

# BRANCH CUTTINGS

Issue 50 - June 2016

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



## *LA LOUVE* by Angela Low



*Little Cuttlefish Bay*



*La Louve*

After the AGHS conference in Adelaide we joined Trisha Dixon for the post-conference tour. On Kangaroo Island we visited a lovely property called *Little Cuttlefish Bay*. The house and its walled garden were right on the coast, approached via a long driveway through dry paddocks, lined by stunted casuarinas. Just outside the mud brick and stone walls was an area with casuarinas clipped into tight balls, stones and a pebbled garden of local grasses, golden brown, placed in a formal pattern, with natural bush and the sea view beyond.

Years ago I bought a coffee table book called *Fashion Designers' Gardens* by Francis Dolmans. The last garden featured was *La Louve*, created by Nicole de Vésian in Provence and it made an indelible impression, a tough dry climate garden of stones and familiar common plants, all clipped and shaped to make something beautiful in harmony with the wild surrounds. This was what was being attempted at *Little Cuttlefish Bay*.

In 2011 we were in France staying near Bonnieux and I realised this was the village where this garden was sited. I searched the internet for the garden which was now owned by Judith Pillsbury who lives in Paris, and found her e-mail address. I wrote a desperate letter saying how much I had admired this garden in various publications and was there any possibility of a visit. I remember telling her that in Sydney we had just come out of

a long drought, that dry climate gardening had become compelling, and also told her we had just been to an AGHS conference and tour in Maryborough and seen beautiful gardens made in the harshest of climates. She wrote straight back saying the garden was open once a month, that there was a tour the next day and she would add our names to the list at the Office de Tourisme. Rushing over there we found (of course) that they were closed for 2 hours for lunch. We later presented ourselves and the lady at the desk said, 'Ah oui, les Américains.' My face must have fallen but, no, she meant 'Australiens' and we were in. Bonnieux is one of the ancient 'perched villages' of Provence, in the Luberon. It has Roman origins but was mostly constructed in The Middle Ages; the church on the summit was built in the 12th century. These villages were placed high up for protection from enemies who could be sighted far off and often had a single gateway entrance that could be barricaded. Of course in this dry region water is always scarce so a source or spring was desirable, but not always sufficient. Gardens have to be watered sparingly; there are never any green lawns.

Nicole de Vésian was a fashion designer who most latterly worked for Hermès, a Parisian lady of great elegance. In 1985 she retired and visiting a friend in Bonnieux saw this property in ruins with buildings part medieval and a garden falling down

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

I am still reading the diaries of James Lees-Milne. On 23rd July 1947, while in his role as Secretary of the Country Houses Committee of the UK National Trust, he was asked by Lady Crewe to speak on her behalf to the Ministry of Planning. She [said] that she opened the local newspaper...to read that...a satellite town was to be built near her home and a main road was to be driven through her garden. But her house would be saved by serving as the centerpiece of a round-about. Hard to believe and mentioned without comment.

Today our NSW government allows roads, mines, suburbs and airports to be ploughed through cultural landscapes, parklands and open space to avoid inconvenience to impatient residents or commuters. A cultural landscape evolves over a long time and can be degraded very quickly. The pressure of development impinges on our remaining green spaces and consequently the increased density makes green spaces ever more essential to maintain the principles of good town planning: urban health; efficiency and beauty. A conundrum.

Beauty is a notion dear to my being and as I move about and observe the sweeping changes that beset our city and peri-urban areas, I rarely exclaim: *Wow, how beautiful!* I return to my enclosed garden and exhale *Ah...paradise!* The built environment may be much improved by landscape – both terrain and by planting. I heard recently, Stuart Read was asked to repeat in the NSW Land & Environment Court his expression: *Buffer planting is an admission of bad design.* Colleen Morris lamented the practice of landscape architects being asked to *Shrub it up* when there was a visual incursion into a significant landscape by development.

Our cultural landscapes are informed by the stories embedded within them and as these landscapes are harvested by developers - these stories are diminished. Their stories are significant and inform our national identity - they define difference and shared values. In an ever-homogenized world these values, not currently held in high esteem by government agencies and possibly by the people they represent, are threatened. Once they are gone – they are gone. I quoted Robert Freestone above on Town Planning and he describes the heritage of Australia as *rich, diverse and often fragile.* Its fragility leaves it vulnerable.

The Australian Garden History Society was formed in 1980 to bring together those with an interest in the evolution of the various aspects of gardens and gardening – horticulture, landscape design and related subjects. The Society is the leader in seeking conservation of significant cultural landscapes and gardens through committed, relevant sustainable action. It has around 1600 members Australia-wide with active branches in all states including 3 in NSW: the Sydney & Northern NSW Branch is the largest of these with almost 300 members. We can be a thorn in the side of those that seek to take the easy road and ignore the damage to our cultural landscapes and national identity. To this end we wrote to the authorities opposing a proposal for a cemetery within the setting of Varroville, requesting they refuse this and recognize and preserve the significance of Campbelltown's Scenic Hills landscape that provides the setting for *Varroville* house - not only its immediate garden surrounds but the wider expansive rural landscape of the Cumberland Plain from which its once-famous farm estate prospered. Our second event this year was a beautifully illustrated talk by Anne Smith, and it was a lovely way to learn more about Anne through her topic: *Her Favourite Gardens with History from Open Gardens Australia.* Anne has always loved gardens and the bush: she loved to climb trees and often helped parents in the garden as a child. She studied biology at Macquarie University and taught primary school for 25 years, where she organised and supervised tree planting days. Anne studied Horticulture then Landscape Design at Ryde and then volunteered to be a selector for Australia's Open Garden Scheme, eventually being elevated to Chair of Selectors. From 2004-2013 Anne was the regional co-ordinator for Australia's Open Garden Scheme (later Open Gardens Australia) for Sydney, Blue Mountains, Southern Highlands, Illawarra Region (plus Central Coast and Hunter/ North Coast in the later years). She put together the annual program and wrote copy and contributed photos for the annual Guide Book, liaised with Selectors and garden Owners, wrote and distributed media releases and of course visited gardens. Her talents will be of great assistance to the AGHS committee.

At the last meeting of the executive committee, Gina Plate introduced Susan North to the committee. Susan has over 20 years' experience as a communication manager in community, media and government relations. She has specific skill in developing and implementing communication policies, programs and strategies. Susan worked as a specialist for many NSW government agencies. Given the depth and extent of Susan's career in the media, the committee co-opted her so she might guide and direct our ambitious plan to consolidate our brand, increase our profile and hopefully find ways of involving potential new members, keeping existing members and widen our reach and message. We are sure her place on our committee will be beneficial in raising the awareness and profile of AGHS.

If you have any suggestions you would like the committee to consider, please feel free to contact me.

James Quoye. 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:  
Sally Anderson, Jeannie & Anthony Gatt, GML Heritage, Anna Murray, Susan North,  
Peter Raissis, Cecelia Senior, Tony Spillane, Robyn Stone and Susan Stratton**

## AGHS FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### JUNE

**Date:** Thursday 30th June 6pm for 7pm - 8.30pm.

**Event:** Illustrated talk by Tony Kanellos - *The Rebirth of the Museum of Economic Botany*

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

**Cost:** Members \$20 Guests \$30 includes light refreshments. Bookings essential. More details on page 6

---

### JULY

**Date:** Saturday 23rd July 2.00pm - 4.30 pm

**Event:** Guided Walk – *The Female Factory* at Parramatta North led by Gay Hendriksen.

**Meeting place:** TBA when booking

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

---

### AUGUST

**Date:** Wednesday 17th August 6pm for 7pm - 8.30pm.

**Event:** Short AGM followed by illustrated talk by Tim Entwisle *Shared dreams and destinies - The Royal Botanic Gardens of Melbourne and Sydney:*

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

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

**Bookings & enquiries for all events above: Email: [Jeanne@Villani.com](mailto: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, Centrepont 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

**June 16th** Thurs 6.15-8.15pm Garden Design Series: The Sydney School of Garden Design, Designer Michael Bates discusses a fresh approach to contemporary garden design in Sydney - sparking a movement called the 'Sydney School', Royal Sydney Auto Club, Macquarie Street, bookings/info: phone 9231 8182; e: foundation.friends@rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au

**July 16th** Sat.10am-5pm, Colonial Architects talk and tour, architect Robert Griffin elucidates the career and work of Benjamin Backhouse, sometime landscape architect in Australia and the UK. From 1868-84 he designed diverse buildings, including the grounds for the Prince Alfred Park's 1870 Inter-Colonial Exhibition. 10-11am talk; 11-5pm coach tour. \$145/ HHA members \$135, includes morning tea and lunch. Bookings: p: 9252 5554 / e: info@hha.net.au

**July 18th** Sat./Sun.19th 10.30-3.30pm, Annual Camellia show - Tomago House, 421 Tomago Rd, Tomago, Lower Hunter Valley. Range of camellias on display and a number of presentations on gardening. 1840s rural estate of Windeyer family. \$5 / 4 conc. National Trust members free. Info: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/places/tomago-house/>

**July 23rd** Thurs. 6-8.30pm, Book launch – *Gardens of History & Imagination*, Independent Scholars Assn. of Australia and Sydney University Press. Various authors include AGHS members Colleen Morris, Gretchen Poiner, the late Ailsa McPherson and Stuart Read. State Library, Gallery Room, bookings at:

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/gardens-of-history-and-imagination-book-launch-tickets-25337036759?aff=eac2>

**July 29th.**Wed. 12.30-1.30pm, Award-winning author Helen O'Neill talks on story of the Daffodil flower. Tom Kenneally Centre, Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, 280 Pitt St. Sydney. Free-bookings essential. p: 9262 7300/e: [tkc@smsa.org.au](mailto:tkc@smsa.org.au)

**Sept.23rd-25th** Lower Hunter Valley 3 day tour with architect, Robert Griffin focussing on the rich legacy of architects Mortimer Lewis, Edmund Blacket, John Horbury Hunt & Walter Liberty Vernon. Ph.: 9252 5554/e-mail [info@hha.net.au](mailto:info@hha.net.au) for itinerary when available. Includes 4 star accommodation, luxury coach travel, meals and property visits.

**October 21st** Wed.7.30pm, National Archives of Australia, Parkes Terrace, Canberra – Marion Mahony Griffin Lecture, by Dr Jennifer McFarlane – 'A profession worked along (unorthodox) spiritual lines – Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin'. Trevor Lee, architect and scholar will also speak briefly on his 'Recent Finds: Marion Mahony Griffin's personal esoteric library in Chicago'. \$10 / WBG Society members /students \$5.

Bookings: <http://www.eventbrite.com/o/the-walter-burley-griffin-society-canberra-chapter-8519839305?s=45958401>

**November 12-13th** Taralga/Southern Tablelands weekend Historic Houses & gardens tour with Stuart Read. Ph: 9252 5554 / e: [info@hht.net.au](mailto:info@hht.net.au) for itinerary. Includes spring fair day Richlands estate, a Macarthur family outstation & talk by Stuart Read.

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.

## AUTUMN WEEKEND ON THE DARLING DOWNS by Liz Chappell

Northern NSW members joined Queensland AGHS branch for a weekend of discussion, garden visiting and fellowship on the Darling Downs, South East Queensland, in mid-April.

Our event began in Toowoomba with an informal seminar *Gardens, Trees and Urban Development* attended by representatives of Toowoomba Council and local residents as well as AGHS members. Local real estate agent David Snow, as the opening speaker, raised some interesting perspectives on increasing development of medium density housing and its impact on our streetscapes and gardening culture. by Liz Chappell

Graham Wilson from Armidale gave a working definition of heritage as *what the community wants to keep because one it is gone it will never come back*. He cited the importance of projects such as the Armidale Tree Register and explained the criteria used to assess heritage items, illustrating his talk with samples from the photographic exhibition *Old Gardens of New England*. John Taylor from Brisbane introduced us to the concept of urban forests, a recognition by planners of the climatic, health and social benefits of green spaces and tree cover in built up environments. A canopy cover of 30 percent is considered as ideal and our major cities are well below this benchmark. The impact of ongoing climate change cannot be ignored in our planning and planting decisions. What conditions, rainfall and temperature will a tree planted today need to withstand in its lifetime? After this thought provoking afternoon, we enjoyed a walk through the *Boyce Gardens* where the seminar was held. The gardens were bequeathed to the University of Queensland in 1969 by Dr Leslie and Margaret Boyce and have been retained in their original form, a combination of formal exotic gardens and remnant rainforest.

On Saturday we boarded a coach to tour significant public gardens of Toowoomba. Of particular interest to members from Northern NSW was our visit to the *Queensland State Rose Garden* in *Newtown Park*. It will be part of our "rose trail" of publicly open rose gardens along Australia's east coast, along with our Heritage Rose Garden at *Saumarez Homestead*, Armidale. Maintained by volunteers and Toowoomba Council since its official opening in 2001, this garden includes trial plots for newly introduced roses. Our guide was well known rosarian, Rod Hulgren.

*Laurel Bank Park*, 4.5ha immaculately maintained by four full time council gardeners, was a bequest from local resident Samuel Stephens in 1934. As well as public recreation space, it provides display gardens of bulbs, annuals, roses, topiary and a sensory garden. John Taylor was our guide to significant trees in this garden.

Finally, *Ju Raku En*, Toowoomba's noted Japanese garden in the grounds of the University of Southern Queensland. Designed by Japanese landscape architect Professor Kinsaku Nakane, opened in 1989, it contains over 230 species, totalling 16,000 plants, it represents the single most important collection of Japanese plants in Australia.

Our group then travelled to the nearby towns of Pittsworth and Allora where we visited a number of private historic and contemporary gardens opening during autumn for *Gardens of the Downs*, a not-for-profit regional open garden initiative. In several properties we were privileged to also visit inside the historic homes and marvel at the authentic collections of 19th century furniture and bric-a-brac accrued by the owners.

Our weekend culminated with a visit to the recently refurbished and extended gardens at Braeside homestead (1874) near Warwick.



Helen Wilson, Judy King, Lynne Walker, Geoff Teed, Richard Bird, John Taylor, Brian Cook, Wendy Lees, Adeline Walker.



Border of colourful salvias at *Roseneath Cottage*, the oldest house in Allora (C1864) built of hoop pine and red cedar.



Margie Barram & Liz Chappell admire the Queensland bottle trees (*Brachychiton rupestris*) in Faye Meyers' Pittsworth garden.



Tony Spillane, Gail Spillane, Judy King, Camilla Stephens, Richard Bird, Wendy Lees, Geoff Teed, Russell Campbell, (guide), Adeline Walker, Alison Curtis, Caroline Fitzroy, Margie Barram, Lynne Walker, Bryan Jackson, Robyn Jackson, Peter Sloman, Helen Wilson, John Maurer, Elton Squires, Jennifer Freeman, Graham Wilson, John Taylor, Elizabeth Teed.

All photographs by Peter Marquis-Kyle, Brisbane.

### An appreciation of Ailsa McPherson by Gretchen Poiner

Admiration, pleasure and sometimes surprise are all responses to reading something of Ailsa McPherson's biography.

Sadly and unexpectedly, Ailsa died on 7 March this year.

Ailsa's interests were many, focusing particularly on history, heritage, theatre, social process, gardens and gardening. She did not simply dabble in these fields but explored them with lively commitment and intelligence. For all their diversity her concerns were not discrete rather, at various points they intersected, sometimes reinterpreting each other. Yet despite her robust personality, her incisive intelligence and recognised contributions in many fields she remained a modest person.

As a young undergraduate Ailsa's academic orientation was to history. But university took second place to a developing fascination with theatre. Initially she had thought to pursue an acting career but was then drawn to television production where, for years, she directed drama (inter alia) for Channel 9. All the while maintaining a strong attachment to live theatre about which she wrote quite extensively.

After Ailsa retired from the television industry she returned to pursue a scholarly interest in history and completed a PhD in which she examined the theatricality and pageantry informing perceptions of warfare in late nineteenth century Sydney.

But gardens and gardening also ran as a thread through Ailsa's life; she became a member of AGHS nearly three decades ago and took a course in horticulture to further her understanding in this field. Her sense of drama surfaced here too, evident in the essay she wrote 'Exhibiting Gardening', included in the book *Gardens of History and Imagination: Growing New South Wales*. This work, supported by AGHS, which is to be launched in June, is an elegant synthesis of her interests.

## 5 TREE-THINGS TO LOVE ABOUT CALLAN PARK ESTATE by Stuart Read



Moreton Bay fig



Outeniqua / yellow wood



Large old evergreen magnolia at Garryowen



Cabbage tree palm in front of Bunya and hoop pines



Pacific Island kauri, Broughton Hall grounds

Psychiatric hospital therapeutic treatment isn't what it used to be – perhaps we could learn lots from best-practice of 1880 or the 1910s? Publicly-funded, Government-Architect-designed (working with the medical clinicians), Government Botanist-supplied and influenced grounds that learnt from what the rest of the world were then doing meant that such hospital surrounds were deliberately spacious, green, verdantly planted. Screening the (mad) world outside, its inside productive, beautiful and deliberately therapeutic: part of a cure. Not just for patients, but staff, family and visitors.

Even in 'post-hospital' phase, such poignant places as the former *Rozelle Hospital*, once called *Callan Park*, are marvellous repositories of landscape design, planting palettes, tastes, fashions and enthusiasms of earlier ages. To the observant they are rich in lessons: what's tough, what survives neglect, what triumphs in time – good and poor choices. What wildlife loves and will nest in, feed off, gravitate towards. How people use and enjoy open space: shade, contrast, variety – simple principles often ejected in today's computer-screen and magazine-driven myopia. Designers and managers of parks, gardens, even today's reduced urban courtyards might well take note. Or a stroll.

I recently enjoyed a Botanical Tour with the Friends of Callan Park on a perfect still warm autumn afternoon - a couple of hours to drink in this idyll in the midst of Sydney. Of course its grounds have seen better days – more staff, care, budget, tending. Yet they retain a charm, a generosity of space, quiet calm, undoubted beauty and inspiration, for those looking or needing this. Dog walkers, joggers and strollers, family picnicker groups, their blankets on the grass, rollicking football players on its open fields, cars parked up enjoying the Parramatta River views, not to mention views further afield to the North Shore or Blue Mountains, from its higher ridge lines.

Five things to love about its trees (apart from the above?):

1) Dragon's blood trees (*Dracaena draco*): the Canary Islands has a lot to answer for in terms of sheer exotic flora: these weird, Dr.Seuss book-type trees with their wide spreading, flattish crowns, fat swollen succulent trunks and martini-glass structure of fat branches, snake-skin feel grey leathery leaves and bunches of orange fleshy fruit can't help catch the eye, and intrigue. *Callan Park* has eight such trees: a couple quite old – perhaps early 20th century; others younger. A seedling (eighth) is struggling within the folded buttressed roots of a Moreton Bay fig – good luck!

2) Rainforest Gully and collection: the former *Broughton House/Hall* estate, later joined with *Callan Park*, has a richly planted rainforest gully, teeming with New South Wales and Queensland rainforest species of trees and shrubs. Towering Queensland kauri (*Agathis robusta*: 4), hoop pines (*A.cunninghamii*), black bean /native chestnut (*Castanospermum australe*) with its sculptural 'bean pods', firewheel trees (*Stenocarpus sinuatus*), Bangalow, Lord Howe Island, cabbage tree and Cocos Island / Queen palms (*Archontophoenix cunninghamiana*, *Kentia belmoreana*, *Livistona australis* and *Syragus romanzoffianum* respectively), Queensland lacebark (*Brachychiton discolor*) and Illawarra flame tree (*B.acerifolius*) for starters. Nearby is a rainforest rarity –

3) Rose apple/durobby / watermelon tree (*Syzygium moorei*), a large, glossy-leaved 'mega lily pilli', with hot pink 'fuzz' of blossoms directly along branches and trunk, followed by golf-ball sized white fruit – quite a show stopper. I know of a few in Double Bay's *Overthorpe* garden (formerly Sir John Hay's experimental garden) and in the *Royal Botanic Garden*, Sydney – but no others.

4) A massive spreading old Southern / evergreen magnolia or bull bay (*Magnolia grandiflora*) directly outside *Garryowen*, a c.1832 Mortimer Lewis-designed villa built on that estate prior to the establishment of *Callan Park*. The tree could date to the 1830s – it's trunk over a meter in girth. With elevated position, good aspect, fairly rich clay/shale soil over sandstone, it has matured well. White fragrant saucers of flowers speck and drop year-round. Perhaps only *NSW Writers' Centre* users notice?

5) Native cypress pine grove (*Callitris glaucophylla*), in *Broughton Hall Clinic* gardens west of the rainforest gully. Arrayed around an artificial stream making the most of impressive slabs of folded sandstone on site, Dr. Frederick Norton Manning and patients in the 1920s-30s created sandstone walls, a Japanese-style red-lacquer-painted arched bridge, and a garden featuring a spectacular old lemon-scented gum (*Corymbia citriodora*) on a crest, flanked by cypress pines. These wonderful, little-appreciated native conifers grow in tight, tall columns, like a Mediterranean cypress ('pencil pine') but paler, more olive-mid-green, finer in texture and feel. *Callan Park* has quite a few scattered about, probably reflecting their popularising by Botanic Garden Director Joseph Maiden and adoption by the Government Architect's Office for jobs – they turn up at *Gladesville Hospital*, court houses and the odd school grounds around New South Wales, of the time.

Plenty more to enjoy – the odd pre-1788 gum and river oaks, huge, airy paperbarks swaying in the breeze, groves of jacarandas (try November), brush box, lemon-scented gums. And this is just trees! *Callan Park* is listed on the NSW State Heritage Register – more info is at <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/ViewHeritageItemDetails.aspx?ID=5051544>.

The Friends of Callan Park run regular walks and events. See <http://www.callanpark.com/>

## THE REBIRTH OF THE MUSEUM OF ECONOMIC BOTANY by Tony Kanellos

Walking into the Santos Museum of Economic Botany, one is simultaneously taken back in time to a nineteenth-century museum borrowing heavily from the wunderkammer or *cabinet of curiosities*, while also occupying the contemporary space of biodiversity, sustainability and cultural knowledge. The simplest and subtlest of objects - a collection of life-like models of apples and pears - has the power to make us ponder these complex issues.

The rediscovery of the fruit models in the *Museum of Economic Botany* has shed a new light on the collections of the *Adelaide Botanic Gardens*. While the flagship collection is the living collection comprising thousands of plants, there are many other collections as well, with some yet to be fully explored. *The Museum of Economic Botany* contains one such collection—of nineteenth-century fruit models—which the botanic gardens has now revisited, rediscovered and restaged for public display. Museums of Economic Botany were once an important adjunct to many of the colonial Botanic Gardens around the world—at one point there were four of these museums in Australia alone (in Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney). Sometime in the mid-twentieth century, when everything *new* was deemed good and everything *old* was not, these museums appeared, to some, to be old-fashioned or anachronistic and they essentially all but disappeared. Along those lines of thought, much of the collection in Adelaide was relegated to storage or transferred to other museums. But earlier, during the second half of the nineteenth century, this museum and its collection had flourished under the directorship of Dr Richard Schomburgk. Then, in 2009 the Museum underwent a restoration and refurbishment and has proudly become a space where plants, people and culture come together through art, science and nature. Tony Kanellos, the cultural collections manager & curator of the Santos Museum of Economic Botany will speak on this the rebirth of this museum



## Guided walk—*THE FEMALE FACTORY* at Parramatta North led by Gay Hendriksen



An artists impression of the site

The *Parramatta Female Factory* is the earliest surviving convict women's site in Australia and predates all but three of the current world heritage convict sites. Over 9,000 went through the factory system, of which 5,000 went through Parramatta. An estimate one in seven Australians are related to these women.

It is a Governor Macquarie commissioned building and Francis Greenway design. The built heritage is highly significant as are the open spaces and remnant gardens. The early written evidence does not describe the gardens apart from noting a vegetable garden. There are trees that are possibly over 200 years old and the site has evolved over the period and the gardens with it. Currently the most prominent are garden areas c1900.

There are also many questions and the keen eyes of heritage gardeners may shed some light on the remnant gardens.

Saturday 23rd July 2.00pm - 4.30 pm

## SHARED DREAMS & DESTINIES - THE ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS OF MELBOURNE & SYDNEY talk by Tim Entwisle



Sydney's *Royal Botanic Garden* turns 200 in June and Melbourne's celebrated its 170th in March. They are two of the older botanic gardens outside of Europe and today they demonstrate how beautiful heritage landscapes can display and interpret stunning plant collections. Both stuttered in their beginnings but through the varied influences of directors such as Charles Moore, Ferdinand Mueller, William Guilfoyle and Joseph Maiden, it's fair to say they exceeded expectations by the early years of the twentieth century. There are some curious parallels in their development, and undoubtedly more in their future. Climate change, financial security and that growing community ailment, 'plant blindness', will test both gardens as they negotiate the next century or two.

Wednesday 17th August 6pm for 7pm - 8.30pm

## **VARROVILLE** threatened by proposed rezoning for new cemetery by Tempe Bevan

A revised Planning Proposal for the rezoning of 113 hectares of rural land surrounding the historic *Varroville house* to permit a new cemetery is being decided by the Joint Regional Planning Panel and public submissions on the proposal were due 21 March 2016 . The Sydney and Northern NSW Branch of the AGHS submitted a letter of objection to the proposal.

A 2001 study specifically commissioned by the Heritage Council to report on the remaining pre-1860 colonial farms on the Cumberland Plain, described *Varroville* as, 'a 'celebrated early farm estate dating from 1810 with early structures, the 1850s homestead, layout, agricultural ( vineyard) terracing and evidence of early access road.' It concluded that it was, 'rare as one of the few larger estate landscapes remaining in the Campbelltown area where the form of the original grant and the former agricultural use of the estate and its rural landscape character may be appreciated.' The cultural landscape of the subject site is of heritage significance at the state level for its historic values and for its rarity . 'Although excised from the original grant and the main homestead, the lack of development throughout this landscape has allowed *Varroville House* to retain its original visual and functional curtilage as a farmhouse set in a pastoral landscape of quality which is now rare in New South Wales .'

The subject rezoning and cemetery development is within the curtilage of the historic *Varroville* estate. *Varroville's* historic and visual curtilages have survived substantially intact for 200 years. It is critically important for Campbelltown, the Cumberland Plain (as the site of the earliest Colonial settlement) and the State of NSW that this rare historic complex remains intact and able to be interpreted as a cultural landscape .

Only *Varroville* house and garden are listed on the State Heritage Register (SHR) (#737, listed in 1993). The Morris and Britton study recognised that the current SHR listing provided an inadequate curtilage to express those state heritage values. Their recommendations include the necessity of 'separate SHR listing for the land adjacent to the current SHR boundary to *Varroville*. This should include the old outbuildings, agricultural terracing and the extant former access way from Campbelltown Road, and to retain the Scenic Protection zoning, including protective management of the remnant Cumberland Plain Woodland vegetation, for the land adjacent and enclosing high ridgeline.' The Conservation Management Plan (CMP) recommends retention of the Scenic Protection zoning and enlargement of the SHR listing to include outbuildings and significant landscape elements. The CMP concedes that the extended listing would not preclude development and includes a policy for works to be subject to heritage advice . Standard exemptions would apply to areas within the SHR curtilage and include excavation, landscape maintenance, signage and for cemeteries, the creation of new graves and erection of monuments .

The majority of the parking for the cemetery is proposed as kerbside parking (600-900m length) with only 20 spaces provided in a formal carpark . These numbers have been given by the consultants in the absence of a parking requirement for cemeteries in the Campbelltown Council's DCP 2014. The report's comparison with Liverpool Cemetery is a poor one as it is 100 years old and located in a central urban location with a chapel located on the street frontage within metres of the nearest bus stop. The comparison to other metropolitan cemeteries should be made with similar levels of public transport, such as *Macquarie Park and Northern Suburbs Crematorium*. All support expansive formal carparks for in excess of 100 cars, located in close proximity to the chapels and function rooms. The location of the multi-purpose chapel on the steeper part of the subject site and it is therefore likely that this will require extensive cut and fill of the more visually prominent parts of the site, for the construction of car parking.

The visual assessment refers to the proposed buildings located across the site as 'few, small and almost totally hidden from view' and the 'potential for landscape to assist in mitigation of the impacts of the development' . This assessment disregards the realistic requirement for roads and car parking across the site, noticeably absent from the master plan and the entire design statement documentation. Despite acknowledging that much of the site is in excess of 1:6 grade, the Master Plan by JFLA has not considered the

requirement for cut and fill associated with the construction of roads and carparks in association with an cemetery of this size and almost totally reliant on private transport. The proposed rezoning and cemetery development will introduce a more intensive use over time of this culturally and visually significant site.

The excess of proposed roads, introduced avenue plantings and formal garden rooms, buildings and memorials will dominate the simplicity of the expansive pastoral setting that forms the historic rural setting of *Varroville* house and garden and the greater Campbelltown area.



'Landscape Masterplan of Macarthur Memorial Park by Florence Jaquet Landscape Architects



the hill on the edge of the village. She bought it without even viewing the interior, telling her friend there were some extraordinary things in the garden. In 1986 she went to live in Provence permanently and started to garden. She was 70 and had never before owned a garden.

The property is called *La Louve*, the She wolf, named for the last animal killed there by hunters. We arrived at a wooden door in a wall straight off the street, a small group met by the guide. A plaque denoted this was a *Jardin remarquable*. Stepping through the door we were in a sort of hallway with a loose pebble floor. We had to go downstairs through the house and out into the garden at the back. It is not a large garden but its steep site, terraced over several levels looks directly across the valley and into the wild ‘garrigue’ beyond, the aromatic ‘bush’ of Provence and further into the blue hills on the horizon. All the plants were familiar but many are the native plants of the region, lavender, rosemary, santolina, box, salvias, germander, succulents, Boston ivy and native grasses. There is even a miniature lavender field with precisely placed shrubs mimicking the grand lavender fields north in Haut Provence. Everything is clipped and shaped, echoing the hills beyond and mixed with pebbles, stone paths, ancient walls and stone ornaments such as spheres or old water troughs reused as fountains or tanks. Dark cypress form taller notes but these too are severely clipped to the right size. There was very little colour; a few salvias, geraniums and one terracotta pot of blue plumbago. Greens and greys predominate. I have read that the autumn colours of the sumacs provide a beautiful contrast. Even the trees are undercut and clipped to fit into the overall scheme. The whole is peaceful and relaxed in spite of very high maintenance needed. She found a team of locals to help but enjoyed doing much of the clipping, ‘le tailleur’ herself, inspired by the contours of the landscape. She often moved plants to catch the light at certain times of day. Her secret for healthy plants was ‘a touch of sheep dung in spring’. In one corner against a stone wall a spring has been adapted as a small plunge pool.

At the age of 80 de Vésian conceded that the steep site had become too difficult and moved to a flatter garden. She chose Judith Pillsbury, an American who lives in Paris and works in the art world, as her successor. Judith has faithfully kept the garden’s style, making very few changes, only adding a beautiful swimming pool, tucked into a far corner, designed by American, Garret Finney. She came and spoke with our group in impeccable French.

In one of Nicole de Vésion’s notebooks she mused on how she would like to die:

*...standing upright...at peace... in the sunshine... in my garden.*

Sadly she passed away not long after leaving *La Louve* but her beautiful garden, admired and appreciated by the likes of Christian Lacroix, Issey Miyake, Christopher Lloyd and countless others, lives on. Its style has been copied the world over.

I visited one of the Hidden Gardens at Cremorne with a harbour view through a lovely stand of angophoras underplanted with clipped *Westringia* and purple *Pennisetum* grasses, held up by walls of Sydney sandstone.