

ACT Monaro Riverina Branch

Newsletter September 2023 No 6



Australian Garden History Society
www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au

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BRANCH DIARY

24 SEPT

Hackett Heritage Walk
SOLD OUT

4 NOVEMBER

Walk: Kingston Parks and Gardens

24 NOVEMBER

Visit to Goulburn

AGHS NATIONAL CONFERENCES

43RD AGHS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

IPSWICH, QLD

29 SEPTEMBER –

1 OCTOBER 2023

2 optional days – 28 Sept
and 2 October

44TH AGHS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

BUNBURY, WA

18 – 20 OCTOBER

2024

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



Thank you to all those who braved the cold to come along to our AGM in early August. As I mentioned in my opening address, unfortunately AGMs are often perceived as dull and procedural, however they have a very important role, and provide the branch with a specific time each year when we can assess what we have been doing, and ensure our activities are transparent and being managed in accordance within the Society's Constitution and its members' wishes.

During this year's AGM we experienced a change of Committee members, a natural part of a healthy committee's lifecycle, with Lynne Curran concluding her term and Rosanna Horn being elected. I am delighted to announce that Robyn Oates has also accepted our invitation to join the Committee.

The Committee has since met and elected committee members to the following roles:

Chair - Bronwyn Blake
Secretary - Nancy Clarke
Treasurer – Sue Cassidy

Anne Claoue-Long will continue as the AGHS National Management Committee Branch Representative for the ACT. Judy Pearce has kindly agreed to continue as Newsletter editor, and Robyn Oates will act as the liaison person between the Committee and Judy.

Later in this newsletter is a detailed summary of Francesca's Beddie's talk that followed the AGM, so whilst I won't elaborate here, I will reiterate that AGHS is indeed incredibly fortunate indeed to have Francesca, with her vision, energy and passion editing our quarterly journal.

As you will have read in the Society's national newsletter, Lisa Nutting is finishing her time as the Society's National Executive Officer after years of faithful generous service. Lisa has gently guided the Society through tremendous change in her calm, kind and methodical way. As a branch we wish Lisa all the very best in her future adventures.

As spring is thankfully in the air, on behalf of the Committee, I thank you for your ongoing support of the Committee and the work of AGHS.

We look forward to seeing you at our remaining 2023 events,

Bronwyn Blake

Photo: Anne Claoue-Long

**BRANCH
COMMITTEE**

Bronwyn Blake, Chair
Sue Cassidy, Treasurer
Anne Claoue-Long, State
NMC Representative
Nancy Clarke, Secretary

Louise Gaudry
Rosanna Horn
Robyn Oates
Susan Phillips

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

SATURDAY 4 NOVEMBER, 9.30 – 11.30 A.M.

***WALK AROUND KINGSTON PARKS AND
GARDENS – OLD AND NEW***

A joint AGHS/ACT National Trust walk

There are many parks and green spaces, old and new, in the vicinity of Kingston Foreshore, although it is not renowned for its gardens. On this walk we will visit some of the oldest (Telopea and Bowen Parks) and some new ones along the shores of the Lake and Jerrabomberra Creek, with some highly informative talks along the way. We will finish in Norgrove Park, where we hope to buy coffee and crepes from an onsite van. This event has been organised by the Australian Garden History Society and the National Trust ACT.

We will meet at Canberra Glassworks, Wentworth Avenue, Kingston.

Cost \$15

Bookings are essential. Bookings open in early October at
<https://www.trybooking.com/CLMHT>

**FRIDAY 24 NOVEMBER,
10.30 A.M – 3.15 P.M. APPROX.**

***END OF YEAR VISIT TO GOUBURN –
KENTGROVE AND RIVERSDALE***

AGHS members and friends are invited to a special end of year day, a self-drive visit to two historic places in Goulburn, both with fascinating gardens.

Kentgrove, on the outskirts of north Goulburn, was originally established as an orchard and had 30,000 fruit trees at its peak. It even had its own cannery (the Argyle Jam Factory), and the building still stands today. A series of owners held it from the 1850s, and in the 1930s it was bought by Mr J Hyles who cut down the trees and turned it into a successful grazing property. In 2006 Doug Rawlinson purchased the central part of the property, and since then he has restored the buildings and has created a series of remarkable garden rooms. Doug will talk to us about the house and garden and we will have a light morning tea, and then have time to spend looking at the site and the garden.

We will then drive 5 km back to Riversdale in north Goulburn.

Originally built as a coaching inn in 1840, Riversdale became a school and then a small holding. In 1872 it was bought by the Twynam family. In 1967 it was purchased by the National Trust, one of whose real treasures it is. Our visit will give us an opportunity to find out much more about this special house and garden.

On arrival, we will enjoy our lunch (BYO picnic lunch AND we will provide tea and coffee and something sweet - and delicious - to go with our drinks) on the spacious verandahs of Riversdale.

After lunch we will have a guided tour of the house interior and a special tour of the garden which has gone through two major phases of restoration by teams of

volunteers. The Riversdale gardeners, led by the expert Roz Loftus work regularly on the garden, and it is looking splendid.

This is a great opportunity to see these fascinating properties and spend a happy late spring day with friends.

After your visit to Riversdale, you may wish to visit some of the other interesting spots in Goulburn. Here are some garden-related suggestions: Belmore Park in Auburn Street is a splendid example of a 19th Century town park; the roses in the Victoria Park Rose Garden should be in full bloom (the best access to the garden is from Clifford Street near Deccan Street); and the Australian Native Bonsai Nursery is close to Riversdale, at 66 Auburn Street.

If a member would like to attend the Goulburn day but has transport difficulties, or if you would like to OFFER transport, please contact Nancy Clarke. We may be able to arrange transport.



Riversdale: photo Michael Bligh

Timing	Meet at Kentgrove at 10.30 am. About 12.00 we will drive to Riversdale in Goulburn (just 5 km). Finishing time approximately 3.15 pm.
Venues	Kentgrove and Riversdale are both in north Goulburn. Detailed driving instructions will be sent once you have booked.
Bring	Your own picnic lunch – and we will provide something sweet to go with our tea/coffee at lunchtime.
Cost	AGHS members \$35. Others \$40. Includes the tour of Kentgrove and morning tea, a lunch venue at Riversdale with tea/coffee/cake, a guided tour of the Riversdale house and a special tour of the Riversdale garden.
Bookings	Essential at https://www.trybooking.com/CLMRI Numbers limited. Please book promptly to help us with planning the day
Inquiries	Nancy Clarke clarkenancy624@gmail.com , 0423690626

PAST EVENTS

THE ANNUAL LECTURE AUSTRALIAN GARDEN HISTORY: GROWING THE SOCIETY'S JOURNAL 9 AUGUST

In her engaging talk, Francesca Beddie gave an insight into how she became a committed editor and a gardener, and how these led to her taking on the role of editor of the Society's journal, **Australian Garden History (AGH)**. A historian by education and interest, Francesca's career has included many roles in diplomatic circles and a number of professional organisations, all the while honing her editorial skills. She says "Words are the link in my career chain".

Growing up in an academic household in suburban Canberra she was not a gardener – as so frequently, her mother was the gardener - but she was exposed to the gardening culture pervading Canberra. Her career has taken her to many places, but through that time her knowledge of and relationship with gardens in very different locations (with help from friend and gardener Morgan Foster) has grown. Canberra, Carwoola, Bundanoon, Newcastle are some of the places she has lived and gardened.



This background prepared Francesca brilliantly to take on the position of editor of **AGH**, but the timing was dreadful. She took up the role just as Covid lockdowns prevented her from meeting in person with her editorial board, the AGHS National Management Committee, or any of the Society's many knowledgeable and dedicated members, so she appreciates the opportunity now of meeting AGHS members face to face, as on this occasion.

Francesca then spoke of her approach to the role of editor, quoting with approval the words of Trisha Dixon – a previous editor of **AGH** – “we’re really editors of the mind, it’s about the literature, the art, the landscape, the history, the philosophy, everything about it... It’s about custodianship”. The **AGH** editor has a great deal of responsibility and each editor shapes and develops the journal differently, but there are formal **AGH** Guidelines, as well as an active Editorial Advisory Committee (Anne Claoue-Long is the Chair of that Committee). And of course, there are the always important financial considerations. The Journal is a very major cost item for the Society’s budget.

Its limited budget means for instance that contributors are not normally paid for their entries. Francesca relies on the membership for most articles which they contribute free of charge. However, including a wider diversity of voices is critical and the Society's Nina Crone fund is helping here. Nina Crone was a former editor of the journal, and an earlier fund in her honour has recently been relaunched to help encourage and support contributions from other voices to the journal, particularly indigenous people, experts from areas like horticulture and landscape design and young and emerging writers. Francesca described briefly some of the editorial work she has done to mentor and support writers – and how rewarding this has been.

The presentation of **AGH** is also critical. It is directed to a well-informed and educated, but not academic audience, and Francesca spoke of her collaboration with Mariana Rollgejser, who has been the designer for fifteen years. Rather than retain a standard format for the front cover, Francesca and Mariana work together to present each issue as a fresh and enticing production - a display of some recent covers demonstrated this admirably. One valuable and intriguing resource can be archival photos, as in the

recently published article on Armidale's *Booloolimbah* gardens, though reproducing these in sufficiently high resolution can be time consuming and difficult.

Australian Garden History has ongoing and wide value, and ensuring that it reaches a wide audience and that it is properly archived and accessible is a challenge for the Society as well as the editor. At present the Journal goes beyond AGHS members in many ways – it is stored permanently through legal deposit in the National Library of Australia and the State Library of Victoria, and it is available more widely through the libraries of subscriber institutions like Botanic Gardens, through academic databases, and freely through the Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL). Francesca is currently exploring options for making it more widely available in its printed format through specialist bookshops.

To conclude this fascinating talk, Francesca mentioned some important themes she considers currently underrepresented in **AGH** - regional Australia, First Nations Stories, climate adaptation and heritage challenges. She would love to hear from you about this. Email her at editor@gardenhistorysociety.org.au

Nancy Clarke

Photo: Bronwyn Blake

A VISIT TO THE LODGE GARDEN FRIDAY 8 SEPTEMBER

The Lodge Gardens in Canberra are seldom open to the public. The AGHS visit scheduled for April in April 2020 fell prey to Covid, and it was a privilege to be able to visit these historic and interesting gardens this year.



Group photo at the commencement of our tour: Lodge photographer

We were welcomed by Grant Fry, Senior House Attendant and Kim Osmond, House Manager, who had facilitated our visit. After a short welcome, members of the gardening team led us in two groups around the grounds – Senior Gardener Brad Doherty with Holly Matthews, and former Senior Gardener Patrick Adams with Matt Fuller. Heritage experts Georgia McWhinney and Martin Strangman accompanied the groups and fielded questions on heritage matters.

The garden is maintained by Parliament House Landscape Services. This is a government organisation which has replaced a contracted gardener service of about 20 years. It was a joy to meet and listen to the gardeners who are devoted to their task of rehabilitating this important garden.

The original design for the garden was by Charles Weston in 1926, and the current plan retains the overall characteristics of an Edwardian villa garden with many add-ons, including the tall cypress trees near the Lodge - a nod to the Italian Renaissance garden. Originally 2.8ha in size, the garden was reduced to 1.8ha in the 1950s for work on Adelaide Avenue, with an important impact on the garden.

Five significant plantings were highlighted. A beautiful tulip tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) planted by Queen Elizabeth II in 1982 is thriving, though the flowering cherry (*Prunus serrulata*) planted the following year by Diana, Princess of Wales is now ageing. Decisions about plant replacement are made on a case-by-case basis. Some pin oaks (*Quercus palustris*) near the ceremonial entrance in Adelaide Avenue were planted by Sir Robert Menzies in the 1960s. Sir Robert and Dame Pattie had previously planted some Scots pines (*Pinus sylvestris*) in the 1950s and one rather sad specimen remains. A large Algerian oak (*Quercus canariensis*) planted in 1975 by Professor Lindsay Pryor gives shade in the “back yard” and keeps the gardeners on their toes, dropping leaves indiscriminately throughout the year, not only in autumn. All of these significant trees can be seen from the Lodge.

Brad Doherty has a special interest in the rose garden. Prior to his current position, he managed the Rose Garden in the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney, and he gave members of his group some excellent insider’s advice on rose care. There are no records of the plantings, and many of the roses have not been identified. One white rose (popularly known as the Dame Pattie Rose but an unidentified cultivar) was planted in honour of Dame Pattie Menzies by her daughter Heather Henderson and Ms Thérèse Rein in 2009.

A garden containing Australian native plants commissioned by Bettina, wife of the then Prime Minister John Gorton while living in The Lodge is now known as the Bettina Gorton Garden. She selected indigenous plants from all over Australia, and worked with the Czech-born Canberra resident landscape architect Otakar (Otto) Ruzicka. It was said to be the largest designed native garden in the world and the first officially commissioned Australian bush garden. Correas, melaleucas, banksias, and grevilleas surround a large pool which is fed by a rocky waterfall. In this garden two yellow box gums (*Eucalyptus melliodora*) stand tall. They predate the Lodge itself and are estimated to be over 100 years old.



Group at the Bettina Gorton Garden: Lodge photographer

Two eastern vistas from the Lodge to Parliament House stretch past each end of the tennis court. These vistas must, by law, be maintained. The tennis court itself features an odd cut-out section created some time ago so that spectators could watch play

informally from the building and the lawns. This has been retained so that tennis watching continues.

The “back yard” on the north western corner is a spot for relaxation and casual entertaining, perhaps under the shade of the white wisteria which grows along the pergolas or perhaps in the swimming pool or in the shade of Lindsay Pryor’s Algerian oak. Along the northern wall onto Adelaide Ave there is a tall, dense planting of shrubs, including some tall camellias currently sporting stunning crimson blooms. This lessens the wind and the traffic noise as well as providing privacy.

In the south eastern corner lies a vegetable garden in a series of raised garden beds and a small orchard. The orchard boasts nectarine, plum, quince, apple, lemon, fig and Seville orange trees as well as two long rows of table grapes. The citrus trees are exposed to the Canberra winters and only pruned and fertilized when the frosts have finished. Mr Albanese is fond of this part of the garden and loves to show visitors fresh produce which the chef incorporates in The Lodge menus.

If you look closely at the right time, you may see foxes, possums or a lone hare. The possums have three possum boxes for their daytime safety. Yes, they do damage the plants, but the gardeners realistically “live and work with nature”. There are no rabbits or kangaroos!

A special bonus was the gift to everyone of a recently published booklet *The Lodge: Significant Plantings*, a delightful souvenir of our memorable morning. In her thanks, our Chair, Bronwyn Blake thanked the whole team, and emphasised how privileged we had been in visiting the historic and personal garden of the residence of many Australian Prime Ministers.

It had been a bitterly cold morning with strong winds but our enthusiasm stayed strong. The gardeners love this garden and clearly enjoyed sharing it with us.

Oh, and just in case you were wondering, the PM was overseas and Toto was holidaying elsewhere with other family.

Robyn Oates

BRANCH NEWS

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

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

- Fiona Martin, Gundaroo
- Clair Murray, Canberra
- Marian Turner, Canberra

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS BRANCH NEWS

Members of our Branch are welcome to join events in the southern Highlands.

Their next event is a Self-drive to Camden Park House and Gardens, Menangle Park on 25 October. Information should appear in the next National ENews



Many of you will have met Hazel King OAM, a long standing member of the AGHS.

Some of our Branch members visited Berry earlier in the year to celebrate the recently published book she co-authored with Peter Milthorpe, *Trees of Historic Berry*.

www.treesofhistoricberry.com

Many of you came on the fabulous weekend trip she organised for our Branch and the Sydney Branch to Berry some years ago.

She will be sorely missed.



For more conference details go to the AGHS website.

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

OF INTEREST

BERRY GARDENS FESTIVAL

www.berrygardens.org.au

Thursday 12 – Sunday 15 October

\$20 for all 6 gardens \$7 for a single garden.

ACT REGION HERITAGE SYMPOSIUM 2023**Saturday 14 October, 9am – 5pm****Venue: ANU****Theme: *Planning for Heritage***

The keynote speaker at the Symposium will be Dr James Lesh of Deakin University, a historian and Lecturer in Cultural Heritage and Museum Studies who has published widely in Australian urban history. His recent book *Values in Cities: Urban Heritage in Twentieth-Century Australia* is the first major scholarly examination of the Australian heritage movement. He has recently published articles dealing with the relationship between heritage protection and affordable housing, and protection of twentieth century heritage.

Bookings: <https://www.trybooking.com/CKRCP>**NATIONAL ARBORETUM CANBERRA**www.nationalarboretum.act.gov.au

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

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDENSwww.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.

HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY OF CANBERRA<http://www.hsoc.org.au>**NATIONAL TRUST****Thursday 19 October 5.30 pm for 6 pm****AGM and Speaker****Venue:** St John's Church, Reid, Parish Hall

Duncan Marshall AM, Chair ACT Heritage Council, will be the speaker before the AGM

Duncan Marshall is a leading Australian and international practitioner in heritage conservation, both in terms of site-specific work and the development of heritage practice. Mr Marshall is an architect with 40 years' experience in heritage conservation across government and the private sector, including with the Australian Heritage Commission, as General Secretary of the Australian Council of National Trusts and as a heritage consultant since 1993.

Mr Marshall has been responsible for multiple conservation planning projects of historic buildings and precincts in the ACT including Old Parliament House, Lanyon and Cuppacumbalong Homestead Precincts, CSIRO Black Mountain, and St John's Church, Reid

Bookings: The event is free but please book here for catering purposes as refreshments will be served on arrival. <https://www.trybooking.com/CLMYR>

Monthly Heritage Walks

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

15TH ANNUAL REID OPEN HOUSE & GARDENS**Sunday 29 October, 1.15 – 4.30 pm**

After a long break due to Covid19, the National Trust (ACT) in collaboration with the Reid Residents' Association Inc. (RRA) and the property owners will again open three privately-owned houses and gardens in the heritage-listed Reid Housing Precinct. The ticket price includes: a guided tour of the three houses and gardens; a copy of the book *The Heritage of Reid* by Shibu Dutta; an introductory talk on the listed Reid Housing Precinct, a printed hand-out on each house & garden, and a delicious afternoon tea at the Reid Pre-school, which first opened in 1944.

Bookings are essential and will open on 29 September at www.trybooking.com/CLGJC.

Tickets cost \$30 (National Trust, U3A, Friends of the NLA, AGHS & RRA members) & \$35 (non-members).

Inquires contact Mary Johnston at events@nationaltrustact.org.au.

LAKE BURLEY GRIFFIN GUARDIANS (LBGG)

<http://lakeburleygriffinguardians.org.au/>



For more information go to <https://icomosga2023.org/>