

ACT Monaro Riverina Branch

Newsletter July 2026 No 3

Australian Garden History Society
www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au



Branch contact: actmrchair@gardenhistorysociety.org.au

BRANCH DIARY

28 JULY

Winter Film Day

20 AUGUST

Mulligans Flat Woodland
Sanctuary

27 AUGUST

Branch AGM & Annual Lecture

7 SEPTEMBER

AGHS/NLA Annual Lecture

13 OCTOBER

Visit to Millpost

46TH AGHS
CONFERENCE
ORANGE, NSW
25 – 27 SEPTEMBER
2026

OPTIONAL DAY 28
SEPTEMBER

THEME: FRUITS OF
ORANGE: EXPLORING
CENTRAL WESTERN
NSW

47TH AGHS
CONFERENCE
CANBERRA, ACT
15-17 OCTOBER 2027

OPTIONAL DAY 18
OCTOBER

THEME: OUR CAPITAL
– THE IDEAL CITY
REALISED

HELLO FROM THE CHAIR



We find ourselves in the depths of winter, where an occasional rose bud opens, confused by the warmish nights.

It's been wonderful to see so many members and friends at our events. Everything has been well subscribed. This is heartening as the national body gradually moves the focus of AGHS to more than visits to pretty gardens.

Our events this year include focus on local cultural landscapes, which are geographic areas that exist by the combined work of nature and human society over time. In our visits we are also learning about preservation and adaptation in our region and our Advocacy Lead, Anne Claoué-Long works tirelessly on behalf of AGHS in this Branch region. We will submit a report to NMC in September about Landscapes at Risk in the ACTMR region. The film day has returned this year, in a different guise and tickets are selling fast. Your committee is currently planning our end of year event for late November.

Our AGM will be on Thursday 27 August at 5.30 p.m. in the Chambers Pavilion at the Centre for Christianity and Culture in Barton. This will be followed by guest speaker Ben Aylor, Landscape Manager at the NGA, and a senior member of the NGS Sculpture Garden design team and closing with refreshments.

Do consider joining the committee for 2026-27. It's a great way to learn about AGHS and be part of a terrific group of people. Our positions are outlined elsewhere in this Newsletter.

At the recent National Management Committee meeting it was decided to delay implementation of a single renewal date for membership. The complexity of such a transition requires significant manual work and resources; more time is needed for the planning and execution of such a big change.

Sarah Edwards, our Executive Officer in Head Office has resigned and recruitment for her successor will begin soon. I thank Sarah for all that she has done for us as individual members and as a Branch and I wish her all the very best for the future.

Our hearty congratulations for King's Birthday Honours go to AGHS Patron Tim Entwisle AO and to ACTMR member and presenter Dr Stephen Utick OAM. Tim was recognised for distinguished service to environmental conservation, to botanical sciences, to the media, to tertiary education, and to the community. Stephen was recognized for service to

BRANCH COMMITTEE

Robyn Oates, Chair &
NMC Representative

Helen Stevens, Secretary

Sue Cassidy, Treasurer

Louise Gaudry,
Rosanna Horn
Mary Johnston

conservation, and to the community. Stephen has presented excellent talks and led events for our Branch and Tim will be guest speaker at the AGHS/Friends of the NLA/ lecture in September this year.

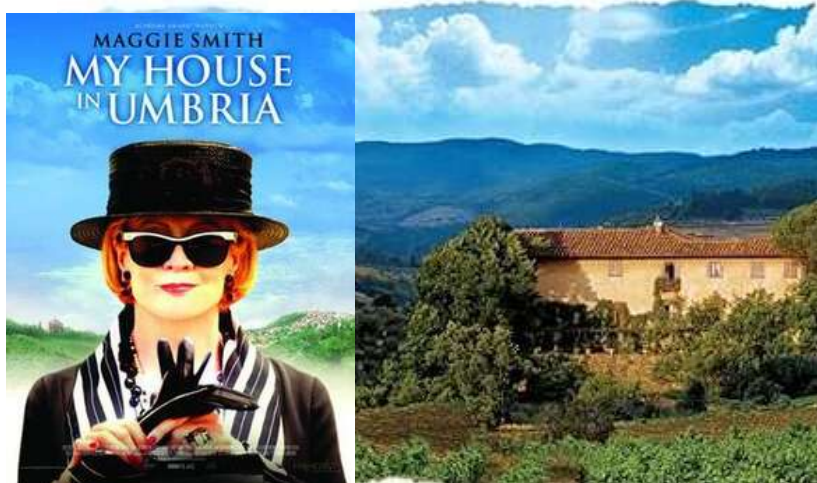
Don't forget the Orange Conference, 25 to 27 September 2026 and Optional Day: 28 September 2026. In addition to the three-day conference there will be an optional day tour and longer tours both before and after the conference. All the details are in the links here

<https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/AGHS-Conference-Brochure-2026.pdf>

The current edition of *Australian Garden History* includes articles by our members. Anna Howe writes about *Trees and Memory*, in keeping with our national theme of "Trees" and Anne Claoué-Long reviews an Ashmolean Museum publication about how plants changed the world.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

WINTER FILM DAY TUESDAY 28 JULY, 2PM



Our Winter Film Day returns, with a twist. An improbable group of people are thrown together in the wake of a terrorist attack on their train carriage, travelling to Milan. They begin to recover in a Tuscan house and garden, owned by fellow traveller Mrs Delahunty (Maggie Smith) and they discover the healing powers of a beautiful garden.

Settle into your red velvet seat in the original theatre at the NFSA and enjoy a wonderful film, with a garden focus. Delight in this old-style cinema, with its Art Deco light fittings and early twentieth century timbers.

There will be door prizes and small surprises.

Venue	The Theatrette, the National Film and Sound Archive, 1 McCoy Circuit, Acton
Cost	\$27.00 members, \$32.00 non-members
Bookings	https://www.trybooking.com/DLYGR
Enquiries	Robyn Oates actmrchair@gardenhistorysociety.org.au

MULLIGANS FLAT WOODLAND SANCTUARY

THURSDAY 20 AUGUST
9.30 OR 10.45AM



Numbers strictly limited

Take a Senior Safari with AGHS as we visit a significant landscape in the ACT. Hop aboard one of the 12 seater Bettong Express safari buses for a special tour through the woodland ecosystem of Mulligans Flat. Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary is Australia's largest single box-gum grassy-woodland area. There are 1200 hectares of fox-free bushland, which is habitat to animals that haven't existed in the wild on mainland Australia for over a century. We will hear about all of this and the ongoing conservation work.

Tours run in rain, hail or shine. Tours will only be cancelled if there is a total fire ban in place or extreme weather. Do note that because of the size of the safari buses numbers will be limited.

There are two options 9.30 am and 10.45 am with a limit of 10 tickets on each tour. Please select your preferred option when booking. If these are both full, you can add your name to the waiting list on Trybooking.

- Wear sturdy shoes & appropriate clothing (i.e. rain protection or warm clothing);
- bring water and
- Wildbark Café TBA.

Please arrive 10 minutes before the start time, to ensure a prompt start to the tour.

Location	25 Rosenberg Street Throsby
Cost	\$30.00 members, \$35.00 non-members
Bookings	To open 20 July at https://www.trybooking.com/DLYHE
Enquiries	Robyn Oates actmrchair@gardenhistorysociety.org.au

**AUSTRALIAN GARDEN
HISTORY SOCIETY
ACT MONARO RIVERINA BRANCH
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING &
ANNUAL LECTURE
THURSDAY 27 AUGUST, 5.30PM**

All Branch members are strongly encouraged to attend this meeting. If you can't attend but would like to submit an apology, please email Helen Stevens, Secretary ACT Monaro Riverina
actmrsec@gardenhistorysociety.org.au.

We warmly invite Branch members to nominate for the Committee. Nominations close on Thursday 20 August. Nomination forms may be obtained from the Secretary at actmrsec@gardenhistorysociety.org.au. Committee roles are explained in another item on page 8.

After the meeting the Branch's Annual Lecture will be presented. Friends of AGHS and members of other AGHS branches are most welcome to attend this talk.

ACTMR BRANCH ANNUAL LECTURE

Benjamin Taylor, Landscape Manager at the NGA has kindly accepted our invitation to give the Annual Lecture. Ben is overseeing the \$60 million NGA Sculpture Garden project. This is a significant and exciting national revitalization project. Ben will be accompanied by another senior team member from the design team.

As usual we will be serving delicious refreshments after the Annual Lecture.

The Agenda will be distributed in late July.

Venue	The Chambers Pavilion, Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, 15 Blackall St, Barton.
Cost	There is no charge for the AGM or the lecture, but it is important that you book for catering purposes.
Bookings	Bookings will open in late July.

**LECTURE BY PROFESSOR TIM
ENTWISLE AO**

MONDAY 7 SEPTEMBER, 6PM

The ACT Monaro Riverina Branch of the Australian Garden History Society and the Friends of the National Library of Australia's annual joint lecture.

Our national theme for AGHS in 2026 is *Trees*. In this spirit Tim Entwisle will speak about the oak tree. Oak trees thrive around the world, they have shaped history and they are an integral part of Canberra's landscape and character. English Oak, Pin Oak, Red Oak, Cork Oak and more. Take your pick. Canberra is home to so many splendid oak trees. Tim will tell us about their amazing diversity, their history and character.



Tim Entwisle is Patron of the Australian Garden History Society. He has been director of Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney and NSW Government Botanist, a director at Kew, London and recently retired as chief executive of Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. Tim is an Honorary Professorial Fellow in the School of Botany at The University of Melbourne and has been a Visiting Professor in the School of Biological and Biomedical Science, Durham University. Since 2016, he has been President of the International Association of Botanic Gardens. Tim's Oral History interview is available on the AGHS website at <https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/publications/entwisle-tim-entwisle/>

Light refreshments will be served after the lecture.

Venue The Theatre, National Library of Australia..

Bookings Through the NLA, opening in August.

SAVE THE DATE

MORNING VISIT TO MILLPOST

TUESDAY 13 OCTOBER



In keeping with the focus on local cultural landscapes we plan to visit *Millpost*, a family farm near Bungendore NSW. Learn about nearly fifty years of restorative agriculture and care for the environment. It is one of the oldest broadscale Permaculture farms in Australia. The family has been graziers there since 1922.

The following background information is taken from Millpost's website.
<https://www.millpostmerino.com/millpost>

David and Judith were early adopters of Permaculture principles and methods. When they first moved to Millpost, it was like most sheep farms in Australia, cleared and windswept. The landscape is now dominated by trees planted over the past few decades: 15 kilometres of windbreaks and woodlots that join remnant native vegetation to form wildlife corridors, while sheltering stock, wildlife and pasture from the desiccating summer winds and the winter

gales straight off the Snowy Mountains. The trees also provide firewood for our hearth, timber for building, and fodder for the sheep during the extremes of our seasons.

The Stone Axe Quarry at Millpost

In 2016 friend and Indigenous archeologist Dave Johnston came to Millpost for a look around, to see if he could identify any important first nation sites. We took him to one of our favourite spots at Millpost, a hilltop with wide views across the farm, to the northeast to Weereewa, south to the Tinderry and West to the Brindabellas. Here amongst the rocky outcrops Dave found a quarry, used for millenia by the Ngunawal/Ngambri people to make stone axe heads.

Since 2016 we have had the great honour of hosting local Elders and their families at Millpost to see the site and share our stories and histories.

In 2019 thanks to the hard work of Dave and also Roy Barker and Barinna South from OEH, the site was gazetted by the NSW government as a protected Aboriginal Place. More than 100 guests including traditional owners, local graziers, friends and family joined us for the ceremony, a walk and tree planting at the site.

Morning tea will be provided by the committee.

Location	Millpost is near Bungendore
Further Information	Information will be available closer to the time Visit https://www.woolmark.com/fibre/woolgrowers/nsw-millpost-merino/
Bookings	Will open in September

RECENT EVENTS

TALK: MAJURA HOUSE & THE FUTURE OF THE PAST TUESDAY 10 JUNE



On a damp, cold winter evening in June, resilient AGHS members braved the weather to hear Mark Butz's engaging and informative presentation on Majura House and surrounds and their significance to our heritage. Mark,

a well-known social historian, writer and heritage researcher, addressed a full house at the Centre for Christianity and Culture in Barton.

The historic Majura House property is located in the Majura Valley on the eastern edge of Canberra. Built using stone quarried from Mt Ainslie, the cottage is one of the oldest surviving habitable structures in the ACT.

While Mark's presentation focused on the last 150 - 200 years, he acknowledged the thousands of generations of First Nations people who lived in the area prior to European settlement.

The first formal survey of the Limestone Plains by Hoddle in 1832 shows Majura House in the north-eastern corner of Robert Cambell's 'Pialligo' Estate, later known as Duntroon pastoral station. Majura cottage was built to house Scottish workers on the Estate. First appearing as a cattle station, it became a sheep station in later surveys.

John McIntosh took over the cottage in 1846, followed by several generations of the Mayo family who acquired the lease after the formation of the Federal Capital Territory in 1938. The Mayos remained at Majura farm from 1864 until 1981. Photos of the house, kitchen block and garden from the 1920s showed how the family lived and contributed to their local community of 'Majura Vale'. The 'unofficial' village included a post office, school, community hall and tennis court. Mature honey locust trees and wormwood bushes feature in early garden photos.

During the two World Wars, the Majura Valley became a military training ground for field firing and exercises. Mortar pits and unexploded ordinance have been found in the backyard of Majura House.

In the Menzies era, significant planning identified a town centre in the Majura Valley, though this was later abandoned.

The battle to obtain recognition of the heritage of Majura House and surrounding property has been ongoing for more than 35 years. In 1983, the National Trust first nominated Majura House for inclusion on the Register of the National Estate. It took until 2024 for this to be achieved. Its heritage value is based on its mention in the 1832 survey, being the oldest remaining Duntroon cottage, and its continued status as a working farm. Modifications undertaken in the 1950s and 1980s complement the original stone cottage. Many outbuildings, including a rare single-stand wool shed dating from the 1910s, are still in use. In addition, a well, constructed around 1840 with hand made bricks dating from that period, is still viable.

With only a 25 year lease, the battle is far from over.

The current owners, Nick Weber and Anne McGrath, bought the property in 1999 and continue to sustainably farm honey, eggs, sheep and other rural produce.

With its close proximity to the city of Canberra and the airport, its rich history and cultural landscape, visitors can value and enjoy this unique part of our heritage and help to protect it for future generations.

We were delighted to welcome Nick and Anne as Mark's guests to hear his presentation and we look forward to arranging an AGHS visit to Majura House later in the year. It was a delightful evening despite the weather.

Sue Cassidy

The 1940's Photo is from McLennan & McLennan – The Mayo Connection 1996

BRANCH NEWS

WHAT DOES YOUR BRANCH COMMITTEE DO?

You may be wondering just what is involved in being a committee member for the ACTMR AGHS Branch. It is enjoyable and the more committee members we have, the less time commitment is required. Currently our members are carrying multiple roles and this is not sustainable in the long term. We do welcome new members.

A Branch Committee must comprise a Branch chairperson, Branch secretary, Branch treasurer, and at least 3 other members, all of whom must ordinarily reside in this region (i.e. a minimum of 6 committee members).

The Chair is elected by the committee members. The role involves running monthly meetings, working closely with the Secretary and Treasurer and with each committee member, being a signatory on venue bookings etc, being the front person for the Branch, speaking at most events, guiding the choice and preparation of members' events.

National Management Committee (NMC) Representative: the Branch representative acts as conduit between the NMC and the local Branch providing one page Branch reports, and raising Branch concerns to the NMC. They also liaise with the National Executive Officer (NEO) on special projects and report back to their Branch committees after NMC meetings. The meetings each year are usually one weekend in Melbourne; one weekend in Sydney; the day before the annual conference; three Zoom meetings. Costs for face-to-face meetings are met by AGHS and our Branch.

The Secretary: manages administrative tasks within the committee, including documenting committee activities, maintaining files, and keeping members informed through timely updates. They should be a good communicator to ensure smooth information flow and liaise effectively. The secretary works directly with the committee chair, particularly when managing meetings. They play a hands-on role in preparing meeting documents, sending invites, and following up on tasks after the meeting. Computer desktop skills are essential.

Treasurer: the Treasurer of the Branch ensures: (a) that all money due to the Branch is collected and received and that all payments authorised by the Branch are made, (b) that correct books and accounts are kept showing the financial affairs of this Branch, including details of all receipts and expenditures. The position requires the Treasurer to maintain financial records, particularly for income, expenses, and cash flow. If you are familiar with *keeping the books* this role would be easy.

Events Officer: manages the trybooking platform, uploading future events and managing information, publicity and bookings.

Newsletter liaison person: This committee member notes all items for the newsletter, receives each of these items from the writers and forwards them to the Newsletter Editor. This role requires adequate computer skills in Word and some written compositional skill.

Being a committee member is not just about attending meetings. You will contribute to discussions and help achieve the committee's goals through collaborative decision-making and hands on assistance. You will attend

one meeting per month, contribute to discussion and assist in achieving the committee's goals and assisting with preparation and running events

If you have any queries don't hesitate to contact our Chair, Robyn Oates ACTMRChair@gardenhistorysociety.org.au or speak to any of our current committee members.

AGHS NAME BADGES



Our magnetic name badges have been popular over the last couple of years. The cost is \$17 (including postage).

If you would like to order a name badge, please complete the form attached to the Newsletter and send it to Sue Cassidy actmrtreas@gardenhistorysociety.org.au

Sue will collect forms and order name badges twice a year (early August and early February). Your name badge will be sent to you by post when it is available.

Please contact Sue by email actmrtreas@gardenhistorysociety.org.au if you have any questions.

AGHS NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2027

Our Capital - The Ideal City Realised?

15-17 October

Optional Day: 18 October

In 2025, the Global Cities Index (Oxford Economics) listed Canberra as the best city on Earth for quality of life. The conference will explore the history of gardening and landscapes of this 'ideal city' (and city of ideals), where mid-century modernism meets landscaping framed by the Griffin-Mahony vision and early structural plantings by Charles Weston.

At the AGHS 2016 Conference in Canberra 'The Scientist in the Garden', the roles of science, indigenous perspectives, grasslands and our pastoral landscape were key foci. The 2027 Conference will build on these themes and focus on the topic: *Our Capital - The Ideal City Realised?*

As we enter the second quarter of the 21st century, we ask: Has the vision of Canberra's founders for the 'ideal city' as it relates to 'garden history' been realised, and how can it be sustained?

IT'S EASILY DONE!

We often have problems with members' bookings.

This is because our online booking platform, *trybooking*, accepts the email address that is typed. If it is accidentally typed incorrectly, you will not receive messages about your booking.

We also receive double bookings when members forget that they had previously booked. Unlike Kindle books, *trybooking* does not alert you to a previous purchase. Following up on double bookings is time consuming and the alternative is expensive for you.

This is a plea to double check your email address when booking for an event, and to note in your diary that you have purchased tickets.

It's easily done but it's also easily avoided.

NATIONAL NEWS

46TH AGHS NATIONAL CONFERENCE



Fruits of Orange, Exploring Central Western NSW

24-27 September 2026
Optional Day: 28 September

Pre and post conference Tours
22 - 24 September & 29 September – 1 October
Numbers for these tours are limited to 50 people per tour
3 days, 2 nights at the Fairmont Resort,
with all meals included in Bathurst and the Blue Mountains

Further details <https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/events/2026-annual-national-conference/>

Information has just come through advising that virtual registration is available for the Orange Conference. We have been sent this smart advertisement, but when I clip it into the Newsletter it is pretty hard to read. I gather the cost is \$50 per half day.

For more information go to

<https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/2026/06/be-part-of-our-orange-conference-from-anywhere/>



THE KING'S BIRTHDAY 2026 HONOURS LIST

Congratulations to three AGHS Members for recognition in the The King's Birthday 2026 Honours List.

Our Patron **Dr Timothy John Entwisle**, AO for distinguished service to environmental conservation, to botanical sciences, to the media, to tertiary education, and to the community.

Our fellow member **Dr Stephen Utick** AOM Dr Stephen Eric Utick OAM, For service to conservation, and to the community.

We also recognize **Mr William (Bill) Oates**, who received the OAM for service to history preservation, recognised for more than two decades of work protecting the documentary and heritage record of the New England region. Bill is married to Helen Oates who is currently national Chair of AGHS, and in the time-honoured spirit of "two for the price of one" he gives many hours to AGHS work and is a driving force behind this year's Orange Conference.

ERROR IN PREVIOUS NEWSLETTER

A previous newsletter mentioned that the AGHS Editor, Francesca Beddie, would set up a National Facebook page. This was not correct and it is not happening.

OF INTEREST

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

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

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://friendsanbg.org.au/whats-on/calendar/> The calendar also provides some information on other talks, walks and activities in the Garden.

ANBG Bookshop - Native Plants Fold Out Guide

The Bookshop has found a new stock of a popular Native Plants of Australia folding guide. This easy-to-use fold-out chart depicts a selection of 63 native plant species that can be encountered in Australia, from small perennials through to tall trees. Each has at least one photo and some facts about the plant. Included in each account are details of habitat and the states and territories where the species might be seen.

The cost of the guide is \$10.00 before discount, \$9.00 for Friends of ANBG.



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

NATIONAL TRUST: ACT BRANCH
<https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/act/>

2026 Heritage Symposium

Saturday 15 August, NFSA

Theme: Everyday Heritage: Conviviality, Creativity, Care

Sherwood Heritage Walk

Sunday 30 August

Nil Desperandum Tour

Saturday 12 September

Blue Mountains Gardens & Heritage Escape

9 - 12 November 2026

OPEN GARDENS CANBERRA SPRING PROGRAM

Save the dates for the Spring program commences 19/20 September 2026.

19-20 September - **Forrest Bower** in Forrest –

26-27 September - **The Garden of Memories** in Lyons

3-4 October - **The Baker Garden** in Griffith

10-11 October - **Els' Garden** in Flynn

24-25 October - **Vogelweide Estate** in Gundaroo

31 October-1 November - **Garden By Fleur** in Braddon

7-8 November - **Joan's Garden** in Fadden

21-22 November:

Zhou's Sustainable Kitchen Garden in Kambah

The Secret Country Garden in Waramanga

More details can be found at <https://opengardenscanberra.org.au/>

GARDEN CLUBS OF AUSTRALIA
ANNUAL PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

The Competition is open to all members of a GCA-affiliated clubs and they would love members to enter their wonderful garden photos.

Photographs can be taken anywhere in the world, at any time, with subjects related to general garden scenes, productive gardens, edible plants, flowers, floral art, trees or garden visitors.

Entry is free and the closing date is 1 October 2026. Email your digital images to photocomp@gardenclubs.org.au. More details and entry form at <https://gardenclubs.org.au/photo-competition/>