



Victorian Branch Newsletter

April 2009

Dear Victorian Member

The weekend of February 7 is a date now etched in our memory as the '39 fires were for previous generations. Our thoughts and good wishes go out to those affected by the fires as they attempt to rebuild their lives after such trauma. You may have seen the touching photograph in *The Age* of members Jane and Malcolm Calder at Steeles Creek searching the scorched earth around their house for signs of the garden that once bloomed there. They managed to save their house, and one of our members who is an avid propagator is already busy collecting plant material for the Calder's garden. We were relieved to learn that the Hermitage at Narbethong where AGHS once had a most enjoyable excursion, was saved from the fires.

www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au

Branch Committee:

Chair:

Pamela Jellie

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Kathy Wright

Secretary:

Helen Botham

Minute Secretary:

Susan Reidy

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Committee:

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Coming Events:

Winter Lectures - 16 June (6 for 6.30pm) Prof. Jeanette Hoorn – landscapes of artist Eugene von Guerard

16 July (6 for 6.30pm) Dr Jane Drakard - Interpreting 'The Italian Garden'

18 August (7.00 lecture) Dr Gerard Vaughan – C18th informal English landscape

Beechworth - the Road to Gold Tour planned for April

A lot of work goes into planning our excursions as it usually means asking favours of friends and garden owners, so it was disappointing to have to cancel the Anzac weekend tour due to lack of numbers. We are grateful to Mary Chapman for the months of planning she put into what promised to be a most stimulating weekend and to John Patrick for his offer to escort us around Beechworth. We are also sorry to disappoint those members who booked for the weekend, and for the residents of Beechworth who are anxious for visitors to return to the township after the fires in the district.

Winter Lectures in June, July and August

The good news is that our winter lectures are on again this year with a most interesting line up of speakers. Details are in the flyer included with this journal so do make a note in your diary of the dates and mention those of interest to your friends. See the Coming Events box for the dates.

Geelong Conference 16 -19 October

The reputation of these annual national conferences has increased over the 29 years of the Society so our branch committee is aware of the considerable responsibility to uphold the high standard and deliver a stimulating program that we can be proud of. I hope you will agree when you see the brochure included with this journal. The conference committee are working to ensure that it is success, so we hope that you will start saving up so that you can come to Geelong in October!

Friends of La Trobe Cottage

Following much discussion over the last couple of years, a 'Friends of La Trobe's Cottage' group is to be formed. The group will be co-ordinated by Helen and John Botham, AGHS members, under the umbrella of The C.J.La Trobe Society but reporting directly to the National Trust of Australia (Victoria). It is hoped that this group will support the National Trust in their efforts to maintain the cottage, and improve the 'Visitor Experience' at the cottage through regular public opening times, better interpretation, and improved interior and exterior appearance. Part of this work will be to plant a sympathetic garden around the cottage, and then maintain this.

There is to be an initial meeting at the National Trust office at Tasma Terrace, 4 Parliament Place on Wednesday 15 April at 6:00 pm. Any AGHS members interested in joining this group should contact Helen Botham on 9583 1114.

Heritage in the High Country forum in May

The Heritage Council of Victoria and Heritage Victoria, in conjunction with Australian Alps National Parks, East Gippsland Shire Council and Parks Victoria, is presenting a one day Forum on Heritage of the high country, on Friday 15 May. The Forum will be held at the Masonic Hall in Omeo. The Forum

hopes to: raise awareness of the historic places of the high country and to gain broad community acceptance of their heritage values; to identify the threats to cultural heritage; and to see how management affects the cultural heritage values of alpine parks.

There is also a self-drive tour after the forum on Saturday 16 May looking at some of the sites under review. This is an excellent way to visit the high country with well informed company. Call Jane Andrews on 0409 804 727 or email jane@netspace.net.au for a registration form. Booking close on Friday 8 May.

Garden visits to Mawallock and Ballantrae

Sharon Beaman reports on our day in the country on Sunday 1 March.

Ballantrae at Buninyong was our first stop. What was impressive here was the wonderful house built in the 1850's with lots of lacework decorating the eaves and verandas that looked like cast iron but had been hand carved from Baltic pine, making it look like something out of a fairytale. Even the outbuildings had their share of lacework. The house still had its timber shingles under the iron roof. The garden still maintained its original layout and had some very handsome old trees, particularly a *Metasequoia* and cedars with their beautiful round grey-green cones on show. All the trees in the garden had been nurtured during the drought with water from a bore. Our hosts were overwhelmingly hospitable.

Mawallock, south of Beaufort, was a totally different experience mainly because there was a large lake fed from a spring which provided water for the extensive garden. In drought ridden Victoria, here was a flourishing perennial border and shrubbery in full flight. I was particularly captured by a *Vitex agnus-castus* covered in mauve spikes, a *Caryopteris clandonensis* full of blue fluffy flowers, an unusual loose flowered pink statice (limonium) that spilled rather than standing erect and the *Sedum spectabile* looked marvellously succulent everywhere. There was an enormous English oak, *Quercus robur* with branches down to the ground, where the temperature under its shade was quite cool. Perhaps the most notable aspect of Mawallock was the lawn terrace in front of the house with its magnificent vista of the lake and distant hills and the broad bluestone steps with erigeron spilling over them leading you into the garden.

St Kilda Botanic Garden, February 11 Walk/Talk

A pleasing number of member and friends took advantage of this evening walk around the gardens with members of the St Kilda Botanic Gardens Friends. In September the Friends are planning an historical exhibition on the history of the gardens. This will be something to watch out for as the exhibition will be the first of a number of events to celebrate the 150 years since the gardens were established.

Committee News

We have been very fortunate to have Helen Botham on the committee so it was with regret that we received her resignation after four and a half years with us. Helen's research and writing skills resulted in her book *La Trobe's Jolimont, A walk round my garden* and in *Garden Cuttings*, the publication by Helen Forgasz of the late Nina Crone's articles for *The Age*. She has been our secretary for the past two years and with her husband John they have greatly assisted us with their graphic and IT skills, most recently the conference brochure included in this journal. Our thanks to both of you for your contribution to our branch and we wish you well with the setting up of the Friends of La Trobe Cottage.

Please let us know if you could help on the committee to fill the vacancy left by Helen.

New Members

We are pleased to welcome new members who have joined us this year and we hope that we will have the opportunity to welcome you in person at one of our functions during the year.

Jo Bourke	John Graham	Jane Miller
John Fordham	Jane Gunnerson	Robert Sparkes
Susan Fox	Lois Keipert	Andrew and Marie Walpole
Heather George	Anne McLeod	Janet Wood

Working Bees

AGHS members have been loyal supporters of the restoration of the gardens at the former Abbotsford Convent, 1 St Heliers Street, Abbotsford, (Melway 2D C3). Regular working bees are held on the first Wednesday of each month and extra help would be most welcome, especially now with the autumn cut back of shrubs. Come anytime from 9.30am - 3.00pm. BYO lunch. Car parking is available on site or opposite the Convent. All day parking is \$4.00. Enquiries: Telephone 9836 1881 or email: pdjellie@hotmail.com

Pamela Jellie – Chair, AGHS (Victoria)