

# BRANCH CUTTINGS

Issue 48 - November 2015

This branch is affiliated with the Royal Australian Historical Society & National Trust of Australia (NSW)



## *Cherry Trees - the mud hut at Oberon* by Mareah Rhodes-White



The consequences of war are not always dire. Around 1940 my grandparents started looking for a small acreage away from Sydney and the threat of invasion by the Japanese, a perceived risk considering their success to the north of Australia. My father ran the family business in Sydney. Grandfather loved 'going bush' as he'd have said. He and my father were keen trout fishermen so that prospect was tempting. 25 acres ten kilometers from Oberon on the Duckmaloi River were purchased in 1940 or 1941.

Because of war, materials were short. It was decided the cottage would have rammed earth pise outer walls and a cypress pine interior. He found a local 'old timer' builder. As a small child of 5, I remember being with them checking progress. I was excited and I looked forward to school holidays there. It was to become the family holiday home and still is.

My grandparents visited between holidays and grandfather began to plant trees. The soil is a rich red volcanic loam embellished with rock, making it

difficult to dig. With help from my father and an odd friend, there to fish, many were planted from c1942. The house was finished in 1943 after interruptions caused by rain-making experiments of the CSIRO. The downpours ensuing managed to wash away a substantial amount of wall. The first planting informally lined a drive with silver poplars and aspens. Conifers included Himalayan cedars, spruces and two, now huge, *Pinus patula*, Mexican weeping pine. These spawned a large 'family' of seedlings. Availability of plants was limited and quality well below today's. I remember hearing of *Ferguson's Nursery* and others in Victoria. My grandfather was a great raconteur, seldom making notes in spite of saying *the faintest ink is better than the strongest memory!* Conifers on the west provide protection from winds and afternoon summer sun, a microclimate for shrubs. There was an alternating planting of

*Cupressus torulosa*, Bhutan cypress with *C.lusitanica* from Guatemala and South Mexico. Inside the fence crab apples, cherries, copper beech, weeping



A panorama of the wide variety of trees planted

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR -

The Chair is gone...long live the Chair!

At the first Executive Committee meeting following the AGM in August the office bearers were elected – I was elected to the Chair, Tempe Beaven was elected as Vice-chair and Anne Galbraith as Secretary.

Stuart Read and Jeanne Villani have left the committee this year, Jeanne will continue taking the bookings and preparing the branch newsletter. As we lament our losses we also congratulate and welcome Anne Smith as a newly elected member of the committee. Anne has agreed to be our speaker for March next year at which time she will present a talk about her time coordinating the *Open Garden Scheme* (now defunct), in Sydney, illustrated with images of notable gardens.

John Maurer, who chairs the committee responsible for the new rose garden at *Saumarez* homestead in Armidale, addressed the committee with an update of works and ideas for raising funds for the second stage of works. The stage one works are now complete and will be officially opened later this year by Sue Ebury, Countess of Wilton and patron of our Society. They are eager to raise a sizeable sum to enable the implementation of the second stage with the planting of Australian heritage roses. The enthusiasm and hard work of these volunteers is astounding and I'm convinced that the rose garden will draw so many visitors to the area.

Under the guidance of Stuart Read, the Sydney branch of the Society has been strong in advocacy for significant landscapes that are threatened and even though Stuart has left the committee we will act and speak out to commend, advise and to reprimand when issues arise. Last month I wrote to the Heritage Council of NSW commending their listing of *Stroud House*, Stroud, NSW on the State Heritage Register. I drew to their attention that the garden may be significant and that they should recognise and preserve the significance of the garden and landscape context of the adjacent land that provides the setting for, and explanation of the house, not only its immediate garden surrounds but the wider expansive rural landscape from which it prospered and on which it sits in contrast.

I was thrilled to read of the Green Ban on the State Government's proposed development at North Parramatta. Jack Munday and trade union secretary, Brian Parker, joined forces with a local residents action group and *Parramatta Female Factory* Friends to fight the State government's divestment of so many publicly owned assets. At one time Parramatta was a larger city than Sydney; it hosted its last World Fair in 1883. I was astounded by the recent article in the *Western Sydney Business Access* by Jason Burcher, which we have reproduced on pages 4 & 5 of this newsletter. In his erudite article he enumerated so many significant landscape heritage items that are threatened - do take the time to read it. Thank you Jason. We are hoping to arrange a walk and talk through North Parramatta in July next year to raise awareness and explore the implications in situ. An important aspect of advocacy is the funding of important projects. One of these that we are proud to support is an endeavour brought about by the Swedish Society to enhance the understanding of the botanist Daniel Carl Solander who, as the monument at *Kamay Botany Bay National Park* states '*landed with Captain James Cook and Joseph Banks*' and intriguingly, was '*erected by his countrymen, 1914*' – without informing visitors from whence he came. It is not possible to augment the monument but we are contributing to an interpretation panel that will be on permanent display at the nearby Visitors Centre it will make clear his origins and skills.

Our last speaker was Leonie Norton who shared with us the remarkable story of Marriane Collinson Campbell and her fortunate life. In a very low key and relaxed way, Leonie lead us through the various phases of Marriane's life. A woman who enjoyed privilege and an ornamental education going on to produce remarkable botanical illustrations of Australian plants, she was an amateur architect who improved the house and garden at '*Duntroon*', Canberra.

We have a wonderful event planned for November. A self-drive trip to Lithgow with a focus on the work of Paul Sorensen and there will be a light lunch provided at a local wildlife sanctuary restaurant.

Our first event next year will be a talk by Jennifer Milam, Professor of Art History at *Sydney University* – she will illustrate *German Romantic Gardens*. I'm sure you will recall Jennifer's enthralling talk on the *Jardins Anglo-Chinois in Eighteenth Century France* - a talk loaded with tales of novelty and exoticism. Well, she's back and I'm sure it will be a very popular event. Jennifer is the President of the Australian and New Zealand Society for Eighteenth Century Studies (ANZSECS). This will be the first of a great line up of events and speakers, largely organised by Stuart before he departed. Thanks Stuart.

I am looking forward to the Christmas Party to be held in *Callan Park*, Sunday 29th November. At the event we will make a presentation to Stuart, invite members to reminisce and thank him personally – there will also be ample Christmas cheer.

A reminder that both the *Sydney Living Museums* and the *State Library of NSW* have the theme of 'gardens' for 2016 and the respective exhibitions and publications: *Florilegia and Planting Dreams – Harvesting Ephemera*, will be a field of opportunity to raise the consciousness within the larger community of gardening and its rich history. Don't neglect Richard Aitken's plea for us all to rummage around for at least one ephemeron that might be donated to the SLNSW – I hope we all respond to this unusual request. Please direct donations to Catherine Barwick, Collection Strategy+Development, SLNSW, Macquarie St., Sydney. The major event for most members is the annual conference, this year it was held in Adelaide, with a theme '*From Garden to Table*'. I was unable to be there but have heard that the attendees had a wonderful time.

The committee is in strong, capable hands and I encourage you to get in touch: we are stronger and better with your feedback and ideas! Ways of involving potential new members, widening our reach and message are welcome. Let us know. As an experiment to engage a wider audience, we have placed an advertisement in the October issue of *Art Gallery of NSW* magazine *Look*, which will be a collector's issue. Let me know what you think of the design. Thanks to all!

James Quoyle. Tel: (02) 95195250 or email: james@qanda.com.au

## NEW MEMBERS

The Branch would like to extend a warm welcome to the following new local members:

Ronald Benson, Peter Brownlee, Graeme Greenhalgh, Maria Hitchcock,

Julie O'Keefee, Libby Percival & Julie Whitfield

## AGHS FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### NOVEMBER

**Date:** Saturday 14th November - 11.00 pm - 4 pm

**Event:** Lithgow self-drive tour visiting *Hoskins Memorial Church, Eskbank House and Barton Park Giant Trees Arboretum* and a mystery early garden. More details on page 7.

**Venue:** Meet at *Hoskins Memorial Church* (pictured right), corner of Mort, Bridge & Church Streets – park in Bridge or Church Streets



**Cost:** Members \$40 Guests \$45 includes morning tea & lunch. **Bookings, closing on TUESDAY 10th Nov., are essential.**

**Date:** Sunday 29th November 4.00 pm - 7.30 pm

**Event:** Christmas Get-Together and Presentation to retired Chair, Stuart Read.

**Venue:** *Callan Park*, Lilyfield. Full address supplied on confirmation of booking

**Cost:** Members \$20 Guests \$30 includes light refreshments. Bookings essential

### FEBRUARY

**Date:** Wednesday 24th February 6pm for 7pm - 8.30pm.

**Event:** Illustrated talk by Jennifer Milam - *German Romantic Gardens*

**Venue:** Annie Wyatt Room, National Trust Centre, Observatory Hill.

**Cost:** Members \$20 Guests \$30 includes light refreshments. Bookings essential. More details on Page 7

### MARCH

**Date:** Wednesday 16th March 6pm for 7pm - 8.30pm.

**Event:** Illustrated talk by Anne Smith - *'Gardens with history from Open Gardens Australia -some personal favourites'*.

Anne - now a branch committee member - was the Sydney co-ordinator of OGA.

**Venue:** Annie Wyatt Room, National Trust Centre, Observatory Hill.

**Cost:** Members \$20 Guests \$30 includes light refreshments. Bookings essential.

**Bookings & enquiries for all events above: Email: [Jeanne@Villani.com](mailto:Jeanne@Villani.com)** (Just a reply to this email)

**NOTE: Please book before transferring money to the account - the event may be booked out. Payment confirms Booking. BOOKINGS CLOSE 24 HOURS PRIOR TO EVENT.**

Payments for all events must be made **prior** to the event by cheque to:

Australian Garden History Society and mailed to: Jeanne Villani, 90 Cabbage Tree Road, Bayview, NSW, 2104 **or**

by **Internet** bank transfer to: Australian Garden History Society Sydney & Northern NSW Branch, ANZ Bank, Centrepoint Branch. BSB 012040 Account 101762565 Payment must include your **name** and the **function** you are booking for.

**An Individual Membership entitles only that member to the Members Rate.**

**Household Membership entitles Members Rate for 2 adults & 2 children living within that household.**

**Corporate memberships entitle anyone working in that organisation to Members Rates.**

Refunds for cancellations will not be made if less than 48 hrs notice is given.

### COMING EVENTS FOR THE NORTHERN NSW BRANCH

**Saturday 14th November 1pm:** Book launch - *Celebrate the Seasons: garden memoirs from New England* by Liz Chappell  
*Devon House*, 11 Rangers Valley Road, Dundee. *Devon House* garden open November 14 & 15. Entry \$8 proceeds benefit Heritage Rose Garden at *Saumarez Homestead*, Armidale. Enquiries: Liz Chappell Tel.67 344143 [liz.chappell3@gmail.com](mailto:liz.chappell3@gmail.com)

### OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST

**Thursday December 10th 10:30am-11:30am** Unveiling of a plaque to Sir Daniel Cooper

Woollahra Council will be unveiling a plaque to honour Sir Daniel Cooper, merchant and philanthropist. The site of the plaque is to be on the frontage of his family home *Rose Bay Lodge*, 1-7 Salisbury Road, Rose Bay. This property is listed by the Heritage Council as a building of historical significance and is the oldest surviving house on the *Cooper Estate* known as Woollahra, NSW. The current owners of the property have kindly offered the grounds of *Rose Bay Cottage* for the serving of light refreshments.

Sir Daniel Cooper was elected first Speaker of the Legislative Assembly in 1856 and was a generous philanthropist, contributing to the relief of widows and children of soldiers killed in the Crimean War. He was knighted by patent on 18 July 1857 and created baronet of Woollahra in 1863 and made a Knight Commander of St Michael and St George (KCMG) in 1880 and Knight Grand Cross of the Order of St Michael and St George (GCMG) in 1888. The name given by Sir Daniel Cooper to his planned new house at Point Piper, '*Woollahra*', was adopted by the new municipality of Woollahra formed in 1860.

**Bookings are essential. Please RSVP by 3/12/15 to Joan Ruthven 9391 7932 or [joan.ruthven@woollahra.nsw.gov.au](mailto:joan.ruthven@woollahra.nsw.gov.au)**

**Saturday November 7th:** Mount Tomah coach trip/self-drive – *Paeonies & paintings along the Bells Line of Road* – details/bookings: <http://www.nationaltrust.org.au/nsw/events>

**Tuesday December 1st:** Ku Ring Gai Horticultural Society – Stuart Read talk on Interwar Gardens – details/info: call Christine Rethers, 9449 6245

**Tuesday January 26th:** RAHS *History House* open day 10 am - 4 pm – pot luck history talks - range of ten minute talks on aspects of history. & book sale, 133 Macquarie Street, Sydney. Book fair.

Info: <http://www.rahs.org.au/event/rahs-history-house-open-day-pot-luck-history-and-book-sale/>

Don't forget to have a look at our website - [www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au](http://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au)  
It can now be used to check for updated details of events, & membership renewals  
including by direct debit, gift purchases and routine enquiries.

## CITY CENTRIC BIAS, SQUANDERED OPPORTUNITY by Jason Burcher

Jason Burcher is marketing and communications professional and science and technology writer specialising in electronics and robotics. A self-confessed geek, Jason also has a strong passion for history, heritage, planning and urban design. He lives in Parramatta.

You may have missed this article which was originally published in the July 2015 edition of Western Sydney Business Access magazine. It is highlighting something that we should all be concerned about.

Link to <http://www.accessnews.com.au/life/arts/item/1222-comment-imbalance-of-arts-funding>



A coloured etching showing the township of Parramatta (looking north up Marsden St from the current location of Westfield Shopping Centre) c1888 (shortly after Parramatta hosted its last World Fair in 1883.)

**" a severe shortfall in state government funding for social and cultural infrastructure in Western Sydney threatens to stymie Parramatta's future as a regional centre for the economy, culture and the arts."**

As the population of metropolitan Sydney continues to grow, with Greater Western Sydney set to accommodate a disproportionately large increase in density, the importance of Parramatta on a regional, state and national basis will become increasingly significant.

Western Sydney will be roughly equivalent in size to the current metropolitan communities of Sydney and Melbourne by the year 2050, by which time Western Sydney is expected to be home to more than four million people.

However, if Parramatta is to meet the needs of what will by then represent well in excess of one in 10 Australians, a focused strategy must be formulated to facilitate the development of attractions and institutions capable of delivering the type of cultural vibrancy and diversity enjoyed by its sister CBD to the east and cosmopolitan cousin to the south. Recently declared Sydney's second CBD, Parramatta

is exceptionally well placed to deliver these necessities thanks to its central location and existing scale, however Parramatta must also develop adequate infrastructure for cultural and social attractions or continue to suffer the 'brain drain' created by the mass emigration of highly trained or qualified people.

This will require a co-ordinated plan to drive the economic, social and environmental outcomes essential for a second CBD and failure to do so will threaten the economic development and social cohesion of the region.

Planning must provide for a comprehensive and diverse range of experiences for both residents as well as visitors alike.

This is vital not only for attracting and retaining businesses and management class employment but also to support Western Sydney's arts community.

Deliberate investment in cultural facilities and programs is essential to meeting this need both now and into the future.

Pivotal to the realisation of Parramatta's future role as a regional centre are some 360-acres of publicly owned land located adjacent to the Parramatta CBD and north/south growth corridor.

This public land is also steeped in Indigenous and European history and every bit as historically and culturally significant as any other landscape found elsewhere in this nation.

Here we can find Australia's oldest public building, its most scientifically significant astronomical observatory, its first productive farmland, one of its oldest private residences, its first female factory, one of Australia's last remaining Edwardian gardens and this convict nation's longest continuously operated Gaol - to name just a handful of the great national assets massing this incredibly significant open landscape.

It is a veritable treasure trove of family silver just waiting to be dusted off and showcased to the world.

Already partially a UNESCO world heritage listed area since mid 2010, an application on behalf of its sole custodian is all that has stood in the way of this esteemed level of international recognition spreading right across the site - from the confluence of Toongabbie and Darling Mills Creek and Parramatta Gaol in the north, right down to the old gatehouse, cattle grid and driveway on the edge of the Great Western Highway to the south.

Sadly, successive State Governments, both Labor and Liberal, have resisted calls to initiate such an undertaking.

Admittedly and due to a range of reasons, such as the continued occupation of the site by resource strapped medical and disability support services and the ongoing use of the site by the department of corrections, activating the site for public use and accommodating a broader world heritage listing would have been somewhat problematic at that time. These former barriers to renewal however no longer exist.



In the last few years the State Government has consolidated the formerly fragmented management of crown land serving different government departments and reorganised planning. The *Parramatta Gaol* and *Norma Parker Centre* now lay empty, and a path for the future consolidation of health and medical services at Westmead hospital has been formed to facilitate the organised migration of related services away from the eastern campus of *Cumberland Hospital*.

The declaration of the Parramatta North Urban Renewal Study Area as a State Significant Site by the Minister for Western Sydney, Premier Mike Baird, back in August 2014 has allowed the State Government to put forward a plan for this site that effectively ignore important heritage and environmental protection mechanisms enshrined in State Legislation while paying little regard to any objections raised by Parramatta City Council, the Western Sydney arts community, heritage advocates and local residents.

The Planning Framework Application put forward by the proponent coupled with it's State Significant Site status removes established processes and protection mechanisms vital to the survival of Parramatta's most important and intact heritage landscape, while squandering the one opportunity we have to restore *Parramatta Park* to it's formerly much broader proportions to deliver a grand public space befitting what was once, and may one day again become, a great world city.

Adding insult to injury, the National Trust has highlighted the fact that the state government's plan also threatens the existing UNESCO World Heirtage listing of *Old Government House*.

The plan nullifies fundamental protections, locks out the rights of relevant stakeholders, slices up the land and its assets and disposes of it's dismembered pieces while stacking the interests of both present and future stakeholders against each other along with that of the remaining flora and fauna, open space and built heritage.

Unit blocks to accommodate some 3900 apartments are to be imposed on the site, including where buildings deemed to be of high significance now stand and in place of ecologically and scientifically significant trees - crowding out what will remain present in the shade of the surrounding tower blocks and in direct competition with new priorities which must inevitably be balanced against the site's other 'potential' use(s).

While the narrative championed by Member for Parramatta, Dr Geoff Lee, and the NSW Planning Minister, Mr Rob Stokes, is one of activation and adaptive reuse, the stated objectives for what was once known as the *Fleet Street Heritage Area*, as articulated by the state government's developer arm UrbanGrowth NSW, is to provide a pathway to unlock value from real estate assets deemed surplus to requirements through a process of de-risking, dismantling and wholesaling to the market for the purpose of meeting urban growth targets for new dwelling construction.

While the renewal and adaptive reuse of these priceless assets presents a once in two century opportunity to develop a world class public space able to attract and house artisans, designers and digital engineers while providing a focal point for contemporary art and tourism in Western Sydney, the state government's plan to relinquish public ownership of the site presents significant barriers to this opportunity and permanently alienates this strategically important site from public ownership.

This divestment in Parramatta's publicly owned assets also comes at a time when the Baird government are investing heavily into the cultural ribbon surrounding Sydney's CBD in a bid to reinforce Sydney as Asia's leading cultural hub.

This includes the delivery of the *Barangaroo Headland Park* and grand event space, development of an all new arts and culture precinct at Walsh Bay, upgrading of the *Sydney Opera House*, revitalisation of *Centennial Park*, *Hyde Park*, *The Royal Botanic Gardens* and *The Domain* as well as redevelopment of Sydney's convention, exhibition and entertainment venues.

In total, the Baird government are set to inject well in excess of \$1-billion dollars into Sydney while allocating just a fraction of that for simular arts and culture projects in Western Sydney.

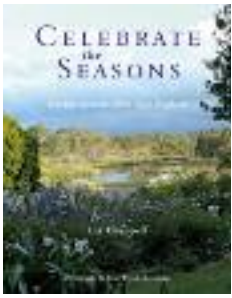


Excerpt from UrbanGrowth NSW's initially exhibited plan for the Fleet Street Heritage Area.



Aerial panorama of Parramatta's river lands

## CELEBRATE the SEASONS: Garden memoirs from New England by Liz Chappell



An essential book for cold-climate gardeners, this personal journey of making a garden around a heritage homestead is set in one of the coldest areas of Australia, the New England region of NSW. Share garden walks through historic properties, exotic woodlands, traditional English style herbaceous borders and contemporary prairie plantings. Advice from key gardeners of the district is presented as a month by month guide to gardening activities.

When Liz Chappell returned to the New England area of northern New South Wales, to a garden cultivated by her mother and grandmother before her, she found Australian gardening advice did not prepare her for the challenges of this climate. Plants hardy to drought would not withstand frosts to minus 15 degrees, in spring as well as winter. Torrential summer downpours drowned many more. Few Australian native shrubs could adapt to the severe cold conditions.

Over twenty years Liz has created a diverse and much admired garden of abundant roses, perennial borders and exotic trees and learned there is indeed a wealth of ornamental plants which will thrive in her garden. Along the way, Liz kept a journal of gardens visited, plants admired and of course every addition, trial and triumph in her garden. Now she brings this experience and the collective wisdom of many other gardeners across New England together in "*Celebrate the Seasons*." This gardening memoir is like chatting to a friend over the kitchen table.

Kim Woods-Rabbidge brings the perception of an artist and gardener to her sensitive photographs capturing the nuances of changing seasons in many of the finest gardens of New England; from spring bulbs thrusting through icy ground; the relentless sunshine and sudden storms of mid-summer; gentle mellowness of autumn leaves to the austere, frost-rimed winter gardens. Soft cover, 240pp. with over 200 colour images, botanical charts and index. RRP \$40. See page 3 for book launch details

*She's tough, she's funny, she's practical and has to be: Liz Chappell gardens on the New England Plateau. In the fine tradition of Australian country women writing about their gardens west of the range, from Mrs Boldrewood through to Beatrice Bligh, Marilyn Pidgeon & Fiona Ogilvie. And this one is in glorious colour.* Gil Teague, Florilegium garden bookstore  
Further information: Liz Chappell, 02 67344143, liz.chappell3@gmail.com or Kim Woods Rabbidge, 07 38999863, kimwr@bigpond.com

For those of you who were unable to be at the recent AGM we thought you would like to hear the

**Vote of Thanks** read by John Maurer to Stuart Read from the members of the Northern NSW Sub-branch.

"There has probably always been a group of horticulturally minded historians residing in the New England dating back to the earliest European settlement. With its testing climate stretched over an array of varied geography, New England gardeners have adapted and shared a sweeping natural landscape with old European practices and plants.

The fact that a group of New Englanders has been fashioned into a growing sub-branch of the Australian Garden History Society is in no small part due to the inspiration provided by one Stuart Read.

The passion and zeal for botany of all types and the study of organised plantings into structures for both food production and aesthetic pleasure, is evident the moment Stuart arrives. This passion is a freely transferrable asset that has inspired the northerners over the last several years to plan and execute massive volunteer tasks like running the 2013 National Conference in Armidale and tackling the Rose Garden project at *Saumerez*.

Many AGHS members in the north have experienced no chair of the branch other than Stuart. He has listened to us and advised when advice was required. He has always shared his knowledge, both formally and informally in a variety of settings. He has shouldered the burden of advocacy with local government while we find our feet in this area. He has certainly challenged us to look at the history of the adoption and spread of foreign botanic species into our gardens.

And he still looks so young!"

Penned by Bill Oates on behalf of the Northern NSW Sub-branch

## IMMINENT LOSS OF LONDON PLANE TREES IN MACQUARIE STREET by Alan Olsen



Macquarie Street is a figure of speech, an example of the imaginative use of language. It was a figure of speech a generation ago for visiting a medical specialist. Today it equates to the seat of government in New South Wales. The terrace that is Macquarie Street is the governmental and historic axis of Sydney, one of Australia's greatest. Its alignment linking the harbour to *Hyde Park* was perhaps Macquarie's most inspired contribution to Sydney planning.

Ahead of Australia's bicentenary in 1988, architect Andrew Andersons led state government initiatives to make Macquarie Street Australia's finest boulevard, including widening its western footpath to enable outdoor cafes and planting of substantial trees. The London planes planted then were well chosen. Our planes are now reaching a size for pedestrian shade, heat alleviation and softening the impact of tall buildings.

"We're gonna put more cars through the city, create an extra traffic lane, narrow the footpath, remove a couple of those existing, mature London planes," announced Roads and Maritime Services in

December 2014, putting the Sydney City Centre Capacity Improvement Plan on display over Christmas and New Year, with submissions closing in the middle of the Sydney Test, 11 weeks before the general election. From the 1987 photograph, the plan would shrink the footpath to create an extra lane. The 1980s study concluded that any kerbside lane would be ineffective. This was ignored in today's evidence-free capitulation to more *Sydneyroom* for cars. Two London planes, of 30 years maturity, will be casualties.

RMS announced in June that it will go ahead with its plan. Its removal of the College Street cycle lane grabbed headlines. There were no concessions for Macquarie Street. But wait. When contractors turned up in June and removed the footpath extension, they found a surprising treatment of the plane trees.

A little research in 2015 suggests that using root barriers is an integral component of best practice in urban tree planting. It is no longer sufficient to plant a tree in an urban location and hope that its roots keep out of trouble. The 1988 upgrade of Macquarie Street anticipated this. The planting of planes included root barriers, diverting roots to a level where they don't disrupt things on the surface. Macquarie Street remains a construction site, but the London planes are still standing – for now.

## VISIT TO LITHGOW GARDENS & SURPRISE PLACES by Gina Plate

In the last *Branch Cuttings* Stuart Read wrote an extended piece about our planned visit to Lithgow on Saturday 14 November this year. Our plans have been revised slightly since then but those travelling from Sydney will need to allow two hours or slightly more driving time:

We will gather at 11.00 am for morning tea at the *Hoskins Memorial Church* Parish Hall (corner of Mort, Bridge & Church Streets – park in Bridge or Church Streets). Stuart will give us a talk and we will have time to wander around the Church's beautiful and well maintained Sorensen-designed garden.

On our way to lunch we are fortunate to be able to visit a local rural, mid nineteenth century private garden that is rarely, if ever, open to the public. Although the garden has been curtailed by road resumption, it has an irregularly curving drive, a carriage loop and a contrasting, rectilinear former orchard garden plus some rare and interesting details to be discovered.

Within the nearby *Secret Creek Sanctuary* is a café where we will have a light lunch, the cost of which is included in your tour fee. The goal of the sanctuary is to save endangered native species. We will be able to see some of the animals from the café & restaurant but cannot enter the sanctuary unless accompanied

by a guide (tours by appointment only). If you are keen to see various wallabies, long-nosed poteroos, rufous betongs, red-necked pademelons and emus and animals bred in the purpose-built breeding facilities (quolls, alpine dingoes, bush stone curlews, golden possums), make a booking for a Friday or Sunday tour and stay the night in Lithgow.

<http://www.secretcreeksanctuary.com.au>

To finish the day we had planned to visit another rarely seen garden: the Sorensen designed garden of *Lidsdale House* (formerly named after its original owners as *Neubeck House*). However, as no staff member of its present owner Centennial Coal can be present on the day, we are sadly unable to go on site. Planning is already underway for a visit in a year or two. Fortunately, we have been invited to a sneak preview of the soon-to-open *Barton Park Giant Trees Arboretum* that is being created on the banks of Lake Wallace, Wallerawang, on land of one of the first farms settled west of the Blue Mountains. Here, since 2007, a collection of the 'tallest and largest-growing trees of Australia' and the world, are being planted with all work and planting being done by volunteers and funded by donations and grants. The park is to be open to the public 'for recreation and educational use' and the mounting collection - a 'Botanic Ark' featuring a redwood grove, pines, conifers and native species including *Araucaria* and eucalypt species will be gathered over time.



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## GERMAN ROMANTIC GARDENS by Jennifer Milam

This lecture on 24th February, our first event for next year's program, explores the German Romantic garden as both a process of cosmopolitan translation and a patriotic experience of place. I consider the garden as a space in which aesthetic ideas were developed in connection with the people who created and used them. My focus is on a small group of German theorists, designers and patrons who thought extensively about the relationship between national identity and garden design: a

philosopher who devoted himself to garden theory, Christian Hirschfeld, and viewed style as 'evidence of a nation's character'; Prince Franz von Anhalt-Dessau and his wife Luise, who were patrons of the garden kingdom of Wörlitz; the author Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who presented the garden as a central protagonist in his novel *Elective Affinities*; and Prince Pückler who not only designed his own gardens at Muskau and Branitz, but also wrote extensively about his visits to gardens around the world and presented practical theories of garden design in his *Hints on Landscape Gardening*. These garden enthusiasts knew one another through personal contact or their writings, and they responded to and developed their ideas in relation to the newly framed creative enterprise in Germany of gartenlandschaftskunst.

What they shared was a conviction that garden forms affect feelings, with the role of the garden artist to determine paths that will alter and diversify the visitor's experience of place to, in the words of Hirschfeld, *elicit a sequence of emotions that emerge spontaneously*. These spontaneous emotions, elicited by movement through the garden, were linked with a growing sense of patriotism that contrasted with cosmopolitan judgments in the writings of Hirschfeld, Pückler, and Goethe.



The Rock of Wörlitz by Karl Kuntz, 1797



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silver birch, lilacs, *Berberis*, *Lonicera fragrantissima* - winter honeysuckle, rowan, hawthorns with sycamores and a rare maple, possibly seed sent by my Vancouver great-uncle. This maple (or sycamore) has pinkish-red leaf undersides and colourful seeds: pink with sharp lime-green on their wings. I've not been able to find a name for it. I've managed to grow one seedling. A weeping golden elm produced a forest of common elms. Another produces suckers – but both give welcome shade and ornament. Near the cottage there were drifts of cornflowers, Shirley poppies, daffodils and larkspurs. A bed had roses, hollyhocks, delphiniums, catmint and alpine *Phlox* and a climbing 'Lorraine Lee' rose with huge trunk and prolific blooms. A photograph shows my grandfather (6'3" tall) framed by hollyhock and *Delphinium*, each his height. He fed that bed with chicken manure from his Warrawee garden. He always had liquid manure so one hopes he took dry manure to Oberon! He was a keen collector of 'Horse apples' from any paddock. The boot always had jute sacks, shovel and gloves.

The cottage was close to a much earlier dwelling, with remains of a chimney, bottles and earthenware. The chimney was 'buried' in a grove of Kentish cherries, plums and apples and a small single red climbing rose. The cherries made delicious jam, highly-prized for its unique flavour and the huge effort which went into de-stoning each small cherry. Raw they were far too sour but stewed with sugar and no water for a pie, the flavour was delicious. Carefully cooked they retained a magnificent Chinese lacquer red. The same for jam - sugar and lemon juice only. Now fruiting suckers provide annual treats for parrots. My grandfather lived a further 30 years to see plantings flourish and witness the great pleasure his family enjoyed from being there. Because of the thicket he named the place 'Cherry Trees' but later when I visited grandmother and asked where he was, she'd say 'He's up at the Mud Hut'.

After he died in 1963 at 97, my father and brothers were its main occupants. I was married and on a cattle station in Central Queensland. After my father's death in 1989 we made alterations to accommodate our family, grandchildren and friends. Both brothers died so ownership came to me. In the 1950s my mother installed her Sydney gardener at Oberon. He was asthmatic and she hoped the climate would improve this. He later bought a nearby block, built a house and a garden, living well into his 90s. In 1990 the garage was converted into a second cottage partly shaded by a huge copper beech planted c1944. A third building is known as 'Alone' and the garage-cottage 'Ninety Nine' because of its birth year. Building a shed to take its contents led to removing the forest of elms, apple, plum and cherries. I planted many trees, the most successful a horse chestnut and shrubs like rhododendrons which



Not a good day for a winter barbecue on this stunning fire pit

flourish on stream banks. When my grandchildren were young I took some to a nursery to choose a tree to plant as their contribution. A couple thrived - a blue spruce 'Fat Albert' of 2008. *Forsythia* and two Kashmir cypresses struggle with dryness. Wisterias do well but late frosts often ruin their flowers. Several 'Grey Owl' junipers do well and a weeping silver pear, to remind me of Dame Elisabeth Murdoch's *Cruden Farm*. I also planted a rose with her name. Labels are kept in a drawer, and an envelope called the Death Collection! But gardeners are optimists and always see anything they plant as a mature plant.

The stream has three dams – which would not be approved today. But they have enabled a garden and sanctuary for birds, platypus and water birds. Now daffodils flank one dam to make a golden fringe on its grassy edge. Clumps of hellebores grow under sycamores and Canadian red maples. Summer buttercups spread on creek banks under willows, which give excellent shade for water, wildlife and flowers. Being at *Cherry Trees* is a joy and the tranquil garden and landscape bring pleasure to visitors. In some respects it's like revisiting the 1940s but with mains power and no chip heater in the bathroom! I'd like to think the spirit of my grandfather and his love of nature made *Cherry Trees* a tiny bit magical.