

BRANCH CUTTINGS

Issue 54 – November 2017

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



AGHS Tour New Zealand South Island

Lynne Walker from Northern NSW led a tour of 20 participants to the Canterbury and Otago regions of New Zealand between 31 October and 13 November. The tour visited 23 gardens in all, ranging from public Botanic Gardens, to small town gardens, to large and historic rural gardens. It included alpine, seaside, high country and coastal gardens and the only two castle gardens in NZ. While varied, all gardens were of exceptionally high quality. Apart from a couple of days of wild winds the weather was very kind for visiting many simply stunning gardens. The tour started in Christchurch, east to Akaroa on the coast & an opportunity to encounter the Hector's Dolphin, the world's smallest and rarest—then inland to the foothills of the Southern Alps. From there we travelled south to Dunedin, inland to Wanaka then over to Queenstown in the heart of the Southern Alps.

The picture to the right is of the native border at Broadfields. This garden specialises in NZ natives, supplemented with exotics bred in NZ. Rhododendrons



were at their best in Broadfields (left) and a number of other gardens.



The group couldn't fail to be impressed at the quality of the gardens, most of which have been assessed by the New Zealand Gardens Trust as being of either National or International Significance. Indeed, learning of this Trust and its role suggests it would make a very worthy paper for presentation at the proposed AGHS Conference in NZ in 2019.

Jill and Richard Simpson's remarkable Fisherman's Bay Garden (right) set high on the east coast was a feast for the senses with its stunning backdrop. Many NZ gardens survive on comparatively little rain compared to parts of Australia. However, they benefit from rich soil compared to the often depleted soils Australian gardeners have to contend with.



Ohinetahi Garden (left) was created by Sir Miles Warren, a leading architect and one that has been assessed by the NZ Gardens Trust as having International Significance. While very closely planted in challenging terrain it was a wonderful setting to display Sir Miles' collection of significant garden sculpture.

While some NZ natives are probably best known for their hardiness, the Chatham Island Forget-me-not (right) is charming and looks so suited to woodland environments. It bears no resemblance whatsoever to a traditional forget me not.



The tour included a visit to Larnach Castle, Dunedin, the home of Margaret Barker. Margaret (pictured front, middle with the touring group) was one of the many impressive plantswomen we had the opportunity to meet and be guided around their gardens. Our walk at Larnach was preceded by high tea and followed by drinks and canapés in the castle. A memorable feature of this visit was being piped into the castle by a piper, resplendent in kilt and sporran. One of the numerous delightful features of this garden was the laburnum walk.

A breath-taking final visit was to the Blair Garden, Queenstown (below) created by Janet and John Blair. This serene and restful garden was a skilful mixture of textures and colours of green, balanced with white and minimal other colours. It was the garden I felt most 'at home' in, possibly because of the skilful way in which swathes of lawn punctuated garden beds and encouraged a visitor to be drawn to another area. It was not without its challenges as abundant 'wet' snow has caused havoc in the past with broken branches in areas such as the ornamental crabapple walk.

Lynne Walker's tour of New Zealand gardens was a delightful two weeks. I found gardens to be every bit as good as those I have visited in England, Ireland or Wales. All private gardens were gardened by passionate owners which was evident in the level of presentation. Three alpine gardens, owned by farmers, were described as being covered in up to 60 cm of snow for periods of up to two weeks.

Tour participants enjoyed the consistently impressive hospitality in cafes, restaurants and hotels, as well as a variety of cruises, one of which to see albatross in flight. It was a revelation to discover the wonderful quality of Central Otago Pinot Noir which beckoned most evenings. Should Lynne Walker offer her tour again to members it is very highly recommended.

John Maurer (Tour participant)



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Sydney & Northern NSW Branch Branch News – September October

I am recently home from ten days in Japan – most of it spent in Kyoto, walking thousands of steps per day to visit some extraordinary works of garden art. The gardens are visited by many and are remarkable. We stayed in traditional inns (ryokans) and I found gardens of all sizes sprinkled about – even atop a dessert of gelato in the form of a Japanese garden, where a sprig of mint represented a cloud-pruned tree. A garden is a privilege and a civilising force - buildings without gardens can be very austere. I discovered that a traditional timber for the manufacture of furniture in Japan comes from the Empress Tree (*Paulownia tomentosa*). The aroma of the timber keeps bugs away and it is related to balsa wood – a hardwood that is very lightweight.

The conference in Melbourne was a triumph! I would like to congratulate the Victorian Branch, who rose to the considerable challenge of hosting a sell-out event with only eight months to prepare. We were privileged to visit many fine and memorable gardens and hear from a diverse range of speakers about how Melbourne has been perceived over time as marvellous – or not. A most interesting speaker for me was Malcolm Faul who explored an undervalued resource for those interested in garden history – the sewers of Melbourne. His focus was on the modest gardens of the middle class. The diagrams prepared by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (established 1891) were so detailed they showed not just the pipework but the garden plan with the path layouts, the materials, dimensions and garden structures, including Shade Houses and others. Two gardens stood out for me as having a magical quality: *Villa Alba*, Kew and *Roseburn*, Hawthorn. *Villa Alba* was featured on Gardening Australia when Jane Edmanson visited with Dr James Broadbent in July 2006. The interiors of the villa are astonishing and had been roughly preserved under layers of cream paint applied by the Department of Health while the building was repurposed as a residence for nurses. A painstaking and time-consuming program to reveal the murals beneath has been undertaken and the results are astounding. *Roseburn* (1862) is a large home that has had only four owners and sits very comfortably in a large garden. At the perimeter is a deep garden bed behind which there is a secret path from which views back to the house are enjoyed through the veil of the garden. Magic!

A booklet was compiled for the 2017 conference to deliver summaries of, and extracts from, a dozen interviews that showcase the Australian Garden History Society's Oral history Collection. The first one I read was that of Dr Peter Valder, OAM. When the text is in italics it is the speaker's voice and the warmth of Peter's particular way of speaking leapt from the page. This collection started one year after the formation of the Society and is a wonderful record of accumulated wisdom and humour. Fairie (Mary) Wilson from Burnie, Tasmania said that after a conference: *The social side is very enlightening. Pleasant. You come home exhilarated and think: "I'd better get on with the weeding!"* Congratulations to the Oral History team, convened by Roslyn Burge, who continue to record the thoughts of our significant gardeners so that future generations may benefit.

Dr Meg Probyn presented a preview of next year's conference that is to be hosted by the Southern Highlands Branch and being so geographically convenient I think many of our members will attend. Numbers will be limited for reasons of manoeuvring through the gardens, so I think you should book as soon as it is advertised if you wish to attend.

As part of the Sydney Branch advocacy program the Branch provides some financial assistance to owners of historic gardens from time to time. This year the Branch offered \$2000 to Eryldene towards emergency arboriculture works to the magnificent Angophora behind the studio beside the tennis court. The Eryldene Trust was very appreciative of the assistance and hosted a small event to acknowledge the AGHS and other donors who had assisted them in the past twelve months.

In Sydney, our first speaker for next year is Lynne Walker from the Northern Sub-branch who will be updating us on progress at the Saumarez Rose Garden. John Maurer advised that pruning of roses planted in Stage I is being undertaken. The rose garden has been very well supported by the community and received funding from donors including government and awards for the work completed. I am inspired by the galvanizing force that gardens can have when volunteers work together to make things happen. Lynne will be speaking in February.

I am looking forward to the guided walk around the Waverton Peninsula and Berry's Bay on Sunday 19 November - Ian Hoskins is delightful and he's bursting with knowledge. I am very impressed that North Sydney Council has a full time historian.

Thank you to all the members who support our Society. Please come to our Christmas Party, this year hosted by David and Angela Low. I look forward to meeting new and existing member for a feast and celebration of the holiday season.

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

AGHS FORTHCOMING EVENTS

DECEMBER

Date: Sunday 3rd December, 4:00pm

Event: Sydney Branch Christmas Party

Venue: Warawee

Cost: AGHS Members \$20, Non-members \$30, Students \$5

Online Bookings: <https://www.trybooking.com/SZZV>

FEBRUARY 2018

Date: Wednesday 21 February, 2018, 6:00 pm

Event: Illustrated Talk on the AGHS Heritage Rose Garden at Saumarez Homestead by Lynne Walker

Venue: Annie Wyatt Room, National Trust Centre, Millers Point

Cost: AGHS Members \$20, Non-members \$30, Students \$5

Online Bookings: <https://www.trybooking.com/RNKG>

Enquiries for all events David Low 0407 464 876 or 02 9943 1456

Email aghssydney@gmail.com

Payments by internet bank transfer to:

Australian Garden History Society Sydney & Northern NSW Branch
ANZ Bank, Centrepont Branch BSB 012040 Account 101762565,
Please include your **name** and the **function**

OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST Dec 2017

Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney

Curtis' Australian Flowers 50+ **C18th and C19th Watercolours of Australian Plants**

9am-4pm Weekdays till 22 December 2017

Pollination at the Calyx - Explore the World of Pollination:

6 December 11am -12.30pm Garden Walk – Free but need to register

Christmas Wreath Making in the Calyx: Sat 16 Dec 2017 12pm-4pm \$130-\$145 Book online

Aboriginal Art Class: Sat 16 Dec

Rare and Endangered Plant Sales:

Growing Friends Nursery Mon-Fri 11am-2pm & Sat 10am-2pm

Booking and payment details: www.rbg Syd.nsw.gov.au

Parramatta Female Factory and Institutions Precinct on National Heritage List

On Tuesday 14th November it was announced by the Federal Minister for the Environment and Energy that the Parramatta Female Factory and Institutions Precinct was included on the National Heritage List. Please see the link below for details.

<http://www.joshfrydenberg.com.au/guest/mediaReleasesDetails.aspx?id=461>

ORAL HISTORY

The Australian Garden History Society Oral History Collection is a national collection of almost 40 interviews. The National Management Committee is working towards reshaping the Collection and uploading it to the website for wider use by members and researchers.

IAN TRAFFORD WALKER – INTERVIEWED IN SYDNEY ON 4 FEBRUARY 2011

[direct quotes in italics]

Ian Walker's parents were both artists: his father, Ralph Trafford Walker, designed (among many works) the sculpture, 'The Guardian of the Emu Totem, Central Australia', which is part of the panels in the doors of the Mitchell Library; and his mother, Jean Walker, trained as a painter and wrote, illustrated and edited a number of books about Australian bush gardening and regeneration. (Jean was interviewed for the Australian Garden History Oral History Collection in 2007.)

Jean and Betty's book, 'Designing Australian bush gardens', published in 1966 was a best seller and influenced a huge number of people in Australia ... it became one of the textbooks in architecture and landscape architecture at Sydney University.

Ian lives on NSW's North Coast and interviewed at his childhood home in Balgowlah. As a young man Ian worked with his mother and her sister, the botanical artist Betty Maloney, in their landscape business creating native bush gardens.

Betty and her husband loved the bush and bought a block in Frenchs Forest. When she asked Ian's father how she should incorporate the bush he replied, *just build your house within the bush*. Sydney Living Museum describes the garden as "the most celebrated and best-known bush garden in Australia", even in Betty's lifetime.¹

Ralph Trafford Walker greatly influenced Jean's vision: *he loved nature, he was born in the bush and was a bush boy really. My mother would sweep up the leaves and my father would say, 'Well look at the way they've blown and interconnected – aren't they beautiful as they settle on the ground*.

Jean recalled the response to a slide show of 'ground photographs' she presented:

... I photographed the ground because the ground is like a tapestry. There's big leaves, there's little leaves – there's everything on the ground and it talks to you. And when you walk you're looking at your feet and you look at the ground and it does talk to you and it's always perfect. It's never wrong. And I often used to photograph the ground a lot – perhaps a leaf on a stone or little plants popping out of cracks and things and different mulches around.

And I found that extremely evocative, it's like the skin of a person. Pimples and bunions and things and it was beautiful. And I had a whole lot of these photographs and people clapped and at the end they said 'we feel as if we've been there because we've walked over the ground'.

Whilst Ian's mother enlisted his help in the garden, teaching him about planting, exposing stone ... *at a deeper level my father influenced me too to look deeper beyond the superficial aspects of nature and to look into the cycles which give birth to different aspects of it.*

Ian worked with Joan Bradley for 2.5 years on a voluntary basis and still uses her methods. For the last three years he has been endeavouring to secure a grant to rehabilitate a local river and waterhole filled with *dozens of tortoises and platypus and large fish and eels and plenty of weeds!*

The waterhole is 5.5m deep and when it floods the water swirls in a circle and creates a vortex. According to Ian, Aboriginal people believe the waterhole is an extinct lava tube, linked to another tube further upstream; and whilst the Aboriginal Lands Council allows Ian to work on the waterhole he was advised not to swim there because the bunyip doesn't like men swimming in what is a women's place.



Photo: Ian Walker 2017



Ian Walker

¹ <https://sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/documenting-nsw-homes/betty-maloney%E2%80%99s-garden> (accessed 17 November 2017)

NNSW Branch Celebration of Roses and pre Christmas lunch

On Sunday 19th November the Northern New South Wales sub branch enjoyed a wonderful excursion with 54 people attending. The day began at Saumarez Homestead with a coach load travelling south of Armidale to Kentucky to visit Kentucky Roses, a charming garden which was formerly Kentucky Rose Nursery specializing in David Austen Roses. Twelve members of the Heritage Rose Society from Sydney and the Southern Highlands joined us for the day. Nearby Eastview Estate which includes a vineyard, restaurant, bar, winery, brewery and distillery proved to be an excellent stop for lunch and socializing.

Driving through the Kentucky countryside showed evidence of the development of a Soldier Settlement after World War 1 which featured a large fruit growing industry.



We returned to Saumarez to 'smell the roses' in the Heritage Rose Garden, the major project of our northern branch. It was looking spectacular in all its blooming glory with wonderful wooden structures and beautiful new seats, one granite and one basalt, in place. There the celebration continued.

From the verandah at Eryldene

In October, at the invitation of the Chairman and Board of the Eryldene Foundation, Tempe Beaven (Secretary) and I attended a celebration of the conservation of the house roof and recent works to the house and garden. The Sydney Branch contribution of \$2000 towards emergency arboriculture works to the magnificent Angophora was acknowledged and the Eryldene Foundation was exemplary in welcoming all to spend some time the house and garden, although most stayed on the front verandah enjoying the very well managed garden.

There is now a new timber fence to the front, the olive over the gateway has been deftly pruned and looks wonderfully refreshed. We heard of the intricate works to the roof, where each clay pan tile was removed, cleaned and reinstated. The original design used tiles from three different manufacturers to ensure an irregular character for the roof. The roofer has been working at Eryldene for about thirty years and now the roof is in good order for the next thirty. Eryldene is fortunate to have many supporters and volunteers some of whom we met, including three grandchildren of Professor and Mrs EG Waterhouse, who built Eryldene (ca.1913). We also met Bob (Robert) Moore, the heritage architect caring for and advising on new works at Eryldene. I congratulated Bob on his recent triumph in the Land and Environment Court, with regard to a proposed subdivision within the setting of Braidwood that establishes case law that may serve to protect other significant cultural landscapes from inappropriate developments.

James Quoye (Chair)



AGHS grant to Garden of Dame Enid mentioned in Garden Drum

Read an interesting article about Home Hill at Devonport, Tasmania, the garden and house of Dame Enid Lyons, Australia's first woman Member of Parliament. Written by Jennifer Stackhouse in The Garden Drum blog the article describes the garden and house of this formidable woman. Thanks to a grant from AGHS a Landscape Management plan will plan the restoration and management of the garden so loved by Dame Enid.

Home Hill is open to the public.

Marvellous Melbourne Conference 2017

Conference delegates from all over the country including quite a number from the Sydney and NSW Branch gathered in Melbourne on the last weekend of October for the annual AGHS Conference.

A great programme of lectures and garden visits was organised by the Victorian Committee to illustrate 'Marvellous Melbourne –The Challenge of Change'. See below a few pictures from the conference.



Gardens House, Melbourne Botanic Gardens



Carlton Gardens



Underneath an arbour from the Victorian Era



Villa Alba, Kew restored to James Broadbent design
Photographer Gina Plate



Umina Fountain



Rose Garden, Burnley Gardens, Richmond

AGHS Sydney Branch

Illustrated Talk on the AGHS Heritage Rose Garden at Saumarez Homestead

Wednesday 21 February, 2018, 6:00 pm

Annie Wyatt Room, National Trust Centre, Millers Point

The Heritage Rose Garden

One women's passion for collecting heritage roses inspired the development of this garden. Catherine MacLean's hundreds of roses on a suburban block became a generous donation that enabled Stage I of the garden (right opp.) to be completed. This collection, all pre-1930 & most pre-1900, won the National Trust NSW *Heritage Collection Award* in 2016. Stage II (left opp.) will house Australian bred roses (Clark, Riethmüller, Fitzhardinge) as well as examples by significant international breeders.



At dawn—Photo: Phil Abrahams, 2017

The garden, developed by AGHS Northern NSW with permission of the National Trust, serves an educative function as it attempts to trace the botanical development of the rose from wild species confined to the northern hemisphere to one loved the world over. Dedicated work of significant breeders have resulted in the rose becoming a highly desirable garden plant.



Speaker: Lynne Walker, originally from New Zealand, has lived in the New England for three decades. She has been a member of AGHS for over 20 years and was at the founding meeting of the Northern NSW AGHS Group. She served on the National Management Committee for two terms and was the Convenor of the 2013 AGHS Annual Conference held in Armidale. Lynne has led garden tours to the UK in 2012 and New Zealand in 2017. As a journalist she writes for several magazines, both national and international. She regularly presents at garden clubs in the New

England and North West. She lives on a grazing property between Guyra and Armidale with her husband, Richard Bird—*The Old Mole*. Richard's fine collection of antique garden tools, now resides at Carrick Hill, SA.



Gloire de France
Gallica, Hardy, 1838

Cost: (includes light refreshments)

Members **\$20**, Non-members **\$30**, Students **\$5**.

Online Bookings: <https://www.trybooking.com/RNKG>