



Australian Garden History Society ACT Monaro Riverina Branch

Newsletter October 2020 No 5

ACT Monaro Riverina Branch, PO Box 5008, LYNEHAM ACT 2602

www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au

For an e-copy of the newsletter email the
Newsletter Editor judy.pearce@netspeed.com.au

New AGHS Phone Number

If you would like to contact the Society, please note that from 31 July 2020, the
National Office phone number will change to 0419 977 703

BRANCH DIARY

15 OCTOBER

Contour 556 Walk &
Talk

21 NOVEMBER- 20 FEBRUARY 2021

Exhibition: *The Blade*,
CMAG

21 NOVEMBER

Exhibition: *The Blade*,
Talk by Richard
Heathcote

6 DECEMBER

End of Year Celebration,
The English Garden

10-12 SEPTEMBER 2021

AGHS National
Conference – Sydney
*Many Dreams One
Landscape*

11-13 NOVEMBER 2022

AGHS National
Conference – Hobart

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

The Branch AGM was held via ZOOM on 26th. August, in this most unusual year. The outgoing Executive members, Sue Byrne and Nancy Clarke, did a magnificent job in conducting proceedings in this new format. Roslyn Burge was the guest speaker, and discussed the Oral Histories she had conducted with four local members. Sadly the AGM brought to a conclusion the allowed terms of Sue Byrne as Chair, Judy Pearce as Deputy Chair and Newsletter Editor, and Helen Elliot as Treasurer. In addition Erica Ryan has also resigned as a Committee member due to work pressures.

Sue Byrne has been an inspiring and dedicated Chair, and I sincerely hope that she will be persuaded to re-join the Committee in the future, after a well-deserved break.

Judy Pearce has also given years of valuable service to us in unstintingly sharing her professional expertise in running successful conferences and events. I am delighted, and relieved, that Judy will continue for a few more editions as Newsletter Editor.

Helen Elliot brought her professional expertise to the role of Treasurer, which was especially welcome when we ran the Annual Conference in 2016 and made a significant profit to support the National Office due to her careful budgeting.

At our first Committee meeting I was elected as Chair, and was very pleased that Nancy Clarke has agreed to continue as Secretary, and guide me in this transition period. Sue Cassidy is the new Treasurer, and Anne Claoue-Long will continue as our representative on the National Management Committee. We are also fortunate to have Bronwyn Blake, the Co-Chair of the NMC continuing with us, and welcome new members Lynne Curran and Fleur Flanery, joining continuing member Greg Johnson.

Now that COVID restrictions are beginning to be gradually relaxed we look forward to bringing you some exciting events for the rest of the year which are outlined below.

Stay safe, and enjoy the delights of Spring.

Best wishes

Margie Bourke

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

NEXT EVENTS

AGHS COVID 19 SAFETY PLAN

We are delighted that our Branch is gradually moving towards holding more events again, but, to ensure everyone's safety, those organising or taking part in them are required to comply with the conditions of the AGHS COVID 19 Safety Plan.

This plan has been approved by the AGHS National Management Committee and applies immediately. It will be updated as required to reflect changes in Australian and State/Territory government requirements.

The plan covers matters like signage, physical distancing, hygiene and cleaning, along with record - keeping of all who attend our events. And of course, anyone who is at all unwell or has recently visited a COVID hot spot may not attend AGHS events.

Although following this plan will entail some inconvenience, it is essential for everyone's health and wellbeing.

This Safety Plan will be displayed on the AGHS website.

contour 556
9 - 31 October | **2020** | **CANBERRA'S**
PUBLIC ART BIENNIAL

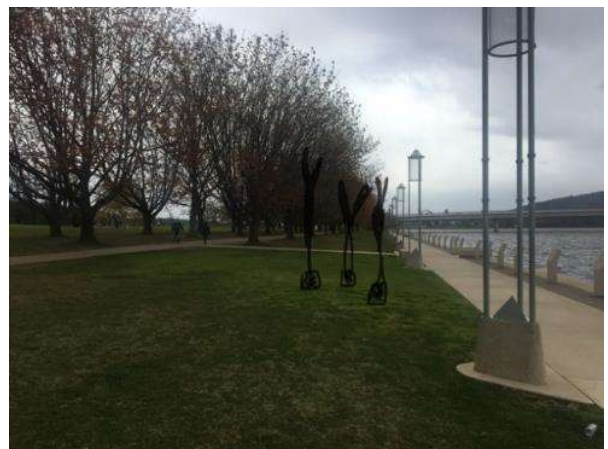
A Special AGHS Tour THURSDAY 15 OCTOBER, 2 - 4PM

With an optional BYO picnic at 12.45

contour 556 is a public art biennial event, running this year from the 9 – 31 October. Established by Neil Hobbs in 2016, it was repeated in 2018, and some of you will have been fortunate enough to join AGHS members on our special guided tours on one of these occasions.

We are delighted that Neil has agreed to lead us on a walk/talk to some of the 2020 installations on Thursday 15 October. He has also invited multi-talented Peter Vandermark, one of the exhibiting artists, to speak to us. This year we are concentrating on the Kingston section of the event, finishing with works outside and inside the Canberra Glassworks.

The inspiration for **contour 556** comes from Neil's lifetime appreciation for the beauty of the central Canberra landscape. He is widely acknowledged for his professional and personal support of and contribution to the development of connection between the landscape and the visual and performing arts in Canberra. Installations selected for this year's festival respond in some way to Canberra's history, from 50,000 years to the present day.



Sian Watson, TAXA

Neil's primary objective for **contour 556** is "to transform how viewers remember or recall the Canberra landscape after seeing the artworks or performances ... a link between art and the place they experienced it in ... the memory people take away with them of their time in that landscape".

More information about contour 556, participating artists and events can be found at www.contour556.com.au

Where and What

12.45pm (an optional extra)

Prior to the event, do join us in **Bowen Park** for a cheery BYO picnic lunch. Entry to the carpark is off Bowen Drive - see the top left of the map – the public toilets are a good indicator. There is also a small café there as well (marked as Bowen Park Pavilion though it is now called OnLake Café). There are some seats etc close by, but it may be best to bring a chair or rug. We will leave this area about 1.30pm to drive to the carpark behind the Glassworks off Eastlake Parade to park and walk to our meeting point.

Meet 1.45pm for a 2.00pm start

Park in the large (paid) carpark behind the Canberra Glassworks and walk (5 minutes) to the small bridge that goes over the creek at Bowen Park (**see map**). **contour 556** curator Neil Hobbs will talk to us about this year's exhibition and the works installed in Bowen Park.

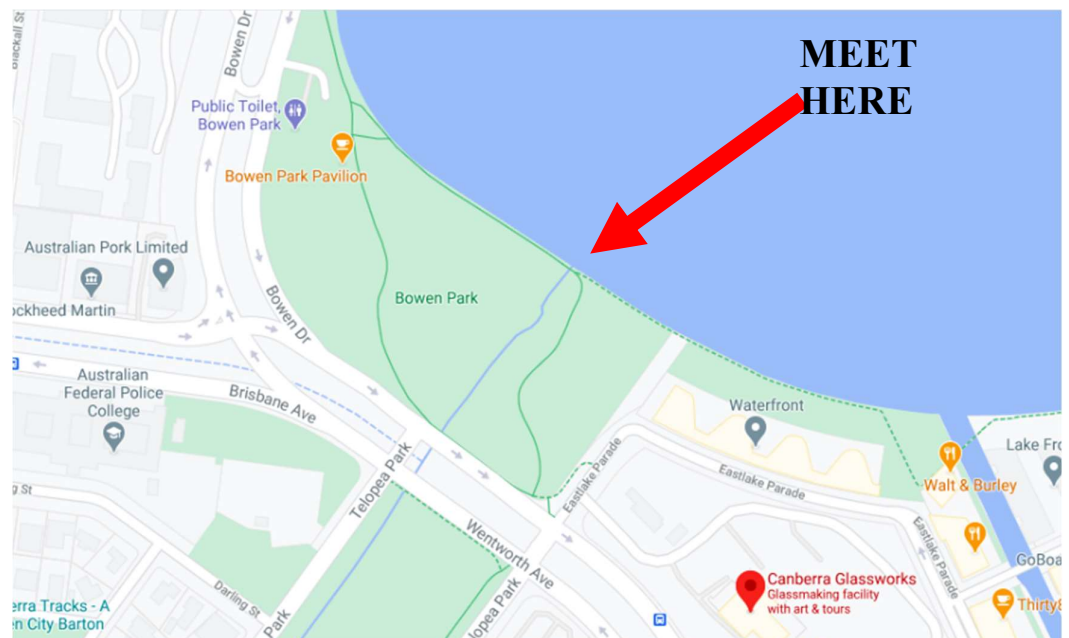
We will then walk together to **Cox Architecture** (*contour 556* sponsors) - less than 10 minutes, to discuss works installed in their foyer, before walking to the **Canberra Glassworks** to view the works on the exterior of the building and installed inside the building, and hear from Peter Vandermark about his work.

Parking There is paid public parking available at Canberra Glassworks, 11 Wentworth Ave, Kingston.

Cost \$10.00 per person, plus 50c ticket fee (AGHS members and friends)

Bookings Bookings are essential. Numbers will be limited in accordance with current ACT Government COVID-19 regulations for indoor and outdoor gatherings. Please book through TryBooking, go to <https://www.trybooking.com/BLPYL>

Enquiries Bronwyn Blake, email blakesos@hotmail.com, 0439 718 580



The Blade – Australia's Love Affair with Lawn ***21 November – 20 February 2021***

Save the Date! 21 November

As mentioned in the August Branch newsletter, we are thrilled to confirm that we are partnering with the Canberra Museum and Gallery (CMAG) to bring ***The Blade***, the travelling exhibition of the Australian Museum of Gardening to Canberra to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the formation of the Australian Garden History Society, and as a perfect link with Canberra's own love affair with the lawn – think of the Parliament House lawns.

We are currently working with CMAG to organise a talk by exhibition curator Richard Heathcote on the opening day, Saturday 21 November 2020. Richard will talk about the exhibition and the unique role the lawn mower has played in Australia's horticultural and social history. Numbers will be limited to comply with current ACT Government COVID-19 regulations for indoor and outdoor gatherings.

Richard Heathcote is currently Director of Benefaction at Carrick Hill historic house and garden in Adelaide, after holding the position of Director for several years. He previously managed for a decade Rippon Lea Estate, the National Trust's flagship property in Melbourne. He is also the immediate past Chair of the Australian Garden History Society's National Management Committee and prior to COVID-19, Richard led tours for ASA. He presented for ABC TV's ***The New Eden*** – a six-part series tracing the evolution of the Australian garden, and has broadcast and published on heritage buildings and gardens. Richard is passionate about making art accessibly to everyone and has curated a number of exhibitions featuring the extensive collection of British and Australian paintings at Carrick Hill. Richard is a charming presenter. We hope you can join us for the talk - **details to come**.

End of Year Celebration **Party in the English Garden, Weston Park** **SUNDAY 6 DECEMBER, 4.30 – 6.30 PM**

In March this year we were most disappointed to have to cancel our garden party, planned to mark the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the Australian Garden History Society. Now we are returning to The English Garden, and invite you to join us to celebrate the end of this difficult year with members and friends of AGHS.

We chose The English Garden for 40th anniversary party as the Branch has important historical links with this area. In 2009 we undertook a condition assessment of the trees in The English Garden and commissioned a descriptive brochure; in 2012 we sponsored the digitisation of Charles Weston's plant



records from the historic Yarralumla Nursery; and in 2016 our ANZAC Centenary commemorative plaque was unveiled.

And now, at the end of 2020, our Branch is honouring Australia's love affair with the lawn, hosting the wonderful exhibition ***The Blade***, which will be on display in CMAG from 21 November.

Fortunately, there is a lovely grassy area in The English Garden, adding to its suitability as a perfect location for our party. There will be some very interesting (short) talks, and of course we will serve refreshments. We are sure you will all welcome this opportunity to socialize, walk in the garden and refresh memories.

Venue	The English Garden, Weston Park, Yarralumla – from Weston Park Road follow signs to the Heritage Nursery and Yarralumla Gallery and Brasserie. There will be AGHS signage from the car park. There is grass but almost no seating, so please bring a folding chair.
Cost	\$10 for AGHS members, \$15 for non-members (plus 50c ticket fee), including refreshments.
Bookings	Bookings are essential. Please book through Trybooking, go to https://www.trybooking.com/BLQVO
Enquiries	Nancy Clarke, clarknancy624@gmail.com , 0423690626

PAST EVENTS

Branch Annual General Meeting 26 AUGUST

In yet another first, our Branch AGM on 26 August was held electronically, using the AGHS Zoom licence. Lisa Tuck our National Executive Officer, set up our meeting, and 29 Branch Members joined our successful virtual AGM.

In her Chair's report, Sue Byrne, the retiring Branch Chair highlighted the challenges of the year – terrible fires, a destructive hailstorm and rain, and the COVID 19 emergency that resulted in the cancellation or deferral of most of the Branch program for the first half of this year, a great disappointment in this 40th anniversary year of AGHS. However, the major projects foreshadowed last year were largely completed – two of the oral histories commissioned by the Branch are on the AGHS website, and the digitisation of some 35 early Australian garden books through the National Library of Australia has been completed. The two remaining interviews are almost finalised, and some additional digitisation is planned.

Immediately following the AGM Bronwyn Blake, AGHS co-chair spoke on behalf of the Society to thank our three long standing and exceptional office-bearers who have left the committee, Sue Byrne, Judy Pearce and Helen Elliot.

Erica Ryan also left the Committee because of other commitments. Two new members were elected at the AGM – Fleur Flanery and Lynne Curran.

Nancy Clarke, Secretary

Annual Lecture: *Interviews in the Time of COVID*

26 AUGUST

SPEAKER: ROSLYN BURGE



Max Bourke AM



Cedric Bryant



Trisha Dixon



Lainie Lawson OAM

Historian Roslyn Burge Zoomed in from Sydney to present our Annual Lecture. A benefit of this format was that we could welcome members from other Branches (including Co-Chair Stuart Read) as well as other guests.

As you know, our Branch commissioned four oral histories as part of our contribution to the 40th anniversary of AGHS. We were delighted that Roslyn agreed to undertake these, and in her meticulously planned presentation she gave us a wonderful insight into her approach to oral histories, demonstrating the way in which oral histories present the voice of the interviewees in a way a history written "from outside" is unable to do. It was a special pleasure that three of the four interviewees – Max Bourke, Trisha Dixon and Lainie Lawson were present at the talk – Cedric Bryant was not able to attend.

Roslyn noted that together these four people represent nearly 200 years of adult history and engagement with horticulture, gardens and history. Their voices and experiences are diverse, but each of them spoke with vibrancy and passion, presenting a captivating picture of Australian gardening particularly in our own region.

Roslyn constructed her talk around the interviews themselves, selecting brief audio clips and readings from the transcripts, giving us a taste of each interview and enticing us to seek full versions of both sound and script on the AGHS website.

For each of the interviewees, she started with a short extract demonstrating the influences that attracted them to gardens and gardening, then moved to items she had selected from the interviews as representing in microcosm the interests and characters of these four very different people. Max spoke about trees, "the most wondrous machines", his career as a senior public servant, his role in two AGHS conferences presented by the ACT Monaro Riverina Branch, and he gave some recollections of Professor David Yencken AO, significant for both the Society and for Max. Cedric's love of gardening came incrementally – he started as a jackeroo, developed a passion for fuchsias, set up a highly individual nursery at Yass, became a long-standing garden writer and told a great story about a mass planting of daffodils that local ducks stripped bare. Trisha recalled her family's connection with Edna Walling, whose passion for stone walls was shared by Trisha's father who would retrieve pieces of stone from Bungonia Gorge and take them home to make Walling-esque stone walls, and spoke of her deep love of books that led her indirectly to join the Society and then become a central person to it, including serving as Editor of *Australian Garden History* for 35 issues. And as she moved across South Australia, Canberra and the Monaro, Lainie's interest in gardens and gardening developed as did her conviction of the importance of documenting gardens, both formally and less formally, along with her understanding that gardens thrive when they are in harmony with their local environment.

Like the rest of us Roslyn has adapted to COVID conditions, conducting the interviews with Trisha and Lainie virtually. Roslyn sees the advantages of this medium in the way that it

bridges physical distances and social divides, though she finds it hard on the sight and the body, and notes how the absence of close personal contact makes interviews across the ether much “trickier”.

Roslyn finished her inspiring presentation with a commendation of the National AGHS Oral History Collection, observing that though we don't know how gardens and landscapes will change, “these recollections will be used in another century to shine a light on a distant society and nation”.

Nancy Clarke

Visit to Reidsdale, in the Braidwood Vicinity

9 SEPTEMBER

On an overcast and misty day in September, a group of hardy AGHS members braved the weather and car pooled in Braidwood before driving in convoy to Reidsdale, a tiny village on the edge of the Monga National Park, not far from Araluen and Major's Creek.

There we met Peter and Kate Marshall, who purchased their property, Terra Preta, 30 years ago. The land had previously been mined for gold and became degraded after years of cattle and sheep grazing. Since then, they have planted over 450,000 trees, a mixture of exotics and native trees. Varieties include oaks (132 varieties), hazelnuts, casuarinas, pines and bamboo.

Our first stop was at the pine, poplar and chestnut forests, planted by Peter around 30 years ago. Some plantings were salvaged from rare trees from the Lindsay Pryor Arboretum in the Brindabellas, and are no longer growing in other parts of Australia, for example Bishop's Pine.

Here we saw evidence of the horrific New Year's Eve bushfire which almost destroyed Peter's shed and could have continued on to Reidsdale. However, Peter explained that, as it emerged from the Monga National Park, the fire was stopped in its tracks by a lack of fuel on the ground and no 'ladder' to reach the tree crowns. This was due to deliberate 'high pruning' of the pine forest.

Peter pointed out a *Populus canescens* (Grey Poplar), also known as the Railway poplar. It was planted along railway lines in the French countryside to protect thatched houses from sparks from passing trains. This tree prevented the fire from destroying the gully, with burnt trees downhill and non-burnt trees uphill from the poplar. Exotic trees can help to reduce fire risk through the water content of their leaves and by increasing humidity. *Lomandra* has also been shown to resist fire. We were surprised to hear that wombats change their behaviour during bushfires and Peter had witnessed quolls, wallabies, snakes and echidna emerging from a wombat burrow after the fire.

Native blackwood, leatherwood and pepperberry trees in this area are relics of a temperate rainforest which existed just 200 years ago. We distributed *Casuarina* seeds, important as a nitrogen fixer, to help to restore the native forest. Peter explained the role of biochar and small marsupials in land management and how he produces and uses biochar on his property. Using a purpose-built retort (kiln), he produces biochar from coppiced timber, which in turn restores the soil's fungal microhabitats.



Relics of a temperate rainforest, Photo Sue Cassidy

Our next stop was Terra Preta, where Peter's wife Kate led us on a delightful and informative meander past the truffle oaks, some enormous eucalypts and ponds brimming with croaking frogs. They made so much noise, it was hard to hear! Kate explained how their land and water management practices have helped to regenerate their property. Many hundreds of thousands of trees have been planted. At Terra Preta, Peter uses particular varieties of oak and chestnut trees to grow truffles. A series of ponds slows the flood waters, providing habitat for animals such as turtles, ducks and seven species of frogs. Clear filtered water is returned to the creek. Kate has achieved great results planting casuarina and lomandra to stabilise the creek banks.

We also met their adorable alpacas and heard about the Hopi Indians of Arizona who use Hopi Indian Paako (Cottonwood root) to carve Kachina dolls. These dolls represent the spiritual world and are used in education. Peter and Kate send Cottonwood root grown at Terra Preta to the Hopis as the wood has become scarce due to disappearing habitat.

As it was well past lunch time, we headed to St Bernard's church where we were welcomed by John Foulcher, the owner, who invited us inside his delightful and inspirational home, built inside the church, to have our lunch. It was very warm and cosy. After lunch, John gave us a potted history of Reidsdale, St Bernard's and how he and his wife Jane came to buy and renovate this charming old country church. We were lucky that Ross Phillips, who managed the church conversion and renovation, was on hand to answer any questions. Over 600 microbats were found to be living in the roof of the vestry when the roof was replaced. The old roof was recycled in the construction of the shed. John, a renowned poet, and Jane look forward to hosting poetry readings in their elegant, repurposed church.

It was the perfect place to finish an enjoyable and special day in the country. We are very grateful to Peter and Kate Marshall and John Foulcher for taking time out of their busy day, sharing their knowledge and expertise and making us feel so welcome. Also another thank you to Jane Foulcher who could not be there on the day, but made a big batch of ANZAC biscuits for our enjoyment.

Sue Cassidy

CAPTURING GARDEN HISTORY

AUSTRALIAN GARDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

2020 PHOTO COMPETITION

As part of the celebrations for the 40th anniversary of the AGHS, our Branch has helped organize the Society's inaugural Garden History Photo Competition. Entries should reflect the aims of the Australian Garden History Society (AGHS) and could range from a 'historical property or landscape' to garden history in the making.

Deadline for Entries: Entries close on 11.59 PM, Eastern Australia daylight saving time (EADT), 15 January 2021. We encourage all members to enter – for full details go to <https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/publications/aghs-2020-photo-competition/>

BRANCH NEWS

GRIFFIN'S GREEN HILLS

AN AGHS SHORT FILM

Our Branch's intrepid film makers now bring you a short video featuring three hills whose interconnected significance may be a surprise to many of us. The film tells the story of the plantings on the western edge of Walter Burley Griffin's city plan, the Green Hills, now known as Roman Cypress Hill, Dairy Farmers Hill and the Himalayan Cedars. Originally

marked on plans as a forest and game reservation and later a continental arboretum, Griffin finally settled on the afforestation of the three bare hills with cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*) and cedars (*Cedrus atlantica*), from 1918 to 1920.

Narrated by Trevor Lipscombe, ACT National Trust Heritage Walks organiser, and filmed and directed by our very own Anne Claoue-Long and Bronwyn Blake, this video reveals the connection of these three green hills which are driven past and visited by thousands of visitors every year. You will find it on the ACT Monaro Riverina Branch page at <https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/branches/act/> and scroll down.



WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

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

- Caroline Barwick, Canberra
- Pamela Chick, Canberra
- Marion Connaughton, Canberra
- Peter and Kate Marshall, Reidsdale
- Andrew Russell, Canberra
- Susan Warner, Queanbeyan

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS BRANCH NEWS

RARE AND UNUSUAL PLANT STALL: 31 OCTOBER

To celebrate Spring the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens will be holding a Plant Stall featuring a wide array of rare, unusual and hard to find plants. As their growers were unable to sell their stock in April at the regular Plant Fair this has allowed all the stock to grow that much larger. An unintended benefit to the buyers. Plants for sale will include everything from Albuca to Zephyranthes with many treasures in between. This event will be following strict Covid safe procedures. Eftpos available. 4pm

Time 10am – 4pm

Address Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens, 1 Old South Rd, Bowral

OF INTEREST

250TH ANNIVERSARY OF COOK'S VOYAGE TO AUSTRALIA

There are a number of interesting exhibitions on in Canberra associated with the 250th Anniversary of Cook's Voyage to Australia. Throughout HMB *Endeavour's* Pacific voyage, botanists Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander collected thousands of plants, many previously unknown in Europe. Together, they form the world's oldest collection of Australian plants and a number of exhibitions explore that rich legacy.

From 26 September to 25 October, at the Australian National Botanical Gardens, **The Botanic Art Groups** present ***Legacy of Banks and Solander***. The exhibition will display

botanical paintings and drawings featuring Banksias and other plants collected by Banks and Solander.

http://friendsanbg.org.au/node/1399?mc_cid=1def855d98&mc_eid=a8cfdfee0a

At Parliament House until **8 November 2020** is ***Voyage of Discovery: Sir Joseph Banks' Florilegium*** an exhibition in which science and art collide with the extraordinary documentation of the plant life along the east coast of Australia observed by Banks and others on board the *HMB Endeavour*. There is also an online exhibition to discover connections between Sir Joseph Banks' Florilegium, and architectural features in Parliament House.

https://www.aph.gov.au/Visit_Parliament/Whats_On/Exhibition/Voyage_of_discovery

And finally, but by no means least, is the multi-media exhibition at the **National Museum of Australia until 26 April 2021**. ***Endeavour Voyage*** explores the untold stories of Cook and the First Australians. The exhibition features some of the plants collected by Banks and Solander as well as their significance for First Australians. There is also an online resource showing some of the Australian plants Banks and Solander collected and Indigenous and European knowledge of them. It also includes some plants significant to Indigenous people, which were not collected by Banks and Solander.

<https://nma.gov.au/av/endeavour/plants/>

EXHIBITION: INSECTARIUM

September 20 – October 25. An exhibition curated by botanical artist Cheryl Hodges, bringing together works by seven artists living in the Canberra region of insects ranging from moths to beetles, bees to caterpillars.
Open Friday – Sunday, 11am-4pm, Helen Stephens Gallery, 39 Murray Street, Collector

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/>

NATIONAL ARBORETUM CANBERRA

www.arboretumcanberra.org.au