

BRANCH CUTTINGS



Issue 58 – July 2019

This branch is affiliated with the Royal Australian Historical Society & National Trust of Australia (NSW)

AGHS FORTHCOMING EVENTS

JULY

Date: Wednesday 10th July, 2019, 6pm to 8.30pm

Event: Dr Greg Johnson will speak on *Write to Garden in Australia*

Venue: Annie Wyatt Room, National Trust Centre, Observatory Hill

Cost: Members \$20, guests \$30, students \$5, includes light refreshments. Bookings essential

Online Bookings: <https://www.trybooking.com/BDUFV>

AUGUST

AGM

Date: Wednesday, 14 August, 2019, 6pm to 8.30pm, AGM begins at 7pm followed by talk.

Event: Margaret Betteridge will speak on *Cartographica - Sydney on the Map*

Venue: Annie Wyatt Room, National Trust Centre, Observatory Hill

Cost: Members \$20, guests \$30, students \$5, includes light refreshments. Bookings essential

Online Bookings: <https://www.trybooking.com/>

Enquiries for all events David Low 0407 464 876 or 02 9943 1456

Email aghssydney@gmail.com

Payments by internet bank transfer to:

Australian Garden History Society Sydney & Northern NSW Branch

ANZ Bank, Centrepoint Branch BSB 012040 Account 101762565,

Please include your **name** and the **function**

Congratulations to our Chair and Vice Chair, James Quoyle and Christine Hay who together with Colleen Morris received the Landscape Conservation Category Award for their AILA Landscape Heritage Study at the 2019 National Trust Heritage Awards. The basis of their project focused on a vision for the Sydney Harbour 'Green Necklace' and proposed a collaborative model for the State Heritage Register nomination of cultural landscapes. The Heritage Study outlines a 'Landscape Lens' methodology which incorporated 'a whole of landscape approach'. This outstanding work has been described as extending the long-held limitations defining curtilage beyond cadastral boundaries to visual and water catchments. We hope to be given a presentation of this exciting project in a future Sydney AGHS Branch event.



Christine Hay, James Quoyle and Colleen Morris

Tempe Bevan

Journey to the Landscapes of Great Britain : Part 1

After years of hearing about, reading about and attending AGHS lectures on the great gardens of Great Britain, we made a 5 week trip in May 2018 with the aim to see many for ourselves. Planning started with a map of UK and Ireland with post-it notes placed on every site recommended by our Garden History friends, or found in books and journals, Branch Cuttings etc. With such a wealth of advice, the map journey looked unachievable but we were going to give it our best shot. We started in London and visited Kew Gardens and the Florilegium exhibition mounted by Colleen Morris, a moment of great pride. We visited the amazing Chelsea Flower Show, an exhibition of extreme modern horticulture.

Then we hired a car and drove to relatives near Andover to start the main game. We visited about 25 sites, gardens and properties, of all sorts, from all ages. I will describe them in historical sequence as it gives such a sense of the scope of man-made landscapes in this ancient land.



The oldest was **Avebury**, in Wiltshire. This huge construct is a 'henge', a monument with a large circular mound around an internal ditch. The chalk mounds are over 6 m high and nearly 350 m in diameter, the ditches originally 9 m deep, all dug by hand with tools possibly made from deer antlers. There were 4 entrances to the inner circle, the South one called 'The Avenue' was 15 m wide and lined with paired standing stones. Wandering into the inner circle one finds arcs of these stones, some over 4 m high, and the largest weighing over 3,500 kg; the remains of 100 that made up the elevated great circle. Walking into this area of green fields with a cluster of farm cottages, some with thatched

roofs, sheep grazing everywhere, a road running through, it takes a while to see the big picture, but the site is immense.

It is four times bigger than Stonehenge and much older, constructed in the Neolithic era approximately 5,000 years ago. The people of the era were nomads but this was obviously an important ceremonial and meeting place. There were 2 smaller circles of standing stones near the centre, and beyond the ditch a link to Silbury Hill, the tallest man-made mound in Europe. This was a landscape shaped for rituals involving inclusion, exclusion and procession.



The Uffington White Horse in Oxfordshire took some finding.

Several vantage points marked on the map were no help.

Eventually we located this National Trust site and walked up the steep field to see it close by. This mysterious figure dates from the beginning of the Iron Age, 3,000 years ago, and is the oldest of Britain's hill figures. It is an elegant stylised figure of a horse carved into green sward to show up the white chalk. It is the size of a football field and can be seen from 20 miles away (from the right angle.) The design is maintained by regular chalking days when volunteers scour the design and pound the chalk to a white paste, once described as

'the world's biggest colouring between the lines'. It would disappear in 20-30 years, eroded and overgrown, if not maintained. It is unknown how the originators made the figure and kept it, but it would have been a communal activity.

The third oldest site we visited was **Chedworth Roman Villa** in the Cotswolds, close to Cirencester. Here were the remains of a grand residence started nearly 2,000 years ago and extended and improved to be an impressive farm domain about 350 AD. Nestled into a hillside with a permanent freshwater spring, it overlooked the River Coln and a green valley through which a road would have approached the main gateway leading into a large walled courtyard. From this steps led up through an elevated portico into the important private quarters and garden courtyard. (This plan was echoed in many subsequent properties we saw.) Discovered in 1864 the site was excavated to reveal extensive floor plans including mosaics, beautifully preserved, and rooms variously dedicated as a temple, a dining room, 2 separate bathing suites, one with damp heat and one with dry heat, and channels supplying



underfloor heating. The natural spring supplied all the water and was adapted as a nymphaeum, a shrine to the water nymphs. A fascinating insight into country living in Roman times. It is now owned by The National Trust.

Nearby we visited an **amphitheatre** built to entertain the citizens of Corinium Dobunorum (Roman name for Cirencester) in 2nd. century AD., more impressive earthworks.



Owlpen Manor in Gloucestershire is a Tudor house dating from 1450 to 1616. It is found in a remote valley in the Cotswold hills, travelled down to via a steep narrow road with very high, impenetrable sides, walls and hedges. We hoped we would not meet a tour bus coming back up as there would be no way to pass. At the bottom it opened out to a flat entrance area with a small office and shop, but no other signs of tourist commerce. The gardens were probably laid out in medieval times and reached their current form of hanging terraces under Christopher Daunt in the early 17th century. The house and gardens have

changed very little since. It has been described as 'the quintessence of the Old English style', a Stuart Garden. To one side The Yew Parlour is a mysterious room cut in yews, 12 to represent the 12 apostles, now towering and dense. The garden then runs down the hill over 7 terraces to represent the seven gardens of paradise. Gertrude Jekyll visited the garden several times and featured the plans, and the pillars and curved steps in the book co-authored with Lawrence Weaver, 'Gardens for Small Country Houses' (1914), which I have had on my shelf forever.



This article covers only the first part of our voyage. In the next newsletter I will go on to describe more modern gardens and landscapes including my favourite by Harold Peto, and Prince Charles garden at Highgrove.another 14 in all.

Angela Low

Angela is a member of the Sydney AGHS committee member. She is a biologist who works part time on a voluntary basis at The Australian Museum working behind the scenes on curatorial work with marine Invertebrates.

VARROVILLE HOMESTEAD

We are very pleased that the Independent Planning Commission (IPC) has endorsed the proposed Varroville Homestead curtilage expansion on the State Heritage Register and the associated study. The Minister, Don Harwin, is however yet to approve the expanded curtilage. It is therefore vital that this approval be granted before the IPC determines the Varroville Crown development application for a new cemetery. You can find all information on the IPC website: www.ipcn.nsw.gov.au under A085-18 Crown Cemetery Development, Varroville.

Tempe Bevan



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Sydney & Northern NSW Branch Branch News – May -June



Level 1 water restrictions for Sydney means managing one's time. I am writing from Armidale where the landscape is desiccated and the situation is dire with water restrictions at level 4.

At the museum within McCrossins Mill, Uralla, I met Owen Croft who expects the current drought to be as bad or worse than the drought of 1902 and not to abate for a further three years, with cataclysmic impacts on rural communities.

Today I visited Owen's daughter Trish who now lives in the Croft family home, Salisbury Court (pictured), which about 200 AGHS conference delegates visited in 2016. The farm is about 10km out of Uralla and the entry is discretely marked

by a magnificent avenue of elms that extend to the farmstead. The main house is single-storey and faces north. The earliest section being a three-roomed stone house with two strangers rooms, built ca.1842. The garden layout and some plants date from the mid nineteenth century. Trish thinks they might have the earliest example of a ha ha in Australia, and several oaks and other trees, dating from the time the house was built. The oak to the west of the house is one of a pair framing an intimate view of the dry paddocks beyond. The tree is currently bare with the most perfect silhouette. The delicate articulation to its outer fringe would inspire the most dedicated bonzai expert! Trish thinks the oaks have their roots well down, tapping into a subterranean watercourse, because they have never been affected by drought.

In the afternoon I made my first visit to Saumarez homestead and met Les there for a personal tour of the new rose garden and the grounds. Les tells me they have no water and they are paying to truck it in - not for use on the garden. The roses are quiet at this time of the year and the form and layout of the garden is supreme. Les' enthusiasm is wonderful and his love of the place is palpable, with many plans to restore aspects of the garden thought lost or neglected. A focus for the team is Mary's garden - a delightful cottage style garden. Mary's shed, once completely covered by blackberries and other bullies, is now revealed. The basalt stones of the crazy paving of the little paths are in active service. At the termination of a rill at the bottom of the garden Les and his team of gardeners are working on rejuvenating the pond that once collected the stormwater from the house. To conclude, Les pointed out the tallest ginkgo in Australia among many fine and healthy specimens of established trees.

Water restrictions will result in some losses in our gardens and some hard decisions about what to save. I always feel that gardens are a community asset with many benefits for health and well-being for all. The lemons in our front garden are festooned with fruit at this time and my partner Rob revels in picking off a few at a time to give to our neighbours who are often moved by what seems a simple gesture of sharing. As the drought tightens its grip we might all consider supporting our rural communities by visiting them.

We have some exciting events programmed by the Sydney branch and I look forward to seeing you there.

James Quoye. Tel: (02) 95195250 or email: james@qanda.com.au

NEW MEMBERS

The Branch would like to extend a warm welcome to the following new local members since October: Fiona Binns, Nev Chick, Janine Crocker, Gordon Coss, Cindy Dearing, Sunnie D'Elton-Howard, Anne Griffiths, Oliver Halley, Ian Hoskins, Jane Irwin, Anne Meadows, Lucy Munro, Sally Price, Collin Randall, Anne Marie Ribas, Glenys Rowe, Meredith Spadon, Rosie Stevens, Janie Symon, Kate Yates

NORTHERN NSW

The NNSW sub branch conducted a very successful fund-raiser at members Susan and Ray Cantrell's garden last month. Despite the driest conditions for over a hundred years the garden looked wonderful in its autumn colours and was a credit to the Cantrell's hard work as well as providing inspiration on how to garden in drought. A strong team of volunteers helped to make the garden opening a very successful event with funds raised going to the completion of the heritage Rose Garden at Saumarez.

The final chapter of the story of Miss Maclean's contribution to the Heritage Rose Garden ended on the anniversary of her death in March. Through an agreement with the Armidale regional Council and AGHS the new roundabout just south of the Armidale airport was planted with Miss MacLean's magnificent hedge of Rugosas, most of which are over twenty years old. It will be touch and go whether the council manages to keep them alive given that Grade Four water restrictions have recently been brought in. This means no outside watering is allowed at all but at least we are trying and the Rugosas have been spared the bulldozer.



Left: Three Musketeers at the Cantrell Garden

Right: A NZ South Island Garden



There are still a few places left on the NZ South Island tour which immediately follows the 2019 conference. Member, Lynne walker, will be leading a 14 day tour of a superb range of gardens from October 29th – November 11th. For details see AGHS conference website.

Helen Wilson
Secretary NNSW Sub Branch

CAMELLIA TALK

Our recent events in Sydney have been well attended including a fascinating introduction by Dr Stephen Utick to several remarkable and interesting facts about the Camellia. We are familiar with its beautiful blooms and its use in the tea industry but there are many uses for Camellia oil. Historical reference to the Camellia goes back many centuries including a small tribal community in China that worships this beautiful plant as a deity. We followed its travels from China to be admired in the gardens of Spain and France before arriving in Australia. The myriad of superb varieties of this very special plant have given us a rich heritage that is worthy of protection in projects such as Camellia Ark which seeks to find and propagate many of the endangered cultivars or species.

We are looking forward to the 'Write to Gardens' talk by Dr Greg Johnson in July on our most famous garden writers. We are also thrilled that Margaret Betteridge is giving a presentation at our AGM in August on some of the fascinating things that maps are able to tell us about our city in the her award winning exhibition, *Cartographica - Sydney on the Map*. We hope to see you at our next event.

Tempe Bevan

SEVEN ISLANDS CRUISE



Despite the torrential March rain the Seven Islands Cruise went ahead and those that attended enjoyed an informative cruise around the western harbour.

The Waratah, a coal fired steam powered heritage tug boat built in 1902 had plenty of shelter and room to move around. We had access to the engine room and boiler room where stoking the boiler was optional.

The weather cleared in the later part of the cruise when we moved around the upper decks to better appraise views of the intriguing islands and bays whilst we were informed of their varied histories.



On a day when many spent hours indoors we were spoilt with a wonderful excursion around the Harbour.

For those that are interested another AGHS Jacaranda Cruise has been organised for Sunday 10th November.

Susan Stratton



OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST

AGHS Southern Highlands Branch upcoming events:

www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au

Recording Gardens Workshop

Sunday 28 July 2019: 10 am- 3 pm

at Henrietta Rose Room, 16 Bendooley Street, Bowral—followed by a short drive or car pool to a field demonstration at 'Moidart', Eridge Park Road, Bowral

The speakers: Professor Craig Burton, Ashley Macevicius, Chris Betteridge, Charlotte Webb

AGHS Members \$45, Full-time Student \$50, Non-members \$55

Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers and Margaret Olley Art Centre at Murwillumbah

Thursday 19 – Thursday 26 September 2019

For the full itinerary, enquiries and bookings contact:

Ray Bradley (E) aghs.sh.info@gmail.com;

(T) 02 4861 4090 or PO Box 2327 Bowral 2576.

Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney

Check the RBG website for details:

<https://www.rbg Syd.nsw.gov.au/whatson>

Plants With Bite - at The Calyx except Wednesday 13 February

Free floral display telling the story of the bizarre world of carnivorous plants. See and observe the 'pitfall', 'flypaper', lobster-pot' and 'bladder' styles of traps. Plants with Bite combines botany with hands-on activities to bring awareness to the ways in which many species are currently under threat due to habitat loss.

Plants for Sale at the Growing Friends Nursery

Monday - Friday 11am - 2pm, Saturday 10am - 2pm

Free Guided Walks

Daily 10:30 AM - 12 PM and Monday to Friday 1 PM - 2 PM

National Trust

See National Trust website for details.

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/whats-on-nsw/>

LINDESAY GARDEN SEMINAR 24 JUL 2019

The Historic Houses Association of Australia (HHA)

<http://www.hha.net.au>

Living Heritage Festival - Sunday 4th August at Tempe House, Wollie Creek

-celebrating the crafts of the past and the heritage of tomorrow including Heritage Stoneworks, Thorne Decorative Plasterwork, Stephen Gapps, Paul Irish, Hilary Davidson, market stalls, artisan food and craft beer, demonstrations and performances, and local historical societies and craft guilds. AGHS member Colleen Morris is speaking at length as well as Stuart Read who is speaking briefly.

National Arboretum Canberra

Walk to Extinction - Sunday 21 July 2019

Learn about the different classifications of the International Union for Conservation of Nature. The National Arboretum has two species that are extinct in the wild. Visit these forests and many others to hear the stories behind the trees. 1 July 2019

EVENT DETAILS

JULY

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DETAILS

During the late 19th Century and the end of the Victorian era, a more diverse and confident Australia began to emerge. Technology, science, new forms of communication, and robust democracy heralded the start of the modern era.

Greg Johnson's lecture will explore the publications and the writers in the period from 1888, the Centenary of European settlement of Australia, to 1938, 150 years after their arrival. The talk will cover writers and writing during the Federation, Edwardian, WWI and depression periods. The lecture continues on from his earlier lecture *Quill and Spade – Pioneer garden writing in Australia*.

Illustration by Signor Guglielmo Autoriello from Handbook of Australian Horticulture (1892) by Henry Alfred James. (Image supplied by Greg Johnson)

Dr Greg Johnson is a plant pathologist who has had his own garden since the age of nine. His interest in gardening led him to study agricultural science majoring in plant breeding and plant pathology at the University of Queensland.

He was gardening correspondent for the subtropics with *Your Garden* magazine from 1989 to 1995. He is founder of Horticulture 4 Development and Past President of the International Society for plant pathology and the Australasian Plant Pathology Society. Greg has collected early Australian gardening and horticultural books for over 30 years.



AUGUST

AGM

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DETAILS



Margaret Betteridge has worked in the museum and heritage sector for over 30 years as a curator and exhibition developer. Following a successful career at the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences where she played a central role in redeveloping the former Royal Mint and Hyde Park Barracks as museums, Margaret was appointed to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet as Fine Arts Adviser to oversee the Australian Government's official gifts program and to advise the occupants of Australia's four official residences on furnishings and artworks. Her most recent project for the City of Sydney, where she manages the collection of the City of Sydney's artworks, furnishings, historical memorabilia and official gifts, has been an immersive journey through public collections of cartography for the exhibition, *Cartographica: Sydney on the Map*.

Margaret's talk will explore some of the intriguing interpretations of the visual representation of the landscape of our city which feature in the exhibition *Cartographica: Sydney on the Map*. Using reproductions of maps in public collections, she has traced some of the many and varied ways that people have documented the impacts of change as Sydney has grown. Maps reveal a city which has been shaped by its ancient terrain, its features connected to the language and stories held in trust by Aboriginal elders and its development intersected by the demands of its evolving multicultural community,

Cartographica: Sydney on the Map was a joint winner in the 2019 National Trust's Heritage Award in the exhibition, events and tours category. The exhibition is on at Customs House over three levels and runs until 1 September 2019

Not a member of the AGHS and would like to be?
Membership application forms are available at our talks or join online at
www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au