

Inflorescence

May 2017



Sunnymeade Garden created by Craig Irving, in the Strathbogies at Kithbrook, Victoria. One of the first gardens we visited on the recent Garden Tour of Victoria (story and photos on page 3)

Winter Seminar 8 July

The Winter Seminar will be held at the Bradman Oval, Bowral, starting at 2pm:

- ❖ Stuart Read: 'Brown, green, other colours & players—a tercentenary odyssey'
- ❖ Richard Heathcote: 'Pets and plants fit for French Empress's garden'

Both speakers are well known to AGHS members: **Stuart Read**, a regular speaker and visitor to our branch, is a New Zealand-born landscape architect and horticulturist who specialises in cultural heritage, focusing on landscape design, parks, gardens and plants.



Stuart Read, ready for the outdoors

His professional life is as Assessment Officer, Heritage Division, NSW Office of Environment & Heritage. He has been on the Australian Garden History Society's ACT, Monaro and Riverina Branch committee from 1993-7; he's been a member of the AGHS National Management Committee on and off

from 2001 (and is currently on it again); he has been very involved with the Sydney & Northern NSW Branch committee from 2006, being branch chair from 2009.

Richard Heathcote is currently the Director of Benefaction at Carrick Hill—historic house and garden in Adelaide, and previously managed, for a decade, Rippon Lea Estate, the National Trust's flagship property in Melbourne.



Richard Heathcote

He is the Chair of the AGHS National Management Committee. Over the last couple of years we have seen episodes of the program he presented for ABC TV's *The New Eden*—a six part series tracing the evolution of the Australian garden.

Stuart Read: *Brown, green, other colours & players—a tercentenary odyssey*

Last year was the 300th anniversary of the birth of one of the UK's most celebrated landscape gardeners, Lancelot 'Capability' Brown. His nickname came from his habit of optimistically advising his prospective employers that the scene from their country estates held 'great capabilities' for improvement. Stuart was fortunate to join in the celebrations and visit some of the most famous of his gardens.

Over the years Brown changed the face of eighteenth century England, designing country estates and mansions; he moved hills and created amazing water features with flowing lakes and serpentine rivers. William Cowper wrote:

*Lo! He comes, The omnipotent magician, Brown
appears . . .
He speaks. The lake in front becomes a lawn,
Woods vanish, hills subside, and valleys rise,
And streams, as if created for his use,
Pursue the track of his directing wand. ¹*

¹ W.M.Cowper satirising Brown 'The Task', Bk III, 1785

'Capability' Brown wasn't popular with all his clients. On hearing of Brown's death, King George III is reputed to have said to his gardener (Michael Milliken): 'Brown is dead! Now you and I can do **HERE** what we please.'²

He designed or worked on over 170 grand gardens, including Stowe, Charlecote, Burghley, Belvoir Castle, Blenheim Palace, Bowood, Petworth, Chatsworth, Croome Court (where he also designed the house), Warwick Castle, Milton Abbey, Harewood House.



Portrait of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown c. 1770–1775
(Artist Richard Cosway (1742–1821)
Private Collection/Bridgeman Images)

He is described as being 'tall and long-boned in the Northumbrian manner, with amused blue eyes and thick, wavy brown hair'.

Richard Heathcote: *Pets and plants fit for a French Empress's garden*

When it comes to designer pets we have all had to come to terms with vacuous celebrities and their miniscule dogs poking out of their expensive handbags. Hollywood receives suitable derision for such fashion trends in the 21st century but in imperial France two centuries ago, pets as status symbols took a different form and required much more time and effort to acquire than a visit to a shop.

Empress Josephine purchased her country house Malmaison in 1799 despite her Emperor husband's misgivings about its lack of scale and grandeur. She moved in that year in the spring and began at once to plan its garden and improve the park's woodlands and water pieces. Originally 60 hectares it grew to become an estate of 726 hectares bordering the river Seine.

From 1802 there could be seen in the park three kangaroos, two emus and five black swans as well as trees such as melaleuca, acacia and casuarina. How had the Empress come by these exotic creatures and were they just for decorative effect and to impress her guests? She held a keen interest in voyages of scientific exploration and the discoveries of intrepid naval personnel who undertook them. Napoleon, her husband, was attentive to scientists and had high hopes for the expedition setting off in 1800 and led by Captain Nicolas Baudin to New Holland as Australia was then called.



Francoise Gerard's painting of Empress Josephine in her Coronation Robes, detail, c. 1807-1808, oil on canvas, Musee National du Chateau de Fontainebleau, France

Josephine sought plants from these expeditions, whose teams included botanists and gardeners, and through the assistance of the eminent botanist Pierre Ventenat she propagated and introduced a wide range of unusual and exotic plants for her garden. She wrote to Joseph Banks and other British botanists requesting seeds from Botany Bay and other regions of the world that were streaming into London from all over the globe. They arrived at Malmaison where they were cultivated in the great hothouse, by her gardeners and botanists.

During the sixteen years of the Napoleonic era more images were published in France of Australian flora than in Britain in the ninety years following Cook's discovery of the east coast of Australia. Since there is no longer any evidence of the plant collections at Malmaison the greatest record of all this activity can be found today in the work of the artist Pierre Joseph Redoute. Josephine commissioned the book *Jardin de la Malmaison*, which was illustrated for her by Redoute and published in Paris. It contained many colour plates of Australian plants. The greatest record of our flora was also published in Paris and written by Jacques Julien Houtou de La Billardière with 265 black and white engraved illustrations by Redoute. The book weighed seven kilograms.

² Quoted in Jane Brown, *The Omnipotent Magician—Lancelot 'Capability' Brown: 1716–1783* (Chatto & Windus, London, 2012)

So many of our place names in and around Australia reflect the role that French cartographers played in mapping and naming our coastline. There are many tragic stories behind them and they often suggest how close we came to becoming part of the French empire rather than the British. Not least is the end met in 1787 by Jean François de Galaup, Comte de La Perouse, who had been ordered by Louis XVI to hurry to Botany Bay to see what the British were up to in sending the First Fleet to establish a permanent settlement.

He arrived on 28 January 1788 and after making some repairs departed six weeks later on 10 March with his two ships the *Boussole* and the *Astrolabe* and was never seen again. A box containing his journals and dispatches, which he had trusted to a convict ship at Botany Bay, had arrived in Paris a few weeks before the storming of the Bastille on 14 July 1789. It was Admiral Antoine Raymond Joseph Bruni D'Entrecasteaux who eventually led the expedition in 1791 to search for the lost La Perouse. But no evidence of his demise was ever found. If you have flown in or out of Sydney airport you will have passed over the suburb named to commemorate La Perouse and his landing.

The search by Cook for La Perouse and his two ships the *Esperance* and *Recherche* was extended to New Caledonia, the Admiralty Islands, the Solomons, Bougainville, between New Britain and New Ireland and around New Guinea to the Moluccas. From there they sailed down the west coast of the Australian mainland; the southwestern corner of the continent is speckled French names—Point d'Entrecasteaux, Cape Riche (after one of the naturalists on board, who managed to get lost for two days), Esperance Bay (today the town of Esperance) and Archipelago of the Recherche. They crossed the Great Australian Bight before limping back to Recherche Bay in southeast Tasmania to effect repairs on the *Esperance* and to replenish their water and other supplies.

It was at Recherche Bay that French expeditioners made several gardens in May 1792. In 2003 the remains of one established by Felix La Hale was identified and gained public attention as the site was threatened by logging. It was not uncommon for ships to attempt to cultivate some plants that could provide fresh supplies for them on their anticipated return. Paul Healy wrote (*The Sunday Tasmanian*, 2 March 2003, p.24) that in this case the altruistic view was that some of the plants might naturalise and provide supplies not only for themselves, but for later visiting ships.

Healy points out that the size of the four plots (about the size of an average kitchen garden in rural France) and the types of plants (chicory, cabbages, sorrel, radishes, cress and potatoes) put it beyond doubt that this was a Potager plot, or food garden. However, as he recounts, the gardeners were disappointed with the results of their efforts on their return 9 months after planting, seemingly a combination of some possibly spoiled seed, the late planting, an

unsuitable rather dry clayey site, and undoubtedly the depredations of the local possums and wallabies.

So the imperial pets that were to later amuse the Empress and her guests at Malmaison had cousins in Tasmania who were enjoying the first French gardens in Australia in a different way.

Richard Heathcote

Garden Tour of Victoria



First stop Beechworth: the happy travellers at Wallasey-Beaumaris, Weir Lane, the garden of Jamie Kronborg (who is editor of the Ovens and Murray Advertiser, in which this photo appeared the next day)

For the first two nights, we stayed at the George Kerferd Hotel, Beechworth, set in a garden of 27 acres, planted with an amazing array of trees, many of which were donated by the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne (approx. 200 trees are classified by the NT of Victoria). Formerly an institution for the mentally ill, it was opened in 1867 as the Beechworth Lunatic Asylum, now known as Mayday Hills. We all enjoyed the guided tour with the horticulturists.

En route to Melbourne, we stopped off to visit *Sunnymeade* (see also photo on page 1) and The Falls near Euroa.



*The shady walk with *Cyclamen hederifolium* at Sunnymeade*



The Falls, a nine-acre garden in the Strathbogie Ranges

From Melbourne we visited Bickleigh Vale where three of the owners opened their gardens for us and provided a delicious morning tea.

Edna Walling left *Bickleigh Vale* in 1967, having originally purchased the first 1.2ha of land in 1920, but her legacy remains with the English trees—oak, beech and birches—and cottage plants such as hellebore, azalea, Daphne, berberis and viburnum. Gateways link the gardens—but it was overcrowded and too shady for some of us.

The next stop was the Melba estate, which was only opened to the public in 2014. We have driven past those huge cypress hedges so many times and were intrigued to look inside the gates for the first time. It was in 1909, after nearly 20 years of international success, that Australia's first lady of opera, Dame Nellie Melba returned to Australia and bought the property in Coldstream, Victoria. She built a house, calling it *Coombe Cottage*, and the garden soon followed. The grand cypress hedge was planted, enclosing the property, and creating a sense of mystery. It is all revealed now but so changed from when she was alive. The huge extensions to the house will make it a wonderful venue for weddings but it has somehow lost the magic of her special place. It's now a commercial venture. The best part is the view towards the Yarra Ranges over the hedges and beyond.



Melba's Coombe Cottage with the view to the Yarra Ranges

The following day we visited another Dame's garden—Elisabeth Murdoch's *Cruden Farm*.

Cruden Farm was given to the late Dame Elisabeth Murdoch in 1928 as a wedding present from her husband Sir Keith Murdoch. It's situated at Langwarrin, about 50 kilometres SE of Melbourne, and you can tell it was beloved by her. Merryleigh remembered an occasion some years ago when she and John attended an AGHS celebration at *Cruden Farm*—we looked for a plaque against any of the trees but couldn't find one.



The lemon scented gums line the drive at Cruden Farm

After *Cruden Farm* we visited *Beleura House* and garden.



Beleura House erected in 1863

Much of the original style of the garden at *Beleura* was lost when the owner in the 1950s fell in love with the Italianate style of gardens, but the gardeners are busy ensuring that the various 'rooms' are being enhanced and renovated. The interior of the house was fascinating and we were guided round the house where supposedly Dame Nellie Melba had loved to stay and take saltwater baths.

Rippon Lea is a National Trust property—an amazing late 19th urban estate with 14 acres of garden, which includes a large lake, extensive shrubberies and flower gardens, an orchard of historically significant fruit varieties, a fernery and rose gardens. The brick mansion was completed in 1868 for Frederick Sargood, who had made his fortune selling goods on the goldfields at Ballarat. Originally it was a self-sufficient farm, with much more land than the garden. Sargood was a remarkable man with ideas ahead of his time. He developed an underground

watering system; the house had internal toilets; and they had their own electricity supply.



Rippon Lea

There was an exhibition of 1920s costumes throughout the house, which meant that we didn't see the rooms as they were intended to be viewed.



Tim Rhodes (from AGHS Tasmania) was the only one to dress up in the 1920s costumes on display at Rippon Lea

The next day we drove south to *The Garden Vineyard* and of all the gardens we visited this is probably the number one choice for most people in the group. Not only did the owner take us round, but also the original owner (who was instrumental in the design and execution of the planting) came round with us. Despite the gentle rain, we all enjoyed this visit immensely. Monty Don was quite right in his assessment—'something genuinely new and creative. . . very beautiful.'



The Garden Vineyard

The same day we visited McLelland Gallery and Sculpture Park and Cranbourne Botanic Gardens. The latter were absolutely stunning.



The Australian Desert Garden at Cranbourne

From Cranbourne we started our journey back to the Southern Highlands. First night was at the Mercure Warragul—and from there the following day we visited *Broughton Hall* at Jindivick. The owners are landscape designers and own the Jindivick Country Gardener Rare Plant Nursery (where we also paid a call). The four-acre garden at *Broughton Hall*, developed over the last twenty years on a steep site, demonstrates the clever use of terracing. The backdrop is the Tarago Reservoir seen through the trees.



Broughton Hall

We bought so many plants from Jindivick Nursery, from Sunnymeade, from Yamina Rare Plant Nursery in the Dandenongs that the coach was bursting at the seams. A wonderful garden tour (with passengers from as far afield as Tasmania, South Australia, West Australia, the ACT and the mid-coast of NSW) and our excellent tour guide, Ray Bradley, who deserves all the accolades.

Southern Highlands Winery development

Recently the Committee made a submission to Wingecarribee Shire Council about a development for tourist and visitor accommodation, with a function centre, cafe, bar and helipad, proposed for the Southern Highlands Winery site between Moss Vale and Sutton Forest. The development has an estimated value of \$23 million and will be determined by the Southern Councils Joint Regional Planning Panel.

The proposed use is in addition to the current uses, with new buildings being located at the western end of the site, the majority closer to both Oldbury Road and the Illawarra Highway than the existing winery complex, and they would be clearly visible to anyone driving along these rural roads.

The Committee's concerns are not about the use of the site for tourist and related development, as the site was rezoned a few years ago to specifically allow this form of development. The submission is about the significance of this area because of its heritage and scenic landscape values and the fact that the proposed development is designed to be visually intrusive. What is proposed is a Tuscan village, with two-storey building clusters, red roofs and a three-storey tower—clearly visible from the roads which it fronts—the Illawarra Highway and Oldbury Road.

The site is within the Exeter-Sutton Forest Heritage Landscape Conservation Area recognised as a Significant Landscape at Risk by the AGHS and is a classified Heritage Landscape by the National Trust Australia (NSW). This is an area where the rural landscape has changed little for almost 100 years (apart from the vineyard). It is characterised by open paddocks with plantings along fence lines, on ridges and around a number of historic buildings. Buildings are generally not visible from either Illawarra Highway nor Oldbury Road and those that are visible are sympathetic to the pastoral landscape in both style and colour. There are many historic properties that are recognised on State and local heritage schedules, for example, *Oldbury*, *Whitley*, *Summerlees*, *Peppers*, *Cardrona Newbury*.

The submission requests that the development proposal in its present form be refused. The objectives for the Tourist Zone include a requirement for any development to be:

- sited and designed to respect the rural environment within which the development stands,

- constructed from materials which respect the rural landscape, and
- complement the style of any existing development in the Tourist Zone.

The submission states that the scale of development, and the height, form and proposed colour palette would make the development unsympathetic to the landscape and be intrusive in it and the vistas from Oldbury Road and Illawarra Highway.

The Council received numerous submissions and after considering these and the issues they raised, particularly in relation to the form, scale and design of the development decided that it could not support the proposal. The applicant has been advised of this and has now withdrawn the application.

Laurel Cheetham



Committee members wanted!

Narelle Bowern has unfortunately stepped down from the branch committee but we are delighted to announce that Lyn Barrett has agreed to step into the breach and will serve on both the main committee and the Conference 2018 committee. At the AGM in August we will be losing two other members and if you would be willing to serve on either of these committees, we would be happy to hear from you. If you are interested, please contact Jenny Carroll later in June when she returns from her holiday.



Future Events for your Diary 2017

Sunday 20 August

AGM and two presentations:

- ❖ Dr Greg Johnson: *Write to Garden in Australia: 1888 to 1938* (The lecture continues on from the AGHS 2015 Lecture *Quill and Spade – Pioneer garden writing in Australia*.)
- ❖ Charlotte Webb: *Parsnips to Picturesque – Evolution of gardens in the Southern Highlands*

Sunday 8 October

Light lunch at *The Loch*, Berrima, followed by a visit to the beautiful garden *Upper Woodlands*, High Range, where the owner Charles Moore will talk to us about his ideas, designs and future plans.

Saturday 11 November

Instead of the Kangaloon Day, we are having a bus trip round some special Bundanoon Gardens. Includes lunch in one of the gardens and afternoon tea in another.

Friday 1 December

Christmas Party

Friends of the NLA and AGHS are promoting a joint lecture:

Sue Ebury, the patron of AGHS is giving the lecture on
*Visionary or Vandal? Lancelot 'Capability' Brown
and the English Landscape*

Thursday, 6 July 2017 at 6:00pm at the Theatre,
National Library of Australia

Sue Ebury is a founding committee member of the Australian Garden History Society, the honorary editor of the proceedings which established the society and one of the honorary editors of the journal. She is also a Patron of the National Library of Australia and was a member of the Library Foundation Board for seven years.

FORTHCOMING EVENT:

*Artist Robyn Mayo will be opening an exhibition of
her work— a collection of prints & drawings:*

Vast

*at the Goulburn Regional Gallery—Civic Centre
corner of Bourke and Church Street, Goulburn.
Friday 8 September to Saturday 7 October 2017.*

*Official opening by Mr Julian Beaumont OAM will be
held on Saturday 9 September at 2pm.*

*Robyn and her husband, John Hawkins, were former
members of the Southern Highlands branch of AGHS,
before they moved to Tasmania.*

**AGHS Southern Highlands Branch
Committee**

PO Box 2327, Bowral 2576 (aghs.sh.info@gmail.com)

Jennifer Carroll	Chair (0419 275 402)
Lyn Barrett	Events
Pamela Bennett	Events
John Biffin	Treasurer
Ray Bradley	Tours
Jane Clifford	Acting Secretary/ Events
Jo de Beaujeu	Events (4862 3532)
Meg Probyn	Vice-Chair, Editor, NSW NMC rep. (4871 3134)



Through the linking gateways at Bickleigh Vale



The Fernery, Rippon Lea

Booking Form

Winter Seminar Saturday 8 July 2017



AUSTRALIAN
GARDEN
HISTORY
SOCIETY

Southern Highlands
Branch

Your Name: _____

Names of Guests: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

<i>Event</i>	<i>Cost per person</i>	<i>Numbers Attending</i>	<i>Amount Incl \$</i>
Saturday 8 July 2017	Members of AGHS \$25	_____	_____
Winter seminar	Non-members \$30	_____	_____
Bookings Close: Thursday 6 July			
		<i>TOTAL</i>	_____

Payment Options:

By cheques: payable to Australian Garden History Society, NSW Branch.

- Please return this form and cheque to: Bookings, AGHS, PO Box 2327, Bowral 2576

By EFT: Account name: AGHS BSB: 012 547 Account No: 237 514 077

- Include the following reference information:
The date of the event (8July) and your surname.
- Email the above booking details to aghs.sh.info@gmail.com

By direct debit: If paying directly at an ANZ branch, record your phone number as the reference.

- Email the above booking details to aghs.sh.info@gmail.com

ENQUIRIES: Jo de Beaujeu (T) 4862 3532, (E) aghs.sh.info@gmail.com

PLEASE NOTE: No tickets will be issued. You will be notified if the event is sold out. No refunds can be given for cancellations made after the bookings closed date.