Australian Garden History Society ACT Monaro Riverina Branch

Newsletter August 2017 No 4

Australian Garden History Society www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au ACT Monaro Riverina Branch, PO Box 5008, LYNEHAM ACT 2602 For an e-copy of the newsletter email <u>judy.pearce@netspeed.com.au</u>

NEXT EVENTS

24 AUGUST

BRANCH DIARY

5pm . Branch AGM followed by the Annual Lecture: *Planting Dreams: shaping Australia Gardens*

20 OCTOBER

Lunch time talk at the NLA on Ferdinand Bauer

17 NOVEMBER Visit to Gundaroo

FOR YOUR DIARIES

23 NOVEMBER Branch Christmas event, Woden Homestead

AGHS NATIONAL CONFERENCES

27-29 OCTOBER

2017 AGHS National Conference *Marvellous Melbourne in Constant Change*

26-29 OCTOBER 2018

AGHS National Conference Southern Highlands: *Gardens in time of peace and conflict*

Branch Annual General Meeting THURSDAY 24 AUGUST, 5.00PM

The AGM of the ACT Monaro Riverina Branch of the AGHS will be held at the National Archives of Australia just prior to the 2017 Annual Lecture (see below).

AGENDA

- Attendance
 Apologies
- 3. Minutes of previous meeting (25 August 2016)
- 4. Business arising
- 5. Chairos report
- 6. Treasureros report
- 7. Election of Branch Committee and State Representative on the AGHS National Management Committee for 2017-2018

Branch Committee members are elected for a three year term, and are eligible for two further three year terms.

Continuing Committee members:

Bronwyn Blake, Nancy Clarke, Greg Johnson, Helen Wilson, Marie Wood

Nominations

Sue Byrne (nominated Margaret Bourke, seconded Max Bourke) Judy Pearce (nominated Tony Stewart, seconded Denise Rawling) Kay Johnston (nominated Greg Johnson, seconded Helen Wilson) Wendy Dodd (nominated Sue Cassidy, seconded Robyn Henderson) Sue Cassidy (nominated Wendy Dodd, seconded Neil Porter)

No other nominations were received by 13 July, but nominations may be accepted from the floor of the meeting.

8. Confirmation of Kay Johnston as ACT State Representative on the AGHS National Management Committee

Venue: Menzies Room, National Archives of Australia, Queen Victoria Terrace, Parkes

Please support your hard working committee and attend.



BRANCH Committee

Sue Byrne, Chair Judy Pearce, Dpt Chair & Newsletter Editor Helen Elliot, Treasurer Nancy Clarke, Secretary

Bronwyn Blake (also on NMC) Wendy Dodd Greg Johnson Kay Johnston, State NMC Representative Helen Wilson Marie Wood

Annual Lecture Planting Dreams: shaping Australian Gardens

SPEAKER: RICHARD AITKEN

THURSDAY 24 AUGUST, 5.30 FOR A 5.45PM START

Planting Dreams: shaping Australian gardens is Richardon most recent project, comprising a book, published by NewSouth in 2016, and a major exhibition at the State Library of NSW, which opened in 2016 to commemorate the bicentenary of the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney.

Planting Dreams explores the environmental and social influences that have helped produce our unique gardening culture. It draws its inspiration from the unparalleled collections of the State Library of NSW, demonstrating Australian garden making in all its richness and diversity.

In this lecture, Richard will showcase *Planting Dreams*, which was generously sponsored by the Australian Garden History Society, recounting highlights as well as giving an insight into the unseen work behind the book and exhibition.

Historian, writer and curator, Richard Aitken¢ books on garden history have become essential reading for anyone with an interest in horticulture, history and design. These include *Gardenesque*, *Botanical Riches*, *The Garden of Ideas*, *Cultivating Modernism*, and *Planting Dreams*. He has curated many exhibitions including *Planting Dreams: shaping Australian gardens* for the State Library of NSW in 2016 and was a contributor to the Art Gallery of Ballarat¢ *Capturing Flora* exhibition in 2012. He is a past co-editor of *Australian Garden History*, the quarterly journal of the Australian Garden History Society.



Ebenezer Howard's seminal diagram of a Garden City (1898), from *Planting Dreams*.

E.Howard, *To-morrow: A peaceful path to real reform*, Swan Sonnenschein, London, 1898, plate 3, facing page 14: State Library of New South Wales (T0057083)

In 2006 Richard was awarded honorary membership of the National Trust of Australia for his advocacy role in the identification and conservation of significant gardens and designed landscapes. In 2015 he was awarded honorary life membership of the Australian Garden History Society for his advocacy and advancement of Australian garden history.

Richard maintains an ongoing interest in the transfer and development of ideas underpinning the history of garden making in Australia but his current project is a commissioned history of Dulux focusing on the history of home improvement in Australia.

Venue	Menzies Room, National Archives of Australia, Queen Victoria Terrace,
	Parkes
Cost	Members \$10, Non-members \$15 - including refreshments
Booking	Booking form Page 11.

We acknowledge the support of the NAA in providing the venue for this lecture.

Lecture: Discovering Ferdinand Bauer Speaker: David Stuart FRIDAY 20 OCTOBER, 12.30 – 1.30PM

Presented in association with the Friends of the National Library

Botanical artist Ferdinand Bauer was the first European to record in detail and unprecedented range the unique plants and animals of Australia. In this lecture, David Stuart explores the work of Bauer, whose work is spread around the globe, with significant holdings in Vienna



Image: Bauer, Ferdinand, 1760-1826, [Stewartia serrata] [picture], [180-], watercolour, nla.obj-135228098

Bauer made a major contribution to a number of significant works on European botany including the *Codex Liechtenstein* and Sibthorp's work on the plants and flowers of the Mediterranean. But for Australians what makes him a figure of special interest is the work he completed after he was chosen by Sir Joseph Banks in 1801 to be the natural history draughtsman to the expedition to Terra Australis under Captain Matthew Flinders. This was to be the first circumnavigation of the continent of Australia.

Two hundred years later, Bauers illustrations of Australian flora and fauna are still remarkable, both as art and for their scientific value and he is internationally acclaimed as one of the greatest botanical artists of all times. His technique allowed him to reproduce form, tone and shading with extraordinary precision. His work is, however, spread around the globe. How we can access, and draw on, his remarkable record of Australian biodiversity remains an important challenge.

David Stuart was Australia's Ambassador to Austria from August 2012 until October 2016. He arrived with some knowledge of Ferdinand Bauer's importance in Australian botanical history, and his early engagement with the Museum of Natural History (NHM) in Vienna led to the first ever public exhibition by the NHM of Bauer's work, held in August 2015, and set the path for further collaboration between the NHM and Australian counterparts.

Venue Cost Booking Conference Room, National Library of Australia \$10 for AGHS members and Friends of the NLA, \$15 for non-members Bookings through the NLA at <u>http://tix.yt/bauer</u> **NO** bookings to be made through AGHS.

Note: If you are unable to book electronically you can call the Friends of the National Library on 6262 1698 and pay by credit card over the phone.

A Day in Gundaroo

FRIDAY 17 NOVEMBER

In November 2008 members of our Branch visited some fascinating gardens in Gundaroo; this year we are going again and expect this visit to be as interesting and enjoyable as our earlier one. This is a self-catered event for lunch (bring a picnic). We encourage car sharing.

Bowylie. Our first stop (10.30 am) will be Bowylie, an historic and important property 2 km the Canberra side of Gundaroo. Bowylie was first settled in the early 19th century and historically its longest custodians have been the Osborne family who purchased it in 1890. At that time it was given its present name although the origin of the name Bowylie is yet to be discovered.



Photo Silas Brown

In 1995 Pip and Dick Smith purchased Bowylie. They commissioned James Hoskins, landscape designer, to design an English-style garden that retained as many of the existing features as possible. House renovations including additions to the garage, flat and northern wing occurred at that time. Much garden construction and development has taken place since 1995.

Garden planting has changed, with drought tolerance and water conservation now the main drivers in plant selection and garden maintenance. We are most grateful to the Smiths who have agreed to our request to visit, and to Tom Morrison, manager of the Bowylie gardens who will speak to us on arrival.

After our visit to this historic station garden, we will drive into the village of Gundaroo to visit two fascinating 'town' gardens, just a couple of minutes apart.

In Gundaroo village. We recommend that people stop at the Gundaroo Park for a comfort stop, before a very short drive to **two***and***three**, the garden of Bronwyn and Harold Blake, where we have been invited to eat our picnic lunches and walk round the impressive garden. Harold and Bronwyn purchased the ½ acre bare block in 2007 and moved into the newly built house when their youngest daughter was one week old, in 2008. Like so many gardeners, Harold and Bronwyn began with a plan that has changed dramatically from that which we will visit. Whilst the vegie patch has remained largely as planned, the entire orchard has moved location twice and is now predominately espaliered to economise on space and fruiting efficiency. As the wind break has grown and the trees have become established, plantings have changed from donated and propagated sun-loving varieties to more shade-tolerant natives and exotics. The garden is a source of food, a palate of planting joy (and disasters!) and a place for family and friends to gather. Bronwyn is happy to provide more information on the plantings.

After this we will visit **Vogelweide**. Birds' Meadow - that over the last ten years Antje Beuermann and Wolfgang Spielmeyer have established from a two acre block of

pasture. The house and garden were designed to fit in with the historical setting of Gundaroo village. A closer look reveals that the irrigated garden is designed to withstand the extremely dry, cold and windy conditions of the area and not to demand fussy maintenance. Guided by the principles of 'beauty, simplicity and usefulness', as well as a liking for asymmetry and a longing for shade and privacy, hedges and trees have been established and flowerbeds have slowly grown. Today, there are signature trees of pine (Pinus pinea), London plane, swamp casuarina, cypress and juniper as well as a small plantation of truffle infected oaks. There are maples for autumn and winter colour, a wild area of Mediterranean herbs and lavender and some historic roses as shrubs or draped over arbours, and native shrubs spread in between. This is a young garden well on its way to becoming beautiful.

Numbers are restricted to 50, and we are requesting pre-payment because of the limited numbers. We will provide more details for those who have booked (driving, parking instructions etc) closer to the event.

VenueGundaroo and SuttonCost\$20 members, \$25 non-membersPrepayment requiredBookingPage 11

Visit to Woden Homestead and End of year celebrations THURSDAY 23 NOVEMBER, 4.30PM

Please note this date in your diaries . all details will appear in the October Newsletter.

News FROM THE BRANCH

CONGRATULATIONS DIANNE FIRTH OAM



Photo: Karleen Minney

We are delighted that Dianne Firth has been recognised in this year's Queence Birthday Honours List, receiving the Order of Australia Medal for services to landscape architecture and to education.

Dianne is a long-time member of AGHS. She was a key-note speaker and heavily involved with the National Conference when it was in Canberra in 1997, has given talks to our Branch in 2011 and 2013, as well as participating in a workshop we ran in 2014 on Conservation Management Planning. She has also written articles and book reviews for our journal *Australian Garden History* and for the special refereed series published by AGHS.

She is a recognised expert on Canberra's landscape and Lake Burley Griffin, a fellow of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, deputy chair of the ACT Heritage Council, a member of the Land Development Agency's design review panel, a former member of Canberra's place names committee and a former chair of the National Capital Authority's expert reference group. Many of our members will also be very familiar with her beautiful art quilts influenced by environmental conditions such as drought, fire, floods and the urban/rural divide.

NEW MEMBERS

The committee would like to welcome the following new members who have joined since the last newsletter.

- Jennie Cameron, Canberra
- Heather Campbell, Canberra
- Pamela Fabricius, Canberra
- Douglas Smith and Anna Kieltyka, Canberra

PAST EVENTS

Lecture: The Gardens of Ancient Rome

The lecture by Emeritus Professor Elizabeth Minchin was very well attended, with about 60 people from the AGHS, and 40 from the Friends of the Classics Museum (FCM). We were rewarded with an extremely well presented talk, with slides, incorporating the design of Roman houses that had gardens, garden styles including water and drainage, literary garden references, fresco paintings, and the archaeological techniques that recorded what plants had grown there, and, for the trees their position. In particular we were introduced to the work of Dr Wilhelmina Jashemski, who uncovered and described a number of garden courtyards in Pompeii that hadn't before been disturbed, using a number of techniques, one of which was using plaster to replace the seams of volcanic ash that had filtered into the spaces in soil left by the roots of dead trees. Then, after uncovering the plaster the type of tree could be recognised by its root structure.



After the talk we crossed to the Classical Museum where drinks and nibbles were provided. The AGHS and the FCM members mixed well and the evening ended with much talk and enjoyment. We look forward to having more events with the Friends of the Classics Museum in the future. *Kave Johnston*

Garden scene: Pompeii, House of the Golden Bracelet, 1st century

BC . 1st century AD fresco. Typical of many frescos featuring a water feature, birds, flowers and fruits

Lecture: Visionary or Vandal: Lancelot "Capability" Brown 1916-1783 and the English Landscape

Some 270 people . AGHS members, Friends of the National Library and a good many others - were enticed by the topic and the authority of the speaker to pack the Theatre of the National Library on a winter night for Sue Ebury's fascinating talk on the most eminent name in English garden and landscape history, 'Capability' Brown.

2016 marked the 300th anniversary of Brown's birth, and Sue began by describing the kind of Brown Mania that seemed to grip the UK throughout the year, as Brownian commemorations and events followed in rapid succession. In addition to many serious events, witty memorabilia were produced for the occasion, exemplified by a cartoon depicting a small van with the insignia 'Mixed Ability Brown, Landscape Gardener'.

Brown was responsible for a total transformation of the face of the English landscape . his name is associated with more than 250 estates, more than 150 of which are still in good condition . a remarkable, unmatched feat. But alteration of the landscape on such a grand scale raises the question of responsibility, and in her talk Sue addressed the question as to whether he was a visionary or a vandal. Certainly in his time he was remarkably well known and admired, though his many grand, formal gardens attracted criticism in and after his lifetime, and after his death his reputation declined rapidly, with the rapid change in attitudes to garden design at the end of the eighteenth century. Only two years after his death the pre-Romantic poet William Cowper drew a witty and accurate word painting of some of the principal features of Brown's approach, while querying the thoroughness and self-confidence with which the great landscaper set about his work of demolition, drainage, realignment, rearrangement in the interests of 'improvement' and a more refined 'taste'.

Lo, he comes! Th' omnipotent magician, Brown, appears! Down falls the venerable pile, th' abode Of our forefathers--a grave whisker'd race, But tasteless. ... He speaks. The lake in front becomes a lawn; Woods vanish, hills subside, and vallies rise: And streams, as if created for his use, Pursue the track of his directing wand, Sinuous or straight, now rapid and now slow, Now murm'ring soft, now roaring in cascades--Ev'n as he bids! Th' enraptur'd owner smiles. ... (Wm Cowper, *The Task*, 1785)

And even his nickname 'Capability' isn't totally admiring . it carries an implicit though gentle mockery of Brown's approach to his clients . his emphasis on the possibilities of improvement, rather than on deploring deficiencies in the existing landscape. Sue positioned Brown in his historical setting . the mid-eighteenth century, a prosperous, peaceful time for a country on the cusp of the industrial revolution. She focussed on Croome Court in Worcester where over a period of some 30 years he established the principles of the English landscape style, embellishing - or rather transforming - the estate, complete with a man made river, statuary, vistas, and follies, as well as the planting of the site with over 6,000 species of plants from all over the world including Australia. He also was responsible for the redesign of the exterior of the main house in neo-Palladian style, and the replacement of the medieval church with a neo-Gothic building, relocated to a more suitable location. Croome displays the landscape features for which Brown is best known, the creation of vistas, clumped tree plantings, secluded spaces (suitable sites for amorous assignations), the 'serpentine line' rather than straight roads and paths (Hogarth's Line of Beauty), and one of his landmark features. the ha-ha, so effective in keeping cattle and deer away from the house without interrupting the vista.

Brown was a remarkable business man with huge energy and authority. His mastery of drainage and water management was one of the most important reasons for his success (monumental works of excavation were done manually by armies of workers, pre-dating most of the great canal works in the UK), and his capacity to disguise or camouflage the disagreeable in the landscape while highlighting the visually attractive totally remarkable. He concentrated on creating a landscape, rather than what we might consider garden.

The landscapes he created now provide grazing for sheep, pasture for cattle, and wind protection. He planted thousands upon thousands of trees, favouring in particular the cedar of Lebanon, the London plane and the weeping willow. Some of these survive; grand, aged heroes, marked particularly by their openness, and now with huge trunks and monumental branches. Some of these plantings were noted by Sue as having been economic saviours of financially embattled landowners in the post World War 2 period, when ruinous death duties were paid by the felling of trees for profitable timber.

None of this came cheap . the costs associated with these transformative works were huge and sometimes crippling . as noted by Cowper in the final lines of his poem, where the proud owner of the transformed estate is unable to pay for the work, and sells it another, wealthier owner:

Drain'd to the last poor item of his wealth, He sighs, departs, and leaves th' accomplish'd plan That he has touch'd, retouch'd, many a long day Labour'd, and many a night pursu'd in dreams, Just when it meets his hopes, and proves the heav'n He wanted, for a wealthier to enjoy! (Wm Cowper, *The Task*, 1785)

Though there has been a remarkable burst of scholarly investigation of Brown's life and work recently, partly prompted by the tercentenary of his birth, Sue made warm acknowledgment of the importance of the seminal biography of Brown . *Capability Brown* by Dorothy Stroud, published in 1950 after very many years of research. Sue's talk was generously illustrated and covered a great deal of ground, with some fascinating byways that invited further exploration. Brown . visionary? . yes certainly; vandal? well, up to a point, but without him we would not have what we know as the English landscape.

Nancy Clarke

News From the Southern Highlands Branch

Sunday 20 August with speakers

- Dr Greg Johnson: Write to Garden in Australia: 1888 to 1938
- Charlotte Webb: Parsnips to Picturesque Evolution of gardens in the Southern Highlands

Further information at https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/branches/southern-highlands/

OF INTEREST

NEW BOOK: GARDENS OF COURT AND COUNTRY

Juliet Ramsay thought that members would be interested in the recent publication *Gardens of Court and Country* which provides the first comprehensive overview of the development of the English formal garden from 1630 to 1730. It is written by **David Jacques** who is an independent scholar and a consultant in historic landscapes, parks, and gardens. For more information visit

http://yalebooks.yale.edu/book/9780300222012/gardens-court-and-country

NATIONAL ARBORETUM CANBERRA www.arboretumcanberra.org.au

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDENS

Lectures on a variety of topics are offered by the Friends of the National Botanic Gardens at 12.30pm on most Thursdays. No bookings are required, entry by gold coin donation. For details and updates check the Friendsqwebsite at <u>www.friendsanbg.org.au</u>. Members may be especially interested in the following talk:

Thursday 17 August Out of the Woods, Speaker: Max Bourke AM

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF AUSTRALIA www.naa.gov.au/visit-us/exhibitions

HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY OF CANBERRA http://www.hsoc.org.au/index.htm

The Horticultural Society holds talks at 7.30pm on the 3rd Monday of each month. Members might be particularly interested in:

 Monday 21 August Early days – Cavan, Westbourne etc, Speaker: Max Bourke AM

For the full program visit the HSOC website

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA

24 May to 27 August, 2017, 10am-5pm. Free. Exhibition: *Melodrama in Meiji Japan*

One of Australiac most significant collections of Japanese art . woodblock prints known as kuchi-e . is on show for the first time at the National Library of Australia exhibition, *Melodrama in Meiji Japan*. If you have not been to see it yet time is running out.

The exhibition features many items from the substantial collection of kuchi-e donated to the National Library by the late Richard Clough, who had a distinguished career in landscape architecture with the National Capital Development Commission in Canberra, and as Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of NSW. Richard Clough's life and contributions to landscape architecture were the subject of our branch AGM lecture by Craig Burton in 2015.

The exhibition showcases the work of more than 20 artists, covering a range of subjects filled with drama, tragedy and intrigue, and very much reflective of the Meiji era. For those with an interest in garden history and landscape architecture, the exhibition also gives insight into a subject that was obviously a major influence on the work of Professor Clough.

Melodrama in Meiji Japan is on show at the National Library of Australia, Canberra, from <u>https://www.nla.gov.au/media-releases/2017/05/23/melodrama-in-meiji-japan</u>

BUNDANOON GARDEN RAMBLE

Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 October, 9.30am – 4.30pm Visit 8 private gardens.

Full details at http://www.bundanoongardenramble.org.au/

CROOKWELL GARDEN FESTIVAL

Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 November, 10am – 4pm 9 town and country gardens will be opening as well as a Garden Lovers Market on the Saturday from 8.30am . 2pm Full details at http://crookwellgardenfestival.com/

NATIONAL TRUST ACT

Members of our Branch are welcome to join with National Trust members for the following events:

Saturday 19 August: ACT Region Heritage Symposium 2017

Keynote speaker Professor Tim Winter from Deakin University will discuss *Heritage Diplomacy: the art of the possible* exploring the significant shifts occurring in the international heritage and conservation arena. Other speakers will present of a wide diversity of topics on the theme, *The Politics of Heritage: the art of the possible*

Monday 18 September, 1 – 3.15pm A facilitated walk: Trees of Heritage Significance at the National Arboretum Canberra

Cost \$25, \$35 . includes afternoon tea

Tuesday 24 October: Private Gardens of the Monaro

A self-drive tour visiting three private gardens in the Monaro High Country - Hazeldean, Shirley and Curry Flat homestead. Cost: \$125, \$135

Sunday 5 November, 1.15 – 4.30pm

12the Annual Reid Open House and Gardens Property owners will open three privately-owned houses and gardens from the 1920s and 1930s in Reidos Heritage precinct. Further details of this event will be sent to members under separate cover

For further information on all of these events visit <u>https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/explore/?content=event&state=act</u>, email <u>info@nationaltrustact.org.au</u> or phone 6230 0533.

LAKE BURLEY GRIFFIN GUARDIANS (LBGG) http://lakeburleygriffinguardians.org.au/

Lake Burley Griffin Guardians are still trying to fight the vile West Basin development proposal. Now the West Basin apartment complex will run into the the proposed Acton Peninsula development proposal. That will create a dense mass of buildings from Commonwealth Avenue to the Limestone Outcrop near the National Museum.

To date no agreement on giving 2 ha of lake bed to the ACT Government has been made and no final master plan of the apartment development nor the bridging of Parks Way has been made available to the public. Yet the ACT Government has promised to start on the foreshore preparation after Floriade.

We are planning some activities in the forthcoming weeks and will send the AGHS more information once plans are finalised.

Check out our Facebook page:<u>https://www.facebook.com/Lake-Burley-Griffin-Guardians-1797781033814906/</u> and our web site: <u>http://lakeburleygriffinguardians.org.au</u> *Juliet Ramsay*

Booking form page 11



AGHS BOOKING SLIP

Booking slips need to be returned no later than one week prior to the event to assist committee with planning. It is easier for your voluntary committee to get payment in advance but if you have difficulties paying by cheque or EFT please send the booking slip or email to Helen Elliot at ellioth@bigpond.net.au (phone 6284 4749 home).

(N.B. Prepayment required for event on 17 November)

Names ____

Contact phone: (Evening/W/E)

Email:

Tick	Event	Cost	Numbers attending	Amount Incl \$
	24 August – AGM and Annual Lecture: <i>Planting Dreams</i>	Members \$10 Non-members \$15		
	20 October . Lecture: Ferdinand Bauer, NLA	Book through NLA http://tix.yt/capability NO bookings to be made through AGHS.		
	17 November Day in Gundaroo PREPAYMENT REQUIRED to secure a place as numbers limited	Members \$20 Non-members \$25		

Payment options:

Cheques payable to Australian Garden History Society. Please return the cheque and payment form to The Treasurer, AGHS, P O Box 5008, Lyneham ACT 2602 or contact Helen Elliot at ellioth@bigpond.net.au (phone 6284 4749 home) and pay by EFT.

By EFT Account name: **AGHS**, BSB: **801009**, Account number: 001062165 Please make sure you include the following reference information:

the date of the event (e.g. 24 August) and your family name.