

ACT Monaro Riverina Branch

Newsletter June 2023 No 3



Australian Garden History Society
www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au

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BRANCH DIARY

21 JUNE

Gundaroo Film Day

5 JULY

Talk: French Botanising in Australia

2 AUGUST

Nominations close for the Branch Committee

9 AUGUST

AGM and Annual Lecture

AGHS NATIONAL CONFERENCES

43RD AGHS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

IPSWICH, QLD

29 SEPTEMBER –

1 OCTOBER 2023

2 optional days – 28 Sept and 2 October

44TH AGHS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

BUNBURY, WA

18 – 20 OCTOBER

2024

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

ROSES IN MID WINTER A FILM DAY AT GUNDAROO WEDNESDAY 21 JUNE, 12 NOON START

Come join us for our very popular Gundaroo Film Day!

As usual it is in the historic and warm Gundaroo Memorial Hall.

This year the theme is all ROSES.

Please arrive by 12 for a short talk on heritage roses in Australia by long time member of the Heritage Roses in Australia Association and AGHS member, Louise Gaudry, followed by a hearty lunch of home-made soup, and a screening of the French comedy *The Rose Maker*.

This entertaining and uplifting film stars Catherine Frot as a formerly successful rose grower on the verge of bankruptcy and her unorthodox solutions for the survival of her business. We will finish with a delicious afternoon tea and conversation.

Wearing of rose inspired accessories or clothing is strongly encouraged.

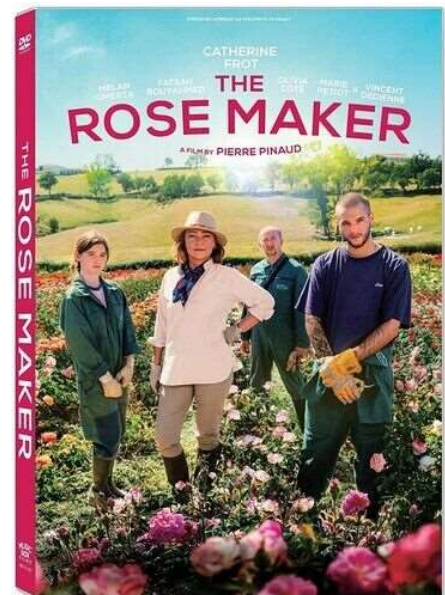
Location Gundaroo Soldiers' Memorial Hall, 52 Cork St Hall

Cost \$30 AGHS members, \$35 non- members (includes the talk and film and afternoon tea)

Bookings are absolutely essential at <https://www.trybooking.com/CHVIO>

As this is a very popular event and numbers are limited, it is recommended that you book early.

Further Information Bronwyn Blake, blakesos@hotmail.com, 0439 718 580



**BRANCH
COMMITTEE**

Bronwyn Blake, Chair
Sue Cassidy, Treasurer
Anne Claoue-Long, State
NMC Representative
Nancy Clarke, Secretary

Lynne Curran
Louise Gaudry
Susan Phillips

**TALK: FRENCH BOTANISING IN AUSTRALIA
IN THE 18TH & 19TH CENTURIES
SPEAKER: MAX BOURKE AM
WEDNESDAY 5 JULY, 6 PM**

Max Bourke has long been interested in many aspects of both French culture and the Enlightenment. From the 18th century France sought to become a colonial power to rival



Britain. This was played out in both scientific and military spheres and the result was a body of knowledge that lay at the core of understanding the new, to western eyes, flora of Australia. This talk will look at the work of French botanists/gardeners from the 18th Century and their interactions with British scientists in documenting, and describing in the then 'new' method(s) of western science, the plant life of Australia. Despite rolling wars and revolution this work went on with only minor interruptions, into the 19th century.

Max has academic qualifications in science, art and conservation management. He has worked in the public and private sectors in senior roles and served as officer bearer in both the ACT Branch and the National Management Committee of the Australian Garden History Society.

Venue The Chapel, Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, 15 Blackall Street, Barton

Further information Please **Save the Date**, booking details to be provided by email closer to the date.

**WEDNESDAY 9 AUGUST, 5.30 P.M.
BRANCH AGM**

**Notice of Annual General Meeting of the
AGHS ACT Monaro Riverina Branch
Wednesday 9 August 2023 at 5:30
Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, Parkes**

The Annual General Meeting of the ACT Monaro Riverina Branch of the AGHS will be held on Wednesday 9 August 2023 in the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture at 5:30pm. Our 2023/2023 Committee will be elected at this meeting and it is therefore an important event in the branch calendar. We strongly encourage all members to attend.

Our current Committee is smaller than it has been in previous years. Without adequate representation on the Committee, the work of our branch will suffer. The need for members to stand up and be ready to serve is made more pressing with the retirement of one of our current Committee members, Lynne Curran. If you think that working with a group concerned with the preservation of historic gardens and cultural landscapes is something you could contribute to, come and join us!

The Committee meets monthly and works collaboratively to develop a program of activities for members as well as to advocate for the preservation of landscapes of significance. The Branch Committee also works closely with the Society's national office and other Branches. Committee members are elected for a three-year term, with the option of one renewal.

If you are interested in joining the Committee, or know someone who you think might be interested, please contact Bronwyn Blake, blakesos@hotmail.com or on 0439 718 580

A nomination form will be available from mid-June from Nancy Clarke, clarkenancy624@gmail.com or on 0423 690 626.

Nominations close on Wednesday 2 August.

THE AGM WILL BE FOLLOWED BY OUR ANNUAL LECTURE

A highlight in our calendar.

This year, Francesca Beddie, the wonderful editor of our journal, will give a presentation designed to stimulate a conversation about the future possibilities for *Australian Garden History*.

More information about the AGM and the Annual Lecture as well as booking information will be available closer to August.



PAST EVENTS

CANBERRA AND REGION HERITAGE FESTIVAL 2023 – SHARING STORIES

THE AGHS CONTRIBUTIONS

For a number of years AGHS has worked closely with the National Trust ACT on the program of the Canberra and Region Heritage Festival and this cooperation continued in 2023.

The National Trust Open Day at Duntroon Dairy on 15 April was a satisfying community event, well organised and well attended. The AGHS stall attracted a steady stream of interested visitors throughout the day, some of them active members of the Society, some familiar with the Society but interested to find out more, others finding out about us and our Branch activities for the first time. As often happens, there was a two-way exchange of information, with some of our visitors providing us with excellent suggestions for possible program events, as well as interesting historic gardens information, while appreciating the personal feedback to their inquiries and enjoying the gift copies of our excellent Journal.



Committee member Louise Gaudry at Duntroon Dairy, photo Nancy Clarke

What is becoming a focus of heritage interest in Canberra – the Mid-Century Modern (MCM) movement - was a feature of two linked events in the suburb of Hackett, both devised by AGHS member and MCM enthusiast Anna Howe. The exhibition at the Hackett shops - **Hackett – a Mid Century Modern Suburb** was opened by the ACT Minister for Heritage, Rebecca Vassarotti on 12 April, and it continued for the duration of the Festival. A series of posters covered Hackett's early development as a planned suburb and the growth of a strong local community. The major characteristics of MCM

houses and gardens was included, and the description of the intersection of MCM style gardens with what was then the emerging “Australian native” garden style proved of particular interest to AGHS members. Between these large posters were smaller ones featuring individual houses and the people who lived in them. The excellent design of the posters by Mariana Rollgejer who has worked closely with AGHS for many years contributed to the exhibition’s success, not just with local residents, somewhat surprised to find themselves living in a place of social, architectural and garden interest, but with those drawn there by the good publicity it had received.



Launch of Hackett exhibition. Heritage Minister Rebecca Vassarotti, Bronwyn Blake, Anna Howe, photo Nancy Clarke

On 22 April Anna conducted a second walking tour of a section of Hackett – **Hackett Heritage: A Mid-Century Modern Hub**. This was fully booked with a long waiting list, and it is planned to repeat the walk later in the year. The route was similar to that Anna led for AGHS in March (in the April Newsletter), but with more emphasis on design than the gardens, noting in particular the inclusion in Hackett of the first complex of town houses in Canberra, in (of course) MCM style.

An interesting add-on was the reference to the newly installed *Canberra Tracks* sign on the Hackett Oval, featuring the substantial multi lane avenue of pine and eucalyptus trees presumed to have been planted in the early 1930s, and now identified as having been planted as a screen between the developing city and a cemetery that had been proposed but was never built.

The final AGHS event for the Festival, **Kingston Parks, Gardens and Windbreaks - Old and New**, scheduled for Saturday 29 April was deferred to later in the year. The glorious autumn weather broke, and as the route for the walk provided no cover, it would have been no pleasure for walkers or speakers.

AGHS would like to congratulate Linda Roberts from ACT Heritage for her superb work across many years organising the Heritage Festival. The themes of the festival have varied across the years with the 2023 theme of *Sharing Stories* providing an unusually rich treasure trove of places to visit and histories to discover.

Nancy Clarke

FOUR GARDENS OF THE MONARO 21 APRIL

The AGHS visit to Cooma and Nimmitabel gardens was planned with the consciousness that our branch includes not just the ACT and immediate surrounds but the Monaro region and the Riverina and that it was time we went south again. And so, the Branch committee approached long standing AGHS member and Nimmitabel resident, Lainie Lawson, about a Monaro gardens day.

Lainie promptly offered to open her own garden, and arranged with three of her friends to do so as well, and on the 21 April over 40 members and friends of the Branch arrived at Anne and Howard Charles’ new Cooma garden for morning tea and the first of four wonderful gardens.

Anne and Howard left their Nimmitabel property *Rockybah* with its established garden in 2017 and Anne immediately started work on a new garden on a sloping two-acre plot on the edge of Cooma. Five years later, the garden, formerly a horse paddock, is still young but the strong design lines are clear and the new trees are very comfortable among the old gum trees. Anne has surrounded the house with exotics that thrive in the cold Monaro climate – maples and hydrangeas and a box hedge. Climbers camouflage the tall front of the house, and a perennial border surrounds the paved back terrace where we enjoyed morning tea. A thriving vegetable garden sits at the back of the house, and in the large front garden are loosely defined spaces – notably a reed surrounded pond supervised by three metal emus that hosts living birds. Garden sculptures are a notable feature of *Annie's Garden* – some brought from Nimmitabel, others acquired for the new garden. And there is still plenty of space for future plans.



Vegies in Anne's garden, photo Anne Claoue-Long

The very large (12 acres) garden of *Blairgowrie*, includes a fine display of ancient trees, both evergreen and deciduous, cedars, elms, pines and poplars. Underneath their canopy and in the gaps between the trees on this autumn day were splashes of colour, including species of cyclamen, colchicums and Japanese wind flowers, as well as a rich and varied undercanopy of shrubs. Round the back a bed of bright yellow autumn crocuses (*sternbergia*) flashed. Jenny Slatyer and internationally recognised artist Imants Tillers have lived here for 26 years, transforming and developing the garden. Jenny and Imants spoke with us about the garden and its history, and we were privileged to be invited into Imants' stone studio on the side of the garden, with its vivid autumn vine espaliered on the outside wall.



At Blairgowrie – hosts and guests, photo Nancy Clarke

We continued south to Nimmitabel and then along a badly potholed road to *Mia Mia*, home of John Rose and Denham Williams where we ate our picnic lunches on the sheltered paved back terrace. The gardens of *Mia Mia* were originally established in 1988 and have been modified and further extended by Denham, after she and John moved there in 2005. Like the other gardens, trees are a major feature of this garden, and Denham has added to these, but there are also large plantings of bulbs, perennials and shrubs, as well as productive gardens. There are significant plantings of roses, dahlias, iris and aquilegias.

The Monaro climate is VERY demanding of gardeners who must be perennially optimistic as well as industrious and Denham's notes on the garden say that the very wet recent seasons after years of drought have brought their own problems and plant losses.

But the most striking feature of this garden is probably its wonderful openness with a short flight of wide shallow steps opening to a fine vista.



Dry garden at Mia Mia with the Monaro landscape beyond, photo Nancy Clarke

Our final garden was *Erindale*, just north of Nimmitabel, home since 2001 of Lainie Lawson. The good existing garden was trebled in size by Lainie and Richard, but Lainie says that is enough. Sited at the very top of the Great Dividing Range the garden is tucked into the side of the hill, with its dramatic valley views from the house and garden itself. The trees remain magnificent, providing good wind protection, and Lainie has developed a number of perennial and mixed shrubby borders, but true to gardener-type, Lainie has diversified and is working on a dry gravel garden on the rocky hill in the front of the house. She has the benefit of a reliable water supply from a bore, so is able to water as needed, a great boon in times of drought. We enjoyed our afternoon tea in the garden, before heading off in various directions.

Back in 2012 Howard Tanner described a garden visit to some Monaro gardens including *Erindale*, speaking of its "panorama of the heroic Australian landscape of the Tom Groggin valley". He describes the landscape (Australian Garden History, Vol 24, No 1) in the following terms:

Expansive grassy plains, often treeless; the folds of the land accented with upright poplars and weeping willow, golden in autumn; and the wide horizon edged by mountains to the west.... Granite and basalt underlie the terrain: the basalt areas are typically without trees, while the granite country has rounded rocky outcrops and scattered eucalypts.

This is the land that all these gardens come from (the use of basalt and granite particularly in stone walls is a feature of all the gardens), and this is the landscape we saw on our visit.

We all very warmly thank Anne and Charles, Jenny and Imants, Denham and John, and Lainie for your wonderful welcome, hospitality and generosity, sharing and talking about your four very distinctive gardens with a large contingent of visitors, and for providing us with refreshments and conversation.

A special feature of this day was that in addition to a Canberra contingent, we welcomed AGHS members from the Monaro region and also from the Sydney and Southern Highlands Branches, as well as some garden lovers from the local area. The golden autumn day was a blessing, with spectacular autumn colour on the leaves of the deciduous trees.

Nancy Clarke.

BRANCH NEWS

WELCOME TO A NEW MEMBER

The committee would like to welcome the following new member who has joined since the last Newsletter.

- Robert Purves, Carwoola

INAUGURAL ACT HERITAGE ORATION 2023 17 APRIL

To celebrate World Heritage Day, the National Trust (ACT) invited AGHS member Max Bourke to speak. His topic was ***Australian heritage at the cross-roads – looking back and forward without breaking my neck.***

For those who were unable to attend it is available at.

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/event/inaugural-act-heritage-oration-2023/#:~:text=%20Oration%20provides%20an%20opportunity,nationally%20and%20in%20the%20ACT.>

ADVOCACY – LOMBARDY POPLAR TREES AT THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA'S FORECOURT

You may have seen media reports about the Lombardy poplar trees at the National Library of Australia forecourt. The poplars are to be replaced and advocacy by the AGHS Branch has ensured the authenticity and integrity of the heritage landscape at the NLA is to be conserved.

The poplar trees were in poor health after years of drought and the NCA had been intending to replace them for some time, but was unsure about the choice of species, as the Lombardy poplar is on the ACT Government's Weed List. Fastigate oaks and Tulip trees were both under consideration at different times. Neither were considered suitable heritage or climate sensitive replacements by the AGHS which mounted an advocacy campaign to retain Lombardy poplars as the species for replanting. The AGHS argument rested on two principles: (1) that the Lombardy poplars were a deliberate heritage planting choice by Richard Clough when he was landscape architect at the NCDC; and (2) that weed management in the NLA forecourt could be readily managed.



The old poplars have now gone and are to be replaced with new plantings of Lombardy poplars! Consistent with our arguments, concerns about the “pest” status of the species were resolved by the Commonwealth Department of Environment confirmation of the heritage status of the forecourt tree plantings and an undertaking from the NCA to manage any perceived weedy suckering which may occur.

The ACT Government has issued an exemption for Lombardy poplar use at the NLA site. We hope the new poplars will grow quickly because the forecourt area looks very bare at the moment.

Anne Claoue-Long

Further details relating to this project can be viewed at

www.nca.gov.au/parking/closure/landscape-renewal-forecourt-national-library-australia

NEWS FROM OTHER BRANCHES

You will have received information on these events through the National E News. For more information visit AGHS website <https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au> I went from here into "News" then "Events" then "Calendar" and clicked onto the graphic for each event to get more details. There did not seem a direct link to the calendar. If you are interested in one event perhaps easier to go to that Branch's page.

Tuesday 6 June, 6.00 – 7.30 pm

Victorian Branch: Webinar

Music, Recreation and Gardens at Nineteenth-Century International Exhibition

An online lecture by Sarah Kirby

Wednesday 7 June, 7.00 - 8.00 pm

Sydney Branch: Webinar

Paul Sorensen, landscape designer

A survey of the life and work of perhaps the greatest NSW landscape designer, speaker Stuart Read

Sunday 25 June, 11.00 - 3.00 pm (lunch provided)

Southern Highlands Winter Solstice Seminar

Speakers:

- Dr. Stephen Utick – *The Bicentennial of Camellia Collections in New South Wales*
- Nick Corbett – *Threats and Opportunities – The Gardens of the Southern Highlands*

Tuesday 11 July, 5.45 pm

Victorian Branch: Webinar

Little men in Red Hats: The Story of Garden Gnomes

Winter online lecture by Dr David Marsh, UK

AGHS NATIONAL OFFICE



Bookings are now open for this conference. For the conference details go to the AGHS website. <https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au>

SEEKING DONATIONS TO THE NINA CRONE WRITING FUND

Most of the content published in the society journal *Australian Garden History* is provided to the editor free of charge by members of the organisation. To those authors, we thank them for their generosity and for the time that goes into researching and preparing an article for publication.

The NMC considers that it is very important to address issues of interest to a broad community for the society to enhance its advocacy role and to position it for the future. In order to attract new voices and perspectives from younger and First Nation's writers as well as non AGHS members, monetary compensation will be required. We cannot expect *pro bono* contributions.

The initial Nina Crone Writing Fund was set up in 2007 with \$10,000 and the money generated articles by four students, an article by an Aboriginal writer and one by a nature writer. The fund was then replenished, thanks to donations from individual AGHS members and fundraising from the 2022 Winter Webinar. The replenished fund was used for three further articles by Aboriginal authors. We hope you have enjoyed reading these in the journal.

The Nina Crone Writing Fund account is currently in need of further replenishment to continue this work. The editor and Editorial Advisory Committee are seeking donations from individual members and Branch committees so that further articles may be commissioned. The editor also welcomes your suggestions on topics of interest and new authors.

For more information on the fund and how to donate go to
<https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/funding/nina-crone-writing-fund/>

FUNDING FOR TROVE

AGHS is delighted that the Federal Government announced sustainable funding for Trove in advance of the Federal Budget. AGHS made strong representations to Ministers about the importance of Trove as our digital memory and as a resource for people all around the country. You might recall that as part of the AGHS birthday celebrations, our branch funded the digitisation of some of the NLA's early gardening books which are now available on the NLA website.

The federal budget extended funding for Trove for the next four years, with ongoing funding beyond that time. The certainty of funding will allow the NLA to continue to provide this essential service, enrich it with new content and stabilise and secure the platform. Trove is a wonderful resource and if you've not browsed through the digitised gardening books and journals, it's a lovely way to spend a couple of hours. If you're unfamiliar with Trove, the AGHS website has a very useful guide on how to search for items written by librarian and AGHS member, Nancy Clarke.

See <https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/publications/dig-in-with-trove/>

OF INTEREST

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDENS
www.anbg.gov.au

Friends Thursday Talks - for program details and for bookings go to
<https://www.friendsanbg.org.au/calendar> This calendar also provides information on other talks, walks and activities in the Garden.

NATIONAL ARBORETUM CANBERRA
www.nationalarboretum.act.gov.au

For details on walks, workshops and other events visit the Arboretum website.

NATIONAL TRUST (ACT)

Saturday 17 June, 1 -2.30 pm
Stirling Ridge Walk

The Friends of Grasslands (FOG) were recipients of the 2023 Outstanding Award for Outstanding contribution to ACT Heritage for the Lake Burley Griffin Lands Ecological Restoration Project.

Join Professor Jamie Pittock and walk down and along the edge of Lake Burley Griffin to the extensive replanted area. See what's been achieved with really hard yakka from dedicated FOG volunteers, view the ochre cliffs and see the proposed site for a future prime ministerial residence. Then join FOG members for afternoon tea, enjoy a Q&A and hear more about other FOG sites as to what's being done to conserve the ACT's natural temperate grassy ecosystems.

For more information and bookings go to: <https://www.trybooking.com/CICJQ>

ERYLDENE CRUNCH WEBINAR

Climate Resilience – Understanding New Challenges for Historic Gardens (CRUNCH)

This webinar was held on 30 March and supported by CreateNSW ,the AGHS and the National Trust. Recordings are now live and available at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLR47eRHH4PidqK8ZZPz1rP6BGcrz9mPR>

The ten YouTube videos present the different experiences of climate change at historic gardens in Australia, the UK and the US. All the speakers are acknowledged experts in their field and include the AGHS patron, Tim Entwisle and AGHS member, Trevor Nottle. There is much food for thought in the webinar about the adaptations necessary for historic heritage gardens.

WHAT BIRDO IS THAT

***What Birdo is That? A Field Guide to Bird People* by Professor Libby Robin**

In an email in May, we drew attention to the book launch of a book about bird people by AGHS member, Professor Libby Robin. The book was recently launched by Professor Robin at the NLA. We enjoy seeing our AGHS members in print, and this guide reveals how bird-people in Australia have gone about their craft across the years. Stories come from diverse landscapes as well as dusty archives. It is sure to appeal to many members as well as providing a basis for understanding the complex relationship between people and birds.

HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY OF CANBERRA
<http://www.hsoc.org.au>

LAKE BURLEY GRIFFIN GUARDIANS (LBGG)
<http://lakeburleygriffinguardians.org.au/>



For more information go to <https://icomosga2023.org/>