

ACT Monaro Riverina Branch

Newsletter October 2021 No 6



Australian Garden History Society
www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au

ACT Monaro Riverina Branch, PO Box 5008, LYNEHAM ACT 2602
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Lots of Excitement on the Horizon for 2022

BRANCH DIARY

4 DECEMBER

Christmas Party at York Park

AGHS NATIONAL CONFERENCE

11-13 NOVEMBER 2022

AGHS National Conference – Hobart

It was with great regret that your Committee had to cancel a number of planned events this year because of COVID.

Glenda Korporaal was scheduled to talk to us at our AGM in August about **Marion Mahony Griffin**. This was to be a joint event with the Friends of the National Library. However, that event had to be cancelled and the continued lockdown in Sydney and the closure of the National Library building precluded the rescheduling of that widely anticipated lecture this year. We hope that Glenda will be able to give the lecture **early in 2022**.

The afternoon organised for 8 October in conjunction with the Friends of the Australian National Botanic Gardens was also deferred because of the uncertainties surrounding the COVID conditions in the ACT and doubts about whether our speaker, Dr Marg Folkard, would be able to travel to and from South Australia. We're hoping that **Telling the Time by the Sun** will proceed in **March 2022**.

Because of the ongoing uncertainties about travel restrictions between the ACT and NSW, it was also decided to defer the proposed trip to Woomargama and Albury in November and the trip to Richlands and Riversdale for our end of year celebration. We are now planning a self-drive tour in May to regional NSW for the autumn colours. We hope to reschedule the visit to Richlands and Riversdale later in 2022.

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

FORTHCOMING EVENT

Christmas Party at York Park Saturday 4 December. 4 – 6 PM

Come and celebrate with other AGHS friends in the next step back to the life we used to enjoy before COVID, and the start of the Christmas season.

We will be gathering under the leafy oaks in York Park in Barton, and promise excellent refreshments, good conversation and company, and some information about this park that is a great lunch spot for public servants but seems rarely visited by others.



*York Park - English oak planted by the Duke of York in 1927
Photo: Nancy Clarke*

York Park? There is only an elusive identifying sign to mark it, so it is no wonder it is not particularly well known, despite its prominent location in the Parliamentary Triangle. It has a fascinating history, and AGHS has been involved in helping to save, and enhance it. In 2011 after years of neglect the Park was reopened.

We are pleased that Heritage Consultant Duncan Marshall has agreed to talk to us about the past, and also the future, of York Park.

Venue York Park, Corner of King's Avenue and State Circle

Parking There is a large parking area immediately behind the park but car access is NOT from King's Avenue, State Circle or Brisbane Avenue! From National Circuit turn into Blackall St (in the direction of State Circle). At the T-junction turn right into the unmarked Windsor Walk and then immediately left into the car park entrance. Drive through the car park towards the oak trees. There is no charge for parking on Saturday.

Cost \$15 for AGHS members, \$20 non-members

Bookings <https://www.trybooking.com/BVDZW>

Enquiries Nancy Clarke, clarkenancy624@gmail.com 0423 690 626

We will continue to observe COVID safe principles.

PAST EVENTS

ACT Monaro Riverina Branch AGM and the Committee for 2020/21

Thirty-eight Branch members attended our Annual General Meeting, held by ZOOM on 28 September. The Branch Chair reported on a very successful year despite the challenges posed by this second COVID year. The Treasurer noted that the Branch remains in a sound financial position. At the AGM elections were held for the Committee, and office bearers for the coming year were elected at the Committee meeting on 12 October.

The Committee for 2021/2022 is:

- Chair: Margie Bourke
- Secretary: Nancy Clarke
- Treasurer: Sue Cassidy
- ACT representative on the AGHS National Management Committee: Anne Claoue-Long
- Other Committee members: Bronwyn Blake (also AGHS Co-Chair), Lynne Curran, Fleur Flanery, Greg Johnson and Susan Phillips.

We particularly welcome our new Committee member Susan Phillips, and we thank Judy Pearce, who though no longer a member of the Committee, has generously agreed to continue as Branch Newsletter editor, with assistance from Lynne Curran.

The AGM was followed by a talk *Our Garden in a year of calamities* – see page 3 for details.

Nancy Clarke

Talk: *Our garden in a year of calamities*

Speaker: Greg Johnson

Following the AGM, Greg Johnson treated participants to a delightful virtual tour of his amazing garden and rare plant collection in Aranda, ACT.

While the house and garden were established in 1968, Greg has tended his cool climate garden on the lower slopes of Galambari (Black Mountain) in Ngannawal Country in the ACT for the last 25 years. His garden is sheltered amongst mature remnant Eucalyptus trees which provide shade in summer, but which also soak up precious water. While snow is rare, temperatures range from a frosty -7 degrees in winter to over 40 degrees in mid-summer. This makes gardening and keeping water up to pots a challenge.

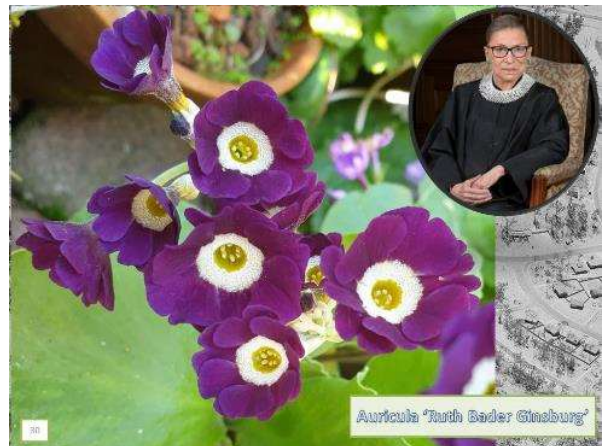
Over the last two years, Greg has been documenting the effects of a series of weather events and their impacts on the garden, plants and garden visitors. From late 2019, the garden was covered in a thick smoke haze from bushfires to the east of the ACT. This, combined with heat in the middle of a hot, dry summer, made it unpleasant to spend time in the garden. A severe hailstorm in January 2020 stripped trees, decimated the garden and damaged over 250 roof tiles. However, it also dumped over 50 mls of rain that soaked into the ground. The garden recovered. In late January, COVID-19 arrived, which changed everything. Canberra went into lockdown and Greg found himself with more time at home to observe the garden. As a keen photographer with an eye for detail, he recorded seasonal changes in plants and the garden.

Greg's garden is divided into distinct areas, including a circle garden, an upper lawn, a veggie garden and an extensive front garden. Retaining walls provide structure and the addition of sand, mulch and compost have helped to build up the soil. Being on a slope, the garden enjoys a borrowed landscape with views towards Mt Ainslie and Black Mountain Tower.

Yellow and orange colours predominate in the garden with brown, blue, purple and red highlights. Inspired by the late Christopher Lloyd of Great Dixter in the UK, Greg has ensured a succession of flowering plants and interesting foliage through the seasons.

One of Greg's indulgences is growing rare plants from seed which he sources from horticultural societies and rare plant suppliers, in addition to collecting seeds from his own garden. Many of his collection are grown in pots which helps with monitoring light and watering needs.

Gardeners dream of growing unusual plants such as galanthus, fritillarias or native orchids. Not only has Greg managed to do this successfully, he collects seeds and propagates new and rare varieties. He shares his knowledge of plants with the many gardening clubs and groups he associates with. In addition to the AGHS members who enjoyed Greg's talk, many of his gardening friends in Australia and overseas linked in to catch a glimpse of his garden and plant collection. His photo and description of the unusual primula auricula with its purple colour and lacy collar was an apt tribute to the late Ruth Bader Ginsberg, who was an associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States until her death in 2020.



Greg's interests extend to native Australian plants and Tasmanian alpine varieties which he has successfully propagated from seed. His persistence is demonstrated by his favourite winter aconite which takes three years to flower from seed.

As well as acknowledging the assistance provided by Shanta from Bollygum Gardens, Greg paid tribute to his Dad who passed away last year.

At the end of Greg's talk, participants asked questions about his extensive plant collection, how to grow and propagate plants and where they could be sourced.

We were treated to a 'visual cavalcade' through Greg's magnificent garden. We could almost touch the rain drops on the leaves and smell the flowers. Greg's photographic composition showcased plants at their best at various stages of development and through the seasons.

Greg's passion for rare plants, photography, seed collection and propagation shone through and it is no surprise that the garden became a refuge for his family and native wildlife during this uncertain and anxious time. Possums, birds and lizards have made their home in the garden or visit regularly. It is his special place to live, breathe, reflect, record and propagate.

Greg's talk is available on the AGHS website. The link is <https://youtu.be/pv7iLPoYilk>

Funds donated by participants went to UNHCR to support their work with refugees in Afghanistan.

Sue Cassidy

VALE – CEDRIC BRYANT (1939 – 2021)



Cedric Bryant at the AGHS function 'Griffin's Three Green Hills', at the Himalayan Cedar planting, National Arboretum, Canberra 31 March 2021. Photo: G I Johnson.

As gardeners, we're used to loss, and inevitably there's regret, but, as Cedric has said, 'Gardening is a journey that never finishes'.

On October 4 2021, the Canberra gardening world lost stalwart gardening writer, horticulturist and designer, Cedric Bryant. He leaves a wife, Gerdina, two daughters and their families, and a legacy of more than 350,000 written words, gardens large and small across the region, and a host of better informed gardeners.

Scion of the Bryant nurseries family in Bovington, Hemstead, England, Cedric Bryant grew up on the family farm and immigrated to Australia in 1957. He first worked as a

jackaroo near Gunnedah, NSW, where he also met his future wife, Gerdina, and later as a gas fitter and company representative.

Cedric's career in horticulture began in Yass in 1979 when he and Gerdina started a fuchsia and herb nursery (Bryant's Nursery and the Herb Gardens of Aberlour). In the late 1980s he trained in garden design with John Brooke the UK, and continued to design gardens across Canberra and the region.

Cedric was a member and regular speaker at most of Canberra's gardening, plant group, and horticulture societies, and wrote weekly gardening columns for over 30 years, first in the *Canberra Times*, and for the last decade, the *Canberra City News*.

Cedric didn't use social media or ZOOM, he was an 'old school' communicator. He spoke frequently at community group functions and gardening clubs, promoting practical gardening skills, plant knowledge and organic methods. And in recent years, Cedric was a regular at AGHS functions – offering comment and raising issues of topical concern with attendees

Through the *Canberra City News* column, letters to the editor of local papers, and meetings with the relevant officials, he also raised community concerns about renewal and conservation of urban tree-scapes (e.g. the light rail on Northbourne Avenue, and the historic cedars on Commonwealth Avenue near the Hyatt Hotel).

In 2019, our Branch commissioned Roslyn Burge to record an oral history interview with Cedric. The recording and transcript can be accessed here:
<https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/publications/cedric-bryant/>.

I first met Cedric at one of my talks on Australian Garden Writing for the AGHS, and we spoke regularly at Horticulture Society of Canberra meetings after I joined in 2013. I had a long chat with him while preparing for the oral history interview with Roslyn Burge, and subsequently, met for coffee regularly.

My last encounter with Cedric was at the Farmers' Market during winter 2021 when he reported progress on a *Cyclamen coum* I'd given him. From the safest way to control slugs and snails, to the best way to break up Canberra clay, I for one will continue to rely on Cedric's know-how.

Greg Johnson

AGHS NATIONAL NEWS

AGHS ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE HELD IN SYDNEY 10-11 SEPTEMBER 2021



Against the odds and in the midst of a COVID-19 pandemic, the 41st Annual National Conference went ahead as a fully virtual event. It was undoubtedly a resounding success.

Hosted by the Sydney Branch over two days, the conference was a major departure from our usual face to face conferences. However, this did not preclude a high level of engagement by delegates with an active chat function and plenty of questions for speakers.

The success of the conference is largely due to the irrepressible conference committee and the ACT Monaro Riverina Branch has extended its heartfelt congratulations to them on an outstanding event. With 6 weeks to go before the planned event at Luna Park (postponed from 2020), the organising committee was forced to reshape the lecture program into an online event due to COVID. We were most impressed by the successful use of technology which made it a highly enjoyable (and educative) experience.

The planned garden visits and tours which were to form part of the conference program could not proceed but the Sydney committee is beginning to think about how those garden visits and tours might be rescheduled in 2022. Stay tuned for further developments!

Lynne Curran

**WEBINAR: SPANISH GARDEN HISTORY, MANAGING
CHANGE: LESSONS FOR A DRYING SOUTHERN
AUSTRALIA
WEDNESDAY 10 NOVEMBER, 7PM
PRESENTED BY STUART READ**



*The home of Mediterranean garden leader, Heidi & Enrique Gildemeister.
Image © Stuart Read*

Spain faces similar environmental challenges to us – affluence, urbanisation, high migration and consumption, and scant water. Its range of climates give parallels worth studying. Its landscapes have a complex history, rich in melding, modification, cropping, garden-making. Designers and gardeners today look back to inform work sensitive to its environment, place. These all vary across what are really many countries, cultures, isolated by rugged topography.

Australia and Spain have long, unsung ties – merino is a Spanish sheep. Madeira and Cape Town were both stops for boats to Australia. That empire at its peak was the world's largest and many economic and ornamental plants were picked up en route to Australia from Spanish ports and colonies. Most thrived due to the similar aridity.

How is Spain's past informing its present and future? Actively. Can we learn from Spanish garden history and modern practice? Are there lessons for 'place-based' design using local plants – native or long-cultivated, local traditions and materials more sustainable and adapted to local conditions: physical, social, economic and cultural? Plenty.

Cost
Bookings

AGHS Members \$10.00, Non-members \$15.00, Students \$5.00
Through Trybooking at <https://www.trybooking.com/822342>

AGHS 2020 PHOTO COMPETITION AWARDS



The AGHS held a Garden History Photo Competition in 2020-21 with entries in the following categories:

- A. Garden view or cultural landscape.
- B. Still life composition.
- C. A gardener or gardeners taken under COVID19.
- D. The lawn.
- E. Garden history imagined.

Winners will be announced at the Annual General Meeting of the Society on Sunday 14 November 2021 starting at 10 AM. Prizes have been sponsored by the AGHS ACT Riverina Monaro and Southern Highlands Branches, as well as individual members. Category winners will receive an Australian made gardening tool and the overall winner will receive an additional prize of \$500.00.

The Judges were:

- Dr Victoria Cooper who has a 30 year practice as a photographer, artists' book maker, writer, mentor and reviewer. Cooper's creative work is located in the intersection between science and art, human and non-human. Instagram @wotwesaw.
- Lucy Culliton, one of Australia's most recognised female contemporary landscape and still-life artists. Lucy is one of those painters whose paintings relate closely to each other, as well as to her own history and way of being now¹. Instagram @lucyculliton.
- Trisha Dixon Burkitt, a writer and a photographer with a passion for landscape, literature, music, art, architecture, design and history. Her most recent book is *Spirit of the Garden*, published by the National Library of Australia in 2021. Instagram @trishadixonburkitt.
- Dr Doug Spowart has been extensively involved in creative arts for over 40 years – his practice includes photobooks, artist books, curatorships, critic, writer, judge and teacher. Instagram @woteyesaw.

Judges' comment on the Competition Entries

Viewers of the winning entries in the Garden History photography awards will be rewarded with a broad range of interesting visual interpretations of the award themes. The entrants have also written short statements to enrich or enlighten those who want to delve more deeply into the context of each photograph. All together, these images, from the formal compositions, the historical or political documentations, to the quirky and heart-warming, caught moments of contemporary life to form an entertaining visual experience. – Victoria Cooper on behalf of the Judges.

Greg Johnson, Chair, AHS photo Competition

¹ <https://www.portrait.gov.au/content/lucy-culliton>

**AGHS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2021
SUNDAY 14 NOVEMBER, 10AM
VIA ZOOM ONLINE**

The ZOOM meeting link will open at 9:30am and the meeting proper will start at 10am.

Please note that all are most welcome to attend the AGM but only members of the Australian Garden History Society may vote.

Register in advance for this meeting via

<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/zoom/register/tZAufuusqTgjGNfSYuR9KS0sE6adNwu04PRc>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Links to papers for the meeting were sent out with the October National E News, sent to members on the 20 October.



**The AGM will be followed by guest speaker
Richard Heathcote whose topic is
*The Blade - Australia's love affair with the Lawn***

**TOUR: GARDENS OF NEW ENGLAND AND THE
HUNTER VALLEY
19 MARCH – 10 APRIL 2022**

Join garden enthusiast, Lynne Walker, a passionate gardener and former Coordinator for Australia's Open Garden Scheme, Northern New South Wales, on an exciting new tour organised by ASA Cultural Tours for AGHS members which will explore a diverse range of private gardens in the Hunter Valley and New England

For more information go to

<https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/events-conferences/category/tour/>

OF INTEREST

NATIONAL CAPITAL AUTHORITY MAGIC OF MARION

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

Exhibition: 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. This free exhibition at Regatta Point has been extended into 2022 and will reopen Monday 1 November, 9 - 5 weekdays and 10 - 4 weekends and public holidays.

Sewing Workshop

Making with Marion

Marion was an advocate for sensible, comfortable dressing. Bring your machine and fabric to Regatta Point and join a workshop to learn how to make the famous 1920s 'One Hour Dress', Cost \$22

The workshop was postponed because of the COVID restrictions and is expected to take place early in 2022.

BOOKLET: CLIMATE WISE GARDEN DESIGNS



The Suburban Land Agency has worked with local landscape architect Edwina Robinson to create a selection of climate-wise gardens that residents can use as inspiration for their own homes. The Climate Wise Garden Designs booklet contains beautiful illustrations of gardens that centre on three themes: climate wise, low-maintenance and edible gardens. We have included advice on how to design your dream garden, how to plant a garden that will flourish under local conditions, and a list of plant species that are ideal for Canberra's changing climate.

The booklet can be downloaded at <https://suburbanland.act.gov.au/en/sustainability>

To have a free copy sent to you email surburbanland@act.gov.au

CANBERRA ENVIRONMENT CENTRE ENVIRONMENTAL HEROES

Podcasts about locals doing great things for our world are hosted by Ryan Lungu and Julie Boulton. New interviews include:

Episode 8 - Fiona Buining who runs Ainslie Urban Farm where she grows microgreens in green houses in her backyard for local restaurants and cafes. Fiona's property has over 50 fruit trees, nuts, berries, vegetables, two beehives, chickens and working rabbits.

Fiona is passionate about growing food and is inspired to create pathways for future food growers in urban areas.

For all episodes go to:

<https://www.canberraenvironment.org/environmental-heroes-podcast>

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDENS
www.anbg.gov.au

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

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

A note from the editor

Members receiving this Newsletter by email may wonder why I give the full URL instead of just including it in a hyperlink.

It is because not all members are receiving the newsletter by email and they need the details to access the link.

Judy Pearce
