

BRANCH CUTTINGS

Issue 49 - February 2016

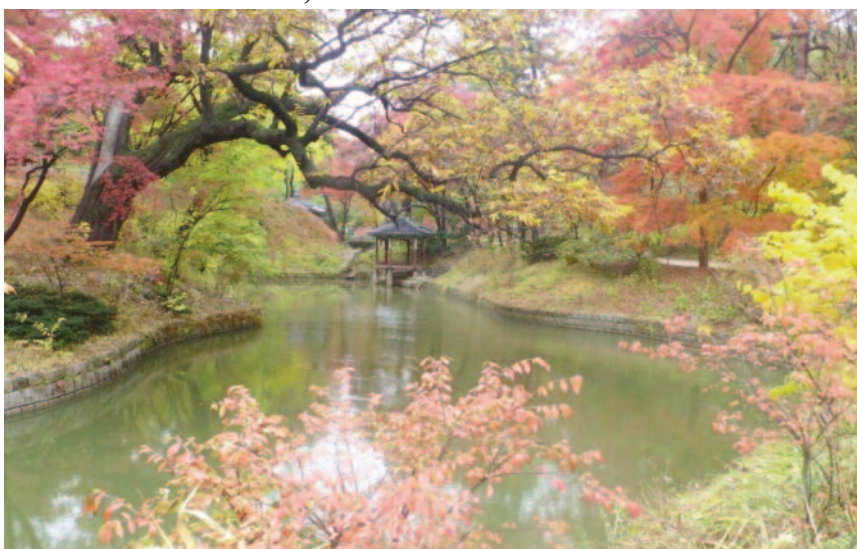
This branch is affiliated with the Royal Australian Historical Society & National Trust of Australia (NSW)



SEOUL'S GREEN HEART: SECRET GARDEN, CHANGDEOKGUNG PALACE



Originally a lotus-blossom-viewing pond, with pavilion.



Fan-shaped pavilion to view a curving shaped pond in the garden

If you only have time for one palace or garden in Seoul, South Korea – go here.

So said a couple of guidebooks Jill Matthews kindly lent me. I visited twice over a week in autumn and it amazed me how quickly colour comes to maples, chestnuts, sassafras, Korean elms (*Zelkova serrata*) and other trees. It is said to be the quintessential Korean garden and is listed on the World Heritage List. Entry is by ticketed guided tour only, something I recommend. The guides speak excellent English. The Huwon/Biwon (Secret garden), in fact parkland, was created north east of the palace between 1405-12 in the reign of King Taejong and makes up some 60% of its area. It was loved more than any other palace by Joseon dynasty (1392-1910) Kings because of its spacious, beautiful garden. This was sited to be accessed from Changdeokgung and adjacent Changyeonggung palaces and its design capitalises on a series of natural gullies on a hill, Maebong Peak, each given its own garden. The whole cannot be seen at once and must be explored on foot by climbing and descending steps and paths. Lotus ponds were created to emphasise each gully's character with scale varying from intimate to grand. Some were used for royal fishing and boating.

Korean landscape architecture hinges on reverence for nature. Human structures and incidents are sparing and carefully located and designed to

complement. Small pavilions were built along the stream flowing through it. The garden was to foster contemplation, poetry-writing and strolling recreation. Areas provided for an archery range, banquets, entertaining and withdrawal from the court. In 1463 the garden's area was extended. Overall it emphasises the site's natural forested character, with formalised areas small and separated by hills. Military drills took place in front of Kings here, and Kings and Queens undertook ritual or experimental farming and silk cultivation here in ceremonies to show leadership to their court and people.

In Japanese invasions from 1592-98 many pavilions were burnt down and unlike Seoul's primary palace (Geongbokgung) also destroyed then, Changdeokgung was rebuilt to serve as the royal residence (1618-1872) and served as the major palace until Geongbokgung was finally rebuilt in 1868.

Changdeokgung's restoration continued over several emperors' reigns. In 1610 new pavilions had been built and in 1636 the Ongnyucheon (an artificial 'stream in a deep valley in the north') was created. In this wine cups were floated and a courtier picking one up had to compose a poem in a drinking game testing his wits. If he could not, he had to drink three cups of wine. Losers quickly 'dropped out'. This game caught on in aristocratic civilian circles.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Happy New Year to all our members, I hope you have enjoyed a relaxing break and maybe caught up on some reading. I found a copy of Sir George Sitwell's *On the Making of Gardens* in a local second hand bookshop in which Sitwell extols the virtue of climbing roses – their vigor and wildness and expounds his regard for straight lines and disdain for symmetry that is too exact. The pleasing disorder that grows only with time that I think makes all things dynamic – especially a garden.

I spent some time with family in Narrabri, NSW and at one of the many social gatherings I admired a pair of Moreton Bay figs in the garden of the hosts. To my great surprise my friends furnished me with a fantastic photographic essay unfolding the history of the homestead and the lost garden of *Wandi*. The garden layout was based on a circle within a square boundary in which the designer used the quincunx ordering system to lay out a grid of citrus that formed an orchard divided by a timber framed pergola leading from Gibbons Street to the front door of the homestead – all on a colossal scale. The original house burnt to the ground in about 1930 and the farmstead is now fractured into many smaller portions. However, the fig trees (ca.1880) remain as a reminder of an extraordinary garden - fragments of our shared garden history.

2016. What a year - the bicentenary of the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney with two major cultural institutions having 'garden' as their theme for the year. The State Library of New South Wales and Sydney Living Museums are planning exhibitions that will open later in the year with associated publications. AGHS is sponsoring both publications and will arrange speakers and events to engage with these significant accomplishments that signify a greater interest in garden history where scholarly exactitude enjoys popularity. I think this reflects well on our nation's character.

We enjoyed a very well attended Christmas Party at the NSW Writers' Centre, Callan Park in November last year - a stunning day in a splendid landscape. Peter Watts, a founding member of our Society, spoke of Stuart Read's achievements as chairman of the Sydney branch of AGHS and Anne Galbraith spoke of Jeanne Villani's many contributions to the Society over a long time. All wished Stuart and Jeanne a heart felt vote of appreciation for their generous service over more than a decade.

I extend a sincere welcome to Richard Heathcote as our new national chairman and I am thrilled that his well-articulated strategy for directing the energies of our membership leads with advocacy. Under the leadership of Stuart Read, the Sydney branch of the Society has been strong in advocacy for significant landscapes that are threatened. Inspired by the debate surrounding the proposed extension of the Art Gallery of NSW, I wrote to the editor of the Sydney Morning Herald on the 1st December to add the voice of the AGHS. A week ago, I was moved to tears when I heard of the unnecessary destruction of century old Moreton Bay fig trees along Alison Road in preparation for the light rail - the chainsaws started at 2am on Friday 8th January. There was a memorial service held at Centennial Park on Saturday 16th January.

In December the Federal government launched the Australian Heritage Strategy with the vision statement: Our natural, historic and indigenous heritage places are valued by Australians, protected for future generations and cared for by the community. Lamentably, a quick search reveals only three gardens are listed – all in Victoria. One exciting proposal to emerge is a national heritage lottery to fund the vision. The Heritage Lottery Fund of the UK is the largest dedicated funder of heritage in the UK and will invest about \$800 million in 2016. Australians seem to be enthusiastic about gambling and if some of that revenue is collected by government and then reinvested in cultural development - including the conservation of landscapes and gardens - I think it would be a good outcome.

Recent proposed listings for inclusion on the State Heritage Register include: *Waverley Cemetery*; the *Goldfingers Inn Group* and the *Dangarsleigh War Memorial*. The last of these was designed and built by a father to honour a lost son and it is rich with symbolism and decoration that reflect the British Empire. Bill Oates chair of the Northern sub-branch advised that their archives has a mass of material from the Perrott family about the Dangarsleigh property *Chevy Chase* and the associated War Memorial - including the war diary of young Perrott complete with bullet hole that was returned to the family after he was killed in 1917. I'd like to commend the northern sub branch for their submission to support the proposed listing of this remarkable monument.

Our first event this year is a talk by Jennifer Milam, Professor of Art History at Sydney University – Jennifer's topic: *German Romantic Gardens* deals with issues of national identity entwined with garden design. Jennifer is a wonderful speaker who offers us the opportunity to broaden our understanding of garden history.

We heard on the grapevine that the Weddin Garden Club and the Henry Lawson Festival have produced a coffee table book of 80 "homes of the Weddin Shire", including their gardens which will be launched 9th May 2016 in Grenfell.

The committee 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. 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:
Gerda Cohen, Eleanor Freeman, Deborah Gilbert, Verity Hinwood, Maria Hitchcock,
Guy McIlrath, Shane & Penny Moran, Jenny Sloman & Nada Vlatka**

AGHS FORTHCOMING EVENTS

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 6

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. More details on page 6

APRIL

Date: Sunday 10th April - 2.0 pm - 4.30 pm

Event: Macquarie University walk led by Craig Burton looking at the work of Walter Abraham & his mentor Richard Clough

Venue: Meeting point to be advised on booking

Cost: Members \$20 Guests \$25 includes light refreshments. Bookings essential. More details on page 6

MAY

Date: Wednesday 4th May 6pm for 7pm - 8.30pm.

Event: Illustrated talk *The Landscape of Roads* by Gareth Collins, Principal Manager Centre for Urban Design RMS & NSW President, Australian Institute of Landscape Architects

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

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

Bookings & enquiries for all events above: Email: Jeanne@Villani.com (Just a reply to this email would be great)

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.

OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST

February 13th from 6 pm – Norman Lindsay Gallery, Falconbridge – *Jazz in the Garden with Galapagos Duck* on the verandah. BYO food & beverages, chairs/blanket. Free. Info:<http://www.nationaltrust.org.au/nsw/NormanLindsayGallery>

February 24th, 10am - *From the Grand Tour to Capability Brown: English gardens of the 18th century*, talk by Michael Turner, University of Sydney Nicholson Museum, \$25/20 Friends*

March 1st 10.30 am Pavilion RBG Sydney. Botanica invites you to a free lecture *The History of Mediterranean Plants and Gardens* by Dr Toby Musgrave. RSVP essential - Bookings at info@botanica.travel

March 10th 6.15pm – Garden Design Series talk, Karl Gercens, Longwood Gardens, USA. *Floral displays in Longwood's glasshouses, inspiration from around the world.* \$75/60 Friends*: Royal Automobile Club, Macquarie Street.

April 9th–May 1st: *Botanica at Farm Cove* – botanical art exhibition, Lion Gate Lodge, 10am - 4pm, free.

and ***Margaret Flockton Award*** - botanical art exhibition, Red Box Gallery, 10am - 4pm, free.

April 9th Bundanoon is Brigadoon - 39th Annual Highland Gathering. 9.30am-4.30pm.\$20/child \$10/family \$50. 20 pipe bands, marching Scottish Clans & Societies, decorated floats, 100 variety & speciality stalls. Email: secretary.brigadoon@gmail.com

April 9th/10th *Collector's Plant Fair*, Hawkesbury Race Club Clarendon – over 70 nurseries selling speciality plants, accessories and inspiration. Entry: (9th) \$12 prepaid/\$14 at door; (10th) \$10 prepaid/\$12 at door .Speakers: 9th Tracey Deep; Jane Irwin & Myles Baldwin. 10th Cheryl Boyd, Wendy Whiteley. Talks all \$35. Bookings: www.collectorsplantfair.com

April 21st, 6.15pm – Garden Design Series talk, Paul Bangay talks to Trish Dixon about his career and sources of inspiration. Travel and his garden in rural Victoria, *Stonefields*. \$75/60 Friends* Venue: Royal Automobile.Club, Macquarie Street.

May 9th Grenfell. Launch of coffee table book by Weddin Garden Club & Henry Lawson Festival *80 homes of the Weddin Shire*

May 19th, 6.15pm – Garden Design Series talk, Richard Unsworth talks about his garden design and sources of inspiration including the *St.James Community Garden* which he helped create. \$75/60 Friends* Venue: Royal Auto.Club, Macquarie St.

June 16th, 6.15pm – Garden Design Series - Michael Bates talks about his approach to the 'Sydney School' of garden design with inside/outside connection, natives and exotics, sub-tropical, sub-temperate etc. \$75/60 Friends* RAC Macquarie Street.

* Bookings: Friends & Foundation telephone :9231 8182.

Don't forget to have a look at our website - 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.

Giving thanks for Gretchen When, ‘Queen Bee’, one of Australia’s best known beekeepers & accomplished horticulturist by Gina Plate



Gretchen with Rose Garden & Pecan Orchard sign - Hawkesbury on the Net

On a drizzly Spring morning in November 2015, family, friends and colleagues gathered in Gretchen When’s pecan tree plantation near the banks of the Hawkesbury River at Richmond in NSW. We were there to remember the life and on-going legacy of this remarkable woman and to spread some of her ashes in the lush green grass under her beloved trees. When Gretchen When died in January 2012, she was one of Australia’s best known beekeepers. Many readers of *Branch Cuttings* will also remember Gretchen for her nursery of old-fashioned roses, simply named *Gretchen’s Roses* which she developed in her later years.

Gretchen’s interest in beekeeping began with tending her mother’s hives but her career in the field started by chance when she discovered and collected a swarm of bees on her way to University one day. The small apiary Gretchen created soon expanded and Gretchen’s interest moved from honey production to commercial queen bee rearing and honey bee breeding, which were to become the focus of her life’s work in apiculture.



Youthful Gretchen with some of her bee boxes. With thanks to the Lewers Family Archive

Gretchen eventually became one of the first suppliers of quality queen bees to Australian and international commercial beekeepers. Passionate about the importance of stock improvement, she was a pioneer in instrumental insemination of queen bees. ‘Deeply conscious’ of the link between honey bees and food security and thus of the need to protect against imported bee and hive diseases, she also played a key role in the establishment of the Honeybee Quarantine Facility at Eastern Creek, which served Australia well from 1980.

After a lifetime of selfless dedication to the beekeeping industry, Gretchen left it an invaluable resource when she dedicated much of her estate, including her farmland, house and laboratory, for the establishment of the *When Bee Foundation*. Through research and development, innovation, training and communication, the Foundation aims to ensure the viability of the beekeeping and food production industries; for without bees to pollinate our crops and for their seed production services, the diversity of plant species, our food supplies and associated employment would be threatened.

Gretchen was born in 1929 in England to Arthur When and Aldwyth, sister of sculptor Gerald Lewers. In his obituary for Gretchen, her friend and colleague Max Whitten, chairman of the board of *The When Bee Foundation*, noted her fierce independence and her urge to help others and provided some background of her formative years to better understand and appreciate her character.

Though born in Australia, both her parents lived their adult lives in England. Arthur When had gone to World War 1 aged 18 after only one year at University and his distinguished service as a signalman earned him three Military Medals. Arthur returned to England in 1920 as a NSW Rhodes Scholar and his working life centred on his position of Keeper of the Library at the *Victoria and Albert Museum*. A proficient linguist, he also translated books and articles. His translation from German of Erich Maria Remarque’s book *All Quiet on the Western Front* helped make this one of the 20th Century’s greatest anti-war novels. Her mother Aldwyth, affectionately called ‘the gardener’ by her husband, not only grew most of the family’s food including dairy products from her cows but also kept a number of hives on their small farm ‘*Further Pegs*’ outside the Quaker village of Jordans, near Oxford in Buckinghamshire. She trained Gretchen in the basics of bee keeping.

In 1940 Gretchen was sent to Australia for ‘safekeeping’ during the war and stayed with her mother’s family whilst completing her schooling. She rejoined her parents in Buckinghamshire in 1946 but, as Max Whitten put it in her Obituary, she ‘*found it easier to love her eccentric parents from a distance*’ and so returned to Australia in 1948, to complete an arts degree at Sydney University and later a Diploma of Horticulture.

Bee keeping requires hard physical work to lift and manipulate hives heavy with honey, but Gretchen held ‘her own against her male colleagues without compromising her charm or femininity’. As an ‘*accomplished horticulturist*’, she maintained well over 300 old-fashioned roses for sale and the pecan orchard mentioned earlier. I am told a Sydney rose society, guided by solicitor, amateur beekeeper and rose enthusiast Peter Ives, is currently exploring ways of rescuing the last of Gretchen’s rose collection at her Richmond farm and making these available to gardeners as cuttings. Readers travelling the back roads and by-ways of the Hawkesbury region on farm-gate tours may even have bought bags of delicious fresh pecans from Gretchen, who sold them from the back of her ute on Yarramundi Lane, parked amongst her hedge of cascading wild roses with her pecan trees reaching to the sky beyond.



Gretchen in her laboratory
Source: Kylie Pitt/Fairfax
Syndication

‘*In her final act of generosity*’, as Max Whitten noted in the Obituary for ‘*the busiest of bees*’, in the *Hawkesbury Gazette* 25 January 2012, ‘*Gretchen donated her body to the University of New England for teaching and research purposes*’. The ashes we spread were some of Gretchen’s cremated remains. The rest, at her request, will be returned to join those of her parents and sister that she herself in 1977, had ‘*scattered together*’ in Wytham Woods in Oxfordshire England, ‘*among the green growth, and as I did, a misty rain came softly down, as it can in England*’, just as it did Richmond NSW in November. Her legacy to Australia’s food security and horticultural innovation lives on through the work of the *When Bee Foundation* and others inspired by her.

I am indebted to the writings and speeches of Max Whitten from which, with his kind permission, I have borrowed heavily for this article. Thanks also to my cousins Darani Lewers and Tanya Crothers, who are also Gretchen’s cousins, for personal information and for the photograph of a youthful Gretchen with her bees from the family archive. A book of letters to Gretchen from her ‘*erudite*’ father, edited by Tanya and published in 2011: *The life and letters of Arthur When 1897 – 1971* has been another helpful reference.

REPORT ON THE 36th ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE by Pamela Bennett

When I joined AGHS over five years ago, people told me that the key attractions of membership were the annual conference and the journal, both highly regarded. Since then, I have become further involved with AGHS committee activities and appreciate the valuable lobbying, petitioning and advocacy work done by branches. However, I wouldn't miss a conference and for 2015 it was no exception.

As a taster, Trisha Dixon's pre tours are a great conference scene setter. While some members prefer the post tour as a more relaxed holiday after the conference, I find the pre tour is an opportunity to learn about the region beforehand. And Trisha's indefatigable efforts don't disappoint. The gardens, landscapes and homes at Fleurieu Peninsular, Kangaroo Island and McLaren Vale highlighted the beauty of native plants married with contemporary architecture.

AGHS Adelaide gave a further taster with an inaugural one-day symposium preceding the conference. Introduced by Ray Choate, a dozen speakers eloquently presented papers on diverse topics. It was a treat to hear Zahra Ranjbari and Shaha Parpia share their research on *The Handbook of Agriculture: Agriculture and Gardening in the Early Safavid Period* and *Symbiotic Spaces: Garden, Agriculture and Hunting in the Mughal Tradition*, respectively. Please continue these cerebral symposia at future conferences.

The conference in the National Wine Centre was well located – Adelaide University, Botanic Garden and a Diggers shop all next door. The theme, *Garden to Table*, produced serious, humorous and enlightening lectures. I particularly enjoyed Julia Holbrook Tolley's talk entitled *Today I sowed seeds and the parrot died*, Chris March's *Where does my food come from?* within a *Locavore* framework, and Caroline Berlyn's *From Garden to Table: the history of flowers for the table*. Loved hearing Katja Hogendoorn on bees, including 2,500 species of native bees. Fascinating learning.

The visit to *Carrick Hill* was remarkable, despite stormy weather. The history presentation and room displays were decorated with outré floral artistry. An ensuite bathroom was an eye-opener.

The generosity of owners who share their gardens with conference delegates never fails to impress me. Large or small, quirky or traditional, we return with masses of photos and a multitude of tips. And those teas – we never go hungry.

The 2016 conference will be held in Canberra, already showcased in Adelaide. I'm told planning includes the *National Press Club* for dinner and cocktails at the *National Arboretum*. And save the date even further – 2017 in New Zealand, 2018 in Southern Highlands of NSW. Can't wait.



Bee hotel, Hamlyn Cottage, Mt Barker



Floral arrangement in ensuite at Carrick Hill

Sally, Lady Croft. 1st August 1933 – 8th November 2015 remembered by Lynn Walker



Lady Sally
in the Rose Garden

Sally Patricia Croft was born in Brisbane to parents Thomas & Nancy Mansfield. Her sister, Helen, was born in February 1936

Their mother was a very keen gardener, establishing gardens in Queensland – sometimes several at a time - during the girls' childhood. Sally's first gardening experience was helping her mother in her garden. Her introduction to Armidale was when she became a boarder at New England Girls School (N.E.G.S). It was there she became firm friends with Margaret Croft from Uralla who was later to introduce Sally to her future husband.

After leaving school Sally became the Private Secretary to the Chief Librarian at the Brisbane University Library. She then went to London for a year.

After returning to Australia she married Margaret Croft's brother, Owen, in 1959 and they moved into the cottage on the property *Salisbury Court*, Owen's family home. Their three children

Patricia, Thomas and Gina were all born there. Sally started gardening from scratch at the cottage and then briefly at *Eversleigh* from 1972 – 76 when Owen managed that property before they returned to *Salisbury Court*.

During those years she and Margaret Croft who, by this time, had married David Wright and was living at *Wallamumbi Station* at Wollomombi, learned to garden and gained much inspiration from each other. Mrs Patsy Giblin and Mrs Benoni Pearson who lived at nearby Uralla were some of her many mentors. Sally then worked fulltime as the Librarian at N.E.G.S. and is remembered very fondly by the students who attended the school during those years.

In 1984 Owen's father, Sir Bernard, died and Owen took over the family title becoming Sir Owen Croft and Sally becoming Lady Croft. The family moved into the homestead and again Sally started gardening from scratch – the trees, the ha ha and the Isabella grape being the main framework. The garden at *Salisbury Court* is one of the most significant historic gardens in NSW. In 1992 Sally was invited to become a Selector of the newly formed Northern NSW branch of Australia's Open Garden Scheme and became Chair of Selectors in 1994. For ten years under her guiding hand the Northern NSW region flourished, becoming one of the most successful regions in Australia.

Sally & Owen joined the Australian Garden History Society in the late 1980s and were great advocates for New England, attending many conferences over the years. A group of members in Northern NSW decided to form a sub branch of the Sydney branch and the first meeting was held at *Salisbury Court* on Sunday 13th March, 2005. A small Executive was formed with Owen becoming the Chair and Sally the Secretary - positions which they held for several years. Despite ill health, Sally continued to be very supportive of the Society and was particularly thrilled with the development of the Heritage Rose Garden at *Saumarez Homestead* which she saw just a week before she died. Her gentle presence will be much missed by all who knew her.

GERMAN ROMANTIC GARDENS by Jennifer Milam



Kettenbrücke zu Wörlitz by Johann Friedrich Nagel

My focus in this talk 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 who 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 human 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.

GARDENS WITH HISTORY FROM OPEN GARDENS AUSTRALIA by Anne Smith



Glenmore House

Thousands of beautiful and interesting gardens opened with Open Gardens Australia over its 27 years of operation. A presentation on just a selection of the gardens which opened during my time as a selector and regional co-ordinator for OGA will include some gardens with historic links or elements.

Often the owners have toiled over many years in developing these gardens sometimes uncovering remnant trees and structures from beneath rampant weed growth sometimes in tough environmental conditions.

Waterfall Cottage at Bayview, Jeanne Villani’s magical garden, now with heritage listing from the Council, opened with OGA from when the Scheme first expanded to Sydney. Often opening four times a year this hidden garden is filled with majestic remnant rainforest and an added abundance of subtropical plants. The winding pathways and bridges over the creek give a sense of adventure.

Beside the Harbour at Birchgrove, historic *Wyoming*, has a restored orchid house, paths and steps leading down from the upper terraces through new but traditional plantings and an original American oak and frangipanis.

Lingellen in Chatswood is a Federation house with some original plantings including a coachwood tree, camellias and relocated azaleas and tree ferns. New plantings arranged in beautiful combinations are consistent with Federation tradition.

Mountainview at Kurrajong features 100 year old Port Jackson figs and beehive wells from when there was an inn on the property.



The beehive wells at Mountainview

The garden at *Glenmore House*, west of Camden, surrounds an historic homestead and restored outbuildings. Inviting garden spaces include the walk between abundant flower and shrub borders, a courtyard, orchard and huge productive kitchen garden.

In the Blue Mountains *Sunstone Lodge* at Woodford has mature conifers and deciduous trees sheltering stone-edged garden beds, terraces, a 1949 glass house and a collection of historic rose varieties from the 1950s, a testament to the owners’ passion for historic Australian-bred roses.

At *Gracemere* and *Albion Farm* north of Maitland rescued pieces of historic sandstone have been used to create garden structures and focal points within a huge garden filled with collections of plants surrounding magnificent water features.

The passion of the garden owners and their knowledge and generosity in sharing their gardens has made these gardens special, adding an extra dimension to the enjoyment of wonderful plant material, design and history of the gardens.

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY: WHERE’S WALLY? WALK & TALK with Craig Burton



Lake & campus panorama Macquarie University

Established as a new University in 1964, Macquarie University was conceived and implemented by two significant men ; one as an architect and planner and the other an architect and landscape architect. The walk will explore the relationship between the former student Walter Abraham and his mentor Richard Clough and its impact on the landscape composition of the university complex as a dialogue between natural and cultural values in the latter half of the twentieth century.

Much has happened since.

Please come and experience the place in the twenty first century with Craig Burton - 10th April at 2 pm - 4.30 pm.

THE LANDSCAPE OF ROADS by Gareth Collins

The landscape architect has to understand what the people want and to understand what the wild life wants, as well as understanding the function of whatever it is you are undertaking. There is a great deal to think about... Dame Sylvia Crowe

In 1987, when I was in my second year of studying landscape architecture in Edinburgh, Dame Sylvia Crowe came to talk to us about her work. I remember her discussing her book *The Landscape of Roads*. She was an optimistic person and a big thinker. She talked of planting forests, moulding topography and creating grand views and I remember particularly about her ideas on how earthworks can be used to 'build hills' to create new landscapes.

When I graduated in 1991 times were tough for landscape architects in the UK, particularly 'up North'. The 1980's boom was over and working on road projects helped keep many offices afloat. It was interesting work. Large scale analysis of the Pennines. Exploring alternative routes along the contours of the 'Backbone of England'. Threading route options around the towns of Halifax, Huddersfield, Heckmondwike, Holmfirth and Hebden Bridge.

It made me realise how complex a road project was. In its form; its interaction with communities, the city and the landscape; and in its history and cultural relevance. The spectrum of roads, in my experience at that time, spanned sweeping motorways skirting the mountains of the Lake District; ancient, dead straight Roman roads heading to Hadrian's wall and the edge of England; winding mountain passes over the Monroes of Scotland; shop lined high streets of Harrogate; and the vennels (laneways) accessing the medieval courtyards of the Royal Mile in Edinburgh. It also included the placeless cul-de-sacs and urban ring roads that had marred both the landscape and the public perception of the road, and so eloquently written about by Lawrence Halprin in the US and Ian Nairn in the UK in his book *Outrage*.

Of particular interest to me when I travelled to Australia was Peter Spooner's work on the Sydney to Newcastle freeway. The general approach to earthworks that I had learnt in the UK was to integrate with the natural landform. But the approach to the Sydney Newcastle freeway was in stark contrast - great scything cuts through the sandstone ridgelines. But like all challenging things, it was a great lesson and had a beauty and distinctiveness all to itself.

Over the years I have had the privilege to have met and worked with many distinguished landscape architects on projects such The Great Western Highway and the Sydney motorway network, but the main project has been the Pacific Highway. Like the early motorways of the 1950s in Britain, it is a pioneering motorway that has saved many lives and reduced journey times by hours, but the design challenge for today is not so much the civil engineering, but how such a road responds to its setting between the Pacific Ocean and the Great Dividing Range; how elegant an artefact it can be as a legacy for the future and an experience in movement; and how sustainable it can be for both the ecology and the communities reliant on the highway. This talk will focus on road infrastructure projects in the UK and New South Wales; the different responses to the landscape and the landscape architects who have dealt with those challenges.



M1 Hawkesbury



M6 Cumbria

HORTICULTURAL HAPPENINGS IN NTHNSW - November 2015 by Lynne Walker

Several significant garden events happened in November under the auspices of the AGHS NthNSW sub branch. The first event was the official opening of the Heritage Rose Garden at *Saumarez Homestead* when almost one hundred guests were invited to celebrate the completion of the first stage of the rose garden. Guests included the local tradesmen who had worked on the garden, National Trust and AGHS members, city councillors plus friends of our principle donor, Miss Catherine MacLean. Catherine and our Patron, Sue Ebury, cut the ribbon and we then adjourned for a celebratory dinner at the *Saumarez* restaurant.

Next day, November 1st, the rose garden was open to the public for the first time, along with the rest of the garden with all entry fees going to the rose garden (thanks to the National Trust) over 700 visitors attended. Our Patron was in attendance and did her usual fabulous job meeting and greeting visitors.

Two weeks later, long time AGHS members and very active volunteers, Liz Chappell and Elton Squires, opened their garden *Devon House*, for the weekend, again with proceeds going to the Heritage Rose Garden. This was also the occasion where Liz's garden memoir *Celebrate The Seasons* was launched by well know gardening writer, Fiona Ogilvie. The garden looked magnificent and again the garden lovers flocked in - this time over 500. Local AGHS volunteers manned the gates and were sumptuously accommodated overnight at nearby *Rangers Valley Cattle Station*, thanks to members Helen & Don Mackay. *Celebrate The Seasons*, one of the most significant gardening books to be released in the region, has gone on to sell extremely well. Photographs taken by another member, Kim Woods Rabbidge. The overall result spectacular, putting it in the 'can't put down' category. Available online: www.lizchappell.com.au \$40.00 RRP.



Miss Catherine MacLean flanked by Sue Ebury & John Maurer Margaret & Dan Ward behind them



Bill Oates (R) presenting certificate of recognition to Don & Helen Mackay for their generous support of the Saumarez Rose Garden



Lexia Nielson, Caroline Fitzroy & Robyn Jackson welcoming 570 visitors at fundraiser for the Saumarez Rose Garden

continued from Page 1

A mulberry tree thought to be 400 years old survives (amongst others in the grounds) near square, tranquil Aeryeonji pond, marked as a national monument. Sericulture (silk-worm farming) and agriculture were basic industries and peasants were encouraged to grow mulberry trees. The Queen raised silkworms as an example for her people.

Another pleasure of the autumn 'array' was the number of coloured berries on display: Cornelian cherries (*Cornus mas*) in bright cornelian, 'Japanese' dogwood (*C.kousa*) black with red stems, *Callicarpa* (beauty) berries in purple and white, Blue *Clerodendron sp.* berries on hot pink bracts, plantain lily (*Hosta*) fruits like green broad bean pods, red Korean yew (*Taxus cuspidata*), to say nothing of huge clustered orange orbs of persimmons, walnuts, paeony pods, pink *Sorbus* 'haws', red or black rose hips, pink and orange spindle berries.

In 1776 the two-storey Juhamnu pavilion was built, the same year King Jeongjo ascended the throne. He made its first floor the Gyujanggak (royal library) and its second the reading room, a research institute to develop policies for his many reforms. Jeongjo was a great, progressive leader who encouraged scholarship, literacy and education. The square Buyongji pond below represents the universe and the round island in its centre, the earth. Three viewing pavilions look on from its other sides allowed contemplation, writing and entertaining.

In 1827 the Uiduhap & Yeongyeongdang halls were built, in the style of an aristocratic country residence, to give the Crown Prince an idea of country gentry life and space for entertaining. The part of the garden most latterly developed originally featured two square ponds and one round pond. During the Japanese occupation, these were combined into one curved pond. Surrounding it are pavilions with unique shapes: one Gwallemjeong, with a two-tiered hexagonal roof, one a fan-shaped roof and one a gambrel roof. On a hill opposite stands Seungjaejeong pavilion. It and Gwallemjeong date to the 1830s, while the oldest of these pavilions dates to 1644.

Unfortunately many of the oldest oaks in the forest are suffering from a fungal disease which, due to my minimal Korean, I was unable to tell the identity of. Many trunks are wrapped in brown plastic to allow injection treatment in the hope of saving the trees. Several sawtooth oaks are the worst-hit.

I had never seen as many 'Japanese' (in fact, like many plants, also found native in China and Korea) elms (*Zelkova serrata*) or ginkgos as I did lining Seoul's streets and parks. Many zelkovas - some ancient - grace the Secret Garden. What a pleasure to see them so old and massive, the gutsy trunks so in contrast to delicate, lacy, saw-toothed leaves. All mature ones have flaking bark in scales, with orange or ginger new bark below. About one in ten have in addition a fantastic 'bullseye' or 'diamond' pattern of dark and light markings on their trunks – almost like Aboriginal carved trees I have seen in an old photo of Hillsgrove, New England.

An ancient Chinese (Korean!) juniper, (*J.chinensis*), propped up by cables and ropes, holds pride of place near a servants' quarters part of the palace grounds. As did an ancient pagoda tree (*Sophora japonica*), all but dead with a few brave branchlets defying all. It seems not only the Chinese revere great age in tree survivors.

Stuart Read with thanks to Jill Matthews for the tip-off and books.



Main gathering area near the Buyongji pond



Juhamnu pavilion & Buyongji pond
& 3 viewing pavilions.

Newsletter edited and collated by Jeanne Villani and Stuart Read
Contributions for inclusion in the newsletter are welcomed and should be directed to:
Jeanne@Villani.com or to 90 Cabbage Tree Road, Bayview, NSW, 2104