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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

Branch Chair & National Management Committee Representative -
Margie Barram
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Vice-chair - vacant

Secretary - Janice Hiller
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Treasurer - Elizabeth Teed
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Newsletter Editor - Dr Robert White
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Members -

Ann Wegener
Dr Thom Blake

Wendy Lees
Margaret Kirkwood

Queensland Branch Newsletter

September 2015

Forthcoming Events

The remainder of 2015:

October or November (watch for event flyer)

Dale Arvidsson, Curator of Brisbane Botanic Gardens, will lead a tour and information sharing session of the City Botanic Gardens and the new extension to the Brisbane Botanic Gardens.

As Dale says: "Botanic Gardens are not just about the plants themselves. They're also about how people interact with flora the interpretation, recreation, wildlife, tourism all these things make up a modern botanic garden."

October 16th - 18th

This year's National Conference in Adelaide, themed "Garden to Table: productive garden history".

December, Sunday 6th, 4:30 p.m. - 7 p.m.

This year's end-of-year gathering will be at the home of Janice Hiller, Aberfoyle Street, Kenmore. Finger food will be provided; byo drinks. A creek bank/ garden tour will include viewing of a protected palm, followed by our festivities.

Events planned for next year

Early February 2016

A lecture by John Adam, New Zealand landscape historian, in conjunction with Matthew Bradbury, UNITEC Institute of Technology. The topic of the lecture will be "*Modern primitive – the history of two iconic tourist Gold Coast landscapes*".

Events planned for 2016 (continued)

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, and *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 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.

Other branch news

Launch of Friends of Brisbane Botanic Gardens and Sherwood Arboretum Ltd

On Wednesday, 14 October, 10 – 11am, at Brisbane Botanic Gardens, Mt Coot-tha you are invited to the exciting launch of the Friends of Brisbane Botanic Gardens and

Sherwood Arboretum Ltd.

Find out how to become a member and about opportunities to become involved with the gardens for special events. Morning tea will follow the information session and general meeting. Launch will be held in the Brisbane Botanic Gardens extension.



Recent Branch visits and tours in South East Queensland

The Branch has visited quite a number of places of historical, horticultural interest during the early and middle part of this year. To keep members informed about all these visits, in late November there will be an extra issue of the Newsletter. It will include an article from Jim Butler about members' visit to his Clayfield garden and the background to the development of the original property. Any other information to round off the year will be included to keep members up to date.

This Newsletter we have two reports about Branch activities. First, Margie Barram gives us the second installment of her description of members' visit to Toowoomba in May; and second, Peter Marquis-Kyle tells us about the tour of the Brisbane Valley in June.

Margie Barram's second report on the Society's visit to Toowoomba in May:

The Boyce gardens and a Fletcher Street private garden

Last newsletter reported on the Branch's May visit to Toowoomba. On the Saturday morning Councillor Sue Englart showed the group the public park flood mitigation landscaping constructed by Toowoomba Regional Council and discussed the rationale behind the changes. Dr John Swarbrick then took the group on a descriptive tour of a selection of Toowoomba's most significant trees. This newsletter we continue with Margie's report on the significant Toowoomba gardens visited by the group in the afternoon.

The Boyce Gardens and Rainforest

On a beautiful morning we gathered at 6 Range Street (on the Great Dividing Range escarpment) for a guided tour of the Boyce Gardens and Rainforest. Daryl Mears, the Estate Supervisor, welcomed us to what was the private 6 hectare garden of Dr Leslie and Margaret Boyce. The garden was begun in 1930, and given in trust to the University of Queensland in 1969. After Mrs. Boyce's death in 1984 Dr. Boyce continued living there until his death in 1988.



Right to left: Elizabeth Teed, Lois Closter, and others gather for Daryl Mear's welcome.



Above: Catherine Brouwer (C) and others admiring the gardens.



Above: Peter Marquis-Kyle (L) and John Taylor (R).



Above: Maurice Wilson (L) and Margaret Kirkwood (R).

Daryl gave us each a copy of the brochure below: "Walk through the Boyce gardens and Rainforest". The brochure provides a history of the property and an update relating to the use of the house. As a private residence the house proved incompatible with the public use of the gardens. A recent renovation changed the house from being the University Vice-Chancellor's residence, making it suitable for the use of community groups.

As part of the changes corporate documents stored at the house were transferred to the University of Queensland Archive and other documents to the Fryer Library. Those documents transferred to the Fryer Library are currently being appraised and arranged, and digitisation of some material may also occur. When the Fryer Library's document collection becomes publicly accessible a visit could be arranged for interested members.

The tour continued as Daryl led us through the garden, answering questions and sharing his observations and memories. Daryl was first employed by Margaret Boyce, and has worked in her garden ever since, maintaining it according to a monthly garden calendar originally drawn up by Margaret Boyce.

A strip along the eastern boundary of the estate contains the only remaining natural vegetation of the Toowoomba range escarpment. On completion of our tour of this remarkable temperate climate garden we moved on to another long-established Toowoomba garden.

The Fletcher Street garden

We next visited a Fletcher Street garden surrounding a house built in 1878. The current owners have restored the original garden and extended it at the back of the property. Plantings in this garden considered traditional Toowoomba plantings were maintained throughout the decade-long drought of the 2000s by clever use of water harvesting and flow direction.



This garden is an exemplar of the care of older plantings in times of water scarcity. Replacing them with new species marketed as drought-resistant, or removing large trees,

would have been far less desirable means of coping with drought and a loss of horticultural heritage.

The large deciduous tree that shelters and shades the garden in the hotter months is kept watered by capturing natural water flow down the sloping block and from the paths and driveway, using a small retaining wall to direct flow. For the owners, Walter and his family, the cooling effect of the tree, as well as its natural beauty, are essential aspects of using the house and garden. In addition, Walter had two large cisterns created, under the tennis court, for the storage of rainwater and any overland flow of water on the paths and driveway that went beyond the upper terrace. All the garden refuse is used to create mulch, and is applied throughout the garden.



Walter also re-used the local bluestone from the site in the terrace's low walls and steps. He did, however, remove the front garden's fountain; during the drought the water drew brown snakes into the garden, which he considered too hazardous for his young children.



Above (L - R): Gloria Cummings ,
Wendy Lees (who organised the day),
and others in the lower terrace.

Walter has kindly given permission for the photographs of his house and garden taken by Peter Marquis-Kyle to be deposited in the State Library of Queensland. They can be used in the society's website and publications provided, for security reasons, his last name and exact address are not published in a web-searchable way.



Right: Members enjoying lunch.

As such opportunities to record significant gardens grow, the Branch is now seeking the permission of private garden owners to deposit in the State Library of Queensland the photographic record of their garden taken during Branch visits. In this way there can be increased accessibility to and greater depth of knowledge of significant gardens. From richer records in the public domain present and future researchers will be able to develop greater understanding of the place and significance of these gardens and extend that knowledge to the wider community. Gardens, trees, and their history matter.

Garden history advocacy

The Queensland Branch intends to continue advocacy and preservation work in Toowoomba in several ways:

- letter writing and meetings with the Toowoomba Regional Council;
(contact Wendy Lees [tallowwood@iprimus.com.au])
- research for nomination to the Queensland Heritage Register of those Toowoomba places identified in the Survey;
(contact John Taylor [jht@hotkey.net.au])
- ongoing recording and research projects of gardens, gardeners, and the garden trade, with deposit and publication as an outcome;
(contact is Margie Barram [mjbarra02@gmail.com])
- an annual AGHS (Qld) Toowoomba event.
(2016's event will be in April and arranged by Wendy Lees)

Any member who would like to be involved in preserving Queensland's garden history, please contact Wendy, John or Margie on the email addresses above.

So please give some thought to how you might like to contribute to the Society's aims in this way. Whilst Toowoomba is one of the Branch's research and advocacy focuses at present, the Branch is working in many areas. Most people would find something that sits comfortably with their interests and skills.

Next we have Peter Marquis-Kyle's article about the June tour of several sites in the Brisbane River valley.

Brisbane River Valley tour

by Peter Marquis-Kyle

On Sunday 28 June 2015 AGHS Queensland Branch members and visitors enjoyed a tour of the Brisbane River valley organised by Wendy Lees. We gathered at Fernvale and car-shared for a drive that looped around Lake Wivenhoe—the flooded landscape above the

Wivenhoe Dam. We were there to see the cultural landscapes of the area, and to understand something of the historical changes before and since the dam was completed in 1984.



The first stop was the former *Bellevue Homestead* complex, a group of buildings that were moved from their original site beside the Brisbane River to higher ground at Coominya in the 1970s—a project carried out by the National Trust of Queensland with support from the National Estate Grants program. We sat down to tea and fresh-baked scones on the verandah of the guest house, imagining we were looking across to the river. After morning tea we enjoyed a guided tour of the gardens (including the reconstructed carriage drive at the front of the house, and the plantings that follow the same plan as the original), and the interior of the buildings. I was in the party shown around by John Dingle, one of the owners of the property, who was an excellent and knowledgeable guide.

We drove to Esk for a picnic lunch in the Memorial Park, then got back into the cars to continue our loop around the dam, via the Brisbane Valley Highway, taking the Esk-Kilcoy Road across the river above the lake, then by Wivenhoe-Somerset Road along the eastern edge of the lake to our next stop at *Wivenhoe*. We had afternoon tea, and Jane Lennon spoke about the countryside we had been traveling through on the day, and about cultural landscapes in general.

Our hosts at Wivenhoe, Mary and Lefric North, gave us a personal account of changes in the cultural landscape of the Brisbane River valley. The North family owned land just upstream from the Wivenhoe Dam wall—land resumed by the state government for the dam project. This was fertile river-flat land used for growing crops and for grazing. For the Norths, and for other land holders, the loss of this closely-settled productive land was a blow. Lefric and Mary looked for another property with similar attributes to continue their business, but did not find one. In the end they decided to remain on the part of the land that had not been resumed—on the ironbark-forested ridges to the east of the river. The Norths established improved pasture for their cattle raising business, and they built a new house to live in with their three young daughters.



They commissioned the architect Bruce Goodsir to design the house and, thirty years later, they still speak enthusiastically about the house and the design process that produced it.

It's a relaxed and comfortable house, a perfect fit for the people and place it was designed for. It nicely incorporates a few pieces taken from their old house that used to stand beside the river, and timber from trees that grew on land flooded by the dam is used in the frame, in cabinets and other joinery.



Lake Wivenhoe, the cause of such disruption to the lives of the Norths and their old neighbours, has become a pleasant backdrop to the new house and garden. The garden connects the interior of the house to the larger landscape. A curved retaining wall serves as a ha-ha, keeping the cattle at a distance without intruding in the view of the garden lawn which seems continuous with the pasture beyond. Trees—some planted and some native—frame and punctuate the view. There are secluded places for special plants and for a fairy garden that is the delight of the Norths' grandchildren.



For more extensive photographic coverage of the tour more images can be seen online at <http://www.marquis-kyle.com.au/koken/albums/brisbane-valley-june-2015/>

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.