



Sydney & Northern NSW

Branch News – February 2017

We had our first event of the year and it was a sellout! Judy Fakes, acting Commissioner at the Land and Environment Court of NSW, shared with members and friends her insights gathered over years of arbitrating on issues dealing with trees. The talk was delivered with such clarity all who attended left stimulated and refreshed – we even thought that the interest the topic generated that we might run a workshop on a similar event and possibly with an emphasis on trees as ‘heritage’ – please let me know if this would be of interest. One great disappointment for me and many gardeners I’m sure, is that loss of sunlight on your arable patch is not grounds for taking the dispute to the court. Loss of views from and loss of sunlight to habitable living rooms appears to be the limit of influence of a court that has a mission to deliver just, quick and cheap resolutions. Judy suggest referring to the Land and Environment website for more information – in particular ‘trees and hedges’. The Act is called: *Trees (Disputes between Neighbours) Act 2006*.

Our next speaker is very popular and already tickets are selling well - so please book early to avoid disappointment – Stuart Read will be walking us through the reshaping of the English landscape by Lancelot ‘Capability’ and his influences. Brown Janine Wookey declares “Brown was the first celebrity garden designer. In the 18th century he was the man who, for the first time, made gardening fashionable in all the right circles – and he was the top people’s top man, rising from lowly beginnings to become royal gardener to the young King George III in charge of Hampton Court. Horace Walpole, the playwright son of the British Prime Minister Robert Walpole, said of him, “We have reached the peak of perfection. We have given the true model of gardening to the world.” That’s enough to turn anyone’s head.”

Although I didn’t hear this voice in opposition to the land grab the Art Gallery of NSW made on the gentle Domain, I was pleased to read an opinion piece earlier this month in the Sydney Morning Herald (3 February 2017), by Ken Boundy, chairman of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust. He wrote about “Green infrastructure is the network of green spaces that is planned, designed and managed to deliver a range of benefits including healthier living, cooling the urban environment, sequestering carbon and improving air and water quality. Research from all over the world is consistent in linking green infrastructure and community benefits – from mental distress mitigation to general wellbeing through the restorative powers of contact with nature.” It reminds me of *The Hidden Life of Trees*, networks that balance and civilise. I do hope the ‘Green Grid’ promoted by the Greater Sydney Commission incorporates the farming estates of the County of Cumberland and fences them off from the heaving leviathan of housing that sprawls across our flat arable lands because it’s easy.

The AGHS Oral History project has been given a significant boost recently and John Maurer is working closely with Roslyn Burge to bring several people up to speed on the best practice for recording the stories of significant garden luminaries – can you think of someone we should include in the list of people we might consider – do let me know.

The committee and I encourage you to get in touch: we are stronger and better with your feedback and ideas! Ways of involving potential new members, widening our reach and message are welcome. Recently I had some feedback and suggestions on my coining of the term ‘arborophobia’ – apparently I wasn’t the first!

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