



AUSTRALIAN
**GARDEN
HISTORY**
SOCIETY

Queensland Branch

Newsletter

October 2006

CONTENTS

Yungaba Building & Gardens
Yungaba Action Group
Ashgrove 150 Heritage Bus Tour
Qld Garden History Archive

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Due to re-organisation at the Art Gallery, meetings are being held in the Board Room of the Public Service Club - entry from Stephens Lane between the Conrad Treasury Hotel and the Old Government Printing Office. *Next meeting at midday on Friday 17th November.*

COMMITTEE CONTACTS

Chairman and Newsletter Editor –
Keith Jorgensen 3341 3933 Home
email: jorgenkg@picknowl.com.au
Vice-chair – Susan Martin
3870 2186 H
Sec'y – Anne Baster 3823 2717
abaster@bigpond.net.au
Treasurer – Regina Brown
3374 3851 H
NMC rep – Cecily Dean
Other committee members –
Elspeth Douglas,
Nancy Schuster,
Elizabeth Teeland,
Nancy Tow,
Maurice Wilson.

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

There were several changes to our Committee at the AGM on August 20. Unfortunately Elspeth Douglas has decided not to continue as Chair for health reasons, and three other stalwarts of the branch: Glenn Cooke, Wendy Lees and Marjorie Shackleton did not stand, the first two because they have served nine continuous years, the maximum permitted under the Constitution. Many thanks to them all for their dedicated work in the past.

Our new Branch Secretary is Anne Baster who has had considerable experience as Secretary of the Queensland Council of Garden Clubs. Regina Brown is continuing as Treasurer, and our incoming Vice-chair is Susan Martin.

Unfortunately we do not have a replacement events organiser but Wendy has offered to continue as RSVP contact until the end of the year. Elspeth, Maurice and Nancy Tow have each agreed to organise an individual event. If any members have ideas for a garden to visit, please let us know.

Our Branch Representative on the National Management Committee will continue to be Cecily Dean. Other continuing committee members are Nancy Schuster and Elizabeth Teeland. I am continuing as Newsletter Editor for this issue, but hope to have a replacement by the end of the year.

Well now, what of the future for our Branch? We must certainly continue to provide our members with a core program of garden visits and lectures, and to increase if possible the number of members that attend.

We also need to increase our Branch's public profile and most importantly generate more income as our finances have been steadily falling since our National Conference in 2003. We particularly need to run more activities such as Colleen Morris's lecture on Margaret Preston in order to raise funds and increase public awareness of the society in order to attract more members.

Keith Jorgensen

EVENTS

To assist with organisation of events, PLEASE register by due date with Wendy Lees ph. 3289 0280 tallowwood@iprimus.com.au Tea, coffee & milk provided for picnics, B.Y.O. hot water.

OCTOBER – Gold Coast

- Narrowneck remnant vegetation
 - Cable Park, Narrowneck
 - Gold Coast Museum garden for lunch
 - Gold Coast Botanic Gardens.
- Time: 10am Saturday 7 October
Meet at: the beachfront carpark on Main Beach Parade, 100 m N of the Main Beach Parade/Ferny Av intersection, opposite Madison Point apartments.
Bring own lunch, cup and hot water.
Register by: 1 Oct to Wendy Lees.

NOVEMBER – Xmas Event

- Date: Saturday 25 November
10am Meet at Maijala Park on main road through Mt Glorious Village for morning tea (bring own cup and hot water) & garden visits.
1pm Lunch at licensed restaurant.
3pm Phoenix Sculpture Garden visit.
Cost approx \$30 for morning tea, lunch & sculpture garden entry.
Car pooling is recommended from Samford or The Gap.
Register by 5 Nov to Wendy Lees for further details.

DECEMBER – No event

Yungaba Immigration Depot — visit on 28 May 2006

Contributed by Nancy Schuster, photograph by Keith Jorgensen

This visit to the *Yungaba* Immigration Depot at Kangaroo Point was made in response to a request for assistance from the *Friends of Yungaba*. They are concerned about the proposed conversion of the existing building into apartments and the construction of new apartment blocks in part of the grounds, and were seeking AGHS support regarding the heritage landscaped gardens.



On arrival we were given a brief history of the building, which was completed in 1887. It consists of a brick two-storied central block with T shaped wings on the north and south. The wide verandas have timber posts and handrails with decorative balustrade infill panels, and the end sections are enclosed with lattice screening. From them we were able to view the gardens and the river. The building was designed to accommodate 100 families and 300 single men and women. After three to four months at sea in cramped conditions, this imposing new building with its spacious verandas, set amidst a wide expanse of green lawn and gardens that reached to the banks of the river, would have been a welcoming sight for the new arrivals sailing up the Brisbane River.

In 1880, Queensland was expanding rapidly and the demand for labourers and trades people was increasing. However immigrant accommodation in Brisbane was extremely poor with many documented complaints. These poor conditions were no incentive to encourage increasing numbers of migrants to consider Brisbane as a destination. In order to improve this image, land was obtained on Kangaroo Point and the new immigration depot was built.

Over the years, at times when immigrant numbers declined, space in the depot was used for a variety of other purposes. In the 1930s the building was used as the site office for the construction of the Story Bridge, and four dormer windows were inserted in the roof of the north wing to provide light for the draftsmen. The building also served as temporary accommodation for patients from Dunwich Asylum. Before embarkation to the Boer War, soldiers spent time at the depot, and after World Wars I and II, it became a hospital for convalescing soldiers. In 1940, it accommodated 100 women and children evacuated from Hong Kong. When immigration increased after World War II, the building housed a translating and interpreting unit to cater for non-English-speaking migrants.

In 1974 the Immigration Depot was renamed *Yungaba* meaning ‘land of the sun’ in the Gubba Gubba aboriginal language of the Maroochy area, a name more welcoming to the large number of post war migrants arriving in Brisbane. In 1988 *Yungaba* became the first building to be entered on the Queensland Estate Register and it was maintained under the Cultural Record Act 1987. Unfortunately we were unable to inspect the interior of the building on our Sunday visit.

The Garden and Grounds of *Yungaba*

Contributed by Elspeth Douglas, photographs by Keith Jorgensen

The *Yungaba* building is situated in large grounds that run down to the Brisbane River to the east. Some areas are well maintained, whilst others are covered in weeds and feral trees.

Visitors enter the grounds from Main Street, Kangaroo Point. The land behind the house on the right has been divided by high clipped hedges. That on the left has been let go, though we did see two handsome black bean trees close to the drive. A further examination might well find other notable trees among the weeds. The right-hand side of the block contains modern buildings used for administration purposes. There are some large trees shading this area, which has the best views across the river. The current owners hope to clear this part of the property in order to build a new block of units, which would be regrettable.



View of the grounds and the river from the veranda



View of the Story Bridge from the rear of *Yungaba*

The most attractive part of the property is the circular driveway and gardens in front of the house. The planting is mixed, with old shrubs and shade-loving plants on one side while grevilleas and other sunlovers occupy the top beds and most of the right-hand side. Some AGHS members thought this garden could be featured as a dry garden to demonstrate how Brisbane gardens were originally established to cope with low water usage.

Yungaba's gardens are of such interest that they should be preserved at all costs as a reminder of an important past and a hopeful future.

...oOo...

***Yungaba* Action Group**

On 5 August 2006 the informal *Friends of Yungaba* group convened a planning day at which they and other interested persons, including AGHS representatives Elspeth Douglas and Keith Jorgensen, considered the most appropriate future action. In view of the forthcoming state government election, it was agreed by a majority vote to establish as soon as possible, an incorporated association with individual membership only and the preferred title of *Yungaba Action Group*. Its objective/motto is ***Working to keep Yungaba and its grounds as a place for the people.*** Subsequently, the President of the Group has sent a letter to the Premier requesting a meeting and proposing a moratorium on development. AGHS members who wish to join or support this action should contact the Convener: Delene Cuddihy [delenevcuddihy@yahoo.com]. A website is being developed.

'Ashgrove 150' Heritage Bus Tour

Contributed by Nancy Tow, photographs by Keith Jorgensen

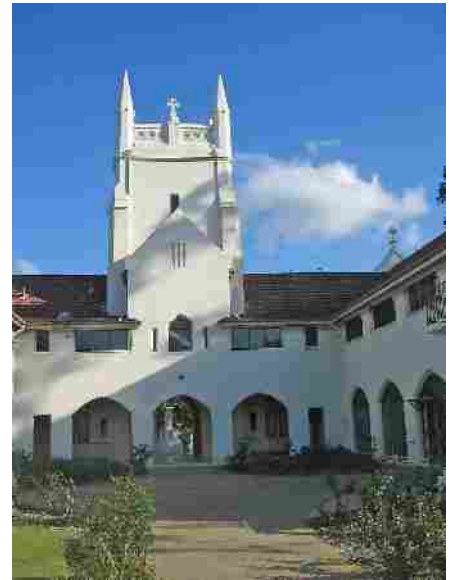
On Saturday 2nd September, AGHS members joined a bus tour organised by the Ashgrove Historical Society and the Brisbane History Group, as part of that suburb's sesquicentenary celebrations. The first sale of freehold land in the area later known as Ashgrove occurred on the 1st September 1856. Prior to that, short-term Crown leases for pastoral use were granted along the valley of Enoggera Creek, the largest of which was The Gap Sheep Station held by Darby McGrath. By the end of 1869 all of the land comprising modern Ashgrove had been sold to private buyers as acreage blocks.

The suburb of Ashgrove is bordered generally on the north and east by Enoggera Creek and on the south by Ithaca Creek. The two main developments in the subdivision of the suburb were the Grove Estate, which is predominantly late 19th and early 20th century, and the Glenlyon Gardens Estate, which began in the mid 1920s. The styles of houses that were built over the period have become known collectively as Ashgrovians.

Throughout the tour, an excellent commentary was provided by Dick Paten, President of the Ashgrove Historical Society and Paul Sayer from the Brisbane History Group. The tour began in Amarina Avenue in the middle of what was the original Glenlyon Gardens Estate. Prior to this subdivision, the area was open countryside, with three grand Stewart family houses dominating the bushland vistas: *Glen Lyon House*, *Grantuly* and *Farnborough*.



Grantuly, now part of Mount St Michael's College



Tower Block, Marist College

Alexander Stewart, a self-made Scottish businessman, built *Glen Lyon House*, a grand, two-storeyed villa in 1876-7. It sat on over 280 acres and is considered Brisbane's most impressive surviving 1870s residence. The grounds were laid out with broad gravel walks, lawns, terraces, rose gardens and flower beds. Today, Glenlyon Drive, which leads down to *Glen Lyon House* through magnificent old bunya pines, contains a wonderful array of late 1920s and 30s Ashgrove houses, and is literally a museum piece of original suburban Ashgrove.

Grantuly was built by Alexander Stewart's eldest son John Killough Stewart around 1899-1900. It originally sat on just over 8 acres of the Glen Lyon estate. *Grantuly* survives as the administration building of the catholic Mount St. Michael's College. *Glen Lyon House* was also for many years owned by the Catholic Church and occupied by the Marist Brothers. It is now once again a beautiful private home. *Farnborough* no longer exists.

The Glenlyon Gardens Estate was subdivided in 1924 and was intended to be an excellent, high-class suburban subdivision based on the latest town planning principles. One of the important features of Ashgrove is that it is miraculously intact. As one who grew up in the suburb, I found it pure magic to drive around streets that are much the same as when I was a child 60 years ago. Indeed one could almost think it is too good to be true, and fear that like Brigadoon, it would disappear suddenly in a mist.

Amid all this low profile serenity, an amazing sight meets the eye – a large white tower stands out in the Ashgrove hills in the grounds of Marist College. It too seems like an apparition, semi-Gothic in style, with mediaeval-like tracery in arches and windows and in the gateway beneath the tower.

The countryside on which Ashgrove was built was a mixture of sclerophyll forest, vine scrub, stringybarks up on the range, brushbox; down by the creeks were casuarinas, black beans, callistemons, and what were locally known as creek myrtles. This bushland was greatly cleared when the estates were subdivided, but thankfully, over the years, with the proliferation of houses has also come a great planting of trees. There were many gullies in the area, and when the estate was planned, the roads were made to wind around them, not through them. With names like Girraween Grove, Acacia Drive, Oleander Drive and Woonga Drive, these streets are indeed winding and picturesque drives.

The houses, with architectural styles called “inter-war porch and gable”, “triple-fronted” and “Ashgrovians” have been well maintained and sit demurely behind their white or cream picket fences, looking out at the world through their beautiful diamond patterned window panes. It was impossible to see the garden details from the moving bus but there was an overall impression of a continuation of the 1920s to 1930s styles in general.



A low-set Ashgrovian house



A high-set Ashgrovian

We drove down to St. Johns Wood to see St. Johns Wood House, also known as the Granite House. Built of local granite in 1868 by Daniel Rowntree Somerset it was originally surrounded by 52 acres. It was bought in 1874 by George Rogers Harding, who added a ballroom. The first subdivision began in 1926 and eventually by 1956 St. Johns Wood house was standing on a mere 1 acre 16.6 perches. The house has been beautifully restored but is difficult to see from the street. The St. Johns Wood area still retains a great many of its 1920s houses intact.

Heading east we were taken to the earlier Ashgrove subdivision – Grove Estate, which was opened up in 1888. The majority of the original houses remain. The special character of this area is due to the building period extending from the late 19th century well into the 20th, which resulted in a diversity of architecture. Also, unlike the Glenlyon Gardens Estate, which set out to be a high-class suburb, the Grove Estate began with a mix of

middle class houses and workers cottages. One of the latter was built by a groom, Robert Yardley, on an allotment he bought in 1886, and the house was inhabited by his son until his death in 1958. It has since been 'done up' and a new extension added in sympathy with the old timber home. Many of the grander houses have also been well maintained, and here too, we have an area of Ashgrove frozen in time.

Another characteristic of old Ashgrove that has survived is the scattering of majestic old gum trees in gullies and on creek banks. An interesting tree is also found in Stewart Place, a tiny park near a busy shopping centre in Waterworks Road. It is an Aleppo pine, which was grown from a seed taken from a tree in Canberra, which in turn grew from a seed taken from an Aleppo pine at Gallipoli. Gone however are all of the Chinese market gardens that were established in the early days along both Ithaca and Enoggera Creeks.

An important road near the eastern boundary of Ashgrove is Ashgrove Avenue, known in the early days as Three Mile Scrub Road. The name came from the Three Mile Scrub, a dense belt of scrub along Enoggera Creek near the eastern end of the road. Several houses from the 19th century remain along its length. Three examples are *Fernbank (The Haven)* built between 1885 and 1888 when Ashgrove was primarily a farming district; *Grove Lodge*, built around 1896, a substantial home designed by architect Richard Gailey for dairyman Robert Graham, and *Lindsay*, said to date from around 1885, built for Mrs. Georgina Margaret Lindsay. All three houses have been elegantly restored and remain as private homes.



The Yardley house at 47 McLean Parade



Grove Lodge at 116 Ashgrove Avenue

Just east of Ashgrove Avenue is Woodland Street, and it was at number 24 that AGHS members met after the bus tour for a special look at *Woodlands*, the heritage listed home of Janet and Austin (Aussi) Hogan. The Hogans bought the property in 1979 and gave it its present name. It sits on part of a 30 acre portion originally acquired in 1868 by James Clarke, a Queen Street confectioner. In the 1880s Clarke and William Reinhold prospected for gold there. In 1883 the property was sold to William Widdop and in the same year Professor John Pepper, an analytical chemist of "pepper's ghost" fame, leased the property.

In 1883 Pepper built the house now known as *Woodlands*. In 1889 he sold the property to Charles Plant who was for a time President of the Acclimatisation Society (appropriate for a man with that name.) Plant later built another mansion nearby: *Ferndale*, which was demolished in 1936. Some of its beautiful leadlight panels were then incorporated into *Woodlands*. Plant's elder daughter married John Grant in 1922. In 1933 a new 'art deco' room was added at the front right corner of the house. The property remained in the Plant and Grant families until the death of John Grant in 1977. The property was then subdivided into 2 blocks and the Hogans bought Lot 2 on which the house is located.

Woodlands sits on half an acre of land, its garden containing large mature trees, some dating from Plant's time. The Hogans have worked very hard to restore the garden. When they bought the house there was not a blade of grass in the back garden – just bare shale. So all the garden beds had to be built up.

The decorative wrought iron front fence, gates and matching tree guards, which all survive from Charles Plant's time, are made of very rust resistant Low Moor iron marked 'Baileys Patent Albion'. A privet hedge along the front fence dates from at least the 1920s. The cast iron on the veranda is of Saratoga design.



Woodlands: Low Moor iron fence



Cottage garden at rear



Rainforest planting

The front path is bordered by heritage roses such as 'Souvenir de la Malmaison', 'Baroness Henriette de Snoy', 'Dr. Grill', 'General Gallieni', 'Duchess de Brabant', 'Monsieur Tillier' and 'Lady Hillingdon'. Some of these roses were present in the mid 1920s and some were planted earlier in the garden's history. A bank of azaleas planted more than 30 years ago below the front veranda still thrives. Two camellia bushes have been planted among the azaleas. The front garden has evolved since the 1930s. A row of pencil pines and two bookleaf pines have been replaced by two tall Bangalow palms and a *Magnolia grandiflora*. The Illawarra flame tree (*Brachychiton acerifolius*) now swathed in a large elkhorn, was transplanted from the garden at *Ferndale* when that house was demolished in 1936. The flagpole originally in the nature strip outside *Ferndale* is also now in the front garden of *Woodlands*.

Clivias and agapanthus are used as border plants throughout the garden, and rainforest plants such as lillypillies have proved very useful in shady areas. In the back garden there is a large open sunny area near the house, that has provided the right conditions for a cottage garden. Chives, Vietnamese and common mint, parsley, and sage mingle with pentas, poppies, and lavender of various sorts and a mature *Feijoa sellowiana*. One garden is edged with alyssum, another with a low privet hedge. A shrubbery of *rondeletia*, *Pachystacys coccinea*, *tibouchina*, gardenia and camellia, bordered by agapanthus, turns the corner around to the east side of the house.

Some of the trees that were planted early in the garden's history remain today to provide a large canopy for an under-storey planting carried out by the present owners over the past 20 years. The large flowering trees that provide a beautiful progressive display enjoyed from the veranda above include: a macadamia, jacaranda, silky oak (*Grevillea robusta*) which can be seen in a 1910 photo, native frangipani, Queensland black bean (*Castanospermum australe*), poinciana and a wheel of fire (*Stenocarpus sinuatus*). A huge ficus forms a big canopy and two slash pines reach for the sky. Other plants in this rainforest atmosphere are a golden cane palm, clivias, birds nest ferns, *Syzygium wilsonii*, *dichorisandras*, *murraya*, loquat, native gardenia, ardisia, Canary Island palm (*Phoenix canariensis*), dianella, native cordylines, bromeliads, elkhorns, dietes, native guava, Davidson's plum and a little evodia. One is taken on a rambling, winding walk of discovery along gravel paths in filtered light beneath the tree canopy, and the old age of the big trees extends a feeling of 'long ago' over the whole garden, to match the 123 year life of the beautiful house that is *Woodlands*.

Reference

'Ashgrove Heritage Tour' compiled by Dick Paten, published by Brisbane History Group 2006.

A Queensland Garden History Archive

Message from Susan Martin, Master of Arts (History)

At the 2006 Queensland Branch Annual General Meeting it was decided to establish an archive with the John Oxley Library to house a collection of research material and garden ephemera that Queensland historians / members could use in the pursuit of garden history. The importance of nursery catalogues in researching old gardens was discussed by Colleen Morris in a recent AGHS journal (Vol. 18 No.1 July/August 2006).

I would like to hear from anyone who has relevant material that they would like to deposit with the archive rather than continue to keep it in 'boxes under the bed'. If you are uncertain as to whether or not your books, photos, diaries, hand-written notes, letters, catalogues, designs or articles are worth keeping and storing correctly, I will be available to speak with you in order to make a decision, on telephone (07) 3870 2186. It is envisioned that the archive will be commenced shortly after the John Oxley Library re-opens in November this year.

Please give this matter some thought. A collection will retain value always for the serious student, and it will also be a depository of interest to our membership into the future.

...oOo...