

# Inflorescence

September 2016

## Next Tour May 2017

### Victorian Gardens and Historic Homes

The nine-day tour of Victorian Gardens and Historic Homes will commence on Monday 1 May and return on Tuesday 9 May. The tour will visit North-East Victoria centred at Beechworth before travelling to Melbourne to visit several venues, including Rippon Lea, Bickleigh Vale, the Melba Estate, Cruden Farm, the McLelland Gallery and the Australian Botanic Gardens at Cranbourne. On the way home to the Southern Highlands, the tour will visit the Gippsland area (Warragul area) to see Broughton Hall and the Jindivick Country Gardener, a Rare Plant Nursery.

The full itinerary and booking form (page 6) are enclosed with this edition of *Inflorescence*. The tour will be limited to 40 passengers.

If you would like any further details, please contact Ray Bradley (T) 4861 4090 or (E) [aghs.sh.info@gmail.com](mailto:aghs.sh.info@gmail.com)

It should be a most memorable trip and as it was launched at the AGM a number of members have already booked their seats.

## Christmas Party: Oldbury Farm

Saturday 3 December 2016

4.30pm to 7.00pm



Oldbury Farm

David and Jane Newby will be the hosts of the Christmas party in the garden of their property, Oldbury Farm—one of the most important historic houses in the district. There will be no entry to the house. We have a cap on the numbers, so members may only bring one guest each. It would be advisable to book as soon as possible. The booking form is on page 5 of this newsletter. Please ensure that you are wearing appropriate footwear as Ian Carroll, the Head Gardener, has promised to lead a tour of the garden, including the newly established arboretum.

### James Atkinson (1795-1834):

It was in July 1822 that James Atkinson resigned from his position as principal clerk in the Colonial Secretary's

Office of Governor Macquarie's administration and came to live permanently at Sutton Forest. He had previously obtained two grants of land—approximately 1500 acres (607 ha) in total—and chose the newly settled Bong Bong district. Born on his father's farm 'Oldbury' in West Kent near Mereworth, he called the two grants of land 'Oldbury' and 'Mereworth'. Unlike many hapless pioneers, he was no stranger to agriculture, having been brought up on his father's well-run farm in Kent, where innovative farming techniques were ensuring improved results.

Prior to emigrating to Sydney in 1819, James Atkinson had worked for nine years as a clerk in the Deptford naval dockyard. He sailed on the ship *Saracen* in December 1819 with a supply of tools and one thousand pounds in money (sufficient capital to allow him to apply for a grant of land in New South Wales). His family background had given him an interest and passion for agriculture and he was able to introduce new agricultural methods into the Southern Highlands. His work did not go unrewarded, with Macquarie giving him a further 500-acre grant and grazing rights to another 4,000 acres of crown land. Atkinson very quickly became not only recognised as a successful farmer, but also accepted and respected by the wealthy free settlers.

His brother John, who had joined him in 1823, farmed 'Mereworth' and took over the running of both properties when James had to return to England on family business in 1825.

While back in England he wrote *An Account of the State of Agriculture & Grazing in New South Wales ...* (London, 1826). With Charles Macarthur he visited Saxony in 1826 to buy sheep, and published 'Remarks on the Saxon Sheep Farming ...' in the *Australian Quarterly Journal* in 1828. Later that year he returned to Sydney in the *Cumberland* (1826) and a shipboard romance resulted in his engagement to Charlotte Waring, who was coming to the colony as governess to the Hannibal Macarthurs. James and Charlotte were married at St Paul's, Cobbity, on 29 September 1827.

His writing brought criticism from some quarters but it was considered by many as important work. In 1829 he published in Sydney *On the Expediency and Necessity of Encouraging Distilling and Brewing from Grain in New South Wales*.

As the ADB says, "He died at Oldbury on 30 April 1834 after a painful and lingering illness: 'a gentleman of considerable literary attainments, and, as a practical agriculturalist ... second to none in the Colony', according to the *Sydney Gazette* on 3 May. 'His frugality and economy on his farm operated as a most useful example to the generally extravagant and even profligate habits of all ranks in this Colony', commented the *Sydney Monitor* on the same day." (See T. M. Perry's entry in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 1 (MUP), 1966)

### Charlotte Atkinson (1796-1867):

Charlotte Atkinson was an accomplished artist and had at one time studied under John Glover (1767-1849). The Atkinsons had four children born at 'Oldbury': Charlotte born in 1828; (Jane) Emily in 1830; James in 1832; and Caroline Louisa (the writer, botanist and artist Louisa Atkinson) in 1834. After James's death, Charlotte was left with four children—the youngest was only eight weeks old when her father died—and a large property to manage with convict labour. And to top it all, they were living in an area where bushrangers ranged. It was not surprising that she turned for help to George Bruce Barton, the superintendent at 'Oldbury'. The mistake she made was to marry him (on 3 March 1836 at All Saints' Chapel, Sutton Forest). But that's another story ...

### The house and gardens:

Built in 1828, the two-storey house resembles an English eighteenth-century farmhouse. It is constructed of stone, with the exterior facade dressed in Berrima sandstone. The original porch was probably quite a simple affair but was later redesigned and built as a Doric portico with timber supporting columns and pilasters flanking the doorway. The house is the centrepiece of the extensive garden with sweeping lawns and many old trees, encircled by Hawthorn hedges.

### Hedgelaying:

The layered Hawthorn hedges at Oldbury Farm are a particular delight and a special feature—they are stock-proof, practical and beautiful. Hedgelaying has been practiced in England and parts of Europe for over two thousand years (and in Australia for the last two hundred). It is the traditional and best way to maintain hedgerows not only to keep them stock-proof but, as environmentalists are becoming increasingly aware, as a habitat and sanctuary for small birds.

Fundamentally, it is the process of weaving partly cut branches through the upright stems of a row of shrubs. In Australia the plants usually selected are Hawthorns, originally planted by early settlers, but native plants may also be used.

Many areas have developed their own distinctive styles of hedge laying, but all are based on the same basic theory: the aim is to reduce the thickness of the upright stems of the hedgerow trees by cutting away the wood on one side of the stem and in line with the course of the hedge. This being done, each remaining stem is laid down towards the horizontal, along the length of the hedge—and this stem is known as a 'pleacher' or in Devon, a 'steeper'.



There has to be a section of bark and some sapwood left contacting a pleacher to its roots in order to be kept alive and that is the hedger's art—knowing how much to cut through while keeping the stem alive and at the

same time making sure that there is sufficient flexibility to bend the trunk without breaking it. The pleachers will die eventually but usually by then a new stem should have grown from ground level, and this replaces the laid one (pleach). This process takes from eight to fifteen years, after which, if the hedge has not been trimmed, the hedgelaying process can be repeated.

## Just in case you missed the trip on Saturday 17 September . . .

### Elaine Musgrave's talk

*Those of you who didn't go on the coach trip to Sydney missed a treat! Elaine Musgrave gave a talk on the bus about the Florilegium project and also answered many queries at the exhibition. She has kindly agreed to have an extract of her talk printed here:*

I need to take you back in time to around 1988 when Dr Shirley Sherwood brought her collection of botanical paintings from the UK to Sydney's S. H. Ervin Gallery (NOTE: The S.H. Ervin Gallery is one of Sydney's leading public art institutions housed in the historic National Trust Centre on Observatory Hill, The Rocks.) At the same time, The Historic Houses Trust held an exhibition **AN EXQUISITE EYE: THE AUSTRALIAN FLORA AND FAUNA DRAWINGS 1801-1820 OF FERDINAND BAUER**. These were works from his voyage with Matthew Flinders on the *Investigator*. That exhibition was displayed in the very same space in which our Florilegium exhibition is now displayed in the Museum of Sydney.

These two exhibitions seemed to spark renewed interest in Botanical Art and before long classes and workshops began to spring up.



*Elaine in front of her painting of Dendrobium speciosum*

Dr Shirley Sherwood instigated some of these workshops which were held in the Observatory Hotel at the Rocks and which I attended to my absolute delight. At that time, in my private little world I had been gradually moving from Commercial Art in the greeting card industry to botanical art largely as a result of being married to Les and becoming more interested in the finer detail of the plants I was painting.

In the greeting card industry, close enough was good enough but not in botanical art.

I had also become aware of botanical art exhibitions showcasing the work of the artists employed at the Botanic Gardens. I contacted the curator and after showing her my work, was lucky enough to be allowed to exhibit as an 'outsider', along with Beverly Allen. The exhibition grew over the years as more artists applied to exhibit and soon 'Botanica' became a well-known annual exhibition held at the Botanic Garden Sydney.

It is from those early days that The Florilegium Society and the current exhibition came about.

A number of gardens worldwide have collections of paintings of their significant plants.

In 2005, Beverly Allen and Margo Child, who had been the long time curator of Botanica, felt that there should be such a collection at the Sydney gardens. I was invited to join a committee along with other botanical artists and botanists from the gardens. Also joining us on that committee was Colleen Morris, garden historian and well-known member of the Australian Garden History Society.

And the Florilegium Society at the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney was formed.



*Members at the Museum of Sydney*

A list of plants which have an important historical significance and which celebrate the amazing diversity of plants in the Sydney, Mount Tomah and Mount Annan gardens was compiled and artists were invited to join the society and to submit paintings of these plants for inclusion in the collection.

Artists both from Australia and from countries including New Zealand, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada, the Netherlands, France, Japan, Korea and South Africa were invited to submit paintings. The collection began to grow and it was hoped that the paintings would be exhibited during 2016 and that a book showcasing the collection be published to commemorate the bicentenary of the Royal Botanic Garden, Sydney.

The paintings were all put through pretty rigorous scrutiny both by the botanists and artists on the selection committee as it was very important that this permanent collection be botanically accurate and of the highest artistic quality.

The exhibition which you will see today includes 87 paintings by 64 Australian and international artists. All the paintings have been generously gifted to the State by the artists with the exception of a few that have been

kindly donated by generous benefactors. The paintings are of both our own indigenous plants and of exotics from countries such as Asia, New Caledonia, The South Americas, Europe and South Africa, many having been introduced to the gardens in Sydney in the very early days to see just what would grow in this new land.

Colleen Morris has been the guest curator for this exhibition at the Museum and as you will see has done a superb job. It is also interesting to note that the labels used in the exhibition have been produced from the timber of the native *Araucaria cunninghamii* or Hoop Pine.

There is a wonderful video playing of Angela Lober at work, which is well worth watching and gives a very good overview of how the artists go about their work and the many hours involved in creating a botanical painting. The book of the Florilegium collection is also available for sale at the museum.

At the conclusion of this exhibition the paintings will be returned to the Sydney Botanic Gardens to be permanently stored in archival boxes in the rare book collection. Hopefully it may be shown in part from time to time but rarely as a whole collection although the exhibition will travel to London in 2018 to be exhibited in the Shirley Sherwood Gallery at Kew Gardens. (Note: The Florilegium exhibition closes on 30 October 2016.)

*Elaine Musgrave*

## Planting Dreams Exhibitions: State Library NSW

Members enjoyed the opportunity to visit the two exhibitions at the State Library NSW. **Planting Dreams: Shaping Australian Gardens**, curated by Richard Aitken, took many of us by surprise—it was much larger and more interesting than anticipated. For 190 years the Library and its predecessor, the Australian Subscription Library, have collected and stored huge numbers of documents and photographs linked not only to gardens but also to botany, horticulture and landscape design.

As Richard writes in his introduction to the catalogue: "Central to the exhibition is the idea that gardening is both an intensely personal quest and a communal and cultural pursuit; it is these two aspects that gives the exhibition its unifying theme."



*The entry to Planting Dreams exhibition at State Library NSW*

The other exhibition, **Planting Dreams: Grand Garden Designs**, was co-ordinated by architect and writer Howard Tanner, who was commissioned by the Library in 2015 to interview leading landscape designers working in New South Wales and to survey larger

innovative gardens and public parklands created in the state since 1980. We found this exhibition equally fascinating and well worth the visit. It highlights the key directions and innovations in the design of private and public gardens. (Note: Both these exhibitions close 15 January 2017.)

Members also had an opportunity to visit the Calyx, the newest attraction at the Royal Botanic Gardens (opened in June 2016) built around the site of the old Arc Glasshouse, in the south-western corner of the garden. Others visited the Kaldor Public Art Project, opened the previous day, and heard a talk by the artist, Jonathan Jones—*barrangal dyara (skin and bones)*.

Altogether the trip was a most successful day out, thoroughly enjoyed by all the participants.



*The Calyx*

## Sunday 21 August 2016 AGM and Sorensen Seminar



*The AGHS Southern Highlands Branch committee*

Back row: Pamela Bennett, Ray Bradley, Jane Clifford, John Biffin, Jo de Beaujeu and Narelle Bowern  
Front row: Meg Probyn and Jennifer Carroll (Chair)

At the AGM the 2016-2017 committee was elected and we were delighted to welcome new faces as well as the return of a few stalwarts. We were sorry to see Don Rees and Julianna Greenane depart and are grateful for their hard work. (More about the new members in the next *Inflorescence*.)

The seminar speakers were well received. Due to illness in the family, Jim Hoskins was unable to appear but Paul Kirkpatrick stepped into the breach and gave a wonderful presentation on "The Art, Skill and Science of Pruning". He used many examples from his work at the Sorensen gardens. Stuart Read's fascinating talk on "Paul Sorensen in the Southern Highlands and the Illawarra" was full of humour, wit and information.

We are very grateful to both speakers for the generosity of their support to the branch.

## Open Garden: Retford Park Friday to Sunday 21, 22, 23 October

10am to 4pm

Entry \$10 (under 18 free)

Supporting the Bowral District Arts Society.



1325 OLD SOUTH ROAD BOWRAL

For further information call 0418 218 558

## Crookwell Open Garden Weekend

Nine gardens open (\$20 for all gardens or \$5 per garden) 10am – 4pm.

Crookwell, 45km north west of Goulburn NSW, will have nine town and country gardens open, 10am-4pm, on Saturday & Sunday 5, 6 November 2016.

A Garden Lovers Market will be held on Saturday, 8.30am-2pm, will offer a tempting, wide array of garden-related products for sale. Angus Stewart will be appearing. For more information: look at the website: [crookwellgardenfestival.com](http://crookwellgardenfestival.com)



[AGHS Southern Highlands  
Branch Committee](#)

**PO Box 2327, Bowral 2576**  
**[aghs.sh.info@gmail.com](mailto:aghs.sh.info@gmail.com)**

Jennifer Carroll	Chair	(0419 275 402)
Pamela Bennett	Events	
John Biffin	Treasurer	
Narelle Bowern	Secretary	(4868 3972)
Ray Bradley	Tours	
Jane Clifford	Events	
Jo de Beaujeu	Events	(4862 3532)
Meg Probyn	Vice-Chair, Editor, NSW NMC rep.	(4871 3134)

**Saturday 3 December 2016  
Christmas Party**

**Time: 4.30pm – 7.00pm**

**Oldbury Farm**

**Cost: \$35.00 per member (\$40 non-member) —includes wine and food**

Your name/s: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of places you require: \_\_\_\_\_

Names of members / guests:

Total payment: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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**Christmas Party  
Payment options**

1. Cheques payable to **Australian Garden History Society, NSW Branch.**

Please return this form and cheque to:

Bookings AGHS, PO Box 2327,  
Bowral 2576

OR

- 2 Direct credit to ANZ Bank: Account name:  
**Australian Garden History Society  
(NSW Branch)**  
**BSB: 012 547 Account no: 237 514 077**

Please make sure you include the following:  
**3 December and your surname.**

OR

- 3 If you pay cash/ cheque directly into our bank account at an ANZ branch, **please request that your phone number be recorded as the reference. The bank can only record a numerical reference.**

**Email your phone number and names of your guests to aghs.sh.info@gmail.com**

**ENQUIRIES:** — Jo de Beaujeu 4862 3532  
Or email: aghs.sh.info@gmail.com

**BOOKINGS CLOSE:  
Friday: 25 November 2016**

**PLEASE NOTE: No tickets will be issued.  
You will be notified if sold out**



Southern Highlands Branch

*Victorian Gardens and Historic Homes*  
*Monday 1 - Tuesday 9 May 2017*  
**Passenger/s Booking Form**

to be completed and returned to Ray Bradley PO Box 2327, Bowral 2576 or (E) aghs.sh.info@gmail.com.

**Deposit \$200 per passenger at time of booking    Final payment – Monday 20 March 2017**

*Please print clearly.*

**Tour Passenger Details**

Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss/Other \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss/Other \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: **Please print clearly** \_\_\_\_\_

**Passenger Requirements**

Room Type: Double ☐ Single Supplement ☐ Ground Floor ☐  
 Twin Share ☐ Willing To Share With: \_\_\_\_\_

Dietary / Medical Requirements you believe we should be aware of. (e.g. - diabetic, vegetarian etc)

**EMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS:-**

1: Name: .....Phone: .....

2: Name: .....Phone: .....

☐ I acknowledge that I have read and agree to the tour conditions specified within the itinerary.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Enquiries/bookings to Ray Bradley (E) aghs.sh.info@gmail.com (T) 02 4861 4090 PO Box 2327, Bowral 2576

**Payment options (please indicate)**

- Cheque payable to **Australian Garden History Society, NSW Branch** returned with this form to:  
**The Victorian Tour**, AGHS, PO Box 2327, Bowral 2576  
 OR
- Direct credit to ANZ Bank - Account name: **Australian Garden History Society (NSW Branch)**  
**BSB: 012 547 Account no: 237 514 077** - please include the following reference **1 May and your surname.**  
**Email your name and phone number to aghs.sh.info@gmail.com** to advise the deposit has been made.