

# BRANCH CUTTINGS

Issue 33 - October 2010

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

## The Herm Garden Tour by Angela Low

Just over 12 months ago we went to France, ending up in Brittany where the hydrangeas (les hortensias) were in full glorious flower. I had never imagined such colours, from white and palest pastels through to deep purples and crimsons, often growing in tiny beds along neglected narrow roads.

From Brittany we travelled to Guernsey in The Channel Islands where the hydrangeas were almost as spectacular. I had read on the net that a tour of tiny Herm Island led by the head gardener was available every Tuesday from April to September, so on the day we went down to the port of Guernsey, found the Trident kiosk and booked .

The little ferry took us out past Castle Cornet and over to the tiny island just visible with larger Sark beyond. It is only 20 minutes away from busy Guernsey but very different.



Ferry heading out of St. Peter Port past Castle Cornet

Herm is the smallest of the Channel Islands open to the public, only 2 km square with a permanent population of about 60. It is part of the Bailiwick of Guernsey which bought the island from the Crown after World War II and now rents the island to a tenant. In 2008 the then tenants put the remaining 40 years of their lease up for sale, with an asking price of £15,000,000, but after many months it was bought for considerably less by a Trust which formed a company, Herm Island Limited. The island is managed as a resort with no cars or bikes, just a truck for transporting luggage and goods from the ferry up to the hotel and settlement and a couple of quad bikes for the gardeners.

We were met by the Head Gardener, Brett Moore, a young man of considerable charm and horticultural knowledge. He trained at Pershore College of Horticulture in Worcestershire in the cold north and has unbounded enthusiasm for his job. He manages every aspect of gardening on the island with just one assistant and delights in being able to grow 'tender' plants from places like Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and South America as well as the Mediterranean and Canary Islands. We were given a comprehensive plant list and the first planting shown off was an impressive clump of New Zealand Flax (*Phormium tenax*) growing right on the shore line.



The planting immediately around the hotel and swimming pool was lovely. A long lawn with curved edges forming little bays for sheltered sunbathing. We discussed the plantings at length, which included *Eucalyptus gunnii*, while standing around some poor lady lying on a sunbed which I thought was a bit rude but it turned out she was a frequent guest on the island, well known to our guide, and 3 of her male relatives were doing the tour (again). They were all having a go at her!



Les hortensias en Bretagne



The rockery supporting the front terrace of the hotel had many plants familiar to us, *Agapanthus*, *Agaves* and other succulents, even some Australian natives.

## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Dear Members and Friends

Welcome to architect James Quoyale, newly elected onto the committee and welcome all new members. I've spent 9 years on the committee and should have stood down under the rules of the Constitution.. At the August AGM members voted to vary the rule on maximum tenure to allow me one more term (3 years). The Society's National Management Committee has since agreed to endorse this. My priority now is to groom successors and hand on more of the tasks I currently undertake. I'm keen we build a strong committee full of skills working on new events and projects. There's talk of hosting another national conference in Sydney, quite apart from 2013's in Armidale.

Since 2001 I've been proud of our oral history project – Roslyn Burge interviewing people with significant contributions to AGHS and NSW garden history and we are lodging copies of these in the State Library of NSW.

Over 2009 I'm especially delighted about the two garden history exhibitions held at the Orange Regional Gallery (organised by members Kylie Winkworth, Alison Russell and Elizabeth Richards (see [www.orangeblossoms.com.au](http://www.orangeblossoms.com.au)) complementing the ground-breaking [www.orangesignificantscapes.com.au](http://www.orangesignificantscapes.com.au). And Armidale's exhibition, organised by Bill Oates, Graham Wilson and others, now in Glen Innes. These widen our outreach to the community: Both have and are eliciting positive reactions to the range of local and regional 'garden-making'. Bravo to all involved. I hope we can persuade New England to 'tour' to Sydney in 2011 and that we can arrange for a website-based 'longer life' for this exhibition. We'll see about that!

At the AGM long-standing treasurer Peter Cousens, committee members Jo Hambrett and ex-Chair Malcolm Wilson all stood down. I pay tribute to their service and help - keeping events running smoothly, drafting reports, letters and in behind-the-scenes negotiation – such as Malcolm's with the *Botanic Gardens* and *Sydney City Council* - much done quietly and unnoticed. Peter is off to create a new garden in Cairns and we wish him and Jase well. Murray Hook has agreed to be treasurer and Rosemary to be Vice-Chair. Jo is flat out on other commitments such as the recently published book *A Passion for Place* about Mt. Wilson, Mt. Irvine & Mt. Tomah gardens (congratulations Jo – a welcome addition!) but we hope she considers returning to the committee.

A welcome initiative is the launch of *Hortus Camdenensis*, an online database of over 3,200 plants and historical information, based on an illustrated catalogue of plants grown by Sir William Macarthur in the garden and nursery at *Camden Park* between c.1820 and 1861. This builds on the *Colonial Plants Database* developed by Colleen Morris & Tony Rodd ([http://www.hht.net.au/research/colonial\\_plants](http://www.hht.net.au/research/colonial_plants)). The *Camden Park* database is easily searchable and can be found at [www.hortuscampden.com](http://www.hortuscampden.com). At *Camden Park* volunteers have made great strides clearing and replanting the formerly neglected lower garden and nursery and propagating plant treasures for sale.

In October Joan Lawrence leads a walk around Chippendale and Darlington, looking at the remains of our first plant nursery created by Thomas Shepherd. It's hard to imagine but well worth exploring. We hope a Shepherd descendent can join us, to tell us more about the family's involvement in the Hunter Valley wine industry. Also on Chippo's streets is a community-greening project reclaiming nature strips for food: a challenge to copy...

A worthwhile event in October is the *Parramatta Park Heritage Rose Festival*, in the lovely *Rumsey Rose Garden* on Pitt Street. A range of related organisations like Heritage Roses Australia and AGHS will have stalls, talks, food and music to enjoy, along with the spring flush of roses...make a day of it.

Recent advocacy includes seeking that management of Sydney's *Moore Park* remain with the Centennial & Moore Park Trust, not be transferred to Sydney Cricket Ground Trust. And asking the NSW Roads & Traffic Authority to reconsider locating a truck rest stop on the Hume highway next to the original land grant of *Varroville Estate*. And encouraging Penrith City Council to resist any subdivision pressure and to support our nomination of *Werrington House* and its four acres of land for State Heritage Register listing.

### Northern NSW report

August 21st found members exploring 3 historic Glen Innes gardens including *Stonehenge*, culminating in attendance at the opening of our photographic exhibition "*Historic Gardens of New England*" that is hanging at the Glen Innes Gallery until 17th September.

Bill Oates: T: 6773 6565 or E: [woates@une.edu.au](mailto:woates@une.edu.au)

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

## NEW MEMBERS

The Branch would like to extend a warm welcome to the following new local members:  
Steve Brown & Allan Mclean, Gail Condor & Ray Lane, Nerida Farrow, Lesley Garret, Frieda Harman,  
Rosemary Leitch, Andi Mazzolani, Jean Solomon, Paul Urquhart, Harriet Wilson.

## AGHS FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### OCTOBER

**Date:** Sunday 17th October 2pm - 4.30pm

**Event:** Talk and walk with Joan Lawrence - *Reminders of Thomas Shepherd's nursery, Chippendale* - see article on P. 7

**Meet at:** To be advised when booking

**Cost:** Members \$15 Guests \$25 includes light refreshments. **Bookings essential**

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### NOVEMBER

**Date:** Tuesday 16th November 6.30 for 7pm

**Event:** *Gilding the garden: 21st century renewal in historic English gardens.* Colleen Morris will discuss renewal and new works at *Arundel Castle* and *Boughton House* and the Duke of Devonshire's projects at *Chatsworth* among other country estates visited during an intensive 20 days of study at the Attingham Summer School 2010. Colleen will conclude her talk by sharing views of a few of her favourite garden features seen along the way.

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

**Cost:** Members \$20 Guests \$30 includes light refreshments. **Bookings essential**

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### DECEMBER

**Date:** Sunday 12th December 4.30pm - 8pm

**Event:** Christmas Get -Together

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

**Cost:** Members \$20 Guests \$30 includes light refreshments. **Bookings essential**

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**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: Jeanne Villani, 90 Cabbage Tree Road, Bayview, NSW,, 2104 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**

Refunds for cancellations will not be made if less than 48 hours notice is given.

### FORTHCOMING EVENTS FOR THE NORTHERN NSW BRANCH

**17th October** Conference meeting - Heritage Centre, Armidale

**28th November** Christmas party at Graham and Helen Wilson's home, 14 Todd Close, Bona Vista.

For more information contact

President Bill Oates on woates@une.edu.au or Secretary Angela Sole on asole@auzzie.net or 0267711661. All meetings subject to weather.

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### OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST

**Monday 11 October** 6.00 – 8.00pm HHT event. Museum of Sydney, Corner Phillip and Bridge Streets, Sydney.

*Greening Sydney* - Lachlan and Elizabeth Macquarie came to Sydney with a vision that shaped the city. In the final talk for this series historian Colleen Morris will discuss the Macquaries' green legacy with Director of the Botanic Gardens, Tim Entwistle.

Two fine minds on such a (too-little-asked) question. You might say that gazetting commons, town parks, town squares and limiting conflicting land uses on them (and on Government Domains) was some 100 years before the planning system/reforms from 1909 and very 'timely' given today's concerns for 'green lungs', clean air, carbon capture, food & fibre security...

**Cost:** General \$25.00, Concessions/Members \$20.00. **Bookings:** 02 8239 2211 or [www.tickets.hht.net.au](http://www.tickets.hht.net.au)

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**12th October** 5.30pm for 6pm State Library event Dixson Room, Mitchell Building, State Library, Macquarie Street

**Hunting the Red Lily in S. E. Tibet.** Plant hunter Ken Cox & journalist Claire Scobie will be giving an illustrated talk about their adventures

**Cost** \$20 includes light refreshments. **Bookings essential.** Phone 9273 1770 Email: [bookings@sl.nsw.gov.au](mailto:bookings@sl.nsw.gov.au)

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**24th October** 10am-5pm **Parramatta Park Heritage Rose festival**

Roses, food 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.

-. [www.parrapark.com.au](http://www.parrapark.com.au) . AGHS will be hosting a stall.

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**27 & 28 November** 10am- 4pm **Eryldene Christmas Fair.** As the Jacarandas flower, choose your Christmas gifts in comfort, amongst the beauty of Eryldene and its late spring garden. This year new stallholders have been invited and many old favourites will be there with a wide selection of unusual and quality gifts. Enjoy the personal attention of over 45 stallholders showcasing their products of stationery, jewellery, antiques, Christmas hampers, cakes and puddings, silkware, garden ornaments, plants, homewares, children's and women's clothing, pearls and paper products. The Garden Cafe serving Christmas delights will be open both days.

Eryldene Entrance: \$5 adult /conc./children free

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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, gift purchases and routine enquiries.

## Gardens of Memory



Sheila Simpson-Lee

Sheila Simpson-Lee's house at 23 Roland Avenue Wahroonga appears on the State Heritage Register as an "excellent and intact example of the work of early modernist architect Arthur Baldwinson". Here are some of her delightful reminiscences of its garden to complete the picture as reported by Rosemary Potts.

When we built this house 52 years ago we were fortunate to begin our garden under a canopy of existing mature trees – remnants of blue gum and ironbark/turpentine forest. This determined the nature of the garden which has developed over the years. We were always grateful to our architect for siting the house well down the hill on this long south-westerly sloping block of land of 5/8 acre (1/4 ha). This has meant a quiet, peaceful and secluded place well away from today's busy traffic. The access to the house from the street curving across the block followed the track initially used by the builders and since topped with river gravel. The drive/pathway established the design layout of the garden we devised and which remains more or less unaltered.

What has changed of course is that the trees *Eucalyptus spp.*, *saligna* [blue gum], *paniculata* [iron bark], *resinifera* [Red Mahogany], *Angophora costata* and *intermedia* and *Syncarpia glomalifera* [Turpentine]) have grown enormously and this has meant increased shade and dryness, root competition and more leaf and bark litter. The garden now has a 'wilder' look, which is also partly due to the diminished activity of the sole gardener in her mid-80s. I now have a much greater understanding of what will grow here in these conditions and I am more mindful of the need for limited water use and more emphasis on the natural environment. It has been a long process of learning and adapting.

I find that many of the old, hardy and possibly out-of-fashion plants we planted in those early years still perform well – *Spiraea spp.* - Winter honeysuckle (*Lonicera fragrantissima*), *Jasminum mesnyi*, *Viburnum tinus* (Laurustinus), *Osmanthus*, *Berberis thunbergii* and *Abelia*, to name a few and especially camellias, the old varieties – *Aspasia Macarthur*, *Lady Loch*, *Great Eastern*, *Waratah*, *Fimbriata*, *Prince Fredrick William* for which I have a great affection as they were planted in the old colonial gardens. Many of our early plantings came from *Hazelwood Bros. Nursery* at Epping or from *Camellia Grove*. Many others were raised from cuttings brought from my childhood garden. As a young gardener I was very influenced by Edna Walling – I bought my copy of *Gardens in Australia* in 1947 – and when the garden was younger and more open I grew many small perennials along the natural sandstone edges of the drive. We had many more azaleas then as did many Sydney gardens in the mid-fifties. The old hardy single indicas have survived – like *Alba Magna*, *Magnifica*, *Splendens*, and some *Kurumes* – these I liked very much – some of E.H. Wilson's 'Fifty'. I also tried many roses, having grown up in a garden west of Parramatta where roses flourished, but they did not like it here in my garden.

So what has evolved is a 'blended garden'. The soil here is fairly heavy loam on Wianamatta Shale, so many Sydney bush plants which belong to the Sydney sandstone do not thrive here, but some acacias, *Indigofera*, westringias, prostantheras, *Eriostemon myoporoides* and *Grevillea rosmarinifolia* and *G. sericea* do well and I like them combined with the grey-leaved lavenders, (*L.allardii*) artemesias, *Helichrysum petiolare* and *Plectranthus argentata*. Many of the unsuitable perennials have given way to dianellas, lomandras, poas and South African stalwarts such as *Clivea*, *Agapanthus*, *Dietes* and *Plectranthus*. Ferns have persisted from earliest times and are good ground covers. More recently I have planted the small-flowered species camellia and the miniature hybrids. I like the small flowers in this bush garden and have avoided most of the new *Camellia*

*japonica* cv.s with showy flowers and the reticulatas.

There have been many mistakes and failures. I have not grown grass for many years – the open spaces are now a "bush floor" of fallen *Eucalyptus* leaves, twigs and bark. As I look out into the garden from my sitting room my chief pleasure comes from the tall trunks and softly-hued bark of the trees and the vertical door and window frames and the pergola supports framing them. From the outside looking in across the garden I like the verticals contrasting with the horizontal lines of the white house. Birds fly in and out, bathing, eating seed – crimson and eastern rosellas, sometimes King parrots and many rainbow lorikeets – wonderful dashes of bright colour in a garden of subtle colours – silvery greys and soft



Front of house and garden

grey-greens of foliage, warm browns and terracotta and silver-grey trunks. Tadpoles and small frogs inhabit the small water garden. Skinks abound and occasionally a blue-tongued lizard walks by. It has been home to brush-tail and ring-tail possums. Kookaburras, magpies, currawongs, butcher birds and the ever-present noisy miners are an integral part of the scene. More recently brush turkeys and their chicks scratch in the litter. After rain the mosses and lichens come to life. It is the serenity and changing light I love most – sunlight and shadow.

I walk out on to the verandah on the other side and look into the bush garden. This is a continuation of the blue gum, ironbark/turpentine forest remnant with an understorey of *Pittosporum undulatum* now aged and beautiful and a ground cover of ferns. When we came it was part of an extensive area of bushland which has since been subdivided. We were told by old inhabitants that a severe bushfire swept through this little valley during the 1939-45 war, so much of it is regrowth forest. Then in January 1991 the Great Storm cut across a narrow strip of Ku-ring-gai including this area. Huge trees fell like ninepins across our land – some big trunks still lie where they fell and the damage to the garden was considerable. In January 2008 two of our largest blue gums were struck by lightning and had to be almost completely taken down. They were the tallest of all and much more light has come in on hot summer days. All of these vicissitudes have meant changes in the vegetation we knew when we first came. We had taken out a lot of privet and there was a nice growth of indigenous flora – *Cassinia*, *Hibbertia scandens* and *H. dentata*, *Clematis aristata*, wonga vine. Some still remain – *Rapanea*, *Notelea* (mock olive) *Eustrephus*. We planted the boundaries after adjacent subdivision but it was difficult to re-establish what was there before so plants able to grow under a mature canopy were selected. Lillipillies (*Acmena smithii*) and *Syzygium paniculatum*, *Elaeocarpus* (blueberry ash), *Backhousia myrtifolia*, *Flindersia* (crow's ash) and *Hymenosporum* (Native Frangipani). Brachychitons (Illawarra Flame) have come as volunteers, as have cabbage tree palms (*Livistona*). There is a more rainforest appearance now – a large stand of *Cordyline stricta* and two Bangalow palms, bird's nest ferns and elkhorns and tree ferns complete this picture. In the centre near-foreground is a very large evergreen exotic tree, *Michelia alba*, from Southern China, where it is known as Pak Lan. I grew this from a cutting taken in 1961 from a tree growing in my husband's grandfather's (Rev. John Young Wai) garden in Summer Hill. It bears small sweetly scented creamy white flowers. It was said at the time to be rare and had been given to him by a visitor from Guandong. It has thrived here and I accord it heritage status!

Occasionally whip birds are seen and heard and more rarely small wrens. Boobook owls and tawny frogmouths come at times. The bird population has changed over 50 years when yellow robins and eastern spinebills and spotted pardalotus were common. The boundary at the bottom of the hill was once a creek, joining with other small creeks to flow into the Lane Cove River. Sewerage works along the creek bed in 1977 almost completely destroyed it. So there have been many changes and what you see today is different but quite beautiful in the late afternoon light.

This then is the story of our garden which we both helped to create. Geelum built the rock walls and the layered steps to the terrace. He laid the terrace. We spread the gravel. We planted trees and hundreds of plants but it is TIME that has brought it where it is today, aged and rather overgrown in parts, but for me a place of quiet beauty and true to "place"



Stage 1 of garden with paving



Driveway plantings



Rear garden

Rosemary Potts

## Thomas Shepherd's nursery, landscape design and legacy

In October Joan Lawrence will lead a walk around the streets of Darlington and Chippendale pointing up the remains of our oldest plant nursery and telling the story of its creator, Thomas Shepherd.

Shepherd deserves to be better known as both a pioneer nurseryman, designer and author. His family also deserves to be remembered. Victor Crittenden AM's biography *A Shrub in the Landscape of Time* (1992) is worth tracking down. As is his entry on Thomas in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Gardens* (2002) from which I quote, along with generous borrowings from Colleen Morris' *Lost Gardens of Sydney* (2008) and Elisha Long's thesis on *Lyndhurst, Glebe (Landscape Survey & Report, Architecture III, University of Sydney, 1983)*.

Shepherd (b.1779) was son of the head gardener at *Struthers*, Fife, Scotland. Professionally trained, he gained experience under Thomas White, who followed the style of 'Capability' Brown, before starting his own practice as a landscape gardener in Scotland and England and a nursery in London. Shepherd migrated here in 1827; setting up a nursery adjacent to *Grose Farm* he named it *Darling Nursery* after the Governor. He struggled to make a living – the *Botanic Gardens* then was giving out free plants to colonists. Shepherd struggled to establish a nursery in uncultivated land, starting with vegetables. His stock was bolstered with material from the *Botanic Gardens, Elizabeth Bay's* garden and from William Macarthur at *Camden Park* (whose mansion was under construction from 1831-5).

Thomas is best known for two series of public lectures he gave in the Mechanics School of Arts, published by bookseller William McGarvie, the first *Lectures on the horticulture of NSW* (1835). These were to educate labourers and farmers with little capital. They practically addressed vegetable growing in a colony with different climate and soils and opposite seasons to England. This was Australia's first garden book and presciently addressed the vital need of summer water – advocating irrigation reservoirs for landscape gardens.

A second series, *Lectures on landscape gardening in Australia* was published in 1836 after Shepherd's death – he was only able to deliver the first. It is a landmark for its translation of British concepts of design to an Australian climate. It addressed a range of garden types: mansion, villa, and cottage – and styles: sublime, picturesque and beautiful. It was published five years before the first North American text on landscape gardening by A.J. Downing. Shepherd advocated thinning but retaining native trees (as did Alexander Macleay at *Elizabeth Bay House* and the Cox family at *Fernhill, Mulgoa*). He praised Macleay's retention of indigenous plants and suggested means of improving this garden. While there is no evidence of Shepherd's direct involvement in Macleay's garden, his only daughter Elizabeth married Robert Henderson, Macleay's gardener, in 1831.

Thomas is likely to have designed a major estate: *Lyndhurst* at Glebe (c1833-4), for Dr James Bowman, principal colonial surgeon and his wife Mary (nee Macarthur). His descriptions show an intimate knowledge suggesting he either designed or was consulted on its layout and embellishment. Although almost entirely gone today, *Lyndhurst* was probably the first Australian garden to have professional garden advice. It was also notable for retaining indigenous vegetation and for the interdependence of garden and house within the estate.

Shepherd is known to have designed a large garden and terraced vineyard at *Mount Adelaide, Darling Point* for William Macdonald, emancipist businessman. the 1837 sale notice for *Mount Adelaide* noted he had supervised its development. Shepherd had lectured on and published three articles '*On the cultivation of the vine*' in the *Sydney Gazette* in 1831 and was on a committee appointed to report on the state of James Busby's vines in the *Botanic Gardens* (Busby donated some 400 varieties of grape cultivar cuttings to these gardens in 1833\*).

After Thomas' death in 1835, his son-in-law Robert Henderson managed the *Darling Nursery* until Shepherd's sons were old enough to take over. Alexander Spark of *Tempe estate* bought plants at the nursery in the late 1830s, delighting in a double purple *Dahlia*, '*Georgina*'.

Shepherd's sons carried on their continued involvement in the nursery trade and horticulture. Thomas Jnr. (b.1824), David (1826) and Patrick (1831) worked in and later managed the nursery. By the 1860s Shepherd & Co. had bought land at Rooty Hill (the *Chatsworth Nursery*) as various parts of the original were sold. By this stage they were sending trees and plants to all parts of Australia. David ran *Chatsworth* while Patrick ran the *Darling Nursery*. In 1881 the company leased the *Baptist Nursery* in Surry Hills, paying John Baptist 200 pounds for his stock. Taking possession in 1882, the brothers handed this over to their sons Thomas (1885) and Lindsay (1858) and semi-retired. In 1884 the business was reorganised with David and his son and F.M.Creswick continuing as *Shepherd & Co.* in Ashfield and Redfern, while Patrick and son Lindsay formed *P.L.C. Shepherd and Son*, a separate and later well-known firm of seed merchants. Patrick later acquired land in the Southern Highlands, becoming well known there. The seed company ceased trading in the 1940s. The dynasty had been one of the most important influences in the development of gardening in NSW – and to some extent the rest of Australia – in the colonial period, not only as providers of plants (trees and shrubs especially) but also for the reputation the published lectures secured for Thomas, it's head.

Other evidence of Thomas' influence has been found by his descendent Ian Shepherd in *The Maitland Mercury & Hunter River General Advertiser* of 13/11/1850, which ran an article titled '*Hunter River Vineyard Association*'. This was extracts of a letter from Henry Carmichael of Porphyry Point, Seaham, to the Botanic & Horticultural Society forwarding bottles of his 1849 wine intended for the 'Exhibition of the Industry of All Nations' in London in 1851 (The Great Exhibition). These included 'Porphyry White Wine' made from a grape variety known in NSW as 'Shepherd's Grape' or 'Shepherd's Reisling'\*\*. The letter notes that about 20 years ago Mr Thomas Shepherd "... had the merit of first taking notice of this grape, as it grew in luxuriance and freshness in front of one of the primitive dwellings of Sydney, green and vigorous in otherwise withering ... conditions. He procured and reared the variety ... finding it performed well, proving a juicy and richly flavoured grape. He recommended its culture with his characteristic zeal and it has thus become pretty generally known in the colony's vineyards. In deserved compliment to Mr Shepherd's sagacity it is usually called 'Shepherd's Grape' and as it is known to bear close resemblance to the larger Riesling of the Rhine, ... it has been proposed to designate it by the name of "Shepherd's Riesling".

\* Busby was a friend of Shepherd's, helping him write his manual for growing grapes. Busby divided his collection of varieties into thirds, giving one to Shepherd, one to the *Botanic Gardens* and one to his Hunter Valley vineyard *Kirkton*. Shepherd's nursery fittingly was near Vine Street in Darlington!

\*\*now called Semillon (a variety for which the Hunter is now famous), then known locally as Shepherd's, later Hunter River Reisling). Carmichael was also one-time president of the Hunter River Vineyard Association and on the School of Arts Board (where Shepherd delivered his lectures).

## Parramatta Park on the World Heritage List



Recently replanted oaks approach the George Street Gate house.



The Crescent and Parramatta River with St. Peter's Church spire in the distance

Australia gained another World Heritage Area on 1st August: 11 sites – a ‘serial site’ that collectively tell the story of convict transportation, labour, emancipation and nation-building. These span several states (NSW, WA, Tas.) & Norfolk Island. NSW sites include part of the *Great North Road* (Devine's Hill near Wiseman's Ferry), *Cockatoo Island*, *Hyde Park Barracks* and *Parramatta Park* as the former Governors' (or Government) Domain around Old Government House. 'First Government House' and its Sydney Domain did not get included, likely due to the former's demolition and the latter's degree of modification. Other sites of the 11 include gardens or significant landscapes: *Brickendon* and *Woollmers* estates near Longford and Port Arthur in Tasmania for example. Part of the reason for the chosen sites is that they are able to demonstrate aspects of the convict story and system: in the case of *Parramatta Park*, that of 'command and control' – a military landscape of industry with the Governor's house and barracks on the hill, overlooking the Government Farm, Crescent, Convict Lumbar Yard etc. and High (now George) Street's avenue of convict huts – where men laboured and slept. This is wonderful news – even though the 'buffer zones' drawn around the urban area of *Parramatta Park* are small and won't constrain or control adjacent urban (re-)development. A pity. What it will mean is increased international (and perhaps domestic) tourism to these sites. People like me use the World Heritage List to plan holidays overseas. With obvious economic spin offs locally.

Parramatta Park Trust has undertaken a number of projects re-instating lost landscape elements and interpreting the rich layering of Aboriginal, convict, colonial and Victorian eras within this park. The Trust recently published a great brochure on the Macquarie (landscape) legacy at *Parramatta Park*, written by its cultural heritage curator, Verena Mauldron. These complement a long-term programme of improvements the National Trust (NSW) has made with government grants to *Old Government House*, including a current programme of underpinning, services upgrade, courtyard landscaping etc. Making both well worth repeated visits, such as the opportunity afforded by the Parramatta Park Heritage Rose Festival in October. There's a nice cafe in the park too...For more information about the WHA listing see [www.heritage.gov.au](http://www.heritage.gov.au) [www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/world/index.html](http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/world/index.html). Or for *Parramatta Park* info see [www.parrapark.com.au](http://www.parrapark.com.au) or call 8833 5000.



View across the Parramatta River to a reinstated suggestion of crops on the former Government Farm

### *Nina Crone Award for Australian Student Garden History Writing*

\$1000 plus a certificate of recognition for an original article of 1000 -1500 words relating to Australian garden history, with accompanying illustrations and/or images, if appropriate.

#### **Aims**

The award is intended to encourage new and emerging scholars in the writing of Australian garden history and recognise excellence in such writing; with a prospect of publication in the Society's journal *Australian Garden History*.

#### **Closing date for final submission - 30 November 2010**

Submissions can be sent electronically to [info@gardenhistorysociety.org.au](mailto:info@gardenhistorysociety.org.au) or by post to Australian Garden History Society, 100 Birdwood Avenue Melbourne 3004

#### **Eligibility and basis of submissions**

The award is open to students only, nationally. Articles must be on a topic related to the Australian garden history. Articles submitted must not have been previously published and associated research must have been completed within the last two years.

For full details regarding the conditions of entry see the Australian Garden History Society (Victorian Branch section) website [www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au](http://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au)

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There are no trees native to Herm but shelter breaks have been established using Holm Oak, Monterey Pine, Monterey Cypress and *Olearia traversii*. Elms were very successful but were wiped out by Dutch Elm disease in the late 20th. century. We were next taken to see a little woodland walk where the assistant gardener had spent weeks clearing trees shrouded in rampant *Muehlenbeckia*. I thought this was an Australian native but they said it came from NZ. After the descriptions of heroic struggles to remove this weed I was quite prepared to disown it and it was probably *M.australis* which is an NZ native. Nearby was a pretty sloping wood which was described as a mass of bluebells in spring. An interesting viewing seat had been constructed of woven willow filled with earth and planted with grass.



Walled garden

We were introduced to the newest project, planned as a walk with sculptures and I think water features. All we saw was a muddy patch with a few big trees and rocks, recently cleared and shaped by a digger. The local fire wardens had been involved in a training exercise to burn off the mountain of rubbish produced. Lyrical descriptions of the garden envisaged here, however, made one want to rush back in a year or so to see it completed.

Some of the most dominant plants on the island were echiums, 3 species, *E.fastuosum* (blue or white, Pride of Madeira), *E.wildpretii* (red), and

the Tree Echium, *E.pininnana*. They had mostly finished flowering but the stalks were still in place as they are encouraged to reseed and in fact some may have hybridised there. The tree *Echium* grows to 4m. in height (12 feet) but on Herm they were exceeding that and the gardeners have issued a challenge to find the tallest in the world, possibly up to 20 feet.

We finished up with a look at the walled garden around the tenants' residence and the very pretty all white garden around the tiny stone chapel.



Chapel garden



Tenants' private residence with giant *E. pininnana* stalks behind the conservatory.

The tour was to last about an hour but we were still going after 2 ½ hours. They are extremely proud to have been a 'Britain in Bloom' Gold Award and Category winner in 2002 and 2008. We ourselves continued on with a walk around the rural part of the island, lovely Guernsey cows, oak trees and hedgerows and cliff views back to Guernsey. Then lunch at the Mermaid Inn at the Hotel before catching the ferry back. A great day.

#### Book recommendation

I wanted to mention a book that I thought members might enjoy. Some years back a friend and I stepped ourselves in Bloomsbury but only just found this book, although published in 2005, at Mosman Library. It is *Sissinghurst, An Unfinished History*, Adam Nicholson. His descriptions of the landscape etc of his childhood are beautiful and the book not only covers history but also his attempt at renewing the past at *Sissinghurst*. I found it all fascinating. He is, of course, the grandson of Vita Sackville West and Harold Nicholson but I would recommend it.

Joan Lawrence

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