

ACT Monaro Riverina Branch

Newsletter September 2026 No 4

Australian Garden History Society
www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au



Branch contact: actmrchair@gardenhistorysociety.org.au

BRANCH DIARY

13 OCTOBER
Visit to Millpost

19 NOVEMBER
End of Year Event, Old
Parliament House Rose
Garden

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

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

MILLPOST MERINO: SUCCESSFUL PERMACULTURE & OLD-FASHIONED GARDENING ON OUR DOORSTEP

TUESDAY 13 OCTOBER, 9.30-11.30AM



In keeping with the focus on local cultural landscapes, we will visit *Millpost*, a family farm near Bungendore NSW. This will be a “show and tell” by David Watson, about his family’s nearly fifty years of restorative agriculture and care for the environment. The house is nestled within an old cottage garden, gnarled fruit trees, kitchen crops and everywhere there is a real patina of age. It is one of the oldest broadscale Permaculture farms in Australia. The family has been graziers here since 1922. The following background information is taken from their website.

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.

<https://www.millpostmerino.com/millpost>.

**BRANCH
COMMITTEE****Robyn Oates**, Chair &
NMC Representative**Helen Stevens**, Secretary**VACANT**, Treasurer**Louise Gaudry,**
Rosanna Horn, OAM
Mary Johnston

PLEASE BE AWARE: Some of the approach to Millpost from the Kings Highway turnoff is unsealed and the final kilometre is very rough. It is not suitable for small vehicles with low clearance.

Location	Millpost Lane, Bungendore Directions will be given to ticket holders
Cost	Members \$20.00 and Non-Members \$30.00, including morning tea
Bookings	Open 13 September at https://www.trybooking.com/DPPNY Numbers strictly limited

END OF YEAR EVENT AT OLD PARLIAMENT HOUSE ROSE GARDEN

THURSDAY 19 NOVEMBER, 5-7PM



**How about a cool evening drink in a peaceful rose garden?
Interested?**

**Join us for our end of year gathering in the Old Parliament House
Rose Gardens.**

Since the 1930s, hundreds of varieties of roses have bloomed in these gardens and the best time to see them is usually in November. This Commonwealth Heritage listed site has been updated many times since its establishment in 1933.

We will be serving from the kiosk under the wisteria walk in the House of Representative Garden on the eastern side of Old Parliament House.

Please bring your own glass/mug and a chair.

Parking	Parking close by is free from 5.00pm
Cost	Members \$25.00 and Non-Members \$35.00
Bookings	Open 13 September at https://www.trybooking.com/DPPTH

RECENT EVENTS

WINTER FILM DAY TUESDAY 28 JULY

Our Winter Film Day was a huge success. It was a rapid sell-out event in the National Film and Sound Archive theatrette. Many enjoyed a nostalgic stroll around the building, which used to be the Australian Institute of Anatomy, a natural history museum and medical research institute until 1985, and then climbed the steep stairs to our red velvet seats.

My House in Tuscany is the story of an unlikely group of people who are thrown together after 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. We nestled in with familiar faces from the world of British film and the soft call of Tuscan landscapes and Italian gentility.

The door prizes were potted cyclamens and there were Maltesers for everyone. It was a first-rate way to spend a winter afternoon in Canberra.

Robyn Oates

Photo: Greg Johnson



MULLIGANS WOODLAND SANCTUARY THURSDAY 20 AUGUST

No rabbits, foxes or cats, how do they do it?

Contrary to the weather forecast, we had no rain on our tour of this large (2300ha), impressive and very interesting gem of a local natural habitat. We met at the Wildbark Visitor Centre, Rosenberg Street, Throsby, in the northern reaches of Gungahlin, bordering NSW.

Conducted as two one-hour minibus drives, the first group started with a bit of sunshine, bringing into focus the beauty of this, the largest intact box-gum grassy woodland reserve in Australia, representing the once dominant southern tablelands landscape prior to settlement by Europeans.

The Territory has an abundance of natural bushland represented in the Canberra Nature Park and smaller reserves. Yet it has become impoverished over time by the depredations of feral pests and roaming

domestic cats and dogs, effectively removing key animal and plant species that are markers and components of a healthy native bushland ecosystem.



The Sanctuary began as an experiment 35 years ago to see if, through rigorous exclusion of foreign predators, native species once commonly occurring but now locally extinct, could be reintroduced to their old haunts. The first new generations bred on site of bettongs - small marsupials looking like miniature kangaroos, imported from Tasmania till now fox-free! - turned the experiment to a larger project to teach the general public about what once lived and thrived in native woodlands at its doorstep, and to build a scientific foundation to the restoration of bushland ecosystems depleted by past farming practice and urban encroachment.

To the original fenced in Mulligan's Flat Sanctuary, has been added the adjacent Gooryaroo grassland reserve. By contrast the latter showed obvious evidence of use as a grazing property - we passed the stone walls of the farmhouse occupied in the early 1900s - was consequently more open and impoverished in native species diversity.

Surrounded by a 23km long fence with a 'floppy' top, the combined reserve manages to stay free of rabbits, foxes and cats, creating an environment where endangered flora and fauna can thrive again. Our guide Helen, and Graham the driver, both volunteers, offered a wealth of information on the origins of the sanctuary, going back to 1992, and its current management by the ACT Government with the help of a large group of volunteers like themselves.

The Sanctuary plays a big role in the community, offering a wide range of tours and events, with a focus on cultural aspects of the Ngannawal Country, and a busy programme of discovery excursions for local schools.

But it also functions as an open air laboratory, attracting ecological restoration researchers from the University of Canberra with over 50 papers published to date.

Mulligans today incorporates two separate areas, Mulligans Flat Sanctuary and Goorooyaroo Woodland and apart from the outer fences boasting no less than 19 gates, it has internal fences, allowing for some carefully managed grazing areas, tracks for bird watchers, and a section of heritage listed coach road once connecting Ginninderra with the rail head at Bungundore.

Rosanna Horn

Photo: Rosanna Horn

BRANCH NEWS

WELCOME TO A NEW MEMBER

The committee would like to welcome Jane Southwell from Bowning, NSW

BRANCH COMMITTEE

This is an urgent call for a treasurer.

After the departure of our treasurer, who served nine years on the committee, we will be once again operating outside the requirements of the AGHS Constitution in two ways (Item 5.3) which states that a *Branch Committee must consist of a chairperson, a secretary, a treasurer and at least 3 other members. (i.e. a minimum of 6 committee members). Some roles may be shared or combined, provided that Branch maintains a minimum of 6 committee members.*

Please be aware that if we are unable to attract a treasurer and, ideally, additional committee members (who are computer literate) we will be unable to function satisfactorily into the future. Note that the role of treasurer must be filled, according to the Constitution. We are a small operation and the job is not difficult.

If you can assist please contact the Chair at actmrchair@gardenhistorysociety.org.au

NMC FOCUS ON LANDSCAPES AT RISK

Can you assist your branch with an alert for a landscape at risk in our ACT Monaro Riverina area?

There is a hierarchy of heritage in relation to AGHS concerns for landscapes at risk. Buildings and artefacts are often offered a higher level of safeguarding than gardens, landscapes, trees and rivers. Weak documentation in heritage listings can omit gardens, views and landscapes that are then left without specific policies for their care and conservation. This can lead to increased risks to these places in management regimes or where development and change is proposed. Several of our places at risk are not heritage listed and would not be listed, but are still valued locally.

It is up to branches to decide what should be on its part of the Landscapes at Risk list in terms of 'watch'; and 'act'.

The NMC Advocacy sub-committee would help with places of national significance, for example, Commonwealth Park Canberra, Adelaide Parklands, Victoria Park Brisbane. We are also ready to assist you with cases if you need further advice.

The Landscapes at Risk lists offer guidance for advocacy work. The AGHS Advocacy Toolkit should also be referred to – it is available under Committee Resources on the website.

NATIONAL NEWS

A NEW WAY FOR MEMBERS TO ACCESS WEBSITE RESOURCES

Due to a recent change in the AGHS membership system, there is now a new way for members to access resources on the website. Members no longer need to log in to the website with their personal details to receive discounts in the online store.

There is now a single password for all members to access website resources. The password will change from time-to-time and all current members will be informed when this occurs.

The new member password is **EUCALYPT**.

To receive the member discount of \$10 per item in the online store, go to the AGHS website and click on the "Shop" menu. Select any publications or products you wish to purchase (or download). Then when you go to the Cart or the Checkout page to complete the purchase, you will see a password (or coupon) entry box.

Enter the password above and click the APPLY COUPON button, and a discount will be applied to all eligible publications and products in your cart.

Note that you can download digital (PDF) copies of Australian Garden History for no cost using this method

If you have any problems accessing these website resources, please contact head office for assistance.

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

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

Virtual registration is also available for the Conference. 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/>

A REPORT FROM THE NATIONAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (NMC) ZOOM MEETING 4 AUGUST 2026

- The Social Media Policy has been completed
- Membership on 4.8.26 was 1020 members
- Website Refresh: new options are now available for members and NMC to access on the website. See more details in this Newsletter.
- Constitutional Amendments have been considered and will be presented for consideration at AGM in Orange.
- Honary and Life membership clarification has been prepared for consideration at the AGM.
- EOY financial figures were not available to the meeting and, as a result, the Financial Report was not able to be accepted at the meeting.

- An auditor has been engaged to undertake audit when records are finalised.
- Interim arrangements for Head Office are in place. National Chair Helen Oates has taken on the Executive Officer role in interim until a replacement has been employed.
- The NMC thanked Helen Oates for the manner in which she has led the Society during this time without an Executive Officer for office and Conference support, in particular for taking on the role of an EO /Office Manager. Helen is also the convenor for the Orange Conference 2026.
- Anne Claoué-Long presented a review of Advocacy Tool Kits to branches. Anne wrote this Tool Kit. Branch Advocacy officers attended Anne's talks.
- Each branch is requested to send the top 5 of Landscapes at Risk for inclusion in website.
- It was proposed that Urban densification and Landscapes at Risk should be the national theme for 2027.

The next NMC meeting will be held on Thursday 24 September. The AGM will be held at the National Conference in Orange on Sunday 27 September.

Robyn Oates, Branch NMC Representative

OF INTEREST

FLORIADE

Friday 12 September to -Sunday 11 October

Full program at <https://floriadeaustralia.com/whats-on/>

Lanyon Homestead returns as a Satellite site for Floriade 2026. For event details go to <https://floriadeaustralia.com/lanyon-homestead/>

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 DESIGNER PAUL BANGAY IN CONVERSATION

Thursday 1 October, 10.30 – 11.45am

To be held at the Arboreum more information at

<https://thecuratoreum.com/pages/15279-PAULBANGAYEVENT>

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

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

Nil Desperandum Tour
Saturday 12 September

Braddon Heritage Walk
Sunday 27 September

Duntroon House & Gardens
Sunday 11 October

Blue Mountains Gardens & Heritage Escape
9 - 12 November

GOULBURN OPEN GARDEN

Saturday 17 & Sunday 18 October, 10am-4pm

After a huge success in 2025, the Southern Tablelands Open Gardens Association (STOGA) is hosting its second Goulburn Spring Gardens event

The 2026 event includes seven new gardens and the return of *Rossville Homestead* one of the favourite 2025 gardens. Variety is a feature of the event with town and country gardens, new and old gardens and exotic and native plantings. Find out more about these wonderful gardens at the website www.stoga.org.au/goulburn-spring-gardens

You can purchase All Gardens tickets for \$25 now at www.ticketebo.com.au/goulburn-spring-gardens

(Note from the editor
We went to the 2025 event which was extremely good, I would really recommend it, Judy)

CROOKWELL GARDEN FESTIVAL

Saturday 7 & Sunday 8 November, 9.30am-4pm

9 beautiful gardens located in & around Crookwell: including *Markdale*, an Edna Walling designed garden, acknowledged as one of the great country gardens of Australia. \$30 for all 9 Gardens.

More information go to www.crookwellgardenfestival.com

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

TARALGA OPEN DAY AT RICHLANDS

Saturday 14 November, 10am to 4pm

Richlands is a very modest homestead with foundations going back to 1840. It was built up as a Macarthur family estate, part of Camden establishment, up to the break up in 1910, when the property was acquired by the Twynam family. The present homestead was built 1839-45 for the series of managers, with some later additions.

Visitors will be able to inspect the homestead itself, a late Georgian cottage, partially convict built. While there are no formal gardens, the grounds bear traces of original plantings from 19th and 20th century and will have a lovely spring look. You can expect a pleasant country outing, and for those unfamiliar, an introduction to the seductions of the rolling basalt landscape in usually clement weather at this time of year.



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

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