

BRANCH CUTTINGS



Issue 51 - October 2016

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

BACK TO THE FUTURE – Warwick Mayne Wilson

Robert Cooper, emancipist gin distiller, built *Juniper Hall* on the top of the ridge in Paddington in 1824. His Georgian-style mansion, the only one remaining in the eastern suburbs, was sited on a south-west and north-east axis to catch breathtaking views to Botany Bay in the south and the Harbour and Heads to the north. As the 1853 drawing to the right shows, the mansion had a grand landscape setting, with two Norfolk Island Pines standing like exclamation marks. That they were semi mature at that time indicates they were probably planted soon after the mansion was built.

Both before and after Cooper's death in 1857, his large estate was successively subdivided and *Juniper Hall* ended up being bounded by Underwood Street in the east, its front by Oxford Street to the south and Ormond Street in the west.

The property changed hands many times following Cooper's death but the front garden remained generally intact. In 1885 the NSW Government acquired it for use as a receiving house for destitute children and as a central office for the State Children's Relief Department. However, when the State proposed to sell it in 1920, the Paddington Council and local residents held a protest meeting, as the house was seen as one of the earliest landmarks in Paddington and there was a belief that the land should be preserved for the provision of public services for people of the eastern suburbs. (Source: CMP, 2016) However, the sale went ahead, and it was bought by property developers in 1924.

The new owners excavated nearly all of the front garden – except for a 2 metre strip along the front veranda and erected a row of shops on it, in front of the mansion, starting in 1925. As shown to the right, these virtually obscured *Juniper Hall* when viewed from Oxford Street and prevented people's appreciation of it and its historical significance.

By the mid 1970s, when community esteem for heritage places had increased – reflected in the passing of the Heritage Act in 1977 -



1853 drawing of *Juniper Hall* shows the mansion had a grand landscape setting, with two Norfolk Island Pines standing like exclamation marks.



The garden as it was until it was sold to property developers in 1924



Photograph illustrating the shops built on Oxford Street in front of *Juniper Hall*.



Montage from the DA of the proposed commercial buildings along Oxford Street.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Unfortunately I could not attend the Annual General Meeting as I was contagious with influenza and Tempe Beaven (Vice Chair) stood in. As it was my first year as Chair I was disappointed not to have been there. I heard how wonderful our guest speaker Tim Entwistle was – honest and open about issues that face our great botanic gardens and their stewards.

My first thoughts are to thank the executive committee for their dedication and hard work this year - a year without Stuart Read on the committee. You will be pleased to hear that Stuart has been nominated to return to the National Management Committee.

When compiling the record of events and advocacy for this year's AGM, I was very pleased to see how full and diverse our calendar of events has been, I feel we have responded to the directive of Richard Heathcote, our National Chair, to lead with advocacy. I would also like to thank Jeanne Villani – who left the committee last year but has remained our editor and continues to produce and send out '*Branch Cuttings*', keeping our members informed when they may not be able to attend events. With every membership the Society strengthens its position vis a vis advocacy and enables the activities at the core of our mission.

There was a good representation at the AGM this year of our members from the Northern NSW Sub Branch. We congratulate them and their work for which they received a heritage award from the National Trust of Australia (NSW) acknowledging their work at *Saumarez*. This raised the profile of not only our Society but the heritage value of gardens to an important audience.

On advocacy and raising our profile or having a voice: we had two letters published in Sydney newspapers this year: the *Sydney Morning Herald* on the outrageous incursion of the Art Gallery of NSW into the public space of the *Domain* and in the *Wentworth Courier* regarding the devastating and heartbreaking removal of so many of the figs along Anzac Parade to accommodate the light rail. Unfortunately, I understand the Gallery may have its funding and the trees are gone or going.

I asked a senior heritage practitioner about the proposed extension to the art gallery and he very wisely said that a great building or design is often the result of dealing with difficult constraints and the proposed extension does not seem to show any restraint. How much better it might have been if the building could have improved the eastern slopes behind the gallery where the chaos of toll roads and rail links might be enveloped and the landscape improved – not a simple land grab of the best land.

A recent event was a walk through the *Female Factory* in North Parramatta led by Gay Hendriksen. This is a very special site with a collection of buildings by significant architects in an exceptional landscape on the banks of the Parramatta River. The great threat looming is development that is ill-conceived and driven by short term interests.

I believe that our current government has scant regard for the fragile remnants of our colonial past – look at *Varroville*. The Society wrote a letter of objection to the proposed re-zoning to allow for a cemetery that would enshroud the villa. This is an early farm estate dating from 1810 - 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.

I read today that the Joint Regional Planning Panel have determined that the proposed cemetery is of public benefit and the panel believes the proposal has been specifically designed such that it will not harm the area's visual, cultural and environmental qualities and will act to protect these values in perpetuity. John Ruskin wrote in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, "...Architecture is to be regarded by us with the most serious thought. We may live without her, and worship without her, but we cannot remember without her." If we remove 500 figs from Anzac Parade there is an outcry, if we despoil acres of farmland that forms a cultural landscape there is hardly a whimper.

Advocacy will remain an objective of the Society into the future and I hope governments may be swayed or slowed down by the loss of significant landscape heritage.

If you have any suggestions you would like the committee to consider, please feel free to contact me – we do appreciate the feedback.

James Quoyale. 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:
Steve & Patricia McVeagh, David Prieto, Rowena Slater, Juliet Suich, Amelia Zavattaro
& Friends of Callan Park

AGHS FORTHCOMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER

Date: Wednesday 2nd November - 6pm for 7pm - 8.30pm.

Event: Illustrated talk by Gina Plate - *Yasmar - last remaining 19th century villa estate - Haberfield*

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

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

Date: Sunday 27 November 4pm - 7.30pm

Event: Christmas Get-Together at Anne & Graham Smith's house in Turramurra

Venue: Full address supplied on confirmation of booking

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

FEBRUARY

Date: Wednesday 15th February 6pm for 7pm - 8.30pm.

Event: Illustrated talk by Judy Fakes - *Trees & neighbours – managing disputes*

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

October 22nd/23rd 10am-4pm Open garden - *Mahratta - Behind the Wall*. An art deco delight in a Sorensen garden.

25 Fox Valley Road, Wahroonga. Admission to garden \$5. Guided tours of house \$10. Exhibitions, Devonshire teas, raffles & more.

More info <http://mahratta.org.au/Mahratta/events.html>

October 29th/30th. Bathurst Spring Spectacular Garden Weekend including *Miss Traill's House & garden* & other gardens. \$20.

Book at: Bathurst Visitors' Information Centre or at the gardens. Info: Anne Lewellyn, 6331 4117 / annesgarden@bigpond.com

OR join a Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney tour to this festival, via the *Orange Botanic Gardens*, more info at: foundation.friends@rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au / p: 9231 8182

November 6th Sunday RAHS tour: Two Macarthur properties: *Bella Vista Farm* and *Elizabeth Farm*, 10am-3.30pm. Join guide Judith Dunn in Parramatta (shuttle bus stop, Darcy Street, outside the railway station) at 10am to visit *Bella Vista* (then 'Seven Hills Farm'), bought by John Macarthur in 1801. Morning tea and tour of house and outbuildings on this 20ha property. Friends market. Visit Lake Parramatta for lunch at own expense. PM - tour *Elizabeth Farm*, Parramatta & grounds. \$35/30 RAHS members, bookings: <http://www.rahs.org.au/product/bella-vista-farm-elizabeth-farm/> or p: 9247 8001.

November 12th Talk *Gardening for our Future*, with Costa Georgiadis, Metcalfe Auditorium, State Library of NSW, 2-3pm, \$20, Bookings essential. ABC Gardening Australia host/educator, Costa will talk about how Australian communities are creating opportunities to connect around gardens and gardening. Bookings: www.sl.nsw.gov.au/whats-on

November 12th-14th Macarthur Trail and Richlands homestead tour with Stuart Read. The Historic Houses Association of Australia tour of Southern Tablelands historic farm homesteads and gardens including Berrima's *Harper's Mansion*, Goulburn's *Riversdale*, a tour of historic Taralga and nearby *Richlands*, an outstation in the Macarthur family land holdings empire – open only once every 2 years. Also Goulburn's *Garoorigang*, an old coaching inn long-held by the Hume family (of highway fame). \$1150 twin share, \$200 single supplement, info/itinerary/bookings: p: 9252 5554 / info@hha.net.au

November 23rd: RAHS talk: 3 authors of *Gardens of History & Imagination: Growing NSW*: Drs Gaynor MacDonald (Aboriginal gardening), Janet George (health and hospital gardens) and Catherine Rogers (back yards v gardens) each discuss their chapters, plus informal discussion. 2 - 4.30pm, History House, 133 Macquarie Street. \$10.

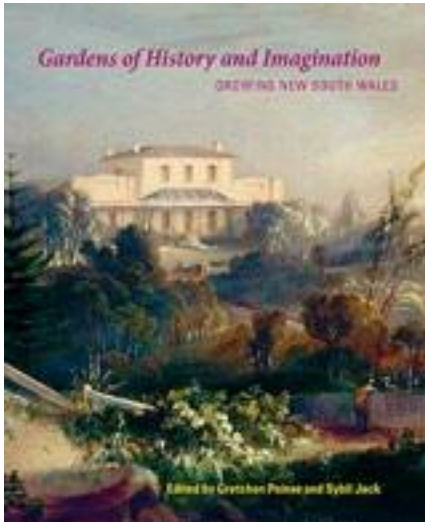
Bookings: <http://www.rahs.org.au/product/gardens-history-imagination/> p: 9247 8001.

Open every day until April 2017: *Sweet Addiction*, the inaugural exhibition inside 'The Calyx', the new exhibition centre and glass house inside the *Royal Botanic Garden*, Sydney, which explores where chocolate comes from, how it is grown, its history and pervasive connection to so many of our lives. Includes the largest Green Wall in the Southern Hemisphere and much more. \$15/9.50, 10am-4pm daily, info: www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/visit/sweet-addiction / info: p: 9231 8111.

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.

GARDENS OF HISTORY AND IMAGINATION: GROWING NEW SOUTH WALES - Book launch by Peter Watts AM

The following is an edited version of Peter Watts AM speech launching this book, published by Sydney University Press, on 23rd June at the Mitchell Library.



I am delighted to launch this wonderful book which has multiple themes, authors and ideas, fascinating and new information. It's a particular pleasure because it is one of few books on gardening in its wider context written and published in NSW. It's wonderful to see scholarly publications are still published. To find one where every element is almost perfect is rare - excellent research, elegant writing, extensive footnotes, meticulously bibliography, short author biographies, illustrations perfectly referenced. The design is excellent and paper quality perfect. But much more: it's a wonderful interweaving of scholarship, imagination and ideas. This book set my mind off in a thousand directions. It traversed new territory, new perspectives on old information. It brings new research and interest and challenges. Study of gardens cuts across so many disciplines: science, arts, design, taste, social history, horticulture, philosophy. It's rare a book celebrates that diversity. It's wonderful to see linked approaches from 10 contributors bringing expertise to bear. I found I reflected on my 1970s work in Victoria identifying surviving historic gardens. My major tools were a VW and generous local people. I was trying to find ones that met criteria of intact form, original planting, condition and character. Up till then, no one had considered the value of such gardens - let alone academic interest.

This book demonstrates the extraordinary advance in knowledge and interest since. Back then it was largely architects and fledgling landscape architects, principally focused on design and with a particular British frame of reference. It seems that there are now 3 major differences. (1) Dumping British baggage and looking at gardens with Australian eyes. (2) Ready access to digital and online resources, e.g. Trove, a powerful research tool. But one that needs caution: there is no substitute for getting out and looking, feeling a place's atmosphere, context, talking to those associated, touching, breathing and absorbing its spirit.

So much can now be done at a distance and so be missed. We see this at its worst in conservation projects where all is overly bureaucratic and policy-oriented and the results mediocre at best. I think it has led to less courage, imagination, understanding, too much process and no potential for delight, wit or freshness.

The third big change is that interest in garden history is taken up much more broadly and for the better. There are no chapters by architects or landscape architects - instead by a pharmacologist turned sociologist; 5 historians; 2 anthropologists; a horticulturalist and an artist/designer/photographer. Gardens are so ubiquitous they deserve examination from every perspective.

The 1979/80 constitution of the Australian Garden History Society (a sponsor) aims to examine gardens in their '*widest social, historic, artistic, literary and scientific contexts*'. And this book does just that. AGHS deliberately left out the word 'horticultural', because there were then many specialist horticultural bodies about - so distinguishing AGHS as something new.

I chuckled reading Ailsa McPherson's wonderful chapter, '*Exhibition Gardening*' on power plays in early horticultural societies. The first dominated by '*practical men*' with interest in production, its success led to takeover by the colony's '*first men*' with '*scientific and expansionist philosophies*': Anglophiles and gentlemen wanting a vehicle to discuss '*taste, and other things essential to the composition of a garden*'.

A struggle for power played out. I have some sympathy for toffs because, as with the AGHS - taking the focus off horticulture was a way of elevating gardening from purely practical to a status that could be explored more broadly. I chuckled as AGHS withstood an unsuccessful push to add the word '*horticulture*' into its constitution a decade on. Exactly the opposite to NSW, 160 years earlier!

I confess I read the whole book backwards, starting with something familiar. I read Stuart Read's excellent chapter '*Riverine Gardens of Sydney Waterways*'. I had been involved in the conservation and management of some of those he wrote about. But it set a pattern for reading.

This becomes relevant when I add that I delayed reading the book until a week or so ago as I was deeply immersed in Bill Gammage's astonishing book *The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines Made Australia* and then had to immediately read Bruce Pascoe's *Dark Emu: Black Seeds: Agriculture or Accident?*

These books were life changing: I am still processing the shift they had on my thinking about the way Aborigines managed landscape. I was spellbound by the evidence, scholarship and two lifetimes of observation that uncovered an extraordinarily complex system of management across Australia.

So with that in mind, as I read this book, backwards, I got a little dispirited that there was little acknowledgement of the Aboriginal-managed landscape. That is until I got to the first chapter — last!

Here Gaynor Macdonald knocked me for six; setting out eloquently a garden's characteristics, noting the common feature is that they are '*cultural products*'. She makes a case that values, beliefs and practices making a garden distinct from any other space are found in 3 interlocking ideas: (1) spaces in which people exercise control; (2) spaces that are owned; and (3) places imbued with moral and spiritual sentiments.

After applying these to Japanese gardens she re-examines the Aboriginal relationship with landscape concluding that to Aborigines, everything is garden: intimately known, bounded, ordered, nurtured and imbued with moral and spiritual sentiment. This is gardening in its most expansive form, an outcome of active and ongoing cooperation between people and creator spirits. Doesn't that upset preconceived notions? If you think it's an overstatement I urge you to read Gammage's book and Macdonald's chapter.

But so many things in this book caught my attention or interest. What I liked about Colleen Morris's piece on *The Role of the Sydney Botanic Gardens* was how it demonstrated the influence of an institution, or particularly one person (a few long-time directors). She explores the impact they had distributing plants to public gardens and places across NSW. Which can help us 'read' a landscape, to pinpoint when it was created. What foresight!

I was taken by John Ramsland's wonderful piece on 4 garden suburbs - 3 in Sydney and one in Newcastle. He writes extensively of Daceyville, a suburb. And the political battle to improve the living conditions of the poor.

Catherine Rogers takes a single photo of a woman behind a large 1880s house in Burwood to build a story on changing backyards: a salutary reminder of why they were not gardens. In the 1880s there were no services. A yard must store fuels, water and produce food. It was where house water was disposed of; clothes dried; compost made. Garbage was disposed of in an incinerator or cesspit. With care, to avoid contamination and disease. As such roles were eliminated with the 20th century the yard changed into a place for pleasure, often a 'garden'.

I found poetry in Gretchen Poiner's essay, *Sense of Place*. It reminded me of Victoria's old gardens and an almost universal truth. The best retained an elusive mellowness, gentle ageing with not too much change, always in caring hands of families who built them. I can think of scores spoilt by new owners with too much money, professional advice and 'good taste'.

She summed up these better than I have read anywhere. Subjective relationships with place forged by settlers in making gardens can persist. Or be asserted anew when descendants continue an association. The garden becomes a bequest with the pride, privilege and responsibility of inheritance. Original form and planting palette are less critical than keeping their *genius loci*. Letters, diaries and journals are a form of insurance against de-personalised history and loss of memory.

In finishing I suggest a new area of research for ISAA. Gammage refers to explorers and settlers describing the landscape as like a 'gentleman's estate - or parkland'. This suggests many were clearly aware of those most sophisticated cultural landscapes - British gentleman's estates.

The question I pose is, why is it that no settler (with the exception of the Macquaries) took advantage of the ready-made parklands found across Australia and incorporated them into their own estates? Perhaps they did. Perhaps some of you know of them. I don't. I can think of examples recreated with exotic and native trees. But I know of none deliberately kept as-found.

In conclusion I congratulate the authors, designers and compilers, Independent Scholars Association, publisher, sponsors, *Royal Botanic Garden* and all involved.

It's my pleasure to declare *Gardens of History and Imagination: Growing NSW* launched.

(A fuller version of Peter's speech is at:

<http://www.isaa.org.au/nsw/launch-of-gardens-of-history-and-imagination-growing-new-south-wales>)

Cecelia Clarke has written a review of this book on page 7

Planting Dreams: 3-part Exhibition Lecture Series

A three-part lecture series in conjunction with the exhibitions *Planting Dreams: Shaping Australian Gardens & Australian Grand Designs* to explore Australia's passion for gardens and garden making.

The Planting Dreams exhibition celebrates the bicentenary the *Royal Botanic Gardens* Sydney (1816-2016).

A special Friends of the Library lecture series. **Australian Garden History Society members eligible for Friends discount.** 18 & 25 October, & 1 November. (please note: last lecture in Gallery Room)

Cost: Friends \$20 / Guests \$25. Cost for series: Friends \$50 / Guests \$70. Book Online at: www.sl.nsw.gov.au/whats-on

Planting Dreams Lecture 1: Exploring NSW Contemporary Gardens with Howard Tanner AM 18th October

Over the past year, award-winning architect and author, Howard Tanner AM has worked with the State Library to produce a survey of contemporary landscape gardens in NSW, in conjunction with specialist photographers, landscape designers and contractors.

Join Howard as he discusses some of NSW's exceptional gardens that have formed part of the *Planting Dreams: Grand Garden Designs* photographic exhibition. These images showcase contemporary designs and innovative landscaping of large scale gardens – from Bermagui to Byron Bay to Tenterfield – utilising creative elements of Australian plants; impressive water features; 'cloud-pruning' of hedges; contrasting colours and textures; the use of luxurious grasses.

12 noon to 1pm in the Metcalfe Auditorium, State Library, Macquarie Street

Planting Dreams Lecture 2: Public Gardens & Places - Then & Now - 25th October

Join us for a fascinating conversation led by former director of the Historic Houses Trust NSW, Peter Watts AM in discussion with landscape heritage consultant Colleen Morris and accomplished landscape architect Anton James.

The talks will focus on public gardens, both contemporary and historical, as arbiters of taste – through style, plant distribution, fashion makers, public art and memorials etc. It will explore those who make our public open spaces, threats to public gardens and what the public expect from them.

12 noon to 1pm in the Metcalfe Auditorium, State Library, Macquarie Street

Planting Dreams Lecture 3: History of Australian Garden Design Through the Library's Collection - 1st November

Join Richard Aitken, garden historian, author and curator of the *Planting Dreams: Shaping Australian Gardens* exhibition and Sarah Morley, Curator Research & Discovery at the State Library, as they discuss the selection and design processes behind this landmark exhibition.

12 noon to 1pm in the Gallery Room, State Library, Macquarie Street

LAST REMAINING 19th CENTURY VILLA ESTATE - HABERFIELD by Gina Plate



Historic *Yasmar* photo
Source: Macleay Museum



Yasmar as it is today
Photo: Gina Plate

On Wednesday 2nd November I will be presenting an illustrated talk about *Yasmar*. *Yasmar* is the name of the last remaining 19th century villa estate on Parramatta Road. Although much reduced in size from its original 44 acres, a substantial portion of the original garden survives as do many of its original trees, some very rare when planted in the 1850s or thereabouts. The mass of the garden's greenery is a notable sight on the road to Parramatta after *Ashfield Park* has been passed. It is the only substantial patch of vegetation along the whole route which, until their recent demolition for the West Connex motorway works, seemed to consist mainly of car sale yards. This talk will illuminate the fascinating history of the property and the garden that is closely linked with the early history of Sydney and some of its prominent citizens and with the establishment of the garden suburb of Haberfield. The property is listed on the NSW State Heritage Register: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/ViewHeritageItemDetails.aspx?ID=5045179> It is now owned by NSW Crown Lands. The house and garden have been neglected for many years as various government departments have sought without success to find an appropriate use for the place. The place is much loved, in particular by local residents and lovers of garden history. Positive change is now underway, with a contract about to be let for the removal of unwanted weedy tree and large shrub species and the formation of a volunteer group keen to finish removing the smaller weeds, to propagate plants from wanted species on site and to restore and maintain a semblance of its original Victorian garden.

Report on The Female Factory walk by Angela Low



Huge jacaranda and
4m sandstone wall detail.



Greenway clock tower with
palms and Bunyas

On ABC television recently Tony Robinson presented a walk around Parramatta which included a glimpse of *The Female Factory*. We were lucky enough to have a guided tour of this site recently and were amazed. Who knew that we had on our doorstep, an historical colonial site that is bigger, older and possibly more significant than Tasmania's Port Arthur. It was first established in 1818 with a foundation stone laid by Governor Macquarie, that is only 20 years after the First Fleet arrived. Its purpose was to house, imprison and employ women of the convict colony, together with the children of single mothers. Sandstone buildings, some designed by Francis Greenway, stand testament to the grim conditions as the numbers of inmates swelled. Enormous four metre walls were built to keep the women in (but failed to do so.) There is a river frontage with a natural stone causeway where fleece was washed; spinning, weaving and sewing were important occupations, also laundry and plaiting of straw hats from palm fronds. In 1827 some women staged a fight for rights, objecting to the appalling conditions. This was the first workers' action in recorded Australian history, (and they had their meagre rations further reduced as a result).

The collection of enormous trees alone warrants a visit; some very rare specimens, some possibly dating from original plantings, giving an idea of the scope of the early gardens and grounds.

Thousands of women passed through these walls, originally designed to hold some 300 women, numbers peaked in 1842 with 1203 women and 263 children. After the age of 4 children were sent to Orphan Schools and often lost all contact with their mothers. It is estimated that 1 in 7 Australians could be descended from this cohort. A tantalising few of their stories were recounted. Colonial men could come to choose a wife from the inmates. One fellow arrived with a bonnet for his favoured lady.

What opportunities exist to preserve this site for students of history, school education visits, a tourist destination explaining the very beginnings of our nation, as well as a beautiful place to visit.

The site was nominated for National Heritage Listing in 2015 and is currently undergoing a 2 year assessment. The original 4 acres of grounds, which once belonged to William Bligh, are threatened with development and overshadowing by high rise buildings.

Thankyou to Gay Hendriksen, President of the Friends of the Female Factory, who led our tour and gave such fascinating snippets of the site's history.

Florilegium – Sydney's painted garden



Exhibition open until 30th October
Museum of Sydney, cnr. Phillip/Bridge
Streets, CBD. Amazingly good botanical
art celebrating and telling the story of
Sydney Botanic Garden since 1816.
Selected artists working in/interaction in
the gallery – 1st & 3rd Sundays October

The Artist & the Botanical Collector



Lively small exhibition of the
productive relationship of Gertrude
Lovegrove, one of the Thorburn daughters
from *Meroogal*, Nowra with William
Bauerlen, a naturalist (explorer/scientist)
documenting Shoalhaven flora. Open until 20th November
Museum of Sydney, cnr. Phillip/Bridge St, CBD. More info:
<http://sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/exhibitions/artist-botanical-collector>

TREES & NEIGHBOURS – MANAGING DISPUTES by Judy Fakes



Trees on neighbouring properties are one of the four most common reasons for disputes arising between neighbours. In late 2006, the NSW government introduced the *Trees (Disputes Between Neighbours) Act, 2006* as a means of providing a relatively inexpensive and quick process by which these disputes could be resolved.

The jurisdiction for this piece of legislation sits with the NSW Land and Environment Court. The Court has appointed arborists to act as Commissioners.

The Act is in two parts: Part 2 deals with disputes arising from actual or potential damage to property on an applicant's land or potential injury to any person.

Part 2A deals with disputes where there is a severe obstruction to sunlight to windows of an applicant's dwelling or a severe obstruction to views from an applicant's dwelling arising from a neighbour's hedge.

This illustrated presentation provides an insight into: the underpinning principles behind and within the Trees Act; the people who apply; where they live; their reasons for doing so; how to make an application; what happens during a hearing and the type of orders that may be made. I have drawn on the more than 450 tree matters that I have heard and determined as both a full-time Commissioner and as an Acting Commissioner of the Court.

GARDENS OF HISTORY AND IMAGINATION: GROWING NEW SOUTH WALES - Book review by Cecelia Clarke

This winter two elegant, informative books have found a stopping place on my desk: *The Florilegium, celebrating 200 years of the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney*. The second, the subject of this review: *Gardens of History and Imagination, Growing New South Wales*, edited by Gretchen Poiner and Sybil Jack. The dust jacket notes that '*Whether on the ground or in the mind, gardens carry meaning.*' Ten essays written by contributors from diverse backgrounds explore this claim. Ten essays illustrate this search for meaning by the early and later settlers, the 'Toffs', the poets, the artists, the practical men and women, the political visionaries. While there is no single definition for the word garden, there are many common threads: the ties that bind the book.

Gaynor Macdonald tells us that the Aboriginal peoples understood the fundamentals of managing the land: climate, rainfall, geology, sunlight and worked within these parameters. Arguably, and to their detriment, new settlers largely operated without this understanding. Acquiring local knowledge through trial and error was sometimes slow and often costly.

Thus, education through dissemination of information through formal and informal channels is one common thread. With the distribution of cuttings, seeds and plant materials went the knowledge of what would and would not grow. Colleen Morris analyses the more formal channels of the *Sydney Botanic Garden* in distributing plant materials (and knowledge that went with them) to public gardens and institutions. She honours the work of far seeing directors such as Charles Moore and J H Maiden in achieving this aim.

Ailsa McPherson and Sybil Jack discuss the vital and evolving social/economic status of floricultural/horticultural exhibitors such as the seed merchants, plantmen and nurserymen such as Shepherd, Baptist, Creswick and Yates who supplied home gardeners and public institutions. The reader cannot help but be delighted by the luscious illustration of the 1898-9 Yates & Co catalogue cover. No doubt expensive in its day, the four-coloured chromolithograph indicated a thriving business which not only sold garden supplies, it was also a purveyor of dreams of a flourishing garden in a healthy, sunlit colony.

Throughout this book illustrations add to our visual knowledge. Fifty-three illustrations are a generous inclusion. Sue Rosen chooses a photo of the service yards of *Retford Park*, highlighting the contrast to the refined landscape which many of us have visited. Stuart Read's inclusion of the lost garden and home of Captain Piper at *Henrietta Villa* and the modified garden of *Wotonga*, AKA *Admiralty House* advance his narrative of the riverine gardens of Sydney waterways.

John Ramsland's photo Clarence Street, (Sydney) shanties stands in relief to the garden suburbs of Daceyville, Matraville, Hamilton and Castlecrag. Ramsland reproduces a real estate ad for Hamilton. Then as now, they sold dreams.

The twin disciplines of pharmacology and sociology weave the story by Janet George of plants, particularly herbs and medicinal plants, their cultivation, uses and distribution to private landholders and to institution. This was the age when the scientific linkages between mental and physical well-being through gardens were explored. The useful melded with the beautiful, creating a sense of harmony with nature.

Terminology is useful, sometimes elusive and always evolving. Differentiating between 'back yard' and 'back garden' bemuses me. Starting with a photo of a young woman standing beneath a tree against which a bunch of garden stakes are propped, Catherine Rogers considers this subject in: '*Hollywood in Burwood: the transformation of a suburban back yard to a garden*'. The area behind my house has morphed from the 'back yard' to the 'back garden'. But I don't know why.

Last, – a sense of place – is explored and analysed in one way or another by all of the contributors: to the pioneers, to the thinkers and to the land itself. Perhaps, it is my reading of it, but I sense nostalgia, if not regret for lost gardens and lost opportunities. I sense regret for the shift from humanist values underpinning the policy of promoting private and public green space to the primacy of commercial outcomes of slash and churn, of intensive urban consolidation and the commercialisation of public lands.

Initially, a colleague lent me his copy of *Gardens of History and Imagination*. However, I put this book on my 'Must Have' list and bought my own copy. It is money well-spent. The bibliography will lead us down more garden paths. There is much to think about, to like and to re-read.

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it was generally agreed that the insertion of six shops there had been a serious mistake. In 1984, backed by firm local community support, the National Trust (NSW) made an offer to purchase and restore the property as a Bicentennial project at a cost of \$2.5 million. The Trust's "Juniper Hall Appeal" was launched on 20 October 1984 by the NSW Premier, Mr Neville Wran. It was the biggest conservation project ever undertaken by the National Trust in New South Wales, with intensive fund-raising. The State Government gave \$750,000 on a dollar for dollar basis to the National Trust towards the purchase and restoration of *Juniper Hall*. (Source: CMP, 2016)

The restoration project involved the removal of the shops and, with expert advice, the mansion was restored to its late 19th century configuration and an appropriate front garden reinstated to its ca.1900 appearance. The layout took account of both the configuration and Norfolk Island Pine plantings of the Cooper family and that of the period when it was used by the NSW State Children's Relief Department. This brought *Juniper Hall* back into the public's eye as the grand family residence for the Cooper family. The work of reinstating the front garden was undertaken by National Trust Garden Committee volunteers and others, of whom this author was one.

The photograph by Eric Sierins to the right shows the then newly reinstated front garden, with (replacement) young Norfolk Island pines (staked), on each side of the main entry pathway. The picket fence down the centre of the garden reflects the period (1884 - 1924) when the destitute children used the garden on the left (west). The portion of the garden on the right was reserved for the Superintendent, who lived onsite.



It is therefore surprising that, after all this community commitment and public expenditure, the recent Development Application has proposed to remove the front garden again, instate commercial premises at a level below it, and install a 'roof terrace' garden above part of it, close to the mansion. The present Norfolk Island Pines (maturing nicely) would be removed, to be replaced by a different species (Cook Pines), to be grown in planter boxes reaching down past the commercial structures. Whether they would thrive in these narrow, confined conditions is problematical; in any case they have a genetic lean toward the north-east which would look odd against the vertical columns of the mansion's front verandas.

The DA takes the view that, because nearly all the front garden was removed in the mid 1920s (other than parts of side boundary walls) and thus has little original heritage fabric remaining there from the key period of significance for the house, the reinstated front garden has much less heritage significance. However, the heritage significance of landscapes depends not only on the presence of old fabric – which (especially plantings, but also paths, driveways and garden beds) often change over time – but also on intact original layout (reflecting historical eras or styles) and the continuous role and same use of a particular landscape space over time. In this case, the front garden had a continuous use as just that – a front garden which provided a landscape setting for the mansion.

There is also the broader issue, namely that *Juniper Hall*, together with the Paddington Post Office, Town Hall, and Water Reservoir (now a landscaped archaeological site) together constitute an important 19th century heritage precinct of Victorian era heritage buildings. As a group, they provide welcome visual relief and public amenity from the unending row of shops along Oxford Street. It is considered this would be quite disruptive of that valued public heritage precinct to now insert commercial structures within it. Given their rejection and removal by the broader community in the late 20th century, this proposal is not only remarkably insensitive to the community esteem in which *Juniper Hall* is held, but also bound to diminish the State heritage significance of the property. In conclusion, the State heritage listing of the property, which derives mostly from its rarity, development and use by the Cooper family, and its public esteem, indicates that it is 'something we want to keep' - intact. There is a clearly recognised 'public good' at stake, as shown in the campaign of the late 1980s to restore it as a bicentennial project. It would be most improper for such substantial public funding and volunteer inputs to be wantonly wasted. The public understanding and appreciation of *Juniper Hall's* significance will be seriously diminished if it can no longer be seen as an 1824 Georgian style mansion in a broad landscape setting. It is suggested that the other proposed changes to the rear of the property – which are not opposed - could be rejigged to generate sufficient funds to conserve it. This could include letting part of the proposed large art gallery there for commercial offices, and perhaps having a café or restaurant adjacent to them. If this is not done, then that part of the DA which proposes the removal of the front garden and the reinsertion of commercial buildings along Oxford Street should be refused. Given *Juniper Hall's* rarity and level of significance, the Heritage Council and State authorities should intervene to protect the public good.