



Australian Garden History Society
Tasmanian Branch

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2017-18 COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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Newsletter: Our newsletter is published periodically. Send contributions by email to Jennifer Stackhouse.

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Spring–Summer 2017

From the Chairman

Following our AGM in July, I'd like to welcome Ann Burnett from Hobart to our 2017-2018 committee. Ann, we look forward to your contributions.

The AGHS National Office in Melbourne has experienced a difficult 2017. Long-serving National Executive Officer, Phoebe La Gerche-Wijsman, resigned in April and her replacement was unable to stay beyond August. As a result the office has been staffed only one or two days each week. By the end of this year a replacement National Executive Officer will have been appointed and the difficulties some of you have experienced in contacting the office will be over.

October's conference was held in Melbourne as the proposed location in Hamilton, New Zealand, was cancelled at the beginning of 2017. We now hope to have our 2019 conference in New Zealand. Our Victorian colleagues brought together a stimulating group of speakers and several days of superb garden visits. Their theme was 'Marvellous Melbourne' but the lectures had implications far beyond that city. We hope soon to have a presentation by some of our members who attended the conference to share their recollections and photographs of the scope of the lecture program and the extraordinary range of gardens that were included in the conference.

Please enjoy reading about our on-going project at Home Hill (*see page 4*) that we believe will be of value to the entire community. Congratulations to the committee working on this project.

I look forward to seeing many of you at our pre-Christmas lunch at Hamilton on December 3.

Lynne Paul, Chairman

Recent AGHS events and activities

Our recent events have been well attended and we were delighted many of you were able to come to our AGM. Early autumn and spring were busy with nursery and garden visits in the north and south of the state. AGHS member **CAROL BACON** reports on two autumn visits for members and guests of the Tasmanian branch of the Australian Garden History Society.



The large ornamental lake at Woodbank Garden and Nursery, Lower Longley, visited by members of the AGHS in autumn as part of 'A day on the Huon'. Photo Woodbank Garden and Nursery

A day on the Huon (Saturday, March 4, 2017)

The day on the Huon, south of Hobart, started at Woodbridge, with a coffee on the terrace of the Peppermint Bay Restaurant before heading to Woodbridge Nursery, which specialises in rare and unusual plants. The display gardens, featuring a long herbaceous border and rock garden, were magnificent. We enjoyed browsing and selecting purchases from the huge variety of perennials, shrubs, grasses, succulents and herbs for sale. On the way to our second garden visit we passed Hartzview Winery (70 Dillons Road,

Nicholls Rivulet), where some pickers' huts from the early 1900s have been restored. Nicholls Rivulet was once a hive of sawmilling activity and is the location of Crawleighwood Garden owned by Penny Wells and Pav Ruzicka. Started 30 years ago, the garden has been developed with stone walls and pathways meandering through an extensive woodland garden.

Woodbank

The final garden on the tour was Woodbank at Lower Longley established over 40 years>

ago by Ken and Lesley Gillanders, who also ran a nursery on the site. It has been taken over by Kerry Van Den Berg, who with husband Harry, is restoring the garden and propagating some of the plants. The garden is packed full of rare and exotic plants. Carpets of bright blue gentians and lily of the valley underlay mature plantings of rhododendron, waratah, beech and magnolia. A bank of the very rare pink leatherwood (*Eucryphia lucida* 'Gillanders Rose') made a wonderful sight above the lake. Alpines and Gondwanaland plants, such as *Lapageria* (Chilean bellflower) and various species of *Nothofagus* (southern beeches), are a feature of the garden.

Mole Creek gardens (Friday, April 22, 2017)

Old Wesleydale and Wychwood are two beautiful gardens at Mole Creek in northern Tasmania on the plains beneath the Great Western Tiers. Some 22 members of AGHS visited in autumn. The area is underlain by Gordon Limestone, which dates back more than 400 million years to the Ordovician age. This material has given rise to spectacular karst landforms and caves including Marakoopa and King Solomon's Caves, which are open to the public.

Old WesleyDale is on land granted to Lieutenant Travers Hartley Vaughan in 1829. This retired Irish army officer built a stone cottage and was probably also responsible for the enclosed courtyard with its 3m-high stone walls that surround a two-storey stone barn. The barn retains gun slits there to protect Vaughin/s precious livestock from bushrangers and Aborigines.

The property was sold to Henry Reed (1806-1880), who was a devout Wesleyan. He named the acreage WesleyDale, extended the house and built a church. Many years later, Reed built a large holiday house and another church on the property, which he named Mountain Villa; his first residence then became known as Old WesleyDale.

An English-style garden has been developed since 2001 with exuberant plantings among

formal design elements. Topiary, stone walls and hedges including laid hedges, are featured throughout the garden, which is divided into garden rooms. A walled garden is divided with beds edged with neatly clipped box hedges and filled with perennials. One of many delightful surprises is found at the front of the house where a row of topiary elephants march across the grass and overlook a stone walled ha-ha which provides an uninterrupted view across the front paddock. At the back of the house and surrounded by gardens is an ornamental brick aviary that houses two macaws. The resident chooks (mostly Light Sussex) have the run of Chookingham Palace.

Wychwood garden

On the other side of the village of Mole Creek is Wychwood, a one-hectare garden that dates from 1991 when Karen Hall and Peter Cooper began to turn sheep paddock into garden. The plantings are now quite mature, with swathes of autumn colour and heavily laden heritage apples in abundance for the AGHS visit. The garden is renowned for its use of unusual plants, particularly those that can withstand both heat and frost, roses, perennials and its carefully placed art works and garden features.

Part of the garden was inundated by floodwater in June 2016. The flood coincided with the arrival of new owners David Doukidis and Matt Bendall. This year they restored the signature medieval grass labyrinth, which was washed away in the flood.

More information

Both gardens are open during the year. The next opening for Old WesleyDale (www.oldwesleydaleheritage.com) is December 2-3, 10am-4pm while Wychwood Garden and Nursery is also open that weekend. It is also open on Sundays from November (see their Facebook page Wychwood Garden and Nursery) for updates and opening details.

Home Hill – the garden of Dame Enid Lyons at Devonport

Home Hill was the home of Sir Joseph Lyons (1878-1939) and Dame Enid Lyons (1897-1981). Today it is managed by the National Trust of Australia (Tasmania) and owned and maintained by Devonport Council. The house is open for guided tours. The garden recently received a grant from AGHS. This is an important garden and a project of lasting significance.



Dame Enid Lyons beside a pond she constructed in the garden at Home Hill, c. 1970s. Photo from the National Trust collection, Home Hill

Earlier this year, Devonport Council applied for and received a grant from the Australian Garden History Society, matched by funds from the Tasmanian Branch, to undertake an urgent Landscape Management Plan for the property.

Landscape architects Sue Small and Prue Slatyer are working in association on the landscape plan. From the plan it is hoped that the garden can be sympathetically managed and interpreted to reveal Dame Enid's gardening legacy.

About the garden and the Lyons family

Home Hill is one of only three homes of Australian Prime Ministers open to the public. The house retains most of its original contents and was curated by Dame Enid before her death. The garden was laid out and planted by Dame Enid over her lifetime. It includes several historic plantings, memorials, garden features and acts as a setting for the historic house which is open as a house museum. Dame Enid sold the property to Devonport Council before her death. >



View of Home Hill house from the garden.

The house at Home Hill was built by the Lyons on nine acres of land bought by Joe Lyons and given to his wife as a wedding present. The house was completed in 1916 and became home to the extended Lyons family and to Joe and Enid's 11 children.

When Joe bought the land it had been cleared but was bordered by native forest. The property included a five-acre fenced orchard.

Garden documentation and significance

There is a wealth of information about the garden from both Dame Enid's time and later,

including a 2008 survey of the plantings by the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens. Hand annotations were made to the list by the Lyons' son, Richard, who noted plantings remembered from his childhood. The National Trust's Property Manager, Ann Teesdale, has amassed a collection of historic photographs.

Aerial surveys provide extensive details about changes to the vegetation of the property. They reveal that the garden was densely treed on the western side until sometime between 1992 and 1995 when most of these trees were removed.

The garden to the north and north east was relatively sparsely treed during Enid's time, maintaining views to Bass Strait. Most of the smaller flowering plants were close to the house, in front and to the east. Since the early 2000s, more tree plantings have occurred across the whole garden while the beds of flowering plants have virtually disappeared.

In addition to these visual records of the garden, Dame Enid wrote extensively about the garden, made radio broadcasts and left plant lists. Members of the family have also contributed their recollections.

A transcript of Dame Enid's 'Hollyhock' broadcast

This excerpt is from a broadcast Dame Enid made during the 1950s on Macquarie Radio about her hollyhocks. The transcript was kept by her granddaughter and passed to the AGHS in July, 2017.

"For weeks now in my garden, Hollyhocks have been on the march. Like an army with banners, they have taken possession of the borders, standing tall and erect against the house wall and flanking the high screen that shuts the garden off from the orchard. They have even moved out onto the paths, and stand in brave battalions flaunting their colours in the sun..."

"Once we had a giant of a fellow that was 13 feet high, with a stalk an inch and a half in thickness, a perfect guardian of a hollyhock, standing on duty among the rhododendrons in the shadow of the pines. You see, in this garden all kinds of plants are breaking the rules. Nothing should grow near the pines, of course, and yet our rhododendron bed in spring is a thing to marvel at.

"One of the nice things about a garden is that it is always an extraordinary garden – yours is and so is mine. There is a Queensland nut tree flowering in mine, and thirty or forty feet from the rhododendrons there is a fine red bougainvillea. In Queensland, we were told that it would be impossible to grow any other than the common magenta variety so far south."

Don't miss our Christmas lunch at Prospect House, Hamilton

Join us for our annual Christmas lunch, which is being held in the garden at Prospect House, 485 Upper Mill Road, Hamilton, on December 3 at 12 noon.

Prospect House was built on land granted to James Triffet in 1824. The house was later purchased and enlarged by Dr John Sharland, who was district surgeon from 1829 and Hamilton's first warden in 1863. A three-storey surgery once stood opposite the house. Helen Poynder purchased the property in the 1970s and established the garden with the help of local gardener Carlene Triffet inspired by the formal gardens of Italy. The gardens at Prospect House comprise a series of different spaces separated and sheltered by high cypress hedges, sandstone buildings and a wisteria-covered arbour. Sculptures, structures and water features enhance the many beautiful plantings. The property was sold in 2015. Current owners, John and Doug, are AGHS members who have generously opened their garden to us for our Christmas celebration. Join us for a delicious Italian-inspired lunch, commencing with antipasto and a glass of Prosecco in the Italian garden. **COST** \$45 members, \$55 non-members (includes lunch with wine)

STOP PRESS – THIS EVENT IS NOW FULLY BOOKED! For those who have reserved a spot please complete your booking on the form emailed to members in early November, which includes payment details. For queries contact Greg Clota at gclota@trump.net.au.

Historic daffodils on display in Hobart



This display of historic daffodil varieties was put together by daffodil breeder Rod Barwick for the Claremont Spring Flower Show in Hobart in September. Photo Janelle Noble

From late winter to early spring, daffodils come into their own spreading gold across gardens, parks, paddocks and roadsides throughout Tasmania. Although they're not native to Australia – daffodils come from Europe – but have been cultivated

and bred for hundreds of years and have found Tasmania's cool climate to their liking. Our wealth of daffodils is celebrated with a succession of flower shows from early September starting with Claremont's Daffodil, Camellia and Spring Flower Show. The show >

s held annually at the Claremont Memorial Hall with more than 700 cut blooms.

One of the features of the Claremont spring show was a display of heritage and species daffodil blooms staged by bulb grower and miniature daffodil breeder Rod Barwick from Glenbrook Bulb Farm. Featured was *Narcissus hispanicus*, a species daffodil used to breed

modern yellow trumpet daffodils. Also displayed was the curiously named 'Telamonius Plenus', also known as 'Van Sion'. This double yellow daffodil can be traced back to the London garden of Vincent Sion, where it is recorded as first blooming in 1620. Rod Barwick says it is a daffodil to naturalise in gardens or fields.

Preserving historic trees in Tasmania



Acorn produced by a grafted clone from the historic Holm oak planted beside St David's Cathedral in after World War 1.

Photo Rowena Howard

Tasmania has a lot to offer when your passion is preserving historic trees. Grant Horne is a gifted plant propagator who, with wife Rowena Howard, values heritage varieties and welcomes a challenge. The pair has established the Free Settlers Historical Plant Nursery at Cradoc in the Huon Valley to save plants with a history. Grant has grown several hard-to-graft trees from specimens at the Port Arthur Historical Site that have been growing there since the early 1800s. The Commandant's black mulberry,

perhaps one of the earliest mulberries in Tasmania, is one of his successes but says Grant, propagating the Commandant's pears, also from Port Arthur, saved old plant material from being lost forever.

Grant and Rowena have also been tracking down historic trees in the greater Hobart area and gathering cuttings, budwood for grafting and, in the case of the felled historic bunya pine in New Town, seed.

Now growing safely under their care is material from a holm oak (*Quercus ilex*) originally brought back from Gallipoli after WW1 and planted beside St David's Cathedral. The tree, which is now showing extensive dieback, has its genetic material and story safely stored in grafted plants and seedlings in the nursery.

Rowena, a landscape architect with expertise in conservation and the environment, has a passion for heritage apples. She says the flavours of many heritage varieties are amazing with apples that taste of pineapple, strawberry, aniseed, orange and even wine. Heritage varieties vary in shape and size and ripen from late summer into winter. She and Grant have amassed more than 200 varieties.

More information: Some trees and heritage apples are available for sale.

www.freesettlersnursery.com or call Rowena on 0429 023 696.

News & updates

Inaugural historic houses conference planned for 2018

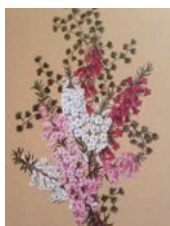
The Historic Houses Association of Australia (HHAA) will stage its inaugural conference in Sydney from April 5-6, 2018. Titled 'Home Heaven Hell: Supporting historic house owners in Australia', it will be held at Sydney's Conservatorium of Music.

The HHAA was formed in 2016 as a support agency for owners of historic houses. It is the first time in Australia that a conference will address issues faced by private owners and independent managers of historic properties.

It is designed around lectures, panels and case studies. Delegates will hear from owners around the country, selected local and international experts, and heritage specialists.

International speakers include James Hervey-Bathurst CBE DL, who will provide the UK perspective, while Anne-Sophie Bellamy-Baird will give the European experience with an emphasis on France. Full details at: www.historichousesconference.com, email conference@hha.net.au, or (02) 9252 5554.

Shop from the AGHS for your Christmas cards and gifts



Epacris card.

Our botanical cards feature illustrations of native plants reproduced from Lady Smith's Presentation Album from 1883, which is part of the Allport Library and Museum of Fine Arts

collection. The album was presented to Lady Smith, wife of Sir Francis Villeneuve Smith, on the occasion of their leaving Tasmania. Artists featured include C.L. Allport, M.E. Livingstone,

Phyllis Seal ('Epacris card', shown left) and Margaret Anderson Hope. The cards are sold for \$5 for a pack of five.

Also for sale is the book *Character of the Blossom: Wildflowers of Tasmania* by Margaret Hope (1848-1934). The book was published with assistance from the AGHS and is available for \$55 from the Allport Library and Museum in Hobart. Cards and books will be available to purchase during our Christmas lunch at Hamilton on December 3 (*see page 6 for details of this event*).

AGHS at Blooming Tasmania

Thanks to members Dot and Mike Evans of Tunbridge, the AGHS (Tasmanian Branch) had a presence at the Blooming Tasmania Flower and Garden Festival at Albert Hall in Launceston during September. The couple set up a table display of AGHS cards, books, magazines and brochures and also offered

secondhand garden books for sale. They reported strong interest in AGHS and several new memberships. The Festival attracted around 3000 visitors over two days. The Festival is on again in 2018. It will run over September 22-23 at Albert Hall and City Park, Launceston.