

ACT Monaro Riverina Branch

Newsletter July 2025 No 3

Australian Garden History Society
www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au



Branch contact: actmrchair@gardenhistorysociety.org.au

BRANCH DIARY

14 AUGUST

Branch AGM, 5.30pm

Annual Lecture, talk by
Gweneth Leigh, 6pm

18 SEPTEMBER

Talk: *The Archaeology of water*

45TH AGHS ANNUAL
CONFERENCE
MT GAMBIER, SA
30 OCTOBER – 2
NOVEMBER 2025

THEME: BEYOND THE
GARDEN FENCE

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

AUSTRALIAN GARDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

ACT MONARO RIVERINA BRANCH 2025 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

THURSDAY 14 AUGUST, 5.30PM

The Branch AGM will be held on Thursday 14 August 2025, at 5.30 pm, in the Pavilion, at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, Parkes.

All Branch members are strongly encouraged to attend this meeting. If you can't attend but would like to submit an apology, please email actmrchair@gardenhistorysociety.org.au.

We warmly invite Branch members to nominate for the Committee. Nominations close on Thursday 7 August – see page 9 for the nomination form.

After the meeting (at 6 pm) Dr Gweneth Leigh will present the Branch's Annual Lecture (see below for details). Friends of AGHS and members of other AGHS branches are most welcome to attend this talk.

As usual we will be serving delicious refreshments after the talk.

There is **no charge** for the AGM or the talk, but it is important that you book for catering purposes. <https://www.trybooking.com/CSDUM>

BRANCH COMMITTEE

Robyn Oates, Chair &
NMC Representative

Secretary VACANT

Sue Cassidy, Treasurer

Louise Gaudry
Rosanna Horn
Mary Johnston

AGENDA

1. Attendance and welcome
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of the previous meeting
4. Chair's report
5. Treasurer's report
6. Election of Branch Committee for 2025
In addition to nominations received prior to the meeting
(nominations from the floor will be accepted)
7. Brief questions or comments
8. Meeting closes

**ACT MONARO RIVERINA BRANCH
ANNUAL LECTURE
A TALK BY OUR SPECIAL GUEST
DR GWENETH LEIGH**

THURSDAY 14 AUGUST, 6PM

Dr Gweneth Leigh is a writer, practitioner, curator and researcher of the built environment. A graduate of Harvard's Graduate School of Design, her work explores how the design of our open spaces impacts the health and habits of communities. She is a frequent contributor of landscape critique, with articles published in journals including *Landscape Architecture Australia* and the US professional journal *Landscape Architecture Magazine*. She has curated exhibitions such as BLOOM, which examined how the design of everyday landscapes impact people's physical and mental health. Prior to commencing her PhD, she worked in both the public and private sectors. Her current research focuses on how our outdoor spaces can better meet the needs of one of Australia's more vulnerable populations: our older youth.



AGM and Annual Lecture

Venue	Chambers Pavilion, Centre for Christianity and Culture, 15 Blackall St, Barton
Cost	Both are free events and we hope as many members as possible will attend – please book to assist with catering.
Bookings	https://www.trybooking.com/DBTYB

**TALK: *THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF WATER*
SPEAKER: DR CHRIS CARTER**

THURSDAY 18 SEPTEMBER, 6PM



Cordoba Garden: Photo Chris Carter

Water is essential for human survival. We need water to live, for health and hygiene, to cultivate crops, to manage livestock, for trade, industry and commerce – and for our gardens. Across the world and in different ways, from the most arid areas of the world to landscapes that are

regularly flooded, humans have adapted their behaviour and settings to occupy the entire globe, and water has been at the heart of this remarkable development.

In his talk, archaeologist Chris Carter will describe some of the ways in which people have managed water for power and pleasure. We will travel from the driest deserts in the world – the Atacama Desert of Chile and the Arabian Peninsula – to the lush, terraced hillsides that produce prodigious quantities of grain in the Philippines, from the slopes of Andean Peru to Australia with its own surprisingly long history of water management. We will look briefly at how humans have gained access to and control of water, and how that has impacted on lifeways, with both positive and negative results.



Generalife, The Alhambra: Photo Chris Carter



Dr Chris Carter is a practising archaeologist with over 25 years' experience working as a teacher, researcher, heritage consultant and tour leader both nationally and overseas, including over 30 tours to South American countries. He has a BA (Hons), MA and PhD from the Australian National University. His PhD research was based on excavations he carried out at coastal sites in the Atacama Desert in northern Chile.

As a teacher, Chris has always declared that archaeology cannot be learned in the classroom. This belief led him to take a study group to South America in 1995 and he has continued to lead several tours a year ever since. The areas visited have expanded to cover many other countries along with areas within Australia that reflect the subjects he teaches.

This talk continues the long-standing tradition of a joint annual event between the ACT Monaro Riverina Branch of AGHS and the Friends of the National Library of Australia.

Venue	Theatre, National Library of Australia
Cost	\$20 AGHS members and Friends of the NLA, \$25 others. Includes light refreshments
Bookings	The Friends will be managing all bookings, and they will open on Friday 1 August . Details will be on the NLA website - www.nla.gov.au and go to What's On.

RECENT EVENTS

NATIONAL TRUST HERITAGE FESTIVAL OPEN DAY TUGGERANONG HOMESTEAD SATURDAY 3 MAY



One of Canberra's significant heritage homesteads, Tuggeranong Homestead, took part in the annual Canberra Heritage Festival for 2025 when it was opened to the community on 3 May.

Located on the edge of the suburb of Richardson the homestead has a long history in the Canberra area.

The Ngunnawal peoples occupied the Tuggeranong plain, the southern limit of their country. Stone artefact scatters and grinding grooves east of the homestead bear witness to their occupation and the significance of the site as they moved through the area either south of the Snowy Mountains or further north into the Canberra plain.

By 1829 the arrival of European settlers in the area severely impacted the Ngunnawal people's way of life. From 1827 a succession of occupations began. A stone cottage, now incorporated into the current homestead, and a stone barn, still largely extant, were constructed. In 1835 Thomas McQuoid named the area "Wanniassa" after an estate in Java.

McQuoid ended his life in 1841, followed by the death of his eldest son, Hya, in the sinking of the Dunbar, off South Head, Sydney, in 1857. In 1858 Andrew Cunningham purchased the property and by 1874 his youngest son, Jim was living there. In 1889 Jim married Mary Tywnam and the couple went on to have eight children. The homestead became an important social hub in the district. The homestead and a proliferation of other buildings reflected their prosperity, including 50,000 sheep shorn annually.

Cunningham left Tuggeranong for Lanyon in 1914 and the Federal government resumed the land. Charles Bean was granted use of Tuggeranong homestead for his compilation of Australia's role in World War 1 and occupied the building from October 1919 to April 1925. In 1927 it was taken up by Timothy Joseph McCormack and continued with the family until the land was resumed in 1974 by the Federal Government for suburban development.

On Heritage Day the AGHS stall was one of over 30 stalls at the homestead, tightly located near the Canberra and District Historical Society stall with the Bush Fire Brigade and their display activities in the background. Helen Elliot, Gail Allen, Nancy Clarke, Maura O'Connor and Richard Buker operated the stall in morning and afternoon shifts. Mary Johnston was our able co-ordinator with ACT National Trust. Around 15 or so visitors came to our stall in the afternoon with one memorable enquiry from a local resident regarding the purchase of the camellia: *Camellia japonica* 'Mavis Edna', developed by Don O'Reilly, former owner of the Blue Camellia nursery, West Belconnen which closed down in the 1980s. Sadly, despite some research and contact with Camellia Ark Australia a specimen has not been located.

This annual event is always an excellent opportunity to publicise our branch of AGHS.

Maura O'Connor

TALK: THE PEPPER TREE GROWS IN THE OLD SCHOOL YARD WEDNESDAY 18 JUNE

Dr Anna Howe shared her research into these remarkable trees and the part they have played in our heritage. Most of the audience had personal memories of these shady trees and their background presence in our childhoods.

Anna explained their origins and the path into the Australian landscape and our nostalgic moments. The trees are native to South America and are sometimes known as the Peruvian pepper tree. They became popular in rural Australia because their ability to deal with all sorts of growing conditions in our harsh climate.

Our own recollections of the ubiquitous pepper tree prompted much discussion. Did you eat the peppercorns or not? Did the trees attract the flies, or not? Opinion was divided. Is it a weed or not? That depends on the State, but it is recognized everywhere for attracting white ants. It is also recognized for its antibacterial and antiseptic properties.

Anna added a personal touch to her research with her own school photos taken beside the pepper tree and the universal style of these class group photos prompted more nostalgia from her audience.

The evening was a sell-out success. Members and guests appreciated their new knowledge and relished their own trips down memory lane. Thank you, Anna, for a splendid address.

BRANCH NEWS

WELCOME TO A NEW MEMBER

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

Bonnie Field, Canberra

MEMBERS' CONTACT DETAILS

Please note that you can update your address on the AGHS Website but if you are wanting to change Branches you need to contact Sarah at the AGHS National Office (info@gardenhistorysociety.org.au, 0417977 703).

This is not something that occurs very often and it seems that some members who are changing location prefer to stay with their original branch.

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. Their next event is:

SUNDAY 3 AUGUST: BRANCH AGM AND WINTER SEMINAR

10.30 – 11am	Branch AGM
11am – 12pm	Flavia Scardamaglia speaking on <i>Leslie Wilkinson, his ideas and role as a Garden Maker and Designer</i>
12 – 1pm	Lunch (provided)
1 – 2pm	Trisha Dixon speaking on <i>The Ongoing Influence of Edna Walling</i>
Venue	East Bowral Community Centre, 71 Boardman Road, East Bowral
Cost	\$60 (including lunch). Bookings and further information at https://events.humanitix.com/aghs-shb-annual-general-meeting-winter-seminar

NATIONAL NEWS

2025 NATIONAL CONFERENCE

This year we will meet in Mt Gambier, South Australia, home to limestone caves, volcanic craters – and top- rated vineyards.

*Beyond the Garden Fence:
Looking at gardens and the wider cultural landscape*

45th AGHS Conference, 31 October - 2 November 2025
Optional Day: 3 November
Pre Conference tour: 28 and 29 October

Further details <https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/events/2025-annual-national-conference/>

Additional places for the Optional Day on 3 November now available.

OF INTEREST

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDENS www.anbg.gov.au

Friends Thursday Talks – held at 12.30 pm every Thursday from February to November. Bookings can be made 30 days in advance. 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.

ACT REGION HERITAGE SYMPOSIUM

Saturday 2 August, 9am- 3pm

Theme: *A Future for the Past*

Venue: Forestry Building (Building 48) ANU, Linnaeus Way,
Cost: \$50.00 Full Registration, \$15.00 Students
Bookings: <https://www.trybooking.com/DCSQB>

NATIONAL TRUST: ACT BRANCH

Wednesday 13 August, 6-7.30pm

Talk: *Unlocking History through Maps and Survey Plans*

Maps and survey plans contain a wealth of historical information if you know how to interpret them.

Jeff Brown, former Surveyor-General of the ACT, takes you on a historical journey through the maze of historical maps and survey plans produced in NSW and ACT since colonisation starting with Major Michell's Map of the Colony (1834) and progressing through maps produced by state agencies and local governments. These include County Maps, Parish Maps, Valuer General Maps, Estate Sales Plans, Town Maps, Portion Plans, Federal Territory Feature Maps, 1918 Walter B. Griffin Plan, plans of Canberra, Nomenclature and Topographic Maps. Jeff will show some links to where many of these maps and plans can be found on-line.

Venue: Chambers Pavilion, Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture,
Blackall St, Barton
Cost: Members of NT, Friends of NLA, U3A \$25, non-members \$30
Bookings: <https://www.trybooking.com/DCSQC>

OPEN GARDENS CANBERRA SPRING PROGRAM

27-28 September: *The Burrow* in Latham

4-5 October: - Two contrasting gardens in O'Connor

11-12 October: A celebration of small gardens

25-26 October: G and J's Garden in Lyons

1-2 November: Always popular, our country gardens weekend

8-9 November: *The Healing Garden* in Waramanga

22-23 November: The Naturalistic Garden in Turner

For further information go to <https://opengardenscanberra.org.au/>

GOULBURN SPRING GARDENS

Saturday 18 & Sunday 19 October

Goulburn will be hosting its first dedicated spring open gardens event with eight beautiful gardens displaying the best of spring in Goulburn.

Tickets are \$25 for all gardens or \$5 per garden.

For further information on all the gardens and to buy your tickets in advance go to <https://stoga.org.au/goulburn-spring-gardens>

GARDEN CLUBS OF AUSTRALIA

30th Biennial Convention: Albury 13-18 October 2025

A five-day Garden Clubs of Australia Convention is held every two years. GCA welcomes both members and non-members to attend the garden visits and other events. While some aspects of the convention may be exclusive to affiliated members, many events, including garden visits, are open to the general public. You can pick and choose which days, or activities, to attend. However, you do have to book.

General information: <https://gardenclubs.org.au/convention/>

HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY OF CANBERRA

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

NATIONAL ARBORETUM CANBERRA

www.nationalarboretum.act.gov.au

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

CANBERRA MUSEUM AND GALLERY

[HTTPS://WWW.CMAG.COM.AU/](https://www.cmag.com.au/)



ACT MONARO RIVERINA BRANCH

Nomination for Election to the Branch Committee

2025-26/2027-28

Committee members are elected for a three-year term, and are eligible for re-election for a further three-year term. Nominees and both people nominating must be members of the Australian Garden History Society and resident within the Branch.

Please return by email to the Chair, Robyn Oates

actmrchair@gardenhistorysociety.org.au by 7 August 2025.

I (Nominator)

nominate

Nominee

Seconded by

Signature of Nominator

.....

Signature of Seconder

.....

Signature of Nominee

.....

Date