

BRANCH CUTTINGS

Issue 35 - June 2011

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

The French Garden at La Perouse by Ivan Barko



View from in front of the Laperouse monumen looking towards the museum. We think the garden was near here between the path and the beach but quite close to the path. Photo by Doug Morrison

On 26 January 1788 two French ships, *Boussole* and *Astrolabe*, anchored off the future Frenchman's Bay in Botany Bay. Lapérouse, his officers and his men were exhausted. Only six weeks earlier the natives of Tutuila in Western Samoa, then the Navigator Islands, had massacred several members of the expedition, including *Astrolabe's* captain, Fleuriot de Langle, and scientist Chevalier de Lamanon.

The ships had sailed from Brest in 1785. Although the expedition was well organized and well endowed, the journey had become strenuous. Scurvy was growing. Although only one died, many suffered its effects. In 1786 astronomer Lepaute Dagelet thought he was dying and Lapérouse, in a confidential note to a friend confided "*when I return you will take me for a centenarian, I have no teeth and no hair left*".¹

De Langle had believed fresh drinking water was the remedy. His death was due to his attempt to collect fresh water before leaving the Navigator Islands - by which time the French had overstayed their welcome.

Lapérouse did not share de Langle's belief that stored drinking water deteriorated and needed frequent replacement. He was convinced that provided water was pure, it would remain so. He considered sauerkraut, malt and spruce beer the best remedies, but more importantly attributed great value to cleanliness - personal hygiene and uncluttered surroundings, neither easy to implement on the crowded ships of the era.

The recurrent theme on scurvy in his journals is the importance of a good diet, quality liquids and solids (e.g. wine and flour) and fresh produce. In a letter from Botany Bay he praised the benefits of roast beef and beef steak, tortoises, fish, herbs and fruit. As early as September 1787 he paid tribute to Surgeon Rollin on *Boussole*, who also believed in prevention.

Awareness of the value of a diet, fresh vegetables and fruit, explains why gardener, Jean Nicolas Collignon was encouraged to plant "European seeds" wherever the expedition landed. Whether they hoped to derive benefit from these before departing (they left on 10 March 1788, after just six weeks) or considered the plantings an integral part of their civilising mission, Collignon always attempted to grow European plants on stopovers.

After the First Fleet had transferred to Port Jackson the very day of the arrival of the French (26 January), the site was left to Lapérouse, except for intermittent objections from Aborigines.

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Dear Members and Friends

Australia Day honours included Marion Blackwell receiving an AM for service to the environment, especially through the Australian Plants Society and to landscape architecture. Marion has worked with Aboriginal communities and mining companies on vegetation surveys of remote sites, revegetation and design projects.

Meredith Walker of Lilyfield received an AM for services to heritage through studies for local government and institutions, developing conservation philosophy and standards and promoting community participation.

If farming is 'gardening the landscape' on a broad scale, "Water Man" Peter Andrews of Denman deserves his OAM for service to the environment through developing and promoting sustainable farming practices. Members may have read about or seen his work on TV - observing Australian rivers and floodplains, slowing water down and fostering absorption. This is gaining wider acceptance.

Judith Dunn of Winston Hills received an OAM for service to the community through the Parramatta & District Historical Society. Judith runs lively *Past Times*' tours of historic cemeteries such as St.John's and St.Patrick's in Parramatta.

And Jennifer Liney of Moruya received an OAM for services to conservation, particularly through the *Eurobodalla Botanic Garden* – a wonderful young garden featuring locally native plants, run mostly by volunteers.

Congratulations to all.

Sydney members enjoyed a fascinating talk in March on our first 'garden' –disappearing mega-diverse bushland - from RBGS senior ecologist Doug Benson. Author of books celebrating and recording its varying fortunes, Doug has monitored changes since the early 1970s. It was interesting to see intrepid Branch secretary Helen Bryant in the field with him, measuring, recording and providing scale in many photographs: bravo!

Helen I regret has had to stand down as secretary and we pay tribute to her energetic service in many ways - business, events and hospitality. I welcome James Quoyale as new secretary.

Northern NSW members enjoyed a visit to the *George Hewitt Memorial Arboretum* around Bellingen Hospital, marvelling at its tree collection. A coming event is visiting Elsa Lowrey's garden, *Highwoods*, bequeathed to the Glen Innes Museum. Member Liz Chappell has been painstakingly transcribing Elsa's diaries about the garden and designer Paul Sorensen's visits there. Neither is in 'the book' on him but that brings my count of Glen Innes' Sorensen gardens to two...

Sydney members enjoyed a walk along *Bedlam Bay Park's* Kokoda Track Memorial Trail with David Frecker and Matthew Taylor, amid April showers. Audio and other interpretive signs and maturing rainforest plantings give vivid impressions of Papua New Guinea's forests and our shared wartime stories.

A reminder that all AGHS visits to private gardens are a privilege and bound by our protocol on taking photographs or making images. No image may be published of a private property without first gaining the owner's written permission and approval of the images concerned. Photos for personal use are fine. 'Publication' means newsletters, our website and journal.

Intriguing news for NSW State Heritage Register-listed house and garden, *The Briars*, Wahroonga: AGHS have written in support of a nomination by Dr Zeny Edwards of *Balcombe Park* in front of *The Briars*, facing Woonona Avenue, for local heritage item listing by Ku-Ring-Gai Council. *Balcombe Park* was created over the last year by Council, who won a NSW Land & Environment Court appeal over a court-approved construction of flats replacing a 1950s house there. Council bought the land, demolished the flats' footings, filled and created a new a park. This was originally *The Briars*' front garden and from mid 20th century, its tennis court. Some interpretation will go in describing its connections to St.Helena and Napoleon – Victoria's Mornington Peninsula has a related *The Briars*. A minor 'win' restoring a fitting setting and welcome open space locally.

Recent state heritage grants went to historic landscapes: Several cemeteries got funding to conserve monuments, do conservation plans and reinstatements: *Wiseman's Ferry cemetery* (1820s-1990s), *Newcastle Cathedral Park and cemetery* and *Maitland Jewish cemetery*; *Old Government House*, Parramatta got \$45,000 to reconstruct the Macquarie-era carriage loop to a layout based on photographs and surveys (Craig Burton and Michael Lehany's work); *Richmond Park's* fountain (1892 in an 1811 park) got \$14,000 to conserve remnants of vandalised waterworks (to be removed to the museum and have a replica reinstated). The National Trust (NSW) got \$71,000 to continue their Cemeteries Advisor service and complete a survey of Sydney cemeteries.

A recent National Heritage Listing is Victoria's war memorial *Great Ocean Road*. And recent listings on the NSW State Heritage Register include some landscapes: *Newington Armament Depot* and Nature Reserve (on the former Newington estate), Macquarie's 'castle for horses' the *Conservatorium of Music* in the *Sydney Domain*, *St.Patrick's estate* (the 'Cardinal's Palace') at Manly, *McQuade Park* at Windsor (its former Market Square), *Mort's Dock* (now *Mort Park*) in Balmain, *Holy Trinity Church* (1833) and cemetery (1826), Kelso – the oldest colonial church yard west of the Blue Mountains and the modernist 'dandelion' *El-Alamein Memorial Fountain* in Kings Cross' *Fitzroy Gardens*. More info at www.heritage.nsw.gov.au

Stuart Read: T: 9326 9468 or E: stuart1962@bigpond.com.

NEW MEMBERS

The Branch would like to extend a warm welcome to the following new local members:

David Burdon, Annabelle Duncan, David Elliot, Rosy Porter, Theresa Sargeant,
Peter Schell, Margaret Ann Smith, Judith Stoelwinder

AGHS FORTHCOMING EVENTS

JUNE

Date: Sunday 19th June 10.00am - 5pm

Event: Self drive day tour of Hawkesbury disappearing agriculture - from vegetables to turf farms to bricks. Discover the Secret Garden & Federation era grounds at UWS, Richmond Campus, tour of farm gate/Hawkesbury Harvest and Hawkesbury Artists' trails finishing with a wine tasting and nibbles at Tizzana Winery

Meet at: To be advised when booking

Cost: Members \$25 Guests \$35 - includes light refreshments. Lunch - self catering picnic. Bookings essential - numbers are limited

JULY

Date: Sunday 10th July 2pm - 5.00pm

Event: Walk - La Perouse day: 1788 French garden, exhibition and Botany cemetery

Meet at: To be advised when booking

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

AUGUST

Date: Wednesday 3rd August 6pm Talk at 7pm.

Event: Short AGM first. Followed by a talk by Colleen Morris - *Eastern influences in English gardens*

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

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

SEPTEMBER

Date: Monday 26th September 6.00pm for 6.30-8.30pm

Event: A talk by Chris Betteridge *Remembrance Driveway: Sydney to Canberra – its evolution and heritage value*

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

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

NOVEMBER

Date: 5th/6th November

Event: Self drive weekend tour of gardens at Berry.

More information next newsletter.

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

July 16th -6th August. The New England chapter will be continuing its series of exhibitions of historic garden photography with a short exhibition being opened in the *Inverell Art Gallery* on Saturday 16th July 2011.

Research is continuing on the extensive records documenting the garden *High Woods*. These records are held in the *Glen Innes History House Museum* and a visit to this garden and the associated record holdings will be scheduled at a date to be fixed

For more information contact

President Bill Oates on woates@une.edu.au or Secretary Helen Nancarrow on helennancarrow@bigpond.com or 0267712157..

OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST

Now until 26th June: Exhibition *Carved Trees: Aboriginal Cultures of Central NSW* - Russell Black photographs from the Clifton Cattie Towle collection (1920-40s) of tapho/dendroglyphs. Mitchell Library, Macquarie Street, 10am-5pm, free.

July 26th Rural Fences. Talk by expert Dr John Pickard at History House Macquarie St. 5.30pm for 6pm. Cost \$8.00. More info.9247 8001

July 27th, Garden Seminar, Lindsay, Darling Point: Speakers include Michael Pembroke on favourite (Mt. Wilson) trees; Michael Bligh explains principles of good garden design and Mark Paul introduces newly popular 'Vertical Gardens'.

Cost \$75/National Trust (NSW) members \$65. For more info/bookings: phone: National Trust (NSW) 9968 1915 .

Sunday August 7 Southern Highlands branch AGM with guest speaker: **Trevor Nottle**. Lunch and a Garden Tour to 5th Chapter Estate Avoca, followed by a wine tasting. Cost AGHS members \$35 guests \$40. Bookings essential to Jane Clifford at dejadoo@ymail.com

August 6th/7th 10am-4pm *Paradise Gardens* open weekend 147 Greta Road, Kulnura. Take a free guided tour of the garden. Explore the many sculptures - the cheeky monkey colony and amazing water fountain wall and picnic near the lakes. Learn how to grow drought hardy camellias from members of the NSW Camellia Research Society. Enquiries: AGHS member, Derelie Cherry on 02 4376 1330

16th October Parramatta Park Heritage Rose festival – 10am-5pm. Enquiries - Susan Clunie: 8833 5020 or more info atwww.parrapark.com.au

Don't forget to have a look at our website -
www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au It can now be used to check for updated details of events,
membership renewals, gift purchases and routine enquiries.

Walking The Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway



David Frecker explains the Track's topography



In the heart of the track - memorial



The main memorial space

On a rather damp Sunday in April a small group of AGHS members and friends met under the shelter near the carpark for The Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway. After a cuppa and some Anzac biscuits our leader, David Frecker, led us to the relief map sculpted on the wall of the Interpretation centre to show the geography, length and vertical challenges of the route crossing the Owen Stanley Ranges. David lived in PNG for many years and has walked the Kokoda Track twice. We were also introduced to Matthew Taylor, the landscape architect for the memorial, which was opened in 1996. Stuart Read distributed copies of his notes and plant lists for the memorial. We then trooped down, under umbrellas, to the hospital end of the walkway. The walking track was designed to link Concord Hospital with Rhodes railway station. There are 22 stations along the walk, each representing a significant site in the Papua - New Guinea campaign of July 1942 to January 1943. A rag-tag bunch of Australian Reserve soldiers, supported by the Americans, fought in atrocious conditions against a much larger Japanese force and inflicted the first defeat on the mighty Imperial Japanese Army. This legendary effort is credited with saving Australia from invasion during World War II. At each station David gave us the history of the named spot spiced with diggers' anecdotes, family memories and his own personal observations from 'walking the Kokoda'. Matthew explained the symbolism of the design elements and the plants used. It transpired that Matthew's own father had served in PNG as a radar officer. The statistics for casualties of the campaign were sobering; during just four months of fighting Australian Infantry alone lost 607 killed, another 1015 were wounded. Many thousands more died of malaria and other tropical diseases. The walkway covers 800 metres along the mangrove shores of Brays Bay on Parramatta River, winding along to reflect the shoreline. Planting largely consists of common or familiar species including many Australian natives but cleverly grouped to give an impression of dense jungle, all splendidly dripping during our visit, an effect emphasised where trees and shrubs melded into the natural mangrove shore. Tropical plants would not thrive here and maintenance has to be within the reach of the council assisted by day release prisoners. The site is also open to the public and not able to be secured. It was subject to vandalism in July 2010, so the lovely vegetation we saw is a credit to all. The point culminant is the Memorial Centrepiece, a serene space with a small bubbling fountain at its centre (which gives rise to the watercourse, running energetically on this wet day), partially enclosed by high, curving, black granite walls with sandblasted photographic images of the campaign. Some of these black and white photographs are very familiar, the much loved fuzzy wuzzy angels for example, but in this setting, enlarged to about twice life size and backed by tall plantings such as palms and tree ferns, they achieve a solemn dignity fitting to the purpose of this wonderful memorial, possibly the only one in Australia dedicated solely to the soldiers of WW II. It was a 'fine' April activity combining history and garden.

David Frecker is a supporter of The Kokoda Track Foundation which works to provide education, health, community development and microbusiness opportunities in 30 villages throughout the catchment area of *The Kokoda Track*.

More information can be found on their website www.kokodatrackfoundation.org

A Plea!

Can we appeal to all members who use e-mail to arrange to receive our newsletter, 'Branch Cuttings', electronically. This will result in considerable savings of both time and money for the committee. Printing costs and postage have both risen in recent times and committee members have not got hours to spend filling envelopes if it is unnecessary. There are some advantages for readers: you will get your copy the instant it is published including advice of upcoming functions, you can see the illustrations in full colour and you can print as many copies (or extracts) to share as you wish. I print mine on recycled paper to read on train journeys, a small step towards treading lightly on the planet.

Please email Jeanne on Jeanne@Villani.com if you are willing to do this.

Angela Low

Eastern influences in English gardens

A glimpse of the talk by Colleen Morris at the AGM



Chinese Dairy at *Woburn Abbey*

In about 1818 Governor and Mrs Macquarie had a pagoda built on the shores of the harbour in Newcastle. Among their landscape improvements and embellishments it was surely their greatest folly. The Macquaries were following the 18th century fashion for Chinese inspired buildings in Britain. This illustrated talk will discuss influences from the East and explore what remains of the early fascination for a Chinese, Indian or Japanese flavour in British gardens.

The lakeside Chinese Dairy at *Woburn Abbey* was built to the design of Henry Holland in 1788. In 1804 Humphry Repton added a Chinese porch opposite the dairy, enhanced the surroundings with Chinese plants and added mounds of rock and a Chinese bridge.



Sezincote in Gloucestershire built in 1805

...and something to look forward to in September - A talk by Chris Betteridge

Remembrance Driveway: Sydney to Canberra – its evolution and heritage value

Chris & Margaret Betteridge have undertaken a heritage assessment of our longest memorial avenue – *Remembrance Driveway* and its current condition. Started in 1953 and officially opened with two plantings made by the visiting Queen Elizabeth II in 1954, this series of plantings of exotic trees honours Australian men and women who served the country in World War II and subsequent conflicts, such as Malaya, Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq. Its initial development was by asking for sponsorship from major Australian companies. Many local communities and R.S.L. branches remain closely involved in tending sections. AGHS member Charlotte Webb did her Master of Heritage Conservation thesis on the Southern Highlands sections of *Remembrance Driveway*. It comprises over 50,000 trees from Macquarie Place, Sydney to Canberra. The new F5/Freeway since 1990 meant realignment of the Driveway (and leaving some plantations ‘stranded’). It also meant there have been 20 new plantations honouring those who have received Victoria Crosses. Interest in the Driveway was revived during the *Australia Remembers 1945-1995* celebrations with extra government funding and plantings.

An afternoon at La Perouse – the French in Sydney; cemeteries v market gardens - Jane Irwin and Stuart Read



Site of French garden at La Perouse

Now you've read the stimulating article on page one, I'm sure you'll be keen to join us in July to explore the places for yourself on a couple of gentle walks near Botany Bay. First around *Botany Cemetery*, part of the *Eastern Suburbs Memorial Park* - one of the east's earliest (1892).

The *Eastern Suburbs Memorial Park* has been an important part of Sydney since its first interment in 1893. Located on the site is the *Pioneer Memorial Park* (1976), where memorials of early pioneers and prominent citizens of the colony still stand. This Park contains 746 surviving memorials of 2285 transported in 1901 from the *Sydney Burial Ground*, also known as the *Old Devonshire Street (Burial) Ground* and the *Sandhills Cemetery*.

In 1938 a crematorium was opened to cater for choice and ensure cultural requirements could be met. The newest part of the park contains gardens and outdoor areas of the former Bunnerong Power Station. Part of this area will become the *Asian Memorial Gardens*. The Park offers modern facilities, including an on-site funeral home, café, condolence centre and florist. Jane Irwin, who has been landscape architect for many recently upgraded areas, will explain proposals for the *Asian Memorial Gardens*. She'll also discuss problems getting plans implemented and discuss conflict with *Botany Cemetery's* proposed extension into the adjacent 150 year old market gardens. These gardens were first tended by Irish and later by Chinese Australians, who continue to produce food there. Urban Sydney is running out of burial space in its graveyards and land close to its population is increasingly under demand. This is a good example of land use conflict, where a new use (more burial space closer to 'home') threatens to erase an older one (market gardening and food production 'close to home').

The market gardens are of historical, agricultural and social significance to NSW and Sydney in particular. The place was supposed to be used as market gardens for more than 150 years, firstly used by Europeans and then by Chinese. It has importance in the area's evolution from a landscape occupied and modified by the local Aboriginal population, to one adapted to the settlement and food needs of a European colony. It has great social significance for its association with Chinese immigrants who became predominant in the market gardens of this area for about 100 years. It has some scenic value due to its somewhat rural character which can be perceived from the surrounding area. They are representative as surviving examples of market gardens that were originally fairly widespread in the area. They are also rare as the last remaining evidence in Randwick of early agricultural uses, many having already been redeveloped for residential uses.

The next short drive or walk, is to *Botany Bay National Park*: site of the 1788 French garden of 1825 and other early monuments to the 1788 French expedition led by famed navigator, Comte de Lapérouse and another later, led by Bruni d'Entrecasteaux. We will visit the fascinating exhibition on the French here in *La Perouse Museum*. While Tasmania's Recherche Bay and its 1797 French garden has garnered much media and academic attention in recent years, Sydney is home to the site of a garden made by French sailors and scientists in 1788, shortly after the English first fleet's arrival. The French were licking their wounds after being attacked in Samoa. They camped on the northern shore, surprised to see British ships anchored in the bay. Phillip had already left to explore Port Jackson to the north. A scientist with Laperouse, Father Receveur, died and was buried here. The French ships sailed out of Botany Bay and were not heard from again. In 1826 their wrecks were found on an island in the Santa Cruz group. In 1825 the French government erected a large monument to Lapérouse here and this forms a kind of pilgrimage site for French visitors, who consider it a small part of France.

Also nearby is the 1820-21 round tower erected under Governor Macquarie's term for a small guard stationed to prevent smuggling. The site enjoys panoramic views across Botany Bay to the port, airport, Brighton-le-Sands, *Towra Point bird sanctuary* and the Kurnell peninsula.

From Vegetables to Turf to Bricks - text & photos by Stuart Read

Join in the self drive tour of the Hawkesbury region in June to enjoy and observe the disappearing agriculture of the Sydney Basin. We will be visiting the *Hawkesbury Skills Secret Garden* nursery, the lovely established grounds of the former *Hawkesbury Agricultural College* (now *University of Western Sydney, Richmond*), an orchard at Kurrajong and a charming Italian winery near Ebenezer. These will give you some idea of the range of productivity of this large area on Sydney's north-west edge.

The Hawkesbury was early settled, named '*Green Hills*' and was a vital 'bread-basket' filling the stomachs and storehouses of the colony. With its rich alluvial river flats supporting intensive cropping (despite devastating floods), its role in supporting and sustaining the growing population and settlement of NSW remains, although today, despite its \$1b industry in fruit, vegetables, turf, cut flowers etc it is under threat from suburban sprawl, hobby farms and ignorance of its real value. Pressure for rezoning land to residential and industrial, lack of beefing up transport links (e.g. a twin track rail line to Richmond) and pressure within and on Council is all too evident.

This will be a full day tour with opportunities to buy plants, vegetables and herbs, fruit, wine and other local products, so bring a full tank of petrol, plenty of plastic carry bags and cash (in small denominations please) so we can keep the group moving freely. Maps for self-drive farm gate tours and artists' tours (many famous Australian artists painted scenes in this district and you can drive to the exact sites of some) will be given out to participants - to enjoy another day. Cost includes morning tea (please bring your own mug), tea or coffee plus a cake or slice of sweet pie at our lunch venue and a biscuits and cheese and wine-tasting at our last stop. Full lunch is not included so please bring your own sandwich. A set of notes on the route, interesting sights and places we visit will be provided at the meeting place. A couple of local growers have agreed to address our group and answer questions. There will be a chance to see some of Australia's oldest remaining buildings in passing and a visit to *Ebenezer Uniting Church* can also be squeezed in. Numbers will need to be capped to keep the group workable so book soon. Costing allows us to give a donation to hosts at not-for-profit venues.



Entry drive of UWS Richmond



Richmond Park - main oval and grandstand



Landscape in the Grose Vale-Kurrajong district

Looking for your suggestions!

As you may know, the Australian Garden History Society is a not-for-profit organisation. We make money from the many events we stage throughout the year.

Our money is then used to further gardens and their preservation as well as garden history. Here are some of the areas that have received donations from our Branch. Our money has helped in the restoration of the Cunningham Obelisk in the *Sydney Botanic Gardens*. It has purchased tags to be used in *Eryldene's* camellia cataloguing project. Also it has paid for the preparation of oral histories of a number of garden personalities by the Society (These oral histories are available to any members. As well they can be accessed in the *State Library of NSW*).

We are interested in your suggestions for future donations. Does anyone have ideas for a significant favourite or neglected garden or landscape that needs help? Some suggestions could be as follows, the preparation of garden conservation plans, arborists reports or work, planting restorations or recreations, manual labour, as well as horticultural advice.

Garden histories, writings or research are other suggestions.

All ideas and gardens/landscapes will be considered. Please give us your thoughts, experience and 'light bulb' suggestions! Ring Jeanne Villani 9997 5995 or email jeanne@villani.com or me, Rosemary Potts 9332 1002 rpotts@ozemail.com.au

