

# ACT Monaro Riverina Branch

## Newsletter February 2024 No 1



Australian Garden History Society  
[www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au](http://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au)

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### BRANCH DIARY

#### 5 MARCH

*Horse Park & Elm Grove*

#### 4 APRIL

*Exploring Green Griffith*

#### 20 APRIL

*National Trust Open Day*

#### 28 APRIL

*Joint AGHS/NT walk  
Modernism & Canberra  
Red Brick*

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#### 44<sup>TH</sup> AGHS ANNUAL CONFERENCE BUNBURY, WA 18 – 20 OCTOBER 2024

More information in the  
December National E  
News.  
(emailed to members 4/12)

### BRANCH COMMITTEE

**Robyn Oates**, Chair  
**Sue Cassidy**, Treasurer  
**Anne Claoue-Long**, State  
NMC Representative  
**Nancy Clarke**, Secretary

**Louise Gaudry**  
**Rosanna Horn**

## AGHS COMINGS & GOINGS

### OUR CHAIR STEPS DOWN

It is with sadness that we acknowledge the resignation of our Branch Committee Chair, Bronwyn Blake who is stepping down for personal reasons.

We are so grateful for her active contribution to AGHS over many years; since 2015 she has played a vital part in activities at both branch and national level. She joined the Branch Committee in 2015 bringing to it not just her personal qualities of character and multiple talents but much experience and knowledge gained in Open Gardens Australia. From 2016 to 2022 she was also an elected member of the AGHS National Management Committee where she took on the position of Secretary. In 2019 with Stuart Read, she was elected Co-Chair of the NMC – they served in this role for three years through the extraordinarily difficult Covid years. During this time, they faced many daunting challenges from coaching the locked-down committee to use Zoom, to facing the traumatic cancellation of the Sydney conference and associated shortfall in society income. As Co-Chairs, Bronwyn and Stuart helped not only keep AGHS afloat but also instigated a review and an update of the Society's critical documents – the Constitution and Manual of Proceedings - and developing a Strategic Plan. They also led the Society as for the first time it specifically addressed climate change.

Meantime, while holding a full-time position and with her husband Harold raising three daughters, Bronwyn continued to contribute actively to the Branch's program. In 2022 as her position on the National Committee drew to an end Bronwyn accepted the position of ACT Monaro Riverina Branch Chair. Among her many achievements, one has particularly attracted a warm response from our members – the garden history related film day at the delightful Gundaroo Soldiers Memorial Hall. We all wish Bronwyn the very best for the future and thank her for her ever-present warmth, knowledge, dedication, enthusiasm and hard work.

Committee member Robyn Oates has generously agreed to accept the position of Branch Chair. Very many thanks to Robyn.

### WELCOME TO SARAH EDWARDS

We would like to offer a formal welcome to our new Executive Officer, Sarah Edwards, who is tasked with running the national office of the society.

The latest edition of Australian Garden History (vol 35, no 3, January 2024, page 33) contained a profile piece on Sarah, written by herself, giving us information about her background, which is both interesting and impressive, and her commitment to helping AGHS members with their requests. I recommend reading this introduction to Sarah and what she brings to this new role.

As branch representative on the NMC and Chair of the Editorial Advisory Committee I can confirm her willingness to learn and assist. We have met several times by email,

phone and Zoom, and I am looking forward to a real face to face 3-D encounter in Melbourne for the annual AGHS NMC planning weekend in early February.

The branch committee welcomes Sarah and we remind our members that she is part time, working Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. Her email remains the same as the one Lisa worked on [info@gardenhistorysociety.org.au](mailto:info@gardenhistorysociety.org.au) and her phone number in the office is now only a mobile one 0419 977 703 with no landline.

Good luck settling into your new role Sarah. We are very happy to welcome you as AGHS Executive Officer.

**Anne Claoue-Long**

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

### HORSE PARK AND ELM GROVE, GUNGAHLIN TUESDAY 5 MARCH, 3PM

Horse Park and Elm Grove homesteads are two of the oldest continually occupied and worked rural properties in the ACT. John Gillespie and his wife Mary Anne worked in the Ginninderra district from the 1840s, and in 1852 John bought 30 acres of land at Dead Horse Gully in what is now Gungahlin, in the north of Canberra. They named their property Horse Park and began building their stone homestead in 1853. In 1882 their son James settled at the nearby Elm Grove. Together these homesteads give a wonderful picture of a family enterprise extending over more than a century and a half. Between the two properties are the Horse Park wetlands, a significant ecological community and habitat for a range of flora and fauna species with urban development on its door step. Horse Park and Elm Grove are both on the ACT Heritage Register.

We are delighted to have an opportunity to make an afternoon visit to these historic homesteads on Tuesday 5 March. Many thanks to AGHS member, garden columnist and horticulturist Jackie Warburton who has put these arrangements in place for us.

The garden at Horse Park was planted with trees and shrubs that would survive the westerly winds that come across the wetlands, and the garden still has many original trees including elms, cedars and a significant pear tree.



*Horse Park, photo Jackie Warburton*

Elm Grove gardens have some remnants of the orchard that was planted in yesteryear with two old apple trees framing the entrance to the homestead. These are of high significance to the Gillespie family who were pioneers in the area and who owned Elm Grove for over one hundred years. The garden's edging and fencing are significant to the history of the homestead and they are still there today. The homestead is currently occupied by a young family who live there and run a low-key wedding business on site.

Note that this is NOT a tour of the house interiors - we will be looking at the precincts including the garden plantings and exterior of the homesteads.

We will meet at Horse Park, where we will walk round the site, and have light refreshments (no toilet). We will then drive to Elm Grove for a walk/talk. Full details will be sent to you once you have booked.



**Elm Grove: Photo Jackie Warburton**

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Meet      | At 3.pm at Horse Park, Gungahlin – access details provided once you book.   |
| Cost      | \$15 AGHS members, \$20 others (including light refreshments)   |
| Bookings  | Bookings are essential, numbers limited.<br><a href="https://www.trybooking.com/COYRQ">https://www.trybooking.com/COYRQ</a> |
| Inquiries | Nancy Clarke: <a href="mailto:clarkenancy624@gmail.com">clarkenancy624@gmail.com</a> or 0423 690 626                        |

## EXPLORING GREEN GRIFFITH THURSDAY 4 APRIL, 4PM

AGHS has planned an early April walk through the suburb of Griffith, just as we near the end of Daylight Saving. Griffith is one of Canberra's oldest suburbs, rich in parks and fine trees, and with several streets following Walter Burley Griffin's original designs for Canberra.

Our tour leaders will talk about the beginnings of the suburb and how it, and the streets in it, were given their names.



**Captain Cook Crescent, Griffith Photo Nancy Clarke**



During our shady stroll of approximately an hour we will learn about Griffith's growth from a dusty, smelly sheep paddock to the prized suburb it is today. We will be seeing small houses from the early forties and late fifties to huge modern ones taking up the large blocks, walking under mature trees and through parks, with many plantings from the 1930s to the 1950s.

We will conclude with a visit to one of the original ex-govie houses where you will have the opportunity to purchase garden related books while we enjoy refreshments.

Meet At 4.pm at M16 Artspace, 21 Blaxland Crescent Griffith (where there is good parking.)

Cost \$15 AGHS members, \$20 others (including light refreshments)

Bookings Bookings are essential. Go to <https://www.trybooking.com/COUWN>

Inquiries Louise Gaudry, [lgaudry@smartchat.net.au](mailto:lgaudry@smartchat.net.au)

CANBERRA & REGION HERITAGE FESTIVAL CANBERRA & REGION HERITAGE FESTIVAL

## CANBERRA & REGION HERITAGE FESTIVAL 13 – 28 APRIL

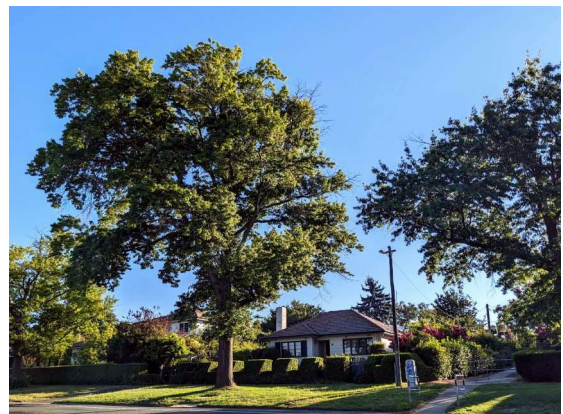
As in previous years AGHS will participate in the Canberra and Region Heritage Festival in 2024. The Festival theme is **Connections**, and the dates are from 13 to 28 April – ie the dates of the ACT School holidays. As always there will be a wealth of events and activities, many of them of great interest to our members. The programme will be released on Thursday 14 March and will be available online at <http://act.gov.au/heritagefestival>.

### NATIONAL TRUST OPEN DAY 20 APRIL, 10AM – 3PM

A major event in the Festival is the National Trust Open Day, to be held at Yarralumla Woolshed, with the usual activities – entertainment, classic cars, refreshments and community participation along with some special activities suitable for the location. AGHS plans to hold a stall at the Open Day. This is a golden opportunity for us to let people know that AGHS exists and what we do. We will staff it on a two-session roster – morning from 9 am to 12.30 and afternoon from 12.00 to 3.30. We need just a couple of people for each session – you may like to be one of them! If you are interested, please contact Nancy Clarke on [clarknancy624@gmail.com](mailto:clarknancy624@gmail.com). It is good fun.

### MODERNISM AND CANBERRA RED BRICK: UNDER THE TREES IN SUBURBAN GRIFFITH SUNDAY 28 APRIL, 2PM - 3.30PM.

Jointly with the National Trust ACT we have planned a heritage walk in Griffith on the last day of the Festival. This walk will cover some of the ground of our **Exploring Green Griffith** walk advertised separately in this Newsletter, but the route and emphasis will be different. Bookings are being handled by the National Trust ACT. The walk will be included in the program for the Heritage Festival (online from 14 March at <http://act.gov.au/heritagefestival>).



Here is the outline:

We will be taking a walk (about 2 km) through the leafy streets of the suburb of Griffith, looking at some contrasting domestic architecture from earlier times in Canberra, and their quite distinctive landscaping. We will be paying particular attention to the Modernist, heritage listed Evans Crescent Housing, built in 1940. This complex is cited in its Heritage listing as an example, rare in Canberra, of what is known as Inter-War Functionalist Style. We will be contrasting this in particular with a Canberra red brick government cottage on its large well treed block and some early two storey duplex houses located near the Griffith shops.

The trees in the streets, parks and gardens will be in their full autumnal splendour, and (weather permitting) this will be a delightful afternoon.

We will make a short stop at the cottage where you will have an opportunity to purchase some gardening books donated to AGHS for resale.

Meet M16 Artspace, 21 Blaxland Crescent Griffith

Bookings Bookings are essential. To be handled by the National Trust. Information will be available on the Heritage Festival website <http://act.gov.au/heritagefestival>.

Inquiries Anne Claoue-Long, [annecl@icloud.com](mailto:annecl@icloud.com)

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CANBERRA & REGION HERITAGE FESTIVAL CANBERRA & REGION HERITAGE FESTIVAL

## PAST EVENT

### END OF YEAR VISIT TO GOUBURN 24 NOVEMBER

A cool misty day proved ideal for the much-anticipated AGHS end-of year visit to Kentgrove and Riversdale in Goulburn.

Several of those attending had grown up in Goulburn and for us, as well as others, Kentgrove was a surprise. The site was settled by Europeans in the 1840s, and a small orchard was established there in the 1850s. Good soil, access to water and a little later, proximity to the railway line encouraged its development so it became the largest orchard in New South Wales by the 1890s. A huge cherry tree was a noted feature of the orchard. A little later, the modest house was extended and became a meeting place for Goulburn social events, as ownership transferred to a sequence of Goulburn mayors. In the 1930s the land was purchased as an additional grazing property by the well-known Hyles family from Uriarra. In the 1950s Harry Rawlinson managed the property for Ernie Hyles – there is a wonderful story of how this came about. The land was later divided and the central block purchased by the Gittoes family who restored and extended the run-down homestead. In 2006 during a period of severe drought Harry's son Doug bought the central part of the property and began the task of establishing a series of gardens.

Originally an electronics engineer, Doug established and ran a retail nursery in Goulburn for many years. Over the last eighteen years he has put his diverse skills and creativity to good use to develop a series of imaginative and productive gardens at Kentgrove including a large Japanese inspired garden with tea house, fish pond and bridge, a miniature mediaeval village, an extensive kitchen garden (on the site of the former tennis court) and a bee, bird and butterfly garden. After our leisurely walk through the gardens we walked through the temperate forest garden room to the former jam factory building for a delicious morning tea and a talk by Doug about the history of the site and the development of the property.



**Kentgrove: Medieval village in an old tree trunk & extensive kitchen garden, photos NancyClarke**



Doug has enthusiastically embraced the principles of climate change gardening and his gardens testify to this. In addition to the designated gardens, he has also a 1-acre Australian forest garden and recently has signed a Conservation Agreement with the NSW Government to protect a block of land rich in wildlife and native vegetation.

Riversdale is only 5 km from Kentgrove, also on the northern side of Goulburn. Two planned visits there had to be abandoned in recent years (Covid again) so our success this year was a particular pleasure. A jewel of the National Trust, the house, landscape and gardens are very special. After a byo picnic lunch in the courtyard we split into two groups – half were guided through the house by Marie Kennedy, the others through the gardens by Ros Loftus. The house - originally an inn - remains in remarkable condition, and Marie's commentary was both informed and fascinating. Of special interest to AGHS members is the handwork of Emily Rose Twynam. Wife of NSW Surveyor General Edward Twynam (he purchased the property in 1872) and mother of six children, Emily was also a highly talented artist – a woodcarver and embroiderer with much of her work featuring Australian plants and birds. A fine display of her note books and carving is on view in the house, and some of her truly astonishing embroidered panels are permanent features of the setup of the house.

The garden at Riversdale is a tribute to dedication, knowledge and generous volunteers. Since 2009 Ros Loftus has led her team of volunteers through drought, rabbit invasions, and weeds to recreate a garden that includes some garden remnants from the past but also evokes the spirit of the earlier gardens in a very rich way. Seventeen year old Alice Twynam wrote to her sister of "the lilies, lilac, lavender and Fortune's double yellow rose". These have all been replanted. Many of the trees originally planted have recently fallen or been felled, but there have been some discoveries – dry sticks proved to be peonies and are now flowering. And the asparagus garden tells a tale. Asparagus from Riversdale was taken to Tuggeranong Homestead (Canberra) by Mary, one of the Twynams. Lost at Riversdale for 50 years, wild asparagus from Tuggeranong has now been taken back to Riversdale where it has been reestablished.

The weather broke as we were finishing our garden tour, making a fine gardeners' finish to a splendid day. The generosity of our hosts at both Kentgrove and Riversdale was exceptional.

**Nancy Clarke**

## BRANCH NEWS

### WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

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

- Jenny and Chris Oates, Canberra

The ACT Monaro Riverina Branch has the reputation of providing a dynamic and enjoyable program and of contributing generously and knowledgeably to the national work of the Society. We think this is partly because Committee members work closely and collaboratively, and we truly enjoy the contributions we make. However since the last AGM we have lost two valuable members, leaving just six of us: Robyn Oates, Sue Cassidy, Anne Claoue-Long, Nancy Clarke, Louise Gaudry and Rosanna Horn. It is now critical that we have new members on the Committee. The current membership of six is the minimum under the AGHS Constitution, and two of the current committee (Anne Claoue-Long and Nancy Clarke) must retire at the next AGM as they will have served the maximum term permitted in the Constitution.

Please do give this some thought and if you have any interest or suggestions, please contact the Branch Chair, Robyn Oates [robyn.oates1@bigpond.com](mailto:robyn.oates1@bigpond.com) or secretary Nancy Clarke [clarkenancy624@gmail.com](mailto:clarkenancy624@gmail.com) as soon as possible. We would love to talk with you.

[illegible]

- All gardening, horticultural, garden design and garden history books in good condition will be gratefully received.
- We will advertise the sale to our members so your preloved books are bound to find a good new home.
- We hope to have the sale in March 2024.
- Proceeds will be spent on Branch projects such as our oral histories and digitisation.
- Books can be dropped off to the following committee members after notification of the delivery day and time to check someone will be there to receive them.

Northside: c/o Anne Claoue-Long, 58 Glossop Crescent Campbell,  
[annecl@icloud.com](mailto:annecl@icloud.com), 0438 357 320



## SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS BRANCH

Members of our Branch are always welcome to attend events in the Southern Highland and you may have met some of their members who travel down regularly to our events.

**Tuesday 20 February, 2.30pm.**

**Film, *The Gardener***

Empire Cinema, 327 Bong Bong Street, Bowral

The Australian Garden History Society and the National Trust present a special screening of 'The Gardener'. Ticket (\$28) includes a drink or choc-top!

Shortly before his passing at the age of 86, influential gardener and horticulturalist Frank Cabot recounted his personal quest for perfection at Les Quatre Vents, his twenty-acre English style garden and summer estate that was opened to a film crew for the first time ever in 2009. Nestled amongst the rolling hills of the Charlevoix County in Quebec, Les Quatre Vents has become one of the world's foremost private gardens. Created over 75 years and three generations, it is an enchanted place of beauty and surprise, a horticultural masterpiece of the 21st century

Tickets can be purchased online at

<https://www.movietkts.com.au/selectsession.php?siteCode=BOWRAL&movieCode=THEGARDENER>

If you attend please identify yourself at the desk as you enter the theatre as an AGHS member as it is a fund raising event for the Branch.

Forthcoming events – information should be contained in forthcoming National ENews

- 17 April, Visit to *Upper Woodlands*
- 27/28 April, Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens Autumn Fair
- 7-9 May, 3 Day Tour to NSW South Coast

## OF INTEREST

### BUNDANOON HISTORY GROUP

2023 Gardening Exhibition opening 15 February at 4.30pm at the Old Goods Shed, Railway Parade, Bundanoon. I have not been able to find out how long it will be on for, but it sounds like it will be on for some time.

### AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDENS

[www.anbg.gov.au](http://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. Talks recommenced in February.

Visitors Centre Gallery Exhibitions, free

- To 25 February – Transformations: Art of the Scott Sisters
- To 25 February – Gardening Gloves, work by local artist Sharon Peoples
- 1 March to 2 April – explore and experience native bees: art works by Cheryl Hodges

Crosbie Morrison Amphitheatre, \$5, \$3

- 24-25 February Bonsai Exhibition – public demonstrations at 11am & 2pm



## LAND ESCAPISM – SYDNEY AND CANBERRA

Land Escapism events are located in different parts of Australia and are held biennially between the Australian Landscape Conferences. They bring together world leading landscape designers, planting experts, ecologists, artists and other specialists from home and abroad to present their ideas at carefully curated forums

Two upcoming events are:

Sydney 24 February 2024 - Talks by Tom and Dr Sue Stuart-Smith, Steve Wells, Georgina Reid.

Canberra 29 February 2024 - Talks by Dr Sue Stuart-Smith, Emma Cutting, Margot Neale and Trisha Dixon

For further information and booking go to <https://www.outlandishventures.au/>

## HIGHLANDS GARDEN SOCIETY

Friday 15 March – Autumn flower Show  
Uniting Church Hall Crn Boolwey and Bandooley Streets, Bowral

Public Viewing – 3.30 – 6.30pm

## NATIONAL TRUST

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.au>

4 day tour of Tumut and the Snowy Mountains, 7 May - 10 May 2024  
The National Trust (ACT) and Potter Travel are partnering again to offer a 4-day coach visit to the Snowy Mountain

For details go to <https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/event/tumut-and-the-snowy-mountains/>

Monthly Heritage Walks

The next walk is on **Sunday 25 February** to the Tharwa Bridge and de Salis cemetery

For details go to <https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/act/heritagewalks-act/>

## NATIONAL ARBORETUM CANBERRA

[www.nationalarboretum.act.gov.au](http://www.nationalarboretum.act.gov.au)

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

## HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY OF CANBERRA

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

## LAKE BURLEY GRIFFIN GUARDIANS (LBGG)

<http://lakeburleygriffinguardians.org.au>