunteers and sat and chatted. She later wrote to ECG to thank the volunteers for their work and described the morning as being “like a party!” For many clients the opportunity to sit and chat is very important and a rare pleasure. As one of our volunteers, Maree Horan, described it, she enjoys the gardening because it gets her “out of my own circle” and meeting people and says “It doesn't matter where you come from, we're all equal as gardeners.”

Easy Care Gardening (ECG) started in August 1988 when three Horticultural Therapy Association volunteers working at the Association centre, saw that there was a need in the community for help in the gardens of the elderly and disabled. Anne Shires, Kathleen Ciemiega and Henry Llewellyn, were successful in an application for funding from Ku-ring-gai Council. A six-month pilot scheme for volunteer gardeners to work in the gardens of people like Mrs King was funded by a grant of just \$1,500.

In 1990 the Premier's Community Award was given to ECG. A grant from Home and Community Care (HACC) assisted ECG to take over the clients from the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Home Handyman service, doubling the workload and increasing the service to now include Ku-ring-gai Municipality and Hornsby Shire. Another grant was received to establish a lawn mowing team.

By February 1991 ECG was granted incorporation as Easy Care Gardening Incorporated with the status of a Charity. An office was established in St Ives (previously in Anne Shires' kitchen!) and further grants enabled one full-time and one part-time staff member to be employed.

In 2003, another grant was provided to ECG from DADHC allowing the volunteer gardening service to expand into the Ryde and Hunters Hill council areas, taking the total gardening clients to around 500, along with 130 lawn mowing clients. On 8 August 2008 ECG celebrated 20 years of service to the community with a breakfast function at the Pymble Golf Club. As at June 2009 although there are 1,156 volunteers working for ECG there is an increasing community need for this service and new volunteers are always needed. In an effort to address this need, ECG celebrated 21 years of service to the community with a fundraising and promotional Garden & Market Day, held in the garden of historic house “Claremont” in Pymble. A number of speakers donated their time at this event including Silas Clifford-Smith, Tim Entwisle, Judy Horton, Meredith Kirton, Virginia Macleod, Angus Stewart and Helen Young.

Other ECG groups are now established throughout Sydney - located from Northern Beaches through to the Blue Mountains & Hills district and south to Sutherlandshire. This is clearly an indication of the need for this important community service.

#### Our Goals

- To assist frail aged and younger people with a disability to stay in their own homes by providing a gardening and lawn mowing service.
- To help them to retain their independence.
- To convert gardens to low maintenance.
- To ensure garden areas are safe and provide low cost lawn mowing services.
- To provide help to those in need, either directly through this service or by referral to other organisations.
- To recruit, support and train volunteers in the techniques used in providing the service.
- To seek financial support from individuals, organisations and Government agencies.
- To work in close liaison with other community organisations.
- To encourage and assist the establishment of similar groups in other areas.

**Definition:** *An easy care garden is one which is safe and pleasurable, requires low maintenance and minimal upkeep. This is achieved by the effective use of mulch and appropriate planting.*



AGHS member, Silas Clifford Smith, speaking at the fundraising day at Claremont



Happy volunteers hard at work

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snow capped mountains spread out on the horizon in the distance. But en route I was invited in for morning tea by a goat shepherd. Although none of them spoke a word of English, I enjoyed meeting his family: his wife, son and daughter. His home was very simple – the goats lived with them in the downstairs quarters. What struck me most about the little room that I was taken into off a small front passageway was the object that had central place in their home – it was their carpet! It was stunning and I reflected later on that they were carrying on a tradition that has probably been around as long as mankind.

The next day one of the group members, who lived locally, and had joined us for a few days was really surprised when he heard of my previous day's encounter. But what was most interesting for me to learn was when he asked 'Were you given tea or coffee to drink?' and when I replied coffee, he queried "was it weak or regular?". The coffee I was given was perfect and I felt so very privileged when I was informed that I had probably just drunk their week's supply and coffee like that is only given to people they consider to be VIPs. I was glad in retrospect that I had given the children a few coins. Most of all I was taken by the generosity of spirit that prompted such action in the first place.

In the afternoon of that same day I hired a guide to take me round the numerous Roman sites in the area. I especially wanted to see the field, just outside town, where only a few years ago thousands of Roman coins had been discovered – they are now safely housed in the nearby museum at Burdur. I just had to see for myself. The field turned out to be very ordinary and right next to the main road. But it did not stop me from feeling in total awe of the surrounding landscape filled with so many centuries of civilizations.

Derelie is the author of the recently released book *'Two Dogs & A Garden'* which tells the story of life in *Paradise* – the garden where she and Bob live in the hinterland of the New South Wales Central Coast. See review on page 7.

*Paradise* is open on Sat. 31st October & Sun. November 1st



View of Sagalassos showing the low hill behind where Alexander the Great triumphed in battle and won the city.



:Ancient gnarled roots of an enormous fig tree, possibly as old as the nearby Lycian rock tombs, growing along a stream running through the middle of Pinara.



Suddenly spilling out everywhere on the path before me, it was these goats who led me to their shepherd.

Newsletter edited and collated by Jeanne Villani and Stuart Read  
Contributions for inclusion in the newsletter are welcomed and should be directed to:  
Jeanne@Villani.com or to 90 Cabbage Tree Road, Bayview, NSW, 2104