

ACT Monaro Riverina Branch

Newsletter July 2021 No 4



Australian Garden History Society
www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au

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BRANCH DIARY

4 AUGUST, 5.15PM

ACT Monaro Riverina
Branch AGM

4 AUGUST, 6PM

Winter Series Lecture 3
*Marion Mahony – in her
Own Right*
Speaker: Glenda Korporaal

8 OCTOBER PM

Telling Time by the Sun

12 & 13 NOVEMBER

Self Drive to Woomargama
Station and Albury

AGHS NATIONAL CONFERENCES

10-12 SEPTEMBER
2021

AGHS National
Conference – Sydney
*Many Dreams One
Landscape*

11-13 NOVEMBER
2022

AGHS National
Conference – Hobart

FORTHCOMING EVENTS



**ACT Monaro Riverina Branch
Annual General Meeting 2021
WEDNESDAY 4 AUGUST
5.15 – 5.45PM**

The Friends of the National Library of Australia have kindly made the Friends Lounge (2nd Floor, Nan Kivell Room, NLA) available for this meeting. After the meeting Glenda Korporaal will be speaking to us on *Marion Mahony Griffin – In Her Own Right*. See copy below for details - booking essential through the NLA website
<https://www.nla.gov.au/whats-on/events/marion-mahony-griffin-her-own-right>

We have use of the Friends Lounge from 5 to 5.45 pm for our meeting, which will start promptly at 5.15 pm. Covid conditions apply and you will need to check in. To help simplify arrangements, please make a booking on TryBooking
<https://www.trybooking.com/BSJMN> – this is not essential for attendance but will help us keep our records straight.

AGENDA

1. Attendance
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of the previous meeting (26 August 2020)
4. Chair's report
5. Treasurer's report
6. Election of Branch Committee

Branch committee members are elected for a three-year term, and are eligible for two further three-year terms.

Continuing Committee members: Margaret Bourke, Sue Cassidy, Lynne Curran, Fleur Flanery, Greg Johnson

Nominations have been received from:

Bronwyn Blake (nominated Sue Cassidy, seconded Wendy Dodd);
Anne Claoue-Long (nominated Judy Pearce, seconded Sue Byrne);
Nancy Clarke (nominated Anna Howe, seconded Robyn Henderson) and
Susan Phillips (nominated Kay Johnston, seconded Marie Wood).

Further nominations from the floor will be accepted.

7. Confirmation of Anne Claoue-Long as ACT State Representative on the AGHS National Management Committee.

BRANCH COMMITTEE

Margie Bourke, Chair
Sue Cassidy, Treasurer
Anne Claoue-Long, State
NMC Representative
Nancy Clarke, Secretary

Bronwyn Blake (and Co-
chair of the NMC)
Lynne Curran
Fleur Flanery
Greg Johnson

WINTER LECTURE 3 WEDNESDAY 4 AUGUST, 6PM NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA

MARION MAHONY GRIFFIN – IN HER OWN RIGHT SPEAKER: GLENDA KORPORAAL

In association with the Friends of the National Library.

Author Glenda Korporeal looks at Marion Mahony, the ground breaking woman who played such a critical role in the design of Canberra.

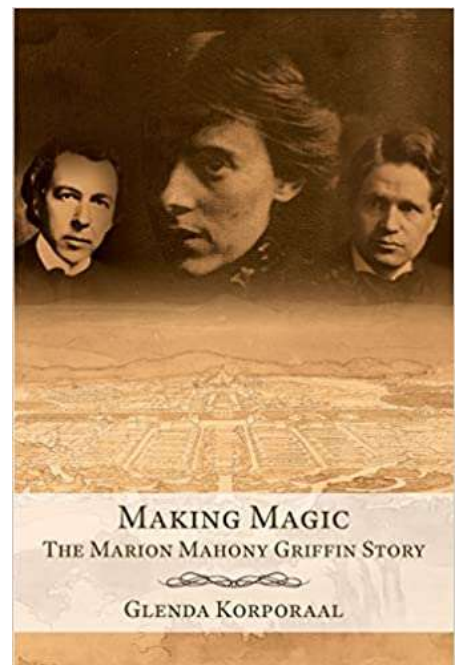
She argues the case for Marion to be recognised for her unique combination of artist, architect, environmentalist, community maker and social observer Korporeal will put the case for Marion to be considered in her own right, separately from her husband Walter Burley Griffin. With so much of her work already in Canberra - in the National Library and the Archives - she deserves to be ranked as a "founding mother" of Canberra whose work and life continues to inspire Australians more than 100 years after she lived here.

Glenda is a Sydney based journalist and writer. After living in the US for six years she developed an interest in US architect Frank Lloyd Wright which turned into an interest in Walter Burley Griffin and a fascination with his ground breaking architect wife Marion Mahony.

Glenda has worked as a journalist in Sydney, Canberra, London, Washington, New York, Singapore, Hong Kong and Beijing. Her journalistic career has seen her work as the US correspondent and the first woman deputy editor of the *Australian Financial Review*.

She has also been business editor of *The Bulletin* magazine, editor of the Australian's business magazine *The Deal* and is now associate editor (business) of *The Australian* in Sydney.

Her book *Making Magic: The Marion Mahony Griffin* story is the first biography of Marion.



Venue	Theatre, NLA
Cost	\$20 (AGHS members & Friends of the NLA), \$25 (Non-members) Refreshments included.
Bookings	Essential through the NLA website at https://www.nla.gov.au/whats-on/events/marion-mahony-griffin-her-own-right

SAVE THE DATE***Telling the Time by the Sun
Friday 8 October***

Armillary Sphere, ANBG, Photo Nancy Clarke

One of the disappointments of 2020 was the deferring of our planned special afternoon with Dr Marg Folkard, sundial designer and maker extraordinaire. We are delighted that this joint event with the Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens will now take place on the afternoon of Friday 8 October. The program will include a lively presentation by Marg, followed by informative visits to two of the sundials her company, Sundials Australia, <https://www.sundialsaustralia.com.au>, has installed in Canberra: in the Australian National Botanic Gardens; and at Mt Stromlo. More details including booking arrangements will follow soon.

SAVE THE DATE***Self Drive Visit to Woomargama Station and Albury
Friday 12 & Saturday 13 November***

Planning is currently underway for a self-drive trip to Woomargama Station and Albury in mid-November. Woomargama is nestled on the edge of the Great Dividing Range near the Murray River and is a mixed grazing property with a beautifully managed house and garden. Some of the land on the property is managed under the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust which is a statutory not-for-profit body, established under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*. Some further details about Woomargama are in the link below.



<https://bit.ly/2Uuofwl>

This promises to be a wonderful trip away visiting some remarkable gardens. As planning progresses, we'll provide further details on other aspects of the itinerary. Numbers will be limited, so for the moment, mark your diary!

A Hidden Camellia Grove at Tidbinbilla

Did you know that at one time there was a specialist camellia nursery at Tidbinbilla? *Nil Desperandum* (Never Despair) - you might get the chance to visit remnant plantings still at the historic homestead of *Nil Desperandum* on Hurdle Creek. Henry Ffrench Gillman built the homestead in the late 1890s using the *pise* construction method. Later in 1975 a part of the *Nil Desperandum* plot was transformed from vegetable garden to a commercial camellia and rhododendron nursery, and operated until 1989 by the then owner Phil Gilmour and horticulturalist Leon Horsnell. Some 600 plants were established but when the nursery closed for the creation of the Nature Park many plants were transferred to Yarralumla Nursery for sale. About 100 plants survive at *Nil Desperandum*, flowering between July and October.

Negotiations are under way regarding an AGHS trip to view the camellias, but the date is yet to be settled on. Apparently the Rangers tell us some of the camellias are already in flower – climate change in action? Or perhaps they are *Camellia sasanqua* rather than *Camellia Japonica*. We will let you know how our plans progress in another newsletter.

PAST EVENTS

An Autumn Day in Gundaroo

THURSDAY 20 MAY

I have always considered it a privilege to be welcomed into someone's garden. Generally, they are deeply personal places and like any piece of art, reveal something about their creator.

During our recent event held in Gundaroo's charmingly restored historic memorial hall, all who attended were happily transported for an hour and a half to Frank Cabot's magnificent private pleasure garden, *Les Quatre Vents*, in the Charlevoix region near Quebec City, Canada through the film *The Gardener*.

The Gardener premiered in early 2018. The film looks back at this remarkable man's personal story and the artistic philosophy that gave birth to what many consider, one of the greatest gardens in the world. Filmed shortly before he died, Cabot recounts the stories behind his inspiration for the 20-acre garden's almost overwhelming number of rooms, features and follies which you are shown in chronological order of their creation. This is supplemented by the observations of members of his family and gardening experts and writers about Cabot's inspirations and philosophy. I have never visited *Les Quatre Vents* but having watched the film, I am sure a tour of the garden would be an incredible experience. If you were unable to join us in Gundaroo, I would highly recommend purchasing the film on DVD or watching it, if available, on your streaming platform.

As we enjoyed our country-style afternoon tea following the film, several people commented on Cabot's philosophical comments, such as:

"... when visiting a garden you don't just go through, you look quietly, listening to the garden, drink in the experience, visit alone or with someone who doesn't do much talking."

"... when I see something in a garden that is so good and I'm moved by it, it improves me as a person."

"... gardening is the purest of human pleasures, a good garden has a soul, the senses are the gateway to your soul ... everyone has a garden within them... making a garden is perhaps a human being's most intimate relationship with the planet ... hands in the soil are an embrace."

"... you can never have too many delphiniums in a garden ..."

After visiting Ruth Bancroft's dry garden in Walnut Creek, California in 1989 and learning that there was no clear plan for the future of the garden, Cabot decided that something needed to be done to help preserve such exceptional gardens for future generations and founded the Garden Conservancy. The mission of the Garden Conservancy is to preserve, share, and celebrate America's gardens and diverse gardening traditions for the education and inspiration of the public. Learn more about the Garden Conservancy here <https://www.gardenconservancy.org>.

In addition to watching *The Gardener*, those who attended the day were tempted by the vast collection of second-hand garden books at our book sale. Thanks again to all those generous members and friends who donated books and magazines and to all those who indulged and bought a few! Particular thanks must also go to Committee member and NMC representative Anne Claoue-Long, who initiated this fundraising project and managed the collection of books. We raised over \$800. All proceeds from the book sale will go towards the Branch's latest digitisation projects, so keep your eye on upcoming newsletters to learn more about these.



Whilst we have all become adept at attending lectures and visiting gardens via Zoom, it is days like this that reminds us what a pleasure it is to collectively gather and share a day together, and how, visiting a garden, virtually or in person, somehow feed our souls.

Bronwyn Blake

The First Winter Lecture ***Trisha Dixon: Spirit of the Garden*** **WEDNESDAY 9 JUNE**

This year's series of three Winter Lectures focuses on significant women, who deserve to be better known for their contribution in writing, photographing, and collecting plants and trees, or significant landscapes.

Our first speaker, Trisha Dixon is well known to many through her long association with AGHS. For 6 years Trisha edited our AGHS journal, and has for many years led trips visiting significant gardens, both within Australia, and overseas. In 2006 when our Branch produced a film about Canberra's garden heritage, Trisha was chosen to be the narrator. As an author and photographer, Trisha has published a number of garden related books, four of which have been published by the National Library. It therefore seemed fitting that we would invite her to be the guest speaker for the joint lecture with the Friends of the National Library.

Trisha spoke of the influences that led to her writing, photographing, and reflecting on *The Spirit of the Garden*, her most recently published book by the National Library. Her account began with important family influences, starting with handed down stories of Irish forebears and their love of books and learning. Trisha also spoke of her mother's love of gardening, and her father's enthusiasm for the Australian bush and the terrain of the Shoalhaven River, and the impact this had on her growing up.

Bobundra, Trisha's property on the Monaro, where she has resided for most of her adult life, is the garden she loves, and has taught her how to successfully garden through the vagaries of "drought and flooding rains", as well as snow falls! The wide open plains of the Monaro, her borrowed landscape, also provide the sense that this is where she belongs, even though she is constantly absent leading groups on garden tours to other parts of Australia, and in pre-COVID times, overseas.

The large audience (within the constraints imposed in these COVID times) very much enjoyed the talk, and many also took the opportunity to buy a copy of the book.

Margie Bourke



Trisha with AGHS and Friends of the NLA Committee members

L to R: Meredith Hinchliffe, Margie Bourke, Trisha Dixon, Greg Johnson, Kerry Blackburn and Lynne Curran

NCA MANAGEMENT OF CANBERRA'S HISTORIC LANDSCAPE PLANTINGS

Australian War Memorial Early Works

Your committee and the National Management Committee of the AGHS, submitted concerns to the NCA about the proposed early works to facilitate the demolition of Anzac Hall at the Australian War Memorial (AWM) and enable controversial new development costing \$500 million.

Our concerns were related to the designed landscape surrounding the building and loss of many native trees. Many others also tendered comments covering this and other concerns. All to no avail. The NCA has approved the early works proposal that will see the removal of 140 trees, considerable alterations to the landscaping in front of the AWM building at the end of Anzac Parade, demolition of the award-winning Anzac Hall for a new larger display space and changes to landscaping at the base of Mt Ainslie. A replanting program of some 250 trees will help to ameliorate the landscape feel of the AWM surrounds, but the promised "advanced stock" will take many years to compensate for the loss of mature specimens.

This is very disappointing, as was the speed in which the NCA processed the some 600 submissions, of which only a handful supported the proposal.

National Library of Australia Forecourt Poplars

The NCA's new Tree Management Policy is available on its website. Your committee provided input in consultations, but our concerns about the proposed management of the poplars (*Populus nigra* 'Italica') at the NLA forecourt seem to have been overlooked. Lombardy poplars are used as landmark trees in important locations in the Parliamentary Zone – for example in the Old Parliament House (OPH)/Museum of Australian Democracy courtyards. The species is also on the ACT Government's weed list. And the NLA poplars are in very poor health and need replacing.

The NCA has committed itself to replacing the poplars with a species that is not on the ACT weed list. The choice indicated is *Quercus robur* 'Fastigiata' - similar in shape but a different colour and rather stiffer in outline. In heritage terms changing the species of the forecourt trees is similar to removing the bronze façade sculptures or stained glass windows that are part of the NLA building. Such a change to the building would be unthinkable but landscape plantings still seem to be considered expendable. The proposed change will remove one of the historic horticultural aspects that contribute to the heritage significance of the whole site. This is despite documentary information provided from the NLA's own collections regarding the specific choice of the poplars by landscape designer Richard Clough.

There are strategies to manage the undesirable nature of the poplar trees – at the OPH poplars were replanted in large underground pots to control the extent of suckering. Non-suckering rootstock is also available for use, and at the Braidwood avenue of poplars the suckers are cut out every few years. It remains to be seen if the NCA is willing to consider alternative management strategies for the NLA Lombardy poplars rather than replace them with another species which give a different aesthetic effect at the important historic and heritage listed landscape.

Anne Claoue-Long

BRANCH NEWS

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

The committee would like to welcome the following new members who have joined since the last Newsletter.

- Barbara Belcher, Canberra
- Denise Landau, Canberra
- Alice-Anne and Timothy Macnaught, Canberra.
- Pamela Swaffield, Canberra

AGHS SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS BRANCH

Branch members are welcome to attend events organised by the Southern Highland Branch. The next event is:

Sunday 22 August, 1.30 – 5.00pm
2nd Winter Seminar (and AGM)

Their committee is delighted to announce that they have two special speakers for the second winter seminar: Chris Betteridge and Stuart Macpherson.

In addition, they are going to hold a silent book auction with a small number of books from their stock. Prior to the meeting several members plan to have lunch at Burrawang

Pub across the road from the Hall. (Separate bookings to be made through the Burrawang Pub).

Chris Betteridge is a foundation member of the AGHS and currently completing a Character Study of Bowral (the results of which will be the topic of his talk). He was the original landscape and environmental specialist in the Heritage and Conservation Branch of the NSW Department of Planning from 1978 and over the next decade that position provided him with the opportunity to pursue a strong interest in the protection of historic gardens and cultural landscapes generally.

Stuart Macpherson is currently the Head Gardener for Frensham and is responsible for the team that maintains and improves all gardens, grounds and sports fields at the three school locations, Frensham, Gib Gate and Sturt. Previously he worked for nine years for the Sydney Living Museums (Historic Houses Trust of NSW), providing support to the conservation and maintenance of the garden and grounds across all SLM sites and Heritage and Collections Division projects to conserve, develop and present these gardens and landscapes to the highest standards for access, interpretation, enjoyment and education of visitors in accordance with the philosophies and corporate plan of Sydney Living Museums.

Cost AGHS Members \$25, non-members \$35 (refreshments included)

For full details including booking forms go to
<https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/branches/southern-highlands/>

AGHS NATIONAL NEWS

AGHS Photo Competition

Deadline for entries extended to 17 July 2021

Your last chance to enter – for full details go to
<https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/publications/aghs-2020-photo-competition/>

AGHS 2021 CONFERENCE: SYDNEY 10-12 SEPTEMBER 2021



The Full Conference is fully booked. However, lecture only (in-person attendance and online participation) are still available below.

For the registration link go to <https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/register/>

OF INTEREST

NATIONAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA (ACT)

ACT Region Heritage Symposium 2021

Saturday 7 August, 9am – 5pm

Biology Building ANU Acton Campus

Convened by Heritage Partners: ICOMOS, CAS, CDHS & NTACT

Heritage at Times of Crisis: Saving, Sustaining, Sharing - In a Land of Fires, Droughts and Flooding Rains, and now Climate Change, and a Health Pandemic, what role at such times has a community's heritage in maintaining its sense of place, of belonging, and continuity?

Registration open in July; \$75 full registration, \$55 member of host organisation and \$35 concessions and full-time student. For further information contact

info@nationaltrustact.org.au

NATIONAL CAPITAL AUTHORITY MAGIC OF MARION

<https://www.nca.gov.au/marion>

To celebrate Marion Mahony's 150th Birthday, the woman who played such an integral part in architectural designs across two continents.

Lakeside Walk until Tuesday 10 August

While walking Bridge to Bridge noticed some drawings on the pavement? Enjoy these cameos from Marion's original drawings.

Exhibition from late June at Regatta Point

Marion, a Woman of Genius

Discover more about Marion's life and work. Besides being a noted architect she was a gifted painter, community organiser and sometime believer in fairies and elves.

Free

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDENS

www.anbg.gov.au

Friends Thursday Talks have recommenced, with new arrangements in line with ACT COVID-19 restrictions. For program details go to

https://www.friendsanbg.org.au/calendar_talks

HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY OF CANBERRA

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

LAKE BURLEY GRIFFIN GUARDIANS (LBGG)

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