

Inflorescence

May 2016

A Reminder—in case you haven't yet booked!

Saturday 18 June 2016

**2.00pm – 4.30pm The Bradman Museum
Theatre St Jude Street, Bowral**

There are still some places left for you to join us for the first of our two seminars this winter (see booking form on page 6). Again this year we visit the Bradman Museum Theatre to hear another fascinating talk, and enjoy two more episodes of the New Eden series. Plus, afternoon tea will be served in the Bradman Oval Pavilion. We look forward to seeing you there. The afternoon will begin with a talk by Max Bourke AM:

Conservation of Landscapes and Places – The Past 50 years and the Future

Max will speak about the establishment of the conservation movement post WWII, legislation and community actions, and the beginnings of the AGHS up to the present, with some speculation on where it might all go.

Max Bourke trained originally as an agricultural scientist and later studied fine arts. He undertook postgraduate work in conservation and has been involved in conservation action—from grass roots to becoming Australia's delegate to the World Heritage Committee. His graduate thesis was written on garden conservation while studying at the College of Europe in Bruges.

He was founding Director of the Australian Heritage Commission, CEO of the Australia Council for the Arts, a senior Federal civil servant and in the private sector the founding Chairman of the now-listed agricultural business Rural Funds Management. He now is once again actively involved in cultural and natural conservation activities, including AGHS (where he was on the National Management Committee and Deputy Chair for six years).

Sunday 21 August – AGM and lectures

The arrangements and speakers for the AGM have been finalised. More information and the booking form will be available in the next *Inflorescence*. Jim Hoskins will focus his talk on the Hoskins family's relationship with Paul Sorenson; Charlotte and Chris Webb will give an update on the Boral project; and Stuart Read will talk more broadly about Paul Sorenson in the Southern Highlands. Paul Sorenson is perhaps Australia's finest landscape designer and serious competition for better-known Edna Walling. Renowned for his Blue Mountains gardens, he in fact had significant career boosts by work in the Southern Highlands and Illawarra. He lived in Berrima in the 1930s running a nursery and seed farm

with Claude Crowe. Stuart's talk will explore in some detail eight of ten known jobs he did across this region between the 1930s and 1970s. His work for Australian Iron & Steel (later BHP) magnates Cecil and brother Sidney Hoskins is the key to many of these jobs, which leave us a significant landscape legacy, in places such as Invergowrie, Exeter, Gleniffer Brae and the Wollongong Botanic Gardens at Keiraville, the Mount Keira Scout Camp and Remembrance Driveway plantings at Berrima.

***For your Diary: Please note the change of date for the Christmas Party to be held at Oldbury:
Saturday 3rd December 2016***

Saturday 17 September - Coach Trip to Sydney

A coach trip is being planned for members to visit the **Museum of Sydney** to see *Florilegium: Sydney's painted garden*, followed by lunch at the **Royal Botanic Gardens** and an opportunity to see the new attraction—*The Calyx*. After lunch we will visit the **State Library of New South Wales** to view *Planting Dreams: Celebrating Australian gardens*.

The Florilegium Society at the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney was formed to create a florilegium, a collection of contemporary botanical paintings of some of the most significant plants in the living collections of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust. Jennifer Carroll led a small contingent of our SH Branch members to the launch of the book. It's a beautifully produced opus with eighty-seven paintings accompanied by the plant's botanical description and text relating it to the history of the Gardens. Elaine Musgrave has three of her exquisite paintings included: *Pinus roxburghii*, *Magnolia sieboldii*, *Worsleya procera*.

Booking forms for this trip will be available in the next newsletter.



Meg Probyn, Elaine Musgrave and Jenny Carroll at the Launch of *Florilegium* (photo John Biffin)

Monaro Tour: 26 April-29 April 2016

For some time I have wanted to visit the four featured gardens of this trip. Thank you Ray for including them in the Monaro tour itinerary.

Monaro means “treeless plain”, so the dominant landscape features we saw as we headed south towards Nimmitabel were the yellow grasslands, punctuated by shimmering golden poplars, against the distant blue of the Snowy Mountain range.



Golden poplars at Shirley (all photos by Tom Carroll)

This was the setting for the four gardens, which survive very well despite drought conditions in the area. Water (or lack of it) is a major determinant of what plants will survive in this harsh environment, and the plant palette of the gardens we visited. In most cases irrigation does not occur. The result is a restricted range of plants, with deciduous trees, conifers, bulbs, roses and hardy hedge plants dominating.



Bobundra: a shady path

“Bobundra” was the first of the properties we visited. We were greeted at the gate by Trisha Dixon, who led us through a shady woodland towards the

homestead via a pathway along the banks of Myalla Creek.



Beautiful place to picnic at Bobundra

A sunny glade was set up for a leisurely lunch and a number of our party returned there to enjoy the delicious food provided by Trisha and her helpers. We were invited to make ourselves at home in the house and garden, and the placement of the wine at the opposite end of the house to the food ensured we explored the house as well as the garden.



Leaning against the window on the left are Jenny Carroll and Trisha Dixon (photo T. Carroll)

The garden surrounds the house, providing shelter from the west and south and sunny open areas to the east and north, where the main entries and living spaces are. There are a number of large trees, and Trisha explained that when she first was establishing the garden (30 years ago), she had watered her plantings. Since then she has not persisted with

difficult to grow plants, and her garden now contains only the “survivors”. She is still modifying the garden areas and we noted that her tasks for the winter included remaking various parts. We were intrigued by the hedges (and floral arrangements) of *Euonymus europaeus* ‘Red cascade’ (spindle tree), with their brilliant red seed capsules and orange leaves contrasting with the mauve autumn crocus beneath them.

“Bobundra” has a fine merino herd of 2,200 and our visit coincided with shearing. We were invited to visit the shearing shed where Trisha’s son-in-law was supervising a team of shearers—an unexpected “extra” to our tour itinerary. It was a glorious afternoon and a wonderful beginning to our Monaro trip!

Each of the three gardens we visited on our second day had responded differently to the harsh climatic conditions of the Monaro, and each was charming in its own way.



Views across the landscape at Erindale

The first, “**Erindale**” was at the highest altitude (1100 metres), and located on the eastern edge of the tableland, with the harshest environmental conditions. We were welcomed by Elaine (Lainie) and Richard Lawson, and friends who had come to help with the morning tea.



Lainie Lawson and Laurel Cheetham

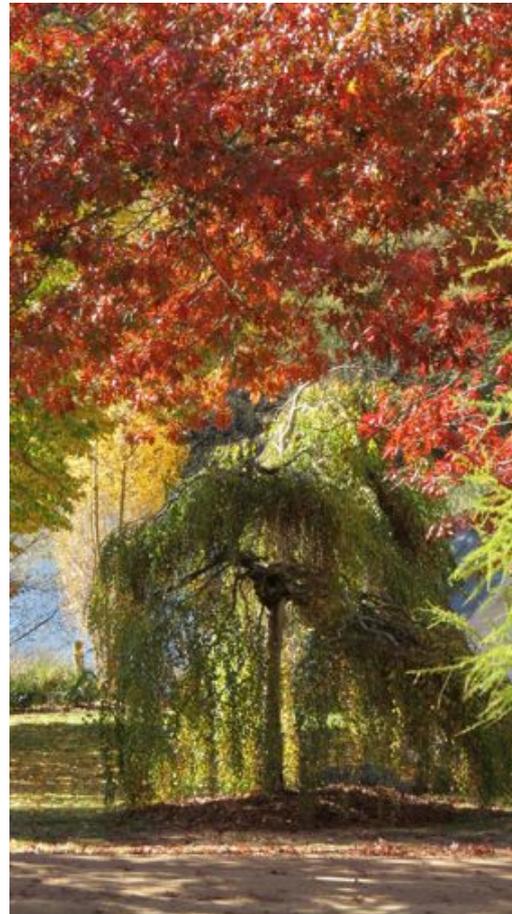
While the garden had its beginnings around 100 years ago, Lainie and Richard are essentially responsible for developing a colourful and interesting garden, a little wild in places which matches the landscape beyond. The reds, yellows and golds of birches, poplars, elms and maples contrasted with the autumn crocus and grassy open areas north and east of the house.

The house and its garden nestle into the side of an east-facing hill and are protected from the westerly winds by tall cypress hedges. Around the house are a number of distinct garden areas, and we were intrigued by the hedges of snowberry *Symphoricarpos* species) with their white balls. Lainie was very proud of her most recent garden where native ground covers and artemisias had been planted in gravel on a rocky outcrop above the valley.



Erindale: gate within the stone wall

“Shirley” and “Curry Flat” also had “old bones” with the settings retaining much of the character of the original designs. Both gardens surround graceful old homesteads, which are central to large grazing rural properties. The gardens appear as green oases in the rolling grasslands surrounding them.



The autumn tones at Shirley



The water surrounded by trees at Shirley

“**Shirley’s**” landscape is attributed to three generations of the Cottle family, and in recent times, Paul Bangay has added detail. The focal point is a large lake with grassy slopes and strategic planting above and the front lawns and gardens look over this. Paul Bangay’s contribution has added an element of formality at the back and side of the homestead, with a paved courtyard and pollarded plane trees, hedging, stone walls and repeat plantings of deciduous trees, where the old tennis court had been.

We were told that Claude Crowe was not responsible for any of the landscape design, but that many of the trees now displaying “autumn glory” were from the Crowe’s nursery at Berrima, bought and planted by John Cottle’s mother and grandmother.

The formality of the areas developed by Paul Bangay was in sharp contrast to the peaceful and flowing landscape of the rest of “Shirley” and the two gardens we had visited earlier. John Cottle pointed out how Paul had designed hedging to disguise the fact that walls were not parallel, thereby increasing the symmetry of the “blocks” behind the house.



Paul Bangay’s design at Shirley

“**Curry Flat**” is a large sheep property just west of Nimmitabel, which is currently worked by Sue and Jim Jardine and their two sons. The centrepiece is a magnificent homestead (see below), which “presides” over the gardens largely designed by Claude Crowe in the 1950s.



A corner of the old homestead at Curry Flat

The garden is Sue Jardine’s passion, and she has expanded the original plantings, and added detail. There are new plantings around the lake, and raised gardens at the rear of the homestead. Close to the homestead is a formal rectangular garden with sundial and seats, with pretty iron gates at either end. This adds an element of formality to this otherwise “informal” garden. I felt that this, because of its scale and plant palette, fitted well into the gently flowing landscape (unlike the Paul Bangay additions at Shirley).



Curry Flat

Sue and Jim attended our first event about Berrima Bridge Nurseries in 2011, telling us tales of the visits Claude made to “Curry Flat” to establish the early gardens, with their stone walls and a plant palette suited to the climate. As the nursery was closed on Sundays and this was the day that they visited their daughter at boarding school, they often picked up trees and shrubs ordered by phone left for them outside the Nursery gate.

We left Cooma and headed down Talbingo Mountain in the dark, pleased that we had such a skilled and careful driver to negotiate this narrow, windy road. At Tumut we were no longer in the Monaro Region, and the countryside included many more trees. The area was still dry, and there was plenty of autumn colour.

In **Tumut** we explored the Stockwell Gardens, and met some of the garden volunteers. One confirmed that the tree with the reddest leaves was a crepe myrtle. I found it hard to imagine the Gardens after heavy rain, even though they occupied a gully. Pathways provided access through the Gardens, and linked with the four roads surrounding them, and with a small stone amphitheatre created at street level for amateur productions. It was an interesting

idea and possibly one, which could be incorporated in our own Botanic Gardens.

We had been told about the majestic and unique forest of pines in the Bago State Forest near Laurel Hill, where Sugar Pines (*Pinus lambertiana*) planted in 1928 have been protected from logging to preserve its beauty. The pines towered above us meeting high overhead along the path through the forest, and walking along it was quite eerie, especially as the thick carpet of pine needles muffled the sound. Some of our party collected huge pinecones and beautiful bark pieces as we wandered among the trees. These trees are native to the US Pacific Coast where the tallest recorded specimen, growing in Yosemite National Park, reached 82m (269 feet) before its demise in 2007. I understand the ones in the Laurel Hill plantation are close to 200 feet high!



The walk through the Sugar Pines

We made six stops in and around **Tumbarumba**. These included the Glenroy Heritage Reserve, where the men especially enjoyed looking around the old farm machinery sheds while the women looked around the Pioneer Women's Hut Museum and Heritage Quilt Room exhibition, and investigated the handicrafts for sale and exhibits in the Glenroy Cottage Crafts Shop. The quilts on display were made from old overcoats, blankets, old trousers and

dresses, and scraps of left over material, illustrating the 'gift of thrift', as the display is titled.

In the Museum was an extensive collection of hand-made objects, reflecting the ingenuity and resourcefulness of the pioneer women and men in using and reusing whatever was available.

Lunch was at Tumbarumba Wines, where we were able to sample local wines with our lunch, and the stops at the Blueberry Farm, a small nursery in Tumbarumba and an apple orchard near Batlow allowed us to indulge in some retail therapy. Paddy River Falls are south of Tumbarumba, and, although we had been told by the locals they were 'not to be missed', they were not nearly as spectacular as our Carrington, Fitzroy and Belmore Falls.

Our last day included some free time in Tumut, where some of us discovered the joys of Mitre 10's garden centre. Julianna made the largest purchase - two large concrete pots, which she said were 'a bargain.'

We travelled 20 kilometres south to **Adelong** and its historic and State heritage listed gold mining and processing ruins on the creek nearby. Adelong ranks as one of the major gold-producing districts in NSW, with reef gold being mined above the creeks and alluvial gold taken from the creek bed over a period of nearly 100 years from 1852. A viewing platform has been built above the gully with display boards explaining how the reef gold was mined and milled on the site. The remains of two ore crushing mills, a gold battery, a brick chimney, stone walls, water wheels and races, and the gold valuer's hut can be seen in the valley.

Some of us followed the creek past other relics of the early alluvial gold mining, back into the little township, that was home to the gold miners. There are many historic buildings (and gardens) and the town itself is State Heritage listed. Some visited the Museum while others enjoyed a coffee or ice-cream, before meeting up for lunch at the Royal Hotel, a classic Australian country pub built during the height of the Adelong gold rush, around 1868.

After lunch our driver, Ron took us out to the Hume Highway, and back to Moss Vale and Bowral. He told us about 'Camellia Ark' and the camellias he was propagating for the Collection. The aim of Camellia Ark is to ensure conservation of Australia's rare camellias. This tied in with an earlier talk I gave about the conservation work carried out by our Branch to protect the significant structures and plant material remaining on the site of the Berrima Bridge Nurseries. This included propagating new plants from a rare collection of camellias dating from the second half of the 1800s and distributing them for inclusion in camellia collections and to Camden Park and Elizabeth Farm.

By the way, how did you get the pots home from the coach, Julianna?

Laurel Cheetham

