

Australian Garden History Society ACT Monaro Riverina Branch



Newsletter December 2018 No 6

Australian Garden History Society
www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au

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BRANCH DIARY

23 FEBRUARY

Ramble: Growing
Democracy

25-28 OCTOBER 2019

AGHS National
Conference . Wellington,
NZ

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS



Persoonia Pinifolia

The *Persoonia Pinifolia* (Pine-Leaved Geebung) is known to some as the Australian Christmas Tree because of its pine tree-like leaves and flowers around Christmas time. Some of our members who came on the trip to Mt Annan in September did see, among many other wonderful plants a fine example of the *Persoonia Pinifolia* getting ready for Christmas.

This was only one of the events organised by a very energetic, imaginative and talented committee whose willingness to give time and effort to our activities is much appreciated. Talks, walks and even chucks were all included in this year's series of activities. Talks were from Lisa Clausen (*Cruden Farm Diaries*) Greg Johnson (*Write Now: Gardening in Australia 1989-2038*) and Lainie Lawson (*Rescue and reality: some thoughts on garden conservation*); whilst walks and visits included the National Portrait Gallery, Goulburn and Crookwell, Jugiong, Harden and Galong. One of our joint events with the National Trust (ACT) was held at the Old Tuggeranong School House to mark the opening of the Australian Heritage Festival (ACT) 2018. The Branch also joined with the Friends of the National Library and the Reid Residents Association for combined activities.

BRANCH COMMITTEE

Sue Byrne, Chair
Judy Pearce, Dep. Chair
& Newsletter Editor
Helen Elliot, Treasurer
Anne Claoue-Long,
State NMC
Representative
Nancy Clarke, Secretary

Bronwyn Blake (also on
NMC)

Sue Cassidy
Wendy Dodd
Greg Johnson
Helen Wilson

Meetings were organised and letters flowed to both the Commonwealth Government and the ACT Legislative Assembly in attempts to have the NCA and the ACT Government review the National Capital Territory Plan and the City to the Lake development. It is to be hoped that the green spaces at West Basin remain in the public arena and not sold to private developers to build apartment blocks. With the rapid urbanisation happening within the city precinct it is essential that parkland providing large open green space and natural lake shore edges be maintained. This area is considered an AGHS Landscape at Risk. Committee members also represented the Branch at the Haig Park consultation meetings.

Planning has now commenced for 2019 and promises to be another stimulating and enjoyable year.

At the end of the year Kay Johnston will be leaving the committee after several terms of service. Kay has made a huge contribution to the Society. She has been a treasurer, a state representative on the National Management Committee and has guided us through exhibitions at the National Gallery. She not only co-ordinated the speakers program for

the 2016 National Conference, which received much acclamation, but she also supervised a group of volunteers to produce the committee's stunning badges. Her talents will be sorely missed. Thank you Kay.

All these activities would just not happen without a committed team prepared to spend time and energy on all the details involved in organising events. From the initial thought to the final report in the newsletter it requires a concerted group effort. I appreciate all the hard work and wish to thank sincerely all the Committee members.

My best wishes for an enjoyable holiday season and I look forward to seeing many of you again next year.

Sue Byrne

Chair, ACT Monaro Riverina Branch
Australian Garden History Society

NEXT EVENTS

Growing Democracy: Plants, Places and People in the Parliamentary Triangle

SATURDAY RAMBLE - FEBRUARY 23
4.30 – 6PM (WITH REFRESHMENTS TO FOLLOW)

We can't miss the golden wattle shining on our coat of arms on the front of Old Parliament House, but this ramble will open our eyes to other emblems of democracy that we rarely



see although they are right in front of our eyes. As well as noting different depictions of wattle on the coat of arms, we will see how styles of gardens and landscaping have changed across the Parliamentary Triangle as our democracy has developed over the last 50 years. The designers of newer areas between Old Parliament House and Commonwealth Place along the Lake have created landscapes that are quite different from the Old Parliament House Rose Gardens, and may prompt ideas about how gardens might give further expression to our democracy in future.

Photo Anna Howe

Starting opposite the National Library, we will walk at a slow pace and on flat lawns and paths, stopping at six points to look at, learn about and talk about emblems of our democracy.

Our leader will be Anna Howe who first lived in Canberra in the mid-1970s, when she worked in the Department of Urban and Regional Development. Her return to Canberra in 2011 revived her interest in exploring our urban environments and discovering just how special they are. Anna is a former AGHS Committee member.

Numbers are limited. Refreshments will be served after this late-summer walk.

- Meet** 4.30pm at the fountain in front of the National Library, Parkes Place West.
(with refreshments at 6pm at the sheltered picnic/bbq site behind Questacon, close to the large Questacon carpark)
- Cost** \$15 Members, \$20 non-members - including refreshments

- Bookings** Through TryBooking, <https://www.trybooking.com/ZQOH>
You may pay by debit or credit card.
- Parking** In the small Questacon carpark opposite the NLA entrance road, in the large carpark behind Questacon and diagonally opposite the NLA or at the NLA all free at weekends.
- Inquiries** Nancy Clarke - clarkenancy624@gmail.com or 0423690626

Visit to the new Solander Garden at the Embassy of Sweden

DATE TO BE CONFIRMED

Arrangements are currently being made for the Embassy of Sweden to host an event to showcase their new Solander Garden to several groups including our members. Full details will be available very soon. The Embassy is looking at a date in late January or early February. Details will be sent to members as soon as they become available.

NEW MEMBERS

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

- Kevin Bell and Rodney Harvey, Canberra
- Fleur Flannery, Yass
- Margaret Huddy, Canberra
- Annette Keenan, Canberra
- Catherine Statton, Canberra

PAST EVENTS

***Talk: Not a Drop Wasted – working with
nature, not against it***

Speaker Phillip Johnson

WEDNESDAY 3 OCTOBER

A capacity audience of 90 attended the presentation by Phillip Johnson, landscape designer extraordinaire, at the Theatrette, Australian National Botanic Gardens on 3 October. Our branch of AGHS and the Reid Residents Association combined to present the event.

Childhood memories of nature and the Australian flora and landscape imbue Phillip's designs. He exudes a contagious enthusiasm, and his designs focus on recreating habitat and accommodating changing environmental extremes.

Phillip Johnson and his team have created some extraordinary gardens incorporating natural pools, billabongs and waterfalls, and his own remarkable display garden at Olinda in the Dandenong Ranges in Victoria. In an Australian first, his design of the Trailfinders Australian Garden presented by Flemings Nursery was winner of a Gold Medal and Best in Show at Chelsea in 2013.

Phillip provided us with images and insights of his design philosophy, and a focus on water saving and harvesting in Australian gardens. He recounted some of the behind the scenes challenges in the assembly of the Chelsea Garden and more recent garden commissions. Phillip also detailed his involvement in the red poppy displays at the

Chelsea Flower Show in 2016, including his second meeting with the Queen, and the planning for the red poppy displays at the Australian War Memorial for the centenary commemoration of Armistice.

The evening rekindled memories for many who had seen his gardens or displays and inspired numerous questions and lively discussion during supper. Phillip's 2014 book, *Connected - The Sustainable Landscapes of Phillip Johnson*, which sums up his approaches, was for sale.

Special thanks are due to Marianne Albury-Colless of the Reid Residents Association, and the Venues staff of the Australian National Botanic Gardens who made the theatre available for this event.

Greg Johnson

Phillip Johnson at his Olinda garden, photo Greg Johnson (taken during an AGHS visit to his garden as part of the 2017 AGHS National Conference).



contour 556
5 - 28 October 2018
2018 CANBERRA

TUESDAY 16 OCTOBER

contour 556 2018 was the second edition of Canberra's public art biennial, held along the foreshores of Lake Burley Griffin.

Contour 556 is the water level of Lake Burley Griffin, which links the festival in name as well as in purpose to the history of Canberra's landscape. The installations and performances selected for the festival, responded in some way to Canberra's history, from 50,000 years to the present day. Curator Neil Hobbs primary objective for contour 556 was to transform how viewers remember or recall the Canberra landscape after seeing the artworks or performances.

We were fortunate enough to begin the event with a walking tour led by Neil. Amongst the many highlights were works by Ian Marr *A Literary Map of Molonglo* (which is now on loan to the University of Canberra), Richard Tipping's lawn painting *Canberra* and Alex Seton's work *The Golden Calf*. It was fascinating to hear, from the curator's perspective, the process, trials and tribulations of curating a large scale public exhibition



Members viewing Canberra, Photo Bronwyn Blake

At the conclusion of Neil's walking tour we returned to the contour 556 indoor gallery for a presentation from the delightful exhibiting artist Ros Lemoh. Ros shared both her professional and private journey as an artist, how art fills her home, heart and life. Ros exhibited work was a high definition video titled, *when you fall softly*.

contour 556 reminded us that Lake Burley Griffin is a precious and treasured part of Canberra's landscape. Now more than ever before, the use of the lake and its

surrounding environment mean that as a Society, we need to continue to be bold and vocal in our advocacy of this precious landmark.

We look forward to another walking tour and artist talk of contour 556 2020!
Bronwyn Blake

Visit to Bundarbo, Goonawarra, St Clement's

FRIDAY 9 NOVEMBER

We couldn't have ordered more perfect weather for our much anticipated trip to the Jugiong, Harden and Galong districts on Friday the 9th of November.

Historic Bundarbo Station, owned by branch member Sue Chisholm, was our first stop. Our 60 seater coach from Canberra was joined here by 4 cars from Victoria, Tumbarumba and the Southern Highlands.

Following morning tea, an introduction to the Station staff and welcome by Sue, we were guided along sweeping lawns, under trees dating back to the earliest settlement, through the extensive park like garden. The pride and care Sue and her late husband Sam have taken in meticulously restoring, renovating and sympathetically adding to the Bundarbo Station was evident at every turn.

Sue had organised for author Michael McKernan to record excerpts of his contextual history of Bundarbo *The Valley, A story from the heart of the land* (published September 2009 by Allen & Unwin) for us to listen in the coach on our way to Bundarbo Station. Many remarked on how much they appreciated the effort Sue had gone to in organising the recording which assisted us in understanding the approach Sam and Sue had taken.



Photo Greg Johnson

Following a sumptuous lunch provided by Long Track Pantry, everyone reluctantly boarded the coach for our second stop. In particular, we would like to thank Sue for generously allowing us to wander, unrushed, through her garden. This made the morning relaxing and peaceful.

Our next stop was Goonawarra, situated between Harden and Galong, owned by Gail Flanery. Despite an unfortunate incident upon entering Goonawarra when a coach window was punctured by a Eucalypt branch shattering glass into the coach, all were determined to equally enjoy our second garden.

Gail was accompanied by her daughter, and Branch member, Fleur who guided us through the garden and shared family stories and anecdotes. It is always so humbling to be welcomed into a private family garden and to hear the personal role it has played in providing a space for a family to grow, love and learn.

According to Fleur, and all agreed, the most wonderful tree in the garden was the magnificent Lemon Scented Gum, *Eucalyptus citriodora*, which were handed out by Yarralumla Nursery to commemorate the newly crowned Queen Elizabeth's first visit to Australia in 1954.

It was a particular thrill for many to see Goonawarra's unique kidney shaped pool inspired by renowned American landscape architect Thomas Church, who is recognized as one of the pioneer landscape designers of Modernism in garden landscape known as the 'California Style'.



Photo: Anne Claoue-Long

With a patched window, our coach limped the short distance to our third and final garden at St Clement's Retreat and Conference Centre in Galong. After a hearty afternoon tea and short history from the Manager, we split into two groups to walk through the museum, visit one of the two chapels and walk around the gardens. Whilst a number of those attending had attended a retreat at or previously visited St Clement's, it was interesting to see this historic property in operation, with a number of retreats and groups using the Centre.



Photo Greg Johnson

Our visit to St Clement's could actually have filled a full day, allowing a visit to the historic cemetery, grotto, chapels, halls and further wander around the grounds. Many agreed they were keen to return.

After a very full day, those travelling by coach returned to Canberra (in a new coach) and those who joined us from further afield by car continued on to their destinations for the evening, tired but happy.

Bronwyn Blake

Visit to Palerang Homestead and end of year celebrations

FRIDAY 23 NOVEMBER

The end of year gathering brought some 40 of us together at the home of Sue and Ulli Tuisk. While the winds howled through both the mature and recently planted trees for much of the day, by dusk the sky was clearing and the winds dipped to encourage brave members to wander into the many rooms across their 3 acres of gardens in the lower Mulloon Valley.

Palerang (home of the black cockatoos) was first settled in the 1840s. The property was initially called 'Hazel dell'. The original house served as an Inn, on the south end of 'Long Swamp' on the old coach road which connected The Monaro to Goulburn, and ultimately through to Sydney. This road (now called Hazel dell Road) was also known as the Queanbeyan Road. The stables and Coachman's House now form the basis of 'Palerang Cottage'.

The original Inn kitchen is still in the centre of the house, and the Victorian section was built in 1875. The easterly weatherboard section was added in 1924 by Major Moore and his family. This was where the poet David Campbell wrote much of his work when he and his family lived here through the mid 1960s.

The final addition, on the western side, included the larger blue stone rooms. This and the Cottage provided enough room for Mick Jagger and the crew to stay here during the 1969 filming of *'Ned Kelly'*.

The size of the property has decreased over the years and now Palerang is a working property of 1700 acres with Mulloon Creek, flowing in a northerly direction, through the middle. This provides excellent flats for fattening cattle.

When Sue and Ulli moved to Palerang 18 years ago the house was uninhabitable (except for wombats and possums) and the garden neglected and very overgrown. So much so that the small 1970s vineyard on the east of the house was not recognizable, nor the Hawthorn Walk which was one entry for the original circular driveway.

Sue cares for the garden that has been in their care for 20 years. Removing the rampant blackberries led to the discovery of remnants of an old vineyard dating back to the time Palerang was a coaching inn. By clearing away the gorse Sue has been able to convert the area around the original inn and the newer additions in the 1960s into a number of gardens. Some are bounded by crinkle crankle walls and others are filled with her extensive rose collection. An espaliered pear climbs the wall adjacent to the former vegetable garden overlooking the now dried up Mulloon Creek. Pepper trees, Bunya pines and an Atlantic Cedar and oak and fruit trees abound along with a small plantation of cork trees. The Bunya pines and the cedar were probably planted in the 1850s.



Photos Nancy Clarke and Greg Johnson

Drought has hit the couple hard and hand feeding of their cattle occurs each morning. Ulli's engineering talents have recently been centred on a new fire-fighting protection system that will protect the central area if there is an available water supply.

Yet it is the cultural landscape, the social placement of their home that brings them joy. The good years still far surpass those of drought, and caring for a homestead that has so many aspects embedded in the 19th century places both Ulli and Sue into the timeline of the history of Braidwood.

Our Branch Chair, Sue Byrne, spoke of the work of the Branch in 2018 and its plans for 2019, and honoured Kay Johnston who was retiring from the Branch Committee after many years in which she filled both local and national management positions within the AGHS.

Helen Wilson

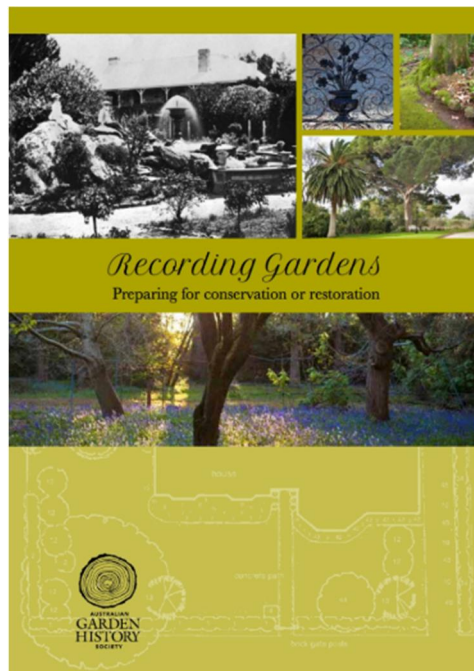
AGHS NATIONAL NEWS

PUBLICATION: RECORDING GARDENS: PREPARING FOR CONSERVATION OR RESTORATION

The AGHS launched its latest publication, *Recording Gardens: Preparing for Conservation or Restoration* (Editor - Eliot Cooper) at the recent National Conference.

It is a useful and practical guide to drawing an existing garden of historical significance (or a new garden that so far exists only in the gardener's imagination).

The book aims to explain the art of recording a garden in straightforward, step-by-step terms. It includes only how to measure and draw the outline of an existing garden but also how to record its man-made and natural features. Further, it provides tips on noting the plants that are grown in the garden, soil type, orientation and other influences such as climate and features that lie over the garden wall.



Garden recordings are vital snapshots in time: historic record of layout, composition and character of a historic garden at a specific time. Often their greatest value is realized when a gardener wishes to restore or recreate lost features, or simply to record how a garden originally was prior to making changes.

This edition of *Recording Gardens* is based on the much-loved (and well thumbed) 1998 edition of *Recording Garden: A guide to measuring and drawing gardens* based on and AGHS seminar by Richard Ratcliffe, published in the ACT, Monaro and Riverina Branch of the AGHS. Ratcliffe's publication has been a valuable resource for the Society.

Since the release of the previous edition, new technology has seen the development of online tools to make it easier to measure and draw garden sites - none of which, however, invalidate the tried and true measures! This

book combines the old and new to furnish gardeners with a range of options to get the job done as they like.

It is available for sale through the National Office office, \$20 for AGHS Members and \$25 for non members, plus postage. To order please phone 1800 678 466 or email info@gardenhistorysociety.org.au. A digital and hard copy will be available for purchase through the website soon.

AGHS Annual National Conference 2019

Wellington, New Zealand

25 - 28 October 2019



**MUSEUM OF
NEW ZEALAND
TE PAPA
TONGAREWA**

The Conference Registration Brochure will be available in the January Journal with bookings opening 11 February 2019.

OF INTEREST

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA

<https://www.nla.gov.au>

22 September 2018 . 10 February 2019, Free

Visitors to Cook and the Pacific will follow James Cook's three remarkable Pacific voyages, and explore this spectacular region through the eyes of the British voyagers and the First Nations peoples they met.

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDENS

www.anbg.gov.au

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. Be warned that the talks are very popular and spaces are limited. For details and updates check the Friends website at www.friendsanbg.org.au.

HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY OF CANBERRA

<http://www.hsoc.org.au/index.htm>

OPEN GARDENS CANBERRA

<http://opengardenscanberra.org.au/>

NATIONAL ARBORETUM CANBERRA

www.arboretumcanberra.org.au

LAKE BURLEY GRIFFIN GUARDIANS (LBGG)

<http://lakeburleygriffinguardians.org.au/>