



## Sydney & Northern NSW

### Branch News – May 2017

Our fourth event of the year was a walk – in May the weather may be contrary but we were so fortunate to see the inclement weather transform into a glorious sunny day. St Thomas' Anglican Church and Cemetery at Enfield is listed by the local council as a heritage item and the community hold it in high esteem. Thomas Hyndes donated two hectares of land to the Church of England for a new church.

There were some very interesting graves to visit including that of Thomas Hyndes. Constructed in 1847 and designed by John Frederick Hilly, it sits on the low side of Coronation Parade and is typical of an English village church. The interior has many fine Hilly features, such as the carved stone heads on either side of the front door, and at the bases of the trusses over the door into the vestry and there are some very fine stained glass windows. Sandra Crofts has done much research on the graveyard and very kindly lead us around the church and graveyard. She told us that the garden once had the character of an English garden. I saw a huge Pomegranate in fruit, two lovely and well-groomed Jelly Palms (*Butia capitata*) flanking the entry path and there was a senescing Chinese Weeping Cypress (*Chamaecyparis funebris*) on the side of the porch. If you missed the event you might like to pop in.

Thomas Hyndes' widow Charlotte had a plaque mounted in the porch with the inscription:

*'To the memory of Thomas Hyndes. This tablet erected by his widow. If you seek his memorial - Look around.'*

Other graves of particular interest to those who value garden history were: James and Amelia Tomkins, the parents of James Tomkins, who established Tomkins Nursery in Mitchell Road, Enfield and Arthur Yates, founder of *Yates*, the seed merchants, who arrived in Sydney from Manchester via New Zealand in 1887, by 1893 Arthur had launched his seed packets for home gardeners. He prided himself on always selling the best quality seeds and 'Yates Reliable Seeds' became the company's catchcry. In 1895 Arthur saw the need for a publication that answered gardeners' questions so he wrote the first Yates Garden Guide, a basic gardening book that is still published more than 137 years later – my very first gardening book was the Yates Gardening Guide and I still have it. It was a gift from Margaret Blackett who had the florist shop at Wollstonecraft station and identified me as a gardener. Do you remember your first gardening book?

The *Landscapes at Risk Register*, to which we are always adding, will now include Parramatta North for which the City of Parramatta is proposing a Control Plan and Development Application for the Parramatta North Urban Transformation Precinct. The Conservation Management Plan notes that '*the Parramatta North Historic Sites are places of exceptional heritage significance to the people of Parramatta, New South Wales and Australia*'. The Society will prepare an assessment of the Development Control Plan for this area that has recently been placed on exhibition and make a submission.

At the AGM this year several of the executive committee are not continuing and we would like to hear from members who have ideas and ways to contribute to the society's future direction. The AGM is in August and we can take nominations from the floor, so please consider what skills you might have that would benefit the society and come along, play a part.

If you have any suggestions you would like the committee to consider, please feel free to contact me – we do appreciate the feedback.

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