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QUEENSLAND BRANCH

COMMITTEE

The Committee meets in the State Library, Floor 2, Room 2D at 11 am on the second Friday of the month.

All members are welcome at Committee meetings.

COMMITTEE CONTACTS

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Members -

Ann Wegener

Wendy Lees

Dr Thom Blake

Margaret Kirkwood

Queensland Branch Newsletter

November 2015

2015 has been a full year for our Branch, so we're issuing an extra newsletter this month to ensure we've kept everyone informed. To wrap up the Branch's year there will be a final newsletter for the year early next month.

As the Branch is increasingly involved in activities contributing to the preservation of Queensland garden history, there will also be an extra newsletter in late January. After Christmas - New Year has finished a January newsletter will remind us what the Branch is planning for 2016 and what activities are in progress.

December's newsletter will include news of the AGHS National Conference in Adelaide last month, and an editorial relating to the Capricornia area of Queensland.

In this month's newsletter:

- Jeannie Sim tells us about the launch of the Friends of Brisbane Botanic Gardens and Sherwood Arboretum;
- Glenn Cooke has sent in a photo and comment from the Ireland tour; and
- Jim Butler writes about members' visit to his Clayfield garden.

Editor

Forthcoming Events

December

December, Sunday 6th, 5:00 p.m. - 7 p.m.

This year's end-of-year gathering will be at the home of Janice Hiller, Aberfoyle Street, Kenmore. A creek bank/garden tour will include viewing of a protected palm. Our festivities will follow, b.y.o. drinks, and finger food will be provided.

Events planned for next year

January 2016

We had hoped to have an address to the Branch in February by John Adam, New Zealand landscape historian, in conjunction with Matthew Bradbury, UNITEC Institute of Technology. The topic of the lecture was to be *Modern primitive – the history of two iconic tourist Gold Coast landscapes*.

Unfortunately time constraints won't permit. However, members who have an interest in this topic could still hear John and Matthew speak at the 13th Australasian Urban History/Planning History Conference at Surfers Paradise on 31st January. If you would like to attend, as a day registrant, the Conference's website is at:

<https://www.griffith.edu.au/conference/uhph2015/programme>

April 16th & 17th

Wendy Lees is organising a self-drive visit to Toowoomba and district, including the Pittsworth Open Gardens (14th to 17th April).

May 21st & 22th

Ann Wegener is organising a self-drive visit to three historic South Burnett homesteads and gardens. They include: Ringwood House (Nanango); Saturday evening dinner at Barambah Station; and Sunday morning at Taabinga Homestead.

June

Dr Thom Blake will lead a walk in Ashgrove and speak about the Glen Lyon Estate garden.

July

Janice Hiller is organising a visit to Maleny and Montville. The visit will include Western Avenue, Montville, *Fairview* in north Maleny, and discussion of their cultural landscape management with landscape architect Catherine Brouwer.

August

Queensland Branch Annual General Meeting and annual lecture on the topic of *War graves gardens in perpetuity*.

September

At present, thought is being given to an event/activity relating to modern design.

If you have a suggestion for September please let the committee know.

October 14th - 16th

Next year's AGHS Annual Conference will be in Canberra, ACT, on the theme *A scientist in the garden*. More information will be available in early 2016.

November/December

Next year's end-of-year festivities will be planned in the later part of the year.

Branch News

Friends of Brisbane Botanic Gardens and Sherwood Arboretum Ltd

The Friends of Brisbane Botanic Gardens and Sherwood Arboretum Ltd was launched last month at the new extension to Brisbane Botanic Gardens, Mt Coot-tha. Dr Jeannie Sim tells us that "the launch exceeded our dreams with over 100 people listening to welcoming speeches and overseeing the symbolic planting of a Brisbane Lily our floral emblem". Forty-five new members joined on the day and there were 68 members at the time of writing.



Communication has been an important initial focus; the website is operating and growing; email has been established; a Facebook page is operating and receiving frequent posts; and a post office box has been acquired.

Contact details are:

Website - www.fbbgsa.org.au

Email - info@fbbgsa.org.au

Postal - Friends of BGGSA, PO Box 39 Sherwood, Qld 4075.

Everyone who shares the Friends' concerns and desires to promote and protect the Brisbane Botanic Gardens (City and Mt. Coot-tha) and Sherwood Arboretum are welcome to join. A draft calendar of events for 2016, which will be in a Friends' November newsletter is currently being compiled.

Jeannie says "Half our members are ready to be part of a "Growing Friends" - a subgroup that propagates rare or endangered plant sourced from cuttings and seeds from our botanic collections. They're itching to get their green thumbs working! We have plans for a Plant Fair around mid-April to sell the plants and spread the love!"

Pending news of the 2015 Annual Conference

A little taster of next month's article about the Conference: the 27 Queensland members who attended made up almost 10% of delegates - a commendable turn-out for our Branch.

Margie Barram tells us that 14 Queensland members stayed on for a post-conference tour with Trish Dixon. The group explored contemporary gardens, houses, and landscapes on the Fleurieu Peninsula, McLaren Vale, and Kangaroo Island. We will have news at more length next month.

Ireland Tour

Glenn Cooke has sent us this photo, taken during the June tour of gardens in Northern Ireland, and his overview of the tour. [Ed.]



The photo was taken at Ballynascreen, Glebe, the (former rectory) home of Rosalind's mother Patience Holt, where the group were invited to afternoon tea. The people are:

L - R: Richard and Rosalind Mulholland, John Campbell (NSW, behind) Ann Wegener (QLD), Kerry Campbell (NSW), Cathy Masters (QLD), Sarah Lucas (NSW), Jim Butler (QLD), Maura O'Connor (ACT)

Seated: Patience Holt (Rosalind's mother), Glenn Cooke (QLD), and Clive Lucas (NSW).

The tour was guided by Richard and Rosalind Mulholland through the interest of Queensland Branch member, Ann Wegener. The gardens ranged from small cottage gardens such as that at Seaview, collectors gardens such as Ballyrobert Garden and Rowallane (now owned by the National Trust of Ireland), to vast formal gardens such as that at the 17th century Antrim Castle, Ulster, the Duke of Abercorn's estate at Baronscourt

and Mount Stewart (National Trust of Ireland). One of the most exciting gardens was the modern interpretation of the formal garden at Glenarm Castle.

The Queensland Branch members who attended the tours in 2014 and 2015 will tell you what a privilege it is to be shown the (impossibly!) green countryside of Northern Ireland by tour guides who are so imbued in the history and context of their homeland. Well known Conservation Architect, Clive Lucas, mentions a little more about the trip in the recent *Australian Garden Journal*.

Branch visits and tours in South East Queensland

Waitara - Clayfield

Among the many places of historical, horticultural interest and beauty visited by members this year was the home of Jim Butler and Kathy Marchant - Waitara - in Clayfield. In one of those serendipitous moments - returning from a walk with their grandchildren and finding AGHS members coincidentally outside their home - Jim and Kathy invited the group into their garden. Waitara is a large Federation style house built on land on the corner of Adelaide Street East and Liverpool Road, Clayfield.



Built in the first decade of the 1900s on more than an acre (approx. 2.5ha) of land, the early garden at Waitara developed a delightful tropical ambience. The photo below, taken in the 1940s, shows Waitara on the left and its then neighbour, Rangemoor, on the right.

Cocos, Phoenix, and Livistonia palms were popular in that era, whereas alternatives such as the Alexander palm are now regarded as less environmentally problematic.



Behind the tennis court was one of Brisbane's early domestic swimming pools, a popular neighbourhood focus at the time. As the next image shows, this corner looks very different today.



Imagery © 2015 Google. Map data © 2015 Google.

The large tile roof with the enormous Chinese Elm and Red Liquidamber is Waitara. Unfortunately, because of unmanageable structural weakness, these trees have had to be removed. The evident close development of the area is a far cry from the original one acre property. Rangemoor, itself a construction on Waitara's sub-divided original land, has since been replaced by the three grey-roofed residences above Waitara.

In 1955 Dr Arthur Meehan, then owner of Waitara and a veteran of the 1st World War, was murdered in his Wickham Terrace surgery. Sometime after his death the property was subdivided into many blocks and Rangemoor was built. In a two storey brick house up-hill of Waitara the roof and walls of the maid's quarters that serviced Waitara can still be seen. Rangemoor has since been demolished and replaced by three modern homes, a fate befalling a growing number of early homes and, in the process, losing the more desirable ambience that accompanied those earlier homes and gardens.

Jim and Kathy purchased Waitara in 2003 and, over time, have realised and addressed some of the consequences of the subdivision and loss of the early garden. As originally built, the home faced Adelaide Street, from which it was set back far enough to allow a sizable, original front garden. That front garden is now occupied by three modern residences, and consequently what was originally a side of the home is now the front facing Liverpool Street. As now often happens with early homes like Waitara, a complete re-think and reorientation of the home and garden became necessary.

Jim and Kathy engaged Jeremy Ferrier who constructed an obvious pathway to the home's current main entrance by use of a Federation style lych gate opening to a main entrance path. Progress along the path moves through four distinct and different garden rooms.



The garden rooms are defined by hedges of camellia, lillypilly, magnolia, gardenia, and murraya. The garden beds are defined by Japanese box, while cupressus provide vertical dimension. The neighbouring properties that now occupy what was the original front

garden are screened by a row of *Elaeocarpus Eumundi*, forming the boundary of another garden room.



The elegant fountain features a central, cascading body of water and eight single water jets. During the decade of drought that challenged every gardener's capacity to keep their gardens alive, 42,500 litres of water storage was installed. Subsequently, sufficient water has been harvested on site to supply most of the garden.

Like all gardens the present Waitara is a work in progress and, for Jim and Kathy, it gives much pleasure in experiencing its growth and maturation. Waitara's story is similar to that of so many Brisbane homes and gardens over the past 150 years - the story of large, spacious gardens progressively whittled down to small gardens. Never-the-less, the current part of Waitara's story is also typical of many of these older homes and their current gardens. Jim and Kathy are its current visionaries, investigating its history and contemporising the garden in the context of that history.

Though now so much smaller than the original garden, Waitara is an example of the horticultural beauty that can be created in the spirit of a garden's known history. It is also an example of the value of knowing and recording the history of a home and its original garden.

Garden history advocacy

The Queensland Branch continues its advocacy and preservation of garden history in different areas of Queensland. Members are currently working on recording the history of significant gardens in the Brisbane and Toowoomba areas. Heritage listing applications are being prepared for some parks/gardens.

Of course, there are significant gardens in many parts of Queensland, as Catherine Brouwer's 2013 survey of Queensland heritage gardens showed. Next month, in our final newsletter for 2015, we will take a look at the Wide Bay – Capricornia area, from Maryborough to Rockhampton approximately.

This area takes in a long section of Queensland's coastline and hinterland, and we will look at how the AGHS aims of preserving garden history relate to Wide Bay - Capricornia. We plan to do likewise for other areas of Queensland in next year's newsletters, and if any members would like to suggest or write something about other areas of Queensland and their significant gardens we'd love to hear/read your ideas/items. [Editor]



THE MAIN BUILDING, GRACEMERE STATION.



Gracemere Station homestead - 1880s
(outside Rockhampton)

Image credit:

Internet Archive Book Images

Gracemere Station - 2001

Image credit:

Peter Marquis-Kyle

How the newsletter works & disclaimer:

The newsletter functions to communicate the branch's activities to the members, the National Committee's activities to members, members activities to other members, and include articles of interest by and from members or otherwise in areas of the society's interest; the newsletter is not a scholarly publication but a news and relationship one, and the opinions expressed in the newsletter are not necessarily those of the society; distribution of the newsletter happens through a branch's committee member and the newsletter editor's appointment is subject to approval of the branch committee, and is for a fixed term of 4 newsletters.