

Australian Garden History Society ACT Monaro Riverina Branch



Newsletter April 2019 No 2

Australian Garden History Society
www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au

ACT Monaro Riverina Branch, PO Box 5008, LYNEHAM ACT 2602
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BRANCH DIARY

13 APRIL

NT Heritage Festival
Open Day

5 MAY

Visit to Mount Stromlo

13 JUNE

Lecture: Ocean^o Gay
flowers, speaker Julie
Ryder

4 JULY

Lecture: *Shared dreams
and destinies: botanic
gardens of Melbourne and
Sydney*, speaker Prof.
Tim Entwisle

22 AUGUST

Branch AGM

22 AUGUST

Annual Lecture: *Gardens
on the Edge*, speaker
Christine Reid

25-27 OCTOBER 2019

AGHS National
Conference . Wellington,
NZ

NEXT EVENTS

National Trust Heritage Festival Open Day Gungahlin Homestead

SATURDAY 13 APRIL, 10AM – 3PM

This year the National Trust Heritage Festival Open Day will be held at Gungahlin Homestead, in Bellenden Road, Crace and as in the past AGHS will have a stall at the event.

There will be participation from a large number of community organisations with heritage interests. There will also be tours of the homestead during the day.

In 2017 the Open Day was held at the Homestead for the first time and was a remarkable success. CSIRO is the main lessee of the site, and has agreed to this event, and Soldier On, which currently occupies the Homestead and other buildings is a partner for the day. Soldier On will benefit from the gold coin donation for entry.

A Visit to the Director's Residence and Garden Mt Stromlo

SUNDAY 5 MAY, 2 – 4.30PM

Many see Mount Stromlo as a place for science, but it was also a home to many people over the last 100 years.

Originally known as *Observatory House*, the Director's Residence was completed in 1928 to accommodate the Director of Mount Stromlo and family. The building was designed by the Supervising Architect for the Federal Capital Territory, Henry Maitland Rolland, with substantial input from the founding Director Walter Geoffrey Duffield and his wife Doris. Seven Observatory Directors and several others lived in the Residence before it was severely damaged in the firestorm of January 2003.

The Director's Residence was once the social heart of Mount Stromlo. The immaculate grounds hosted parties, functions for visiting dignitaries, and other special events. The landscape was primarily in the European domestic style with large established trees, manicured lawns, a formal patio, rose garden, orchard, arbour and even a croquet lawn. Following the 2003 fires, most of the landscape features and plantings were destroyed.

The damaged residence has now been stabilised, and the garden restored, so that what you see now is a modern interpretation of the original landscape, taking inspiration from recorded memories and historic images of the site.

As part of the Canberra and Region Heritage Festival, www.act.gov.au/heritagefestival

**BRANCH
COMMITTEE**

Sue Byrne, Chair
Judy Pearce, Dep. Chair
 & Newsletter Editor
Helen Elliot, Treasurer
Anne Claoue-Long,
 State NMC
 Representative
Nancy Clarke, Secretary

Bronwyn Blake (also an
 elected member on NMC)
Sue Cassidy
Wendy Dodd
Greg Johnson
Helen Wilson

join ANU Heritage Adviser
 Amy Jarvis in a walk around
 the Observatory, as well as
 to the Residence and its
 restored gardens and
 orchard. Light refreshments
 will be served afterwards.

**Photo: Joan and Doris
 Duffield gardening during
 construction of the Director's
 Residence, Mt Stromlo
 (1927/28). (Duffield family)**

A joint event of AGHS ACT
 Monaro Riverina and the
 National Trust ACT.



Cost \$15 - including refreshments

Bookings Are essential through TryBooking, <https://www.trybooking.com/ZYFC>
 You may pay by debit or credit card.

Inquiries Nancy Clarke, clarkenancy624@gmail.com, 0423 690 626.

Lecture: Ocean's Gay Flowers – uncovering the mysteries of Australian seaweed collections of the 19th century

**SPEAKER: JULIE RYDER
 THURSDAY 13 JUNE. 6PM**



Julie Ryder, award winning art-science practitioner, describes her journey to identify the anonymous collector of an album of seaweed specimens from the 19th century. This quest began with her arts residency at the National Museum of Australia in 2016. Her research connects this album with others held in the collections of several Australian institutions, provides new information and subsequent provenance to these holdings, and focuses on a very prolific and largely unknown collector of algae. In 2018 Julie followed clues in the albums to Ireland, where she uncovered the missing links held within several cultural institutions. The residencies and research for over two years

provided the inspiration for her solo exhibition *The Hidden Sexq* held at Craft ACT earlier this year.

Julie is a professional textile designer and artist who has gained international recognition for her work that combines her expertise and interest in both science and art. After a preliminary career working in science, Julie retrained as a textile designer, graduating from the Melbourne Institute of Textiles in 1990 and going on to do a Masters at the Canberra School of Art, ANU.

She was awarded the 2004 ANAT Synapse Artist in Residence to work alongside Dr Christine Cargill, curator of the Cryptogam Herbarium at the ANBG, and they have maintained a close working relationship on several art-sci projects and exhibitions. Since then Julie has held prestigious arts residencies at CSIRO; Asialink, the National Museum of Australia, the Ulster Museum in Belfast and at Cill Riallaig in Ireland.

Since becoming obsessed by all things seaweed, she can either be found on a beach somewhere collecting specimens, or in a herbarium basement poring through 19th century collections. Occasionally she surfaces to conduct textile workshops in natural dyeing, indigo dyeing and screen-printing, both nationally and internationally.

Her work is represented in many public and private collections. For more information visit her website at <http://www.julieyder.com.au>

Venue Theatre, Canberra Museum and Gallery, Crn London Cct and Civic Square. Paid parking to the north of CMAG, and free parking from 5.30 across Northbourne Avenue near the Law Courts.

Cost \$15 members, \$20 non-members (plus 50c ticket fee) including refreshments

Bookings Through TryBooking, <https://www.trybooking.com/BASQA>
You may pay by debit or credit card.

Enquiries judy.pearce@netspeed.com.au, 0417 250 058

We thank Canberra Museum and Gallery for their support for this lecture.

Lecture: *Shared dreams and destinies: botanic gardens of Melbourne and Sydney*

**SPEAKER: PROFESSOR TIMOTHY J ENTWISLE
THURSDAY 4 JULY, 6PM**

A joint event with the Friends of the National Library

Sydney's Royal Botanic Garden turned 200 in 2016, and Melbourne's celebrates its 175th in 2021. They are two of the older botanic gardens outside of Europe, and today they demonstrate how beautiful heritage landscapes can display and interpret stunning plant collections. Both stuttered in their beginnings but through the varied influences of directors such as Charles Moore, Ferdinand Mueller, William Guilfoyle and Joseph Maiden, it's fair to say they exceeded expectations by the early years of the twentieth century. There are some curious parallels in their development, and undoubtedly more in their future. Climate change, financial security and that growing community ailment, plant blindness will test both gardens as they negotiate the next century or two.



Sydney Botanic Garden overview

Professor Timothy J Entwisle is Director and Chief Executive of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, home to two of the world's most beautiful and inspiring botanic garden landscapes, in Melbourne and Cranbourne. Under his leadership the RBGV is transforming into an outward-looking organisation with a focus as much on people as plants. Creative events such as *Fire Gardens* in October 2018 illustrate the mix of nature, culture and science that Tim sees as the strength of a contemporary botanic garden.

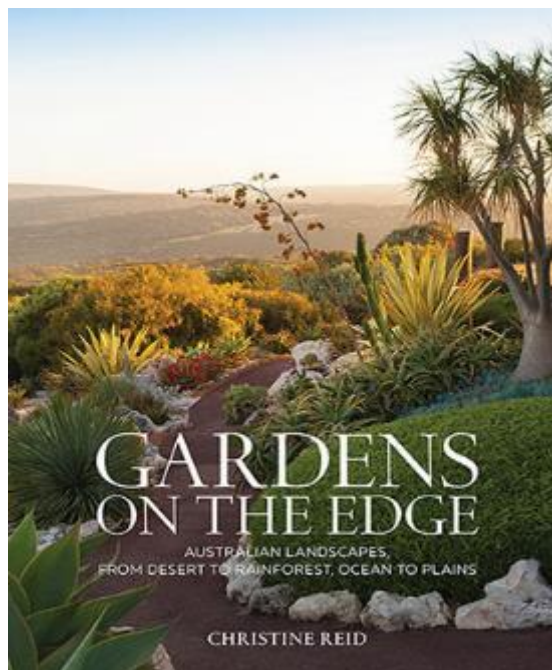


Tim is a highly respected scientist, scientific communicator and botanic gardens director. He took up the role at RBGV in March 2013, following two years in a senior role at Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and eight years as Executive Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust in Sydney. He is an Honorary Professorial Fellow at The University of Melbourne, and a regular contributor to print, radio (including ABC RN's *Blueprint for Living*) and social media.

He has a broad interest in all plants and related life forms and you can visit his blog at <http://talkingplants.blogspot.com/>.

Venue Theatre, National Library of Australia
Cost \$20 for AGHS members and Friends of the NLA, \$25 for non-members includes refreshments.
Booking Bookings through the NLA at <https://www.nla.gov.au/event/shared-dreams-and-destinies>
NO bookings to be made through AGHS.

Annual Lecture: *Gardens on the Edge: Australian Landscapes from desert to rainforest, ocean to plains*



SPEAKER: CHRISTINE REID
THURSDAY 22 AUGUST,
6.15PM

In a journey through Australian landscapes Christine Reid will talk about her recently published book which focusses on stunning Australian gardens, each bordering a natural 'frontier', including rainforest, river, desert, bushland, saltbush plains, volcanic lake, mountain ranges and the ocean's edge

In breathtaking images and insightful essays, the book explores 18 Australian gardens that are defined by extraordinary horizons. Each of the featured landscapes - from every state and territory, from outback to city - is situated on the edge of a natural frontier: rainforest, desert, bushland, river, mountain range, volcanic

crater lake, coast, harbour, saltbush plains. In another sense, Australian gardens and their owners are always 'on the edge' in dealing with the endless vagaries of nature, from drought to dust, fires to flood. In telling the stories of the gardens and their owners, Christine Reid reveals the diversity and character of the Australian continent - and celebrates the imagination and resilience of those who have met the challenges of creating, reconstructing or restoring their 'vision splendid' in an ancient and often-unforgiving land

Christine Reid As a garden writer with a wide-ranging background in newspapers and magazines, Christine Reid's principal interest is the social and cultural history of gardens and designed landscapes, historic and contemporary. Her extensive writings on gardens appear in major lifestyle magazines both in Australia and the UK; she has been the Australian contributor to the English publication *Gardens Illustrated* since 1998. Christine has also been writer and consulting editor for many international garden books including *The Oxford Companion to the Garden* (Oxford University Press, 2006) and *The Gardeners' Garden* (Phaidon, 2014). She is a longstanding member of AGHS.

Venue	The Chapel, Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, 15 Blackall St, Barton
Parking	On site (the boom gate will be open), or in adjacent streets
Cost	\$15 members, \$20 non-members (plus 50c ticket fee) including refreshments
Bookings	Through TryBooking, https://www.trybooking.com/BBZWN You may pay by debit or credit card.
Enquiries	Greg Johnson gregh4d@gmail.com

Branch Annual General Meeting

THURSDAY 22 AUGUST, 5.45PM

The AGM of the ACT Monaro Riverina Branch of the AGHS will be held at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture just prior to the 2018 Annual Lecture (see above). Details will be included in the June newsletter. Committee nominations close **11 July 2019**. We would welcome new committee members so if you are interested in joining the Committee and would like to talk to someone about it please contact our Secretary Nancy Clarke clarкенancy624@gmail.com, 0423 690 626.

Committee members serve a term of three years, with the option of extending for two further terms. We meet once a month and all Committee members take a role in organising Society events and/or the Committee's business activities

PAST EVENTS

Growing Democracy: Plants, Places and People in the Parliamentary Triangle

RAMBLE: SATURDAY FEBRUARY 23

Anna Howe led an enthusiastic and appreciative group of AGHS members and friends on a late afternoon ramble to discover how democracy has been planted in the Parliamentary Triangle. Anna has kindly written the following account of the excursion.

The 1989 National Capital Plan nominates the Parliamentary Zone as *the physical manifestation of Australian democratic government and a place for the people*. In our walk we saw plantings, places and people that have realised these intentions in different ways.

Plantings

Starting at the front of the National Library of Australia, we saw the low maintenance plantings of dark green prostrate juniper, lighter green hebe and purple witch-hazel that have replaced the original beds of tulips and other flowers designed for colour. Further change may come as the two lines of Lombardy poplars planted in the mid-1960s are beginning to show signs of decline. Poplars are now a prohibited plant in the ACT, so the replacement trees may not be of the same species.

King Edward Terrace is something of a Wallace Line in the evolution of the landscape of our democracy. On the southern side, exotic deciduous trees, many planted by Charles Weston close to 100 years ago, shelter extensive rose gardens. Roses were much favoured by Alexander Bruce, head of NCDC to 1937; in an early instance of participatory democracy, the original roses were donated from all over Australia.



Photos (Anna Howe): *Roses, poplars and oaks in front of old Parliament House, The glassy surface of the pool next to the National Portrait Gallery reflects gums and casuarinas before it slides over the edge, alongside a bed of lomandra.*

On the northern side, we see eucalypts and casuarinas, most still in straight avenues, but a few in random groupings. Australian shrubs and grasses abound, with callistemons, eriostemons, correas and lomandras filling the beds around the National Portrait Gallery, and also flanking the low stepped fountain that leads to the High Court.

Places

Quentin Stevens, a landscape architect at RMIT, points out that many commemorative sites are contested places, and we explored two examples. The fountains built in 2001 to commemorate the Centenary of Federation have failed to flow since 2012. Could this place become a Federation Garden for the 120th anniversary of Federation in 2021? Plantings of golden wattle, *Acacia pycnantha*, would bring our currently absent national emblem to life in the Triangle, with plants from each state and territory filling the large central square.

The many panels and art works in Reconciliation Place give some understanding of why it is a contested place. But as Stevens points out, Reconciliation Place is unique among the new world capitals with neither Washington DC nor Ottawa having any place that recognises the first peoples of the US or Canada.

People

Naming Places is a very effective way of commemorating those who have shaped our democracy. Parkes, Enid Lyons, Dorothy Tangney and John Dunmore Lang. More spaces in the Triangle could yet be named: could Mall Road West that intersects Reconciliation Place become Neville Bonner Place in recognition of our first Indigenous Senator?

Others have contributed to planting our democracy in different ways. Among them is Lindsay Pryor whose 1968 Planting Plan introduced indigenous species to the Triangle

and the rest of Canberra, pioneering the native garden that became a wider expression of our national identity through the 1970s.

AGHS members Dr Diane Firth and Anne Claoue-Long gave me much background information to help me guide the ramble. Thank you. Thanks also to Duncan MacLennan, Urban Tree Manager, National Capital Authority who not only answered my queries but joined us on our ramble, assisting with plant identification and giving us insights into the challenges of managing the future of this historic landscape.

Anna Howe

History in Nature – Plantings at the Australian War Memorial

RAMBLE: THURSDAY 21 MARCH

In March the local branch of the Australian Garden History Society was given a tour of the grounds of the Australian War Memorial by one of the Memorial's many volunteers Di Mitchell.

There was a competition for the design for the War Memorial in 1925-26 but none of the entries satisfied the judges so two of the competitors Emil Sodersten and John Crust were asked to develop a collaborative design. Construction on the Art Deco influenced building commenced in 1928. 29, postponed during the depression and recommenced in 1934. Di pointed out that apart from early plans she could find no documentation of the grounds until recent times. She illustrated her talk with some large photos.

The first tree to be planted was the Lone Pine (*Pinus halepensis*) in 1934, a sapling grown from a cone brought home from Pine Ridge. As the tree is old now several replacement trees have been planted in the grounds. A 1948 aerial photo shows most of the site has been cleared of vegetation. The Western Precinct which includes the Sculpture Garden (which is dominated by two spreading oaks and memorial groves of silver birches, olives and cherries relating to the various commemorative themes) has informal spaces and exotic vegetation. A formal courtyard with clipped hedging, grassed areas separated by gravel pathways leading to a low fountain is a recent addition designed by architect Richard Johnson. The Flanders Fields Memorial garden adds some subtle colour to the area. Near the entrance to the Memorial is a plaque beside a Snow Gum. The plaque states *a snowgum was planted in this area by the Queen Elizabeth in February 1954 to mark the beginning of the Remembrance Driveway*. The original has had to be moved and replaced.

The Eastern Precinct is for informal recreational uses with native vegetation and a few mature trees which may be original.

We also heard how rabbits in plague proportions have meant raised beds and special construction with wire under the soil around the administration building to prevent it being undermined.

Di Mitchell gave us an interesting tour with many amusing anecdotes. Di had high praise for the two horticulturists who are maintaining and caring for the grounds. **Wendy Dodd**

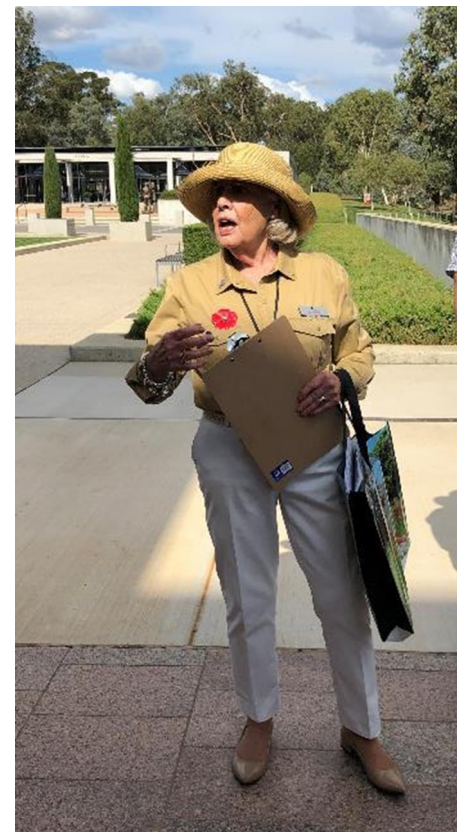


Photo (Sue Byrne), Di Mitchell, our guide

BRANCH NEWS

NATURE IN THE CITY INQUIRY AT THE ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

On 27 March our branch Chair Sue Byrne, with support from Anne Claoue-Long, appeared before a public hearing of the committee into Nature in our City Inquiry.

The AGHS presentation stressed the importance of the Canberra designed landscape of interconnected open public spaces with its relationship between surrounding hills, many planned parks and extensive Urban Forest. All important to Nature in the City. Several significant landscape architects who created this cultural landscape were named with a call for public commemoration. Concerns were raised about piecemeal development driven by profit that is resulting in loss of open public green space and an entreaty was made for an overarching master plan, sensitive to the philosophical, historical and cultural basis of the city's original design concept. Finally the local AGHS branch proposed that the ACT Government acknowledge the Urban Forest as crucial to Nature in the City by listing street trees, and trees in parks and reserves as public assets to be maintained and funded through Treasury provision. A final call was that losses through tree decline or felling be publicly account for as depreciation and cost and be accounted for in development projects.

The hearing was broadcast live and is available on the Assembly website. The local newspaper, *The Canberra Times*, reported that the AGHS had presented.

Anne also wrote a blog for the Professional Historians NSW and ACT which can be found at <http://www.phansw.org.au/lake-burley-griffin-in-canberra-a-changing-landscape-public-parklands-traded-for-apartments/>

I am sure members appreciate Sue and Anne's efforts on our behalf.

Judy Pearce

AGHS NATIONAL NEWS

AGHS ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Expanding Horizons
Wellington, New Zealand
25 - 27 October 2019



**MUSEUM OF
NEW ZEALAND
TE PAPA
TONGAREWA**

AGHS WEB SITE

Don't forget AGHS members can download all AGHS Journals and Garden Histories for free when using the discount code **MEMBER7694** at checkout.

OF INTEREST

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDENS

www.anbg.gov.au

Saturday, 16 March 2019 - 9:30am - Sunday, 14 April 2019 - 4:30pm

The Friends of the ANBG's Botanic Art Groups 12th annual exhibition and sale, with the theme *more than just a pretty plant*.

Lectures on a variety of topics are offered by the Friends of the National Botanic Gardens at 12.30pm on most Thursdays. No bookings are required, entry by gold coin donation. Be warned that the talks are very popular and spaces are limited. For details and updates check the Friends website at www.friendsanbg.org.au. Of particular interest to members:

- 25 April 2019 - Dr Michael McKernan, *Selected Gallipoli Cemeteries*. Michael will speak on some of the better-known cemeteries, their locations, the unique nature of each, and the stories of the men who lie buried in them.

CANBERRA AND REGION HERITAGE FESTIVAL

Saturday 13 April – Sunday 5 May

For more information visit www.act.gov.au/heritagefestival

HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY OF CANBERRA

<http://www.hsoc.org.au/index.htm>

OPEN GARDENS CANBERRA

<http://opengardenscanberra.org.au/>

NATIONAL ARBORETUM CANBERRA

www.arboretumcanberra.org.au

LAKE BURLEY GRIFFIN GUARDIANS (LBGG)

<http://lakeburleygriffinguardians.org.au/>

The Guardians still remain very concerned that the ACT Government is pushing ahead with the West Basin development without any consideration of the values of the area. We prepared a paper on *Values and Principles for Development and Acceptable Proposals* to briefly explain the Guardians views and it is can be viewed at: <http://lakeburleygriffinguardians.org.au/media/values-principles-acceptable-12.2.19.pdf> Due to the pending Federal Election the Guardians have been meeting with political candidates such as Alicia Payne, Anthony Pesec and Nancy Waites. We have recently given a presentation to the ACT Black Mountain Labor Party Group and five Guardians presented at a recent event on West Basin at Manning Clarke House.

Unfortunately, there are still people criticising the Guardians, using inappropriate 'Griffin' spin to justify the West Basin development and declaring that the Guardians want West Basin to stay 'as is'. West Basin *is* rundown and neglected but infilling around 3ha at West Basin with a retaining wall edging is harmful to the health of the Lake. Guardians present at the recent ACT Government Standing Committee on Nature in the City on 27 March gave a powerful presentation on the importance of a natural lake edge to provide a depth of lake edge plantings that can filter the pollutants that cause of blue-green algae growth. West Basin is a valuable area suitable for beaches and planting and not subject to eroding forces present in other parts of the Lake.

The ACT's City Renewal Authority has recently released a tender for the spatial master plan design for West Basin and the Guardians have prepared a paper that analyses the tender and discusses its implications. Contact the Guardians on lakeburleygriffinguardians@gmail.com if you would like a copy.

Juliet Ramsay, Lake Burley Griffin Guardians