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NEWSLETTER – MARCH 2010

WEST AUSTRALIAN BRANCH



Hello members, and welcome to Autumn or a hint of it! The committee looks forward to seeing you during the year. This Newsletter gives notice of two events, and there are some other dates for your diary as well.

FUNCTIONS 2010

Let's Take Tea! Traditional afternoon tea party.

Sunday, 21 March, 3.00pm

79 Solomon St, Fremantle

Cost: \$20.00 RSVP to Sue Monger by Fri 19 Mar 93841575 or susanmonger@yahoo.com.au

We start our year with a visit to Warwick House, in Fremantle. The heritage property was built in the late 1880s and at one stage was owned by the Fremantle Hospital. Our hosts Lorna di Lello and Grant Wignall have generously offered us the opportunity to see over the house and gardens. Hilary White of Elmstock Tea will give us an illustrated presentation on tea growing and varieties in Sri Lanka. He frequently visits his country of birth and keeps in touch with suppliers. A splendid afternoon tea will be served and we will be able to sample Hilary's wares. Numbers are limited so please RSVP early for this event.

Who gives a fig? The Cloisters fig tree and Florence Hummerston Reserve.

Sunday, 16 May, 2.30pm at the fig tree

RSVP to Caroline Grant 9384 3414, email grantspcajc@yahoo.com.au

Street parking or the Cloisters Car Park is open until 6.00pm.

Marion Blackwell, landscape architect and botanist, certainly did, and was instrumental in securing the future of the fig tree (*Ficus rubiginosa*) next to the Cloisters. The fig has graced the Terrace since approximately 1888 and faced an uncertain future in the late 1960s when Mt Newman House was built. The Cloisters was constructed in 1858 with a grant from the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and with funds from the first bishop of Perth, Bishop Matthew Blagden Hale.¹ It was established as the first secondary school in Western Australia, the forerunner of Hale School.

The Port Jackson fig tree was planted when the eastern part of the Cloisters became a private residence in the 1880s. It is hoped Marion will be present to tell us the fascinating story of her role in preserving the tree.

Florence Hummerston (1889-1983) was Perth City's first woman councillor (1951-68). She founded Wanslea Children's Home (for children whose mothers were sick) and the Meals on Wheels service in WA. Phil Palmer, Landscape Architect for the National Trust (WA), will lead us on a walk of the Reserve, the only area of public open space between Elder St and Barrack St.

EXHIBITION OF EARLY PERTH GARDENS

An exhibition of early Perth gardens is planned to celebrate the 21st birthday of the West Australian Branch of the Australian Garden History Society, and discussions are underway with the City of Perth to mount the exhibition in the ground floor of the Perth Town Hall. Members may recall *Modern Visions of the City of Perth* exhibition in that space in April-May 2009, which charted the development of the City of Perth from the 1930s up until the 1960s.

It is hoped that *Early Perth Gardens* will be on display in August, generating interest in the early and remaining parks and gardens of Perth, and raise the profile of the Society. An exhibition subcommittee has been formed with an abundance of curating and research experience, and the National Management Committee of the AGHS has kindly advanced a grant. Hopefully the City of Perth will do likewise. It is incumbent on our Branch to raise a proportion of the funds (a minimum of \$2000, considerably more if we would like a substantial catalogue). If anyone is keen to manage a fundraising event, or is interested in arranging sponsorship, please contact the subcommittee, headed by John Viska, telephone 9328 1519.

NEW MEMBER

We extend a warm welcome to Christopher Vernon.

¹ Taken from the Heritage Council of Western Australia assessment, *The Cloisters*. Go to <http://register.heritage.wa.gov.au> to the places database and type 'Cloisters'.

CHRISTMAS FUNCTION

This was held on Sunday 13 December at the Cottesloe home of Sue & Adrian Monger. Twenty seven members and friends enjoyed the respite offered by the afternoon sea breeze, with a fine fruit cake and bubbly to celebrate the Branch's 21st birthday in style. The nitty gritty of the annual Viska quiz which tests members' memories of our activities over the year, sorted the roses from the dandelions! The Christmas hamper was won by Theresa Putland.

MEMBERSHIP

Your Garden magazine Autumn 2010

The recent issue of *Your Garden* features an article on AGHS by Christine Reid in which she recounts the history of the Society and discusses the importance of studying, preserving and enjoying our gardening heritage. Christine chairs the AGHS Editorial Advisory panel.

Our AGHS WA Branch membership numbers have fallen from approximately 80 to 72. If you have forgotten to renew your membership and intend to stay involved, please attend to it. If you know of friends who would like to join, please ask Sue or Caroline for a form, or visit the AGHS website: <http://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au>.

NATIONAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE NEWS

In Melbourne: Planning Day 13 Feb, Meeting 14 Feb

- Distribution of the journal: subscription only rate not favoured. Branches could draw up list of six "pacemakers" i.e libraries, local studies, Radio National to receive AGHS *gratis*
- Review of Editorial Advisory Panel: Chair Christine Reid, John Viska, Colleen Morris, Anne Latreille, Glen Cook have accepted appointments, first phone link meeting 25 Feb
- Garden of Ideas: R.Aitken spoke on proposed exhibitions, additional funding from Melbourne Uni
- Encouraging Memberships: J.Dwyer spoke to his paper: appoint a sub committee
- Membership rate: \$2.00 per membership increase foreshadowed
- Review of Conference Booking System: bookings to be processed 3-4 weeks after opening date
- Strengthening links with kindred bodies i.e. National Trust, Heritage Roses, historical groups
- Parameters of the Historic Gardens Restoration Fund: for discussion at June NMC
- Amendments to the *Protocols for Taking and Publishing Photographs of Gardens Visited by AGHS*: the word 'image' will cover paintings, drawings, videos etc
- Treasurer: good surplus from 2009 conference. Branches to consider projects
- Journal: editor seeks review of previous 10 issues. Co-editor C.Dyson away 12 months
- 2010 Conference: Launceston, registration brochure in next *AGH*
- Writing awards: Branches struggle to attract suitable entries, change criteria/format
- Western Australian Branch photographic display: \$3000 from NMC. R.Aitken suggested this would provide good material for a Journal article
- Review and appointment of subcommittees
- Edna Walling tour: 26-30 April 48 bookings, likely to run a second tour 3-7 May

NEWLY RELEASED BOOK FOR GARDEN RESEARCHERS

Australian Botanist's Companion by Alex George. For those interested in Australian botany, with information on standard texts and sources, current and historical data, placenames, people, expedition ships, and much more. Concise biographical data on 2,600 people who collected plants in Australia up to the year 1900 is included. Published by Four Gables Press, WA. 671 pages, B5 casebound, price \$77.00 incl. GST. P&P in Australia \$13.00. Contact Alex George: ph 08 9337 1655, Email a.george@murdoch.edu.au.

PERTH WRITERS FESTIVAL

A number of AGHS WA members enjoyed the recent Perth Writers Festival. A profusion of new novels sat alongside themes of landscapes, gardening, and travel writing. Interesting discussions included Nicolas Rothwell, author of *Journeys to the Interior*, interviewed by Bill Bunbury, and a session entitled *The Lure of the Land* with Monty Don, author of *Around the World in 80 Gardens* and the American scholar William Fox, whose publication *Journey to Mars* is about the landscape of Devon Island, Canada.

OTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Until 29 March: McCubbin: Last Impressions 1907-17 at the Art Gallery of Western Australia. Many of these vibrant works depict landscapes of early Melbourne and are from private collections.

27 March: Royal Western Australian Historical Society annual second hand book sale, 9.00am at Stirling House, 48 Broadway, Nedlands. Our scouts tell us there will be "a good selection of gardening books".

April 30 – 2 May: Festival of Country Gardens: Autumn Delights, based in the Bridgetown and Balingup districts experience the delights in this scenic region in a full program organised by Peta Townsing Tel 08 9761 1470 or visit www.countrygardens.com.au.