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Newsletter – August/September 2009

WEST AUSTRALIAN BRANCH



## FUNCTIONS 2009

**Sunday, 6 September: A Day in the Chittering Valley**

**Cost: \$10.00 includes morning tea and entrance to the Bindoon Museum**

**Bring a picnic lunch**

**Using the Great Northern Highway 10.30am** Meet at the Arts and Crafts Centre, 4kms south of Bindoon, signposted Brockman Centre, on Teatree Rd, for morning tea with time to see some local arts and crafts.

**11.30am** Depart for Bindoon to visit the Chittering Museum, located on the left of the GNH in Binda Pl (keep an eye out for the Council offices and Library). Much of the collection was donated to the Shire by the Dickerson family and contains farm machinery, household items and memorabilia.

**12.45pm** Proceed to Enderslea, on Blue Plains Rd off Chittering Rd, where we'll have our picnic. Diane Pope will be our host at her historic property. Settled in 1853, Enderslea was home to the first grapes grown in the Chittering Valley. There are remnant olive trees and later plantings of pears, mulberries and figs. The Heritage Council (WA) has recognised the significance of the place by providing grants to conserve the stone barn and the house. Diane will talk to us about the property and the conservation plan.

You may like to allow a few minutes to visit the historic Holy Trinity Anglican churchyard on the left just south of the Brockman Centre – the church won't be open but the cemetery is of interest.

Members are reminded to wear appropriate footwear – it was very wet underfoot when we did the recce.

**RSVP: John Viska 93281519 or [john.viska@challengertafe.wa.edu.au](mailto:john.viska@challengertafe.wa.edu.au)**

**Christmas function: Sunday 13 December 4.00pm. - venue and further details in our next Newsletter.**

## RECENT AGHS EVENTS

**Sunday 26 July Garden recording workshop at Old Blythewood, Pinjarra**

A small but enthusiastic group of members armed with measuring tapes, pencils clipboards, digital cameras and a picnic lunch, participated in this session led by the National Trust's landscape architect, Phil Palmer. Following the seminar in the State Records Office in June, this provided an opportunity to learn how to read the elements of an historic garden, and record them on paper.

Vince Taylor, Warden of the property, spoke about the pioneering McLarty family and the site. Old Blythewood, on approximately two acres excised from the McLarty holding, was donated and vested in the National Trust (WA) in 1974. Restoration work on the kitchen wing and main house was carried out prior to being opened to the public in 1975 and we had the opportunity to view the spartan living conditions. Many olive trees, heritage roses and extant *Schinus molle* peppercorn trees and a large *E. cladocalyx* sugar gum form the bones of the garden. Oline Richards' conservation plan is in use. Volunteers were hard at work in the garden and it was good to share knowledge with them over morning tea. A copy of *A Guide to Interpreting and Conserving Gardens in Western Australia* was a timely gift to answer many of their questions about appropriate plantings and garden styles of the era. Thanks to Phil Palmer for leading this workshop, and John Viska, Caroline Grant and Renee Gardener for adding their knowledge and skills to the exercise, and to Vince and the volunteers for their excellent hospitality.

**AGM Sunday 23 August at Fall's Farm, Lesmurdie**

Well tended gardens and a warming fire greeted the 29 members and friends who attended. The meeting endorsed the committee (see below) and John Viska reported on the proposed photographic exhibition to mark the 21<sup>st</sup> birthday of the WA branch. The display would be mounted in the Undercroft of the Perth Town Hall for two weeks in the latter part of 2010.

Unfortunately the lack of suitable entries for the John Viska Essay Prize launched at the 2008 AGM meant the prize was not awarded this year.

Following the meeting Ruth Morgan, a PhD environmental history student, gave an illustrated talk on the factors influencing the rise of native gardens of Perth in the 1970s. 'The Wildflower State' slogan was adopted in the late 1960's, a greater appreciation of Kings Park was fostered with the development of a botanic garden featuring WA flora, scientific and research facilities. A poor understanding of cultivation and water requirements often led to early native gardens being unruly and unkempt areas in which lemon scented gums, acacias and many South African species such as agapanthus were common. The 1970's inspired bush gardens to 'get away from it all' in the suburbs, and specialist nurseries, publications on WA plants, improved knowledge of appropriate plants for regions and soils, emphasis on the appeal of low maintenance gardens and colour TV all influenced gardeners in the 1970s. Water restrictions and the introduction of user pays billing ensured that water use became a public issue in this era, while the environmental movement became more influential. Thank you, Ruth for this reminder of an era which many of us remember well!

## NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome to our new members Ann Forma, Jennifer and Susan Cocks and welcome back to Linda Green and Dick Sayers – we look forward to your company at our functions.

## NATIONAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE NEWS

Met by conferlink 3 August

Draft of protocols for taking & publishing photographs of private gardens visited by AGHS discussed

Lady Sue Wilton (previously Lady Ebury) has accepted the invitation to become the new patron of AGHS

Treasurer: a successful year, surplus of \$65,053 due to an increase in membership, profit from tours & 2008 conference & \$10,000 from Grants to Voluntary Environment & Heritage Organisations (used for admin costs)

Janet Armstrong appointed to Administrative Assistant position

2009 AGHS Conference Geelong: conf & post conf tour fully booked, some places for optional day

2010 Tasmania: Launceston: plans progressing

2010 Queensland: to be based in Maryborough, 21 or 28 August

Membership total: to end of June 1541, 1505 at the same time 2008

Website Report: modifications and improvements ongoing

Next NMC meeting: 14 October during the National Conference. Contact elected member John Viska or branch rep. Sue Monger if there are matters you wish to have raised at NMC level.

## OTHER EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

The **Western Australian Art Gallery** quarterly program *Preview* is now available on line. To subscribe log on to [artgallery.wa.gov.au/subscribe](http://artgallery.wa.gov.au/subscribe) A current exhibition *Abstract Earth: The Photography of Richard Woldendorp* may be of interest to members. Woldendorp specialises in aerial photography of the Australian landscape with a difference. The exhibition concludes on 8 November.

The 2009-10 season of the **Australia's Open Garden Scheme** is underway. Anna Chandler's seaside garden at 6 Andrews Pl Cottesloe is open 12-13 Sept 10.00am – 4.30pm. Walcliffe House, the former Bussell property, in Margaret River will be open 14-15 Nov. For details of all gardens purchase the Guide from bookstores or newsagents or log on to [www.opengarden.org.au](http://www.opengarden.org.au).

**Heritage Roses in Australia WA branch:** 21 - 22 Nov A weekend in Kojonup. Travel the Albany Hwy by coach stopping in Williams en route. Visits to the Rose Maze and Museum at Kodja Place, a town garden and a country garden in Williams on the return journey are among the delights of the weekend. \$175pp twin share. Contact Di Durston for further information [di.durston@omail.com](mailto:di.durston@omail.com) ph 9497 9237.

**The Kings Park Festival:** 1-28 Sept highlights include: 9 Sept How to Grow Rare and Endangered Plants in your Garden, 16 Sept The Future of Home Gardening, 25-28 Sept, Friends of Kings Park Native Plant sale. Further information 9480 3600 or [www.bgpa.wa.gov.au](http://www.bgpa.wa.gov.au)

To catch up on what other branches are doing, and on National Office information, visit the Australian Garden History Society web site at [www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au](http://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au)

**WA COMMITTEE** The committee was endorsed at the AGM

Chair: Caroline Grant, Secretary and NMC Branch Rep: Sue Monger, Treasurer: Gillian Lilleyman, Renee Gardiner, Joy Hill, Theresa Putland, John Viska, Lisa Williams.

We're delighted to welcome Lisa to the committee – Lisa has expertise in museums, landscape architecture, horticulture and history. Mary Maxwell, a long-serving committee member, has stood down. Mary made a valued contribution: she revived the proposal that the Branch offer an essay writing prize and undertook the onerous task of distilling committee discussions to present a well worded document detailing the background and criteria of the prize. As Newsletter Editor Mary's writing skills were greatly appreciated by our members. Our grateful thanks to you, Mary. We look forward to you and Phil maintaining your involvement with the Branch.