ACT Monaro Riverina Branch

Newsletter October 2024 No 5



Australian Garden History Society www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au

ACT Monaro Riverina Branch, PO Box 5008, LYNEHAM ACT 2602 For an e-copy of the newsletter email judy.pearce@netspeed.com.au

BRANCH DIARY

9 & 10 NOVEMBER Cootamundra Garden Tour

6 DECEMBER, 5.30 PM End of Year Event

44TH AGHS ANNUAL CONFERENCE BUNBURY, WA 18 - 20 OCTOBER 2024

THEME: HESPERIA: LOOKING WEST

Optional Day, 21 October

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

THEME: BEYOND
THE GARDEN FENCE

BRANCH COMMITTEE

Robyn Oates, Chair Sue Cassidy, Treasurer

Louise Gaudry Rosanna Horn Mary Johnston

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

The AGM in late August was well attended. My sincere thanks to you all and to our committee for their wonderful teamwork which resulted in a year of terrific events. Our committee for 2024-25 is Rosanna Horn, Louise Gaudry, Sue Cassidy, Robyn Oates who were re-elected and Mary Johnston who was elected at the AGM. The positions for the coming year are:

Chair- Robyn Oates

Treasurer - Sue Cassidy

Secretary – vacant. The position of Secretary remains vacant and at the moment the committee members will share the various secretarial taskings.

Newsletter and Membership - this will continue to be co-ordinated by Judy Pearce and we are indebted to her for this.

Two long term members of the committee, Nancy Clarke and Anne Claoué-Long concluded their terms. Nancy and Anne have been instrumental to the success of so many AGHS activities, both local and national, over many years.

Nancy has served a total of 19 years on our committee, much of this time as Branch secretary. She was NMC representative for six years. She has written countless articles, acted as key liaison point for joint events and lead in the adoption of Zoom, the TryBooking platform and digitizing and archiving our records. Her enthusiasm, dedication and friendship are immense and unfailing.



Anne joined the committee in 2016. She has been the NMC representative, advocacy officer and as local historian and heritage specialist she deepened our awareness and action on local issues. She created the AGHS Advocacy Toolkit, available on the website for all national branches and she chairs the national Editorial Advisory Committee. She is also a member of the new AGHS National History Collection Working Group. Anne's quiet commitment to these roles has been invaluable.

Anne Claoué-Long will continue as the AGHS National Management Committee Branch Representative for the ACT until October. She has kindly offered to stay as Advocacy Officer for the Branch, as relevant matters arise. Nancy has kindly offered to maintain the TryBooking site for our events. In light of our reduced committee, we are extremely grateful for their generosity.

A detailed summary of Greg Johnson's AGM lecture is published in this Newsletter. I do, however wish to thank Greg for a wonderful lecture that combined history, genealogy, plant pathology, excellent graphics and all presented with style and humour.

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> The NLA Friends/AGHS joint lecture was a great success. Adj. Professor Margo Neale was a dynamic and generous speaker to her large audience. We thank her and the NLA Friends. Many of you belong to both societies and this lends a congenial touch to our ongoing warm relationship.

During the AGM we held a brief discussion on Future Directions for AGHS. Our various points of view will be conveyed to the NMC for their consideration on future directions and the possible re-naming of the Society. You are invited to comment via this link: info@gardenhistorysociety.org.au for the Branch Committee and the Society throughout the year.

Robyn Oates

This is a callout for additional committee members.

Our committee consists of 5 members. The AGHS Constitution requires a minimum of 6 members.

Please consider joining our committee. For additional information contact Robyn Oates robyn.oates1@bigpond.com

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

COOTAMUNDRA GARDEN TOUR SATURDAY 9 & SUNDAY 10 NOVEMBER

Not 2 & 3 November as originally advertised.

Join us on our Spring Tour of some beautiful private gardens around Cootamundra. Enjoy the rural way of life as you stroll through interesting pastoral gardens.

This is a wonderful opportunity to visit some long-established gardens in the ACT Monaro Riverina Branch's region. We are grateful to our hosts for their generous hospitality.

More information including driving and timing details will be sent to participants in good time.

Itinerary

Saturday

Our first stop will be in the picturesque small town of Wallendbeen. We suggest you drive to Wallendbeen through Binalong and Harden, about a two-hour drive from central Canberra. Perhaps make a quick comfort stop in Mackay Park, in the town, before driving to Bramshott, Wallendbeen where we will enjoy morning tea in the garden.

We will then drive to Cootamundra (20 km) for lunch at our own cost - booking information to follow, or you may prefer to bring your own and have a picnic.

A tour of the town and afternoon tea will follow, hosted by Cootamundra Garden Club. We will meet in the Gallipoli Centenary Rose Garden.

Dinner (own cost). You may like to join other members of the group for dinner in Cootamundra. Booking information to follow.

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Sunday morning

We will have morning tea at our next garden, **Rose Vale** in Illabo. We will get a chance to walk through the 6th generation occupied homestead after morning tea in the garden.

We suggest you join members for lunch at the charming Olde Schoolhouse T-house, Bethungra at your own cost, or picnic in the park.



Photo: Rose Vale

Sunday afternoon

After lunch, we will visit *Ferndale* in Bethungra.

The owner says: 'Ferndale has a lot of old established trees, but I continue to plant as they don't live forever, and I want to give to future generations what has been given to me.'



Photo: Ferndale

The return drive from Bethungra to central Canberra is about 2.5 hours via Cooneys Creek, Jugiong and the Hume Motorway.

Cost \$40 AGHS Members, \$45 non-members

Bookings https://www.trybooking.com/CVMNX

Numbers are limited

Final date for bookings: Friday 1st November

Inquiries Rosanna Horn twynamhorn@gmail.com

SAVE THE DATE

END OF YEAR EVENT AT THE FOOT OF THE MOUNTAIN - A 60 YEAR LEGACY

FRIDAY 6 DECEMBER, 5.30 PM

You are invited to attend our end of year event in a very special garden in Ainslie. This garden abuts Mount Ainslie. It has always been owned by the same family and it retains the original plantings, which now almost cradle the house within their branches.

Suellen Fitzgerald will speak to us about living *At the Foot of the Mountain – a 60 year garden legacy*. She is a highly regarded landscape architect who became the first-ever Executive Director of Western Sydney Parklands Trust prior to her tenure as inaugural Chief Executive of Greater Sydney Parklands. She is also a non-executive advisor at McGregor Coxall, an Australian international company with a global focus on design for climate resilient cities and environments.

Booking details, costs, etc. will be provided near the time.

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RECENT EVENTS

COLLECTING THE GARDEN: GARDEN HISTORIES & MUSEUM OBJECTS SPEAKER: DR LUKE KEOGH

THURSDAY 25 JULY

Gardening is good for us – good for our bodies and our mental health. This was the opening and encouraging message Luke gave in his recent talk to Branch members and friends. He also reminded us through his brief description of some of his research that gardens and gardening are good for our minds.

Many museums across the world have significant gardens - the National Museum of Australia itself has two - and there are some museums dedicated to gardens, like the Australian Museum of Gardening at Carrick Hill in South Australia. However, very many museums also include in their collections objects that relate in various ways to gardens and gardening. In his current role as White Family Senior Fellow in Garden History at the National Museum of Australia, Luke is exploring "garden objects" and their significance in the museum's large collections. There are hundreds of trowels and postcards, as well as many objects that are obviously garden related, like rakes, a seed bucket, photographs, pressed flowers, books about plants, and domestic crockery featuring botanic ornaments and illustrations. But there are also objects that are less obviously garden related and these are among the most interesting. We get a glimpse into suburban Australian life through photos of Sunday-best dressed families in their neatly fenced vegetable gardens, with their produce a source of great pride, and there is a wooden box whose significance Luke has recently been investigating.

This is a small, beautifully crafted and polished 19th Century Huon Pine box. It is an Apothecary's box, and is part of the remarkable Trevor Kennedy collection the Museum acquired in 2020. The garden connection is in the contents of the box. Inside the box are tightly corked glass bottles, each carefully labelled with the name of the medication it contained: among them Camphor, Codrenine, Ergot extract and Salicylic Acid. Like almost all medications until very recently, these were all plant based, and though initially these oils, essences and other medical liquids would have come by sea from the UK, later they were produced from Australian grown plants, just as opium is now grown successfully and commercially in Tasmania. And in some cases the plants from which medications were extracted changed from the original European species to an Australian one – the commonly used Essence of Peppermint was originally extracted

from imported Pennyroyal (*Mentha pulegium*) but this was quickly replaced by Australian species like *Mentha satureioides* (bush mint) or *Mentha diemenica* and *Mentha australis*. And domestic kitchen gardens frequently grew other plants used for medical purposes – roses, cardamon, chamomile, ginger, garlic, lemons, marigolds and many others. The small Apothecary's box is another window into Australian society and how people depended on plants for help with medical conditions.



Apothecary's Box made from Huon Pine, NMA Collection

Luke has also been preoccupied for years with another box – not one held in the National Museum however. In 1829 an English doctor, Nathaniel Bagshaw Ward, developed and popularised what became known as the Wardian Case, a simple, substantial enclosed case made of wood and glass. Until then, it had been possible

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and comparatively easy to transport seeds (sometimes unintentionally) but moving plants that did not rely on seeds for propagation had been chancy, expensive and occasionally dangerous. Ward conducted a practical test on the case he had developed in 1833 when he filled one with plants and sent it on the poop desk of a ship to Australia. The plants survived, as did those returned in the same way. Ward's invention was simple and successful and he had excellent social and scientific connections. Using his case, plants started to move across the world, changing not just gardening but botanical science and ultimately whole economies. The traffic of Wardian cases across the world was astonishing. Between 1942 and 1865, Kew Gardens sent out 307 Wardian cases across the world, and 399 came back, nearly all from British colonies, bringing new plants from remote places. Very few original Wardian cases have survived - perhaps about 10 world-wide, and these are historical treasures.

The success of the Wardian case has had remarkable consequences. Moving plants from their original habitats to others has resulted in economic and environmental triumphs and catastrophes, and these success and disaster stories have in turn brought about changes to the way we think about the environment. It is a truly significant story.

Luke's talk was engaging, with delightful illustrations, and very much appreciated by the audience. He foreshadowed the coming special issue of *The Museum* that focuses on gardens and features articles by well-known experts including the AGHS Patron Dr Tim Entwisle and AGHS guru Richard Aitken as well as by himself.

Nancy Clarke

ANNUAL LECTURE GARDENING WITH THE ANCESTORS SPEAKER: DR GREG I JOHNSON THURSDAY 22 AUGUST



Greg Johnson is a remarkable gardener and his recent explorations into his family history have disclosed an equally remarkable history of gardening ancestors. His Chinese and Scottish forebears were gardeners, and in his lecture, Greg gave an overview of some of their history.

Greg grew up in Maryborough, Queensland, with a long family connection to the place. It is only comparatively recently that his family learnt that his mother's grandfather, John Mann, had been brought from China to *Degilbo* station west of Maryborough as an indentured shepherd in 1853. John Mann was clearly enterprising and ambitious. In 1865 he was naturalised – he was described on his naturalisation document as a Shepherd and Bushman. As a British subject he could vote and

buy land, which he did. By 1868 the family (his wife was Scottish born) had moved into town (Maryborough) where on various official documents and newspaper entries over the next twenty years he was described as a carrier, then later a fruit dealer, a fruiterer and (finally) a gardener. An article in the Wide Bay News in 1888 noted the death of John Mann "one of the oldest Chinamen in the district" and commented that he "had a European wife, and was a very decent sort of Celestial". Just what was did this mean at this time in Maryborough? Greg is on the job.

Some thirty years later John Mann's grandson Jim (Greg's grandfather) married Maggie Roy and here is where the other gardening line, that of the Aberdeen (in Scotland) Roys, comes into the story.

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Aberdeen records in the late 18th and early 19th centuries show a number of land holdings in Aberdeen held by members of the Roy family. These documents identify the owners and purchasers etc of land by occupation as well as name, and on many of them the Roys appear as 'gardeners', a broad classification at that time. The earliest mention so far located is from 1795 when John Roy appears on an official rent roll as a gardener. In Aberdeen street directories from the 1820s, John's widow Ann is also listed as a gardener, as is their son John (there are lots of Johns in this story). James, another son of John and Ann, is listed at the same time as a seedsman/nurseryman.

The brothers (John and James) were deeply engaged in gardening practices – John was an active member of many cooperative societies for gardeners, and in 1829 James purchased rights for land at Ferryhill in Aberdeen, a site that became famous as The Roy Nursery. As nurserymen James, along with his son (another John) were enterprising and remarkably successful. James drained the site, and developed and planted it as a picturesque walking site. They advertised their stock widely and sold a remarkable variety of garden products – garden and flower seed, fruit trees including apples, Seville oranges, figs and sweet chestnuts as well as some highly exotic Australian plants, Leptospermum and the Australiana 'incense plant' *Calomeria amaranthoides*. He also established onsite a significant pinetum featuring the monkey puzzle tree – *Araucaria araucaria*, so popular in Victorian England. And he trained other gardeners too, including the head gardener at Balmoral.

But others in the family were also gardeners. Let us go back to John, brother of James (of the Roy Nursery). John had four sons all of whom trained as gardeners. The third son, William, led an adventurous life, in Fiji, New Zealand, and following the lure of gold, in Victoria. It was his son, also William, who moved to Maryborough, and it was this William's daughter Maggie who married Jim Mann in 1919, linking the Chinese and Scottish families.

This was a complex and fascinating story: a tale of success, and dedication and some good fortune. In his introduction Greg pointed out that both plants and people depend on many factors to thrive –plants need suitable habitats, good genes, and good cultivation; people need healthy living conditions, as well as good political and social systems. And both plants and people can be afflicted by disease. As a plant pathologist Greg has worked for many years to better understand plant health and to ensure that the principles for managing plant disease are soundly applied. He reminded us of the extraordinary advances in his area of science, but that overarching economic and political circumstances can cause catastrophe, citing the impact of the war in Ukraine. He also reminded us that scientists have to work together but also with the people who apply their findings – the farmers, traders and consumers. Everything is connected – place, plants, people.

The Branch would like to thank Greg for this talk as well as his many generous contributions to AGHS as a member and friend.

Nancy Clarke

BRANCH NEWS

WELCOME TO A NEW MEMBER

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

- Denise Rawling & Tony Stewart, Canberra
- Linda Roberts, Canberra

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OUR RECENT SALE OF DONATED BOOKS

The Branch Committee thanks everyone who donated gardening and garden history books for our recent sales. We are grateful to Louise Gaudry who stored the books in her garage and arranged them on her patio, with Anna Howe's help, to be sold after the three guided walks around her suburb of Griffith. We sold many more of those remaining at our recent Gundaroo film day.

Thanks also to all of you who purchased books and gave them a new home.

The book sales brought in \$590.

This will be added to the Nina Crone Writing Fund so that Francesca Beddie, the editor of *Australian Garden History*, may commission more articles from young and emerging authors, and on new topics of interest to our society.

Thank you all!

AGHS NAME BADGES FOR BRANCH MEMBERS

It's a great idea to have a members' badge to wear to AGHS events – and our Branch has arranged to have badges made for ACT Monaro Riverina Branch members who wish to purchase them. They are plastic, on a bright white background and have the AGHS logo on them as well as your name. They have a magnetic backing so they can be used safely on clothing that might be easily damaged by a pin.

The AGHS no longer provides a printed badge for new members. They are available for members through the AGHS website login page to print yourself and put in a pin on plastic sleeve or lanyard. But if you are a new member, or misplaced your badge why not order one of these new options.

They cost \$15 each (plus a 50 cent TryBooking fee) and you can place an order with us at https://www.trybooking.com/CSBHL

For further information contact Nancy Clarke clarkenancy624@gmail.com



CALLING ALL KEEN PHOTOGRAPHERS

Are you a keen photographer? Do you have suitable snaps that you would be happy to share online? The AGHS website is about to get a refresh and they are calling for pictures to be used on our Branch page.

An iconic Canberra picture, to use as a header photo on our Branch page and another for our Branch oral histories will be a great start. Photos of members enjoying our outdoor events and visits to gardens are always welcome. Please ensure that your photo is high resolution. The NMC website refresh committee will select the final pictures.

Send your photos to robyn.oates1@bigpond.com

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SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS BRANCH

Members of our Branch are welcome to join events in the Southern Highlands. The next event is:

COACH TOUR TO ELIZABETH BAY & VAUCLUSE HOUSE

SUNDAY 13 OCTOBER

Elizabeth Bay House

With harbour views, sweeping staircases and spectacular landscaped gardens, Elizabeth Bay House was Sydney's ultimate trophy home. Built for colonial secretary Alexander Macleay, after the governor, the most important public official in Sydney, it was by all accounts the finest house in the colony. Yet it tells a familiar story: of ambition and passion; of riches to ruin.

Elizabeth Bay House is a superb example of colonial architecture in a magnificent setting overlooking Sydney Harbour. The house was restored and opened as a house museum in 1977. Elegantly furnished to the period of 1839 to 1845, the interiors reflect the lifestyle of the Macleays and present an evocative picture of 19th century life. The house was once surrounded by an extensive 54-acre garden and described as a 'botanist's paradise'. Alexander Macleay was a renowned gentleman scientist who established a significant library and entomology collection and had extensive interests in botany.

Vaucluse House

One of Sydney's most treasured harbourside estates. Vaucluse House is one of Sydney's few 19th-century mansions still surrounded by its original gardens and grounds, with the rambling estate stretching down to the harbour's edge. Surrounded by 10 hectares of picturesque gardens and grounds, Vaucluse House is one of Sydney's only surviving 19th-century harbourside estates, dating back to 1803. The sandstone mansion built in the 1830s was the home of explorer, barrister and agitator for self-government William Charles Wentworth and his family. Stretching down to the harbour, the estate is a peaceful oasis away from the city bustle, and many of the Wentworth family's possessions are displayed throughout the house

\$60, bookings at https://events.humanitix.com/sydney-coach-trip

NATIONAL NEWS

MANAGING YOUR AGHS COMMUNICATIONS

The Melbourne office of AGHS communicates with society members across Australia primarily by emails. Some members find these communications useful but others find them to be a case of information overload.

You can manage the degree of AGHS communication to your inbox after logging onto the AGHS website using your email address and password, and reassuring the website that you are not a robot by ticking the required box! If you have forgotten your password there is a link for that to help you out.

Once in your account there is a Dashboard list with "Communication preferences" to the left of the page. A click on that takes you to an online form to choose which emails you will receive from AGHS so you can manage your AGHS communications to the level you are happy with (options include Enews, Book Updated, Climate Updates, Project Activity updates & Landscape Australia Newsletter).

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2024 AGHS ANNUAL CONFERENCE - BUNBURY



To download the program go to https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/AGHS-Conference-Program-2024.pdf This gives details on the optional day and pre and post conference tours.

2025 AGHS ANNUAL CONFERENCE - MT GAMBIER 31 OCTOBER -2 NOVEMBER THEME: BEYOND THE GARDEN FENCE

Initial plans to hold the conference in Alice Springs have been postponed. The working title - *Beyond the Garden Fence* - will explore how the AGHS has developed over the last 25 years and broadened its outlook to consider the wider cultural landscape as well as cultivated gardens. The 2025 program promises to be significantly different from the AGHS conference that was held in Mount Gambier in 1999.



Mount Gambier aerial view of Umpherston Sinkhole Image courtesy depositphotos

OF INTEREST

OPEN GARDENS CANBERRA https://opengardenscanberra.org.au/

The spring program commences the weekend of 28/29 September.

28-29 September, My Place in Torrens & Cuumbeun in Greenleigh.

5-6 October, My Therapy in Reid

12-13 October, BeaverLea & Narrawong in Rivett & Hillside in Wanniassa.

26-27 October, Fairview in Reid.

23-24 November, Teachers' Rest in Palmerston & Dhulwa in Chifley.

All visitors are welcome and admission fees payable for non-members of Open Gardens Canberra. For more information check out the website.

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Tours of the Weston Park Heritage Site

Saturday 28 September & Sunday 29 September, 3.00pm (trials) Sunday 20 October, 3.00pm Saturday 9 November & Sunday 10 November, 3.00pm

Organised by the Rotary Club of Canberra and Camellia Ark Australia. Meet at English Garden sign near Yarralumla Gallery and Oaks Brasserie to learn about Thomas Charles George Weston (1866-1935) who transformed the landscape of Canberra and Districts.

Take a tour surveying over a century of landscape history; Learn the stories of the old trees and shrubs; and Learn how Rotary can help revitalise one of the most significant environment heritage sites in the ACT.

Please book: 0421972287. \$5 per person, \$10 per household, pensioners and students free (or voluntary coin donation). Proceeds shared by Rotary and Camellia Ark Australia for park improvements.

BRAIDWOOD OPEN GARDENS

Saturday 5 & Sunday 6 October, 10am-4pm

An annual fundraiser for the community run, not-for-profit Braidwood Preschool.

2024 Open Gardens will feature::

Mona Farm - Kings Highway, Braidwood The Doncaster - 1 Park Lane, Braidwood Dovecote - 9 Deloraine Lane, Braidwood 18 Coronation Ave, Braidwood Old Post Office, Araluen - 5929 Araluen Road, Araluen

Cake stall, family activities, Made in Araluen markets at Araluen Hall (Sunday), food, drinks and live music at Mona Farm, and more! Join us for a spectacular weekend in the beautiful heritage-listed town of Braidwood, to celebrate the 10-year anniversary of Braidwood Open Gardens. More details and tickets at https://events.humanitix.com/braidwood-preschool-2024-open-gardens

NATIONAL TRUST https://www.nationaltrust.org.au

October Heritage Walk - Sunday 20 October The Law & the Profits! Who was Who on Mugga Way

Canberra was founded on the notion that anything was possible in this fledgling capital. Mugga Way exemplified what the vision of the city would be. This walk introduces you to some of the folks that made their lives along Mugga Way.

The walk will be followed by a chance to view the new exhibition at Calthorpes' House and delve into family stories with the audio tour of the garden. There will be a cup of tea and light refreshment at the end of the walk. Nicole Sutherland, a curator at Galleries Museums and Heritage, will be taking the walk.

Bookings open from 20 September at https://www.trybooking.com/CVJKC.

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

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

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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.

24 October - Branch member Anna Howe will be speaking on *Southern California meets Australian Native in Canberra in the 1970s.*

Visitors Centre Gallery Exhibition, free, open daily 9.30am to 4.30pm.

2 – 29 October – Garden Promenade - featuring textile works by Sharon Peoples. *Garden Promenade* speculates on what could have been if Sarah Sophia Banks had travelled to Australia instead of only her brother, Sir Joseph Banks.

BACKYARD ARCHAEOLOGY

Canberra Museum + Gallery recently hosted an exhibition by ACT Monaro Riverina Branch member Steve Brown on Backyard Archaeology – the small objects excavated from his suburban back garden and the stories they tell. An online resource is available at this link http://www.cmag.com.au/exhibitions/backyard-archaeology

The webpage has two further links; one to Steve's write up of his project and exhibition, and the second to the *Backyard Belongings: Experiences of the everyday in the Canberra Region*, a blog reporting on the Backyard Archaeology Symposium that was held in May 2024 and written up in the August Branch Newsletter.

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

CANBERRA MUSEUM AND GALLERY HTTP://WWW.CMAG.COM.AU/

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