

BRANCH CUTTINGS



Issue 59 – October 2019

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

AGHS FORTHCOMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER

Date: Sunday 10th November, 11:30 for a departure at midday

Event: Jacaranda Cruise on the *Waratah*

Venue: Sydney Heritage Fleet wharf at Gate 4, James Craig Road, Rozelle

Cost: AGHS Members \$50, Non AGHS Members \$60, Full time Students \$20.

Online Bookings: www.trybooking.com/BGDWQ

Event Details page 9

NOVEMBER

Date: Sunday, 24th November

Event: Christmas Party

Venue: a private garden in Elizabeth Bay

Online Bookings: TBA. The TryBooking reference has not yet been setup

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, Centrepont Branch BSB 012040 Account 101762565, Please include your **name** and the **function**

Northern NSW

NOVEMBER

Date: 16th and 17th November

Event: Trip to Yugilbar property at Grafton

Details to be finalised

DECEMBER

Date: 1st December

Event: Christmas party at Rafters restaurant in Guyra

Details to be finalised

NEW MEMBERS

The Branch would like to extend a warm welcome to the following new local members: Ari Anderson, Deborah Anderson, Katie Caban, Kathleen Gardner, Alex Hawthorne, Julie Jones, Judith Meeske, Angela Preda, Kevin Riley, Barbara Wheatley

Journey to the Landscapes of Great Britain : Part 2



Rousham had long been on my wish list. The house was built in Oxfordshire in 1635 by Sir Robert Dormer and is still in the ownership of the same family. William Kent (1685-1748) was later the architect and landscaper. It represents the first phase of great English landscape design and is almost as Kent left it. Leaving the car in a courtyard framed by farm buildings, you pass through high arches piercing massive walls. No shop, no cafe, no people, simply a vending machine to pay for your ticket (£6) and an honour box for the small illustrated brochure. We seemed to have the whole place to ourselves. Passing big old yew hedges we arrived at the front of the

house with striped green lawns around a roughly circular driveway and a vast vista through giant trees to the surrounding countryside leading the eye to the horizon. This front is austere, green, with just one pale yellow



climbing rose. Just around the corner is a little garden tucked under the house walls where it must be warm because it included a conservatory and also lavender bushes, some climbers and a palm tree in the open. Round the other side of the house is another immaculate lawn and view over the river to the horizon. We never made it to the bottom of the wooded part of Kent's landscape as we were lured through a giant yew hedge into a fabulous walled garden of climbing roses and fruit and vegetables. We talked with the lady gardeners who were constructing supports for vines from recently pruned apple trees, and protecting the plants from rabbits with wire mesh. At the far end we found the small church where the Dormers were buried among amazing old shaped yews, then through another wall via an ornamental gate to the pigeon house



garden filled with flowers and herbaceous borders. The columbier had pigeons flying in and out through a roof flèche and inside were dozens of niches up the walls. The birds were used for food and the accumulated guano on the floor for manure. The outside walls were smothered in climbing roses and an espaliered cherry dripping with green fruit. Monty Don said it his favourite garden in England, and I need to go back to visit the green magic of Kent's wooded landscape that we missed, but altogether a wonderful place.

Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire is a huge country house set in enormous grounds. It remains the residence of the Marlboroughs (and was the birthplace of Sir Winston Churchill). Sarah Churchill was the wife of the First Duke of Marlborough and the close friend of Queen Anne. Her story is depicted in the recent film 'The Favourite'. The land



was given as a gift and the house constructed between 1702 and 1722 with some financial support from Queen Anne, though this was withdrawn when Sarah and Anne fell out. It has been the home of the Spencer -Churchill family for the last 300 years and is now a UNESCO World Heritage site. The architect, Sir John Vanbrugh, was untrained, but he had been involved in the highly successful Castle Howard. He planned the house to be seen in perspective from the grounds, necessary as the site covers almost 3 hectares. Visitors today approach the palace via a long drive through a grand park and enter through a triumphal archway, The East Gate, that



cuts through a high curtain wall, and into The Grand Court. We arrived on a beautiful sunny Saturday to find thousands of people there for the Annual Blenheim Triathlon..... athletes in lycra, the Grand Court filled with bicycles, people swimming in the lake, running and riding all over the front landscape, spectators picnicking everywhere (but no dogs I noted!) We were directed to park in a field full of cars and walked into the Grand Court. The palace was open with nobody inside so we visited there first, huge and full of treasures, including an exhibition of the life and times of

Winston Churchill. Then we walked to the south side of the building where the (empty) South Lawn opened up to the horizon, with large trees on either edge. Hidden amongst the western trees is the Temple of Diana where Winston proposed to Clementine, and a bust of the man, on a plinth, set in a wild meadow garden where the tulips had just finished flowering in the tall grass. On the east side of the house is an elaborate Italian garden designed by Henry Wise, gardener to Queen Anne. On the west side an even more elaborate parterre and water garden by the French designer Achille Duchêne in the style of le Nôtre. When Capability Brown was commissioned in 1764, French style was out of fashion and Henry Wise's garden was almost obliterated in the making of a grand English landscape garden.



When we paid to enter Blenheim (£23) we could opt to make it a PPG donation, ie. to Palace, Park and Garden, which gave us free entry for the rest of the year. Three days later we returned to Blenheim on a cold, overcast day. All the picnickers, all the athletes had gone leaving no trace, no tyre marks in the green field, no litter. We entered again into The Great Court, hardly a soul around. We walked through the beautiful gilded gates out into Capability Brown's huge sweeping park, past the lake he made by damming the River Glyme, drowning the lower 4 storeys of the oversized bridge, and had it all to ourselves. The only people we met were the young boys and girls of Marlborough school doing a cross country run. How lucky are they to have this classic landscape as sports ground.

Stourhead is known as one of the great gardens of England. Found in Wiltshire it is one of the best examples of the English landscape style of garden; a brilliant Arcadian design begun by Henry Hoare in 1741, incorporating ever changing vistas around a lake, replete with temples to Apollo and Flora, a rock bridge, a cascade, a pantheon, a thatched cottage, and a grotto. The idea behind the Arcadian movement was to create an idealised version of



classical antiquity. The walk around the lake alone is almost 2 kilometres with views opening up at every turn, wonderful reflections in the still water. The Temple of Apollo at the far end is a familiar icon seen in many garden books. Unlike the green landscapes of Capability Brown, this garden adapts the natural features of the land, with planting featuring colour and variety. Huge rhododendrons and azaleas were covered in flowers when we were there and the largest handkerchief tree I have ever seen. The great variety of ornamental structures are all perfectly placed to delight the eye at every turn. Landscaping with a grand vision.

This article covers only the second part of our voyage. In future parts I will go on to describe more modern gardens and landscapes including my favourite by Harold Peto, and Prince Charles garden at Highgrove.more to come....

Angela Low



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Sydney & Northern NSW Branch

Branch News – September 2019

How wonderful the first weeks of Spring can be in Sydney. In my small garden I inhale the various fragrances of lemon blossom, *Dendrobium kingianum* (a gift from Helen Bryant), wisteria and *Brunfelsia latifolia*. Soon my *Nahema* roses will lend their heady perfume to the mix.

Since the last newsletter we have enjoyed a second presentation from Greg Johnson on garden writers in Australia 1888 - 1938 which was so beautifully articulated and a fascinating presentation by Margaret Betteridge based on an exhibition at the Customs House that she curated - *Cartographica: Sydney on the Map*. There were some maps that were rare and extraordinary that posed some questions and answered most.

Before Margaret's talk we held the AGM at which we elected two new members onto the executive committee: Stephen Halliday and Christina Kanellaki-Lowe and we re-elected three members who have been on the committee for nine years. Office bearers were elected at our meeting in September and the only change was that Tempe Beaven is stepping down as Secretary and will be replaced by Christina Kannelaki-Lowe. Our appreciation goes to Tempe for her diligence and we hope Christina will not find the role too onerous. Special dispensation was granted by the National Management Committee to enable myself, Gina Plate and Angela Low to stay on until after the 2020 conference next year. The Committee would very much appreciate others to come forward to assist with the 2020 conference which we hope will lead to replenishing the executive committee.

'The love of gardening is a seed once sown that never dies.' Gertrude Jekyll – Taken from Richard Heathcote's recent bulletin which includes an item about the **Australian Museum of Gardening** at Carrick Hill. The NMC are considering a proposed renewal of the current MOU with Carrick Hill Trust and AGHS for a further five years until 2023 by which time is anticipated the AMG will have physical home for the collection based at Carrick Hill.

We have some exciting events programmed by the Sydney branch. In March there is the Australia-wide AGHS Garden Party to celebrate the 40 years since the Society was established. Our plan is to hold the event in the most significant garden in Australia – not the biggest but a beloved place of such integrity and historic value – details to come but the date is 22 March. We know it will be a sensational party and all branches will hold a similar event on the same day.

I will be a delegate at the conference in New Zealand and I am really looking forward to that.

I look forward to seeing you there.

James Quoyle

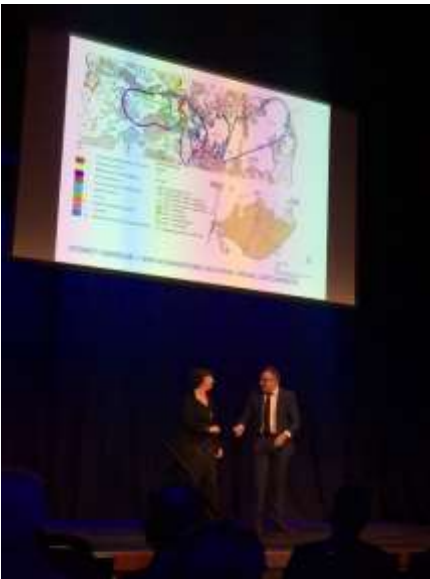
telephone: 9519 5250 or email: james@qanda.com.au

AT THE AGM





Further Accolades for ‘The Green Necklace’ Study



AGHS Sydney Chair and Vice Chair, James Quoyale and Christine Hay together with Colleen Morris have been further awarded for their study the *AILA (NSW) Landscape Heritage Conservation Listing Project* (also called the *AILA NSW Landscape Heritage Study, case study Sydney Harbour*) focusing on a vision for the Sydney Harbour ‘Green Necklace’. As well as the 2019 National Trust Heritage Award for Landscape Conservation mentioned in the July Branch Cuttings, they have received the 2019 AILA NSW Award of Excellence for Cultural Heritage and on Thursday 10 October the 2019 AILA National President’s Award. Christine is seen receiving the award at left.

The AILA President’s Award recognises outstanding individual contributions to the profession, the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, or to the practise of landscape architecture or urban design. This award is presented to the recipient by the national president. The President’s Award is awarded on merit – it is not an annual award.

Congratulations once again.

AGHS NATIONAL ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

Robin Lewarne was interviewed on 3 December 2003 at her home, *San Michele*, in Neutral Bay¹ for the Sydney Branch Oral History Collection, which has since become the AGHS National Oral History Collection. [Italics are direct quotes from Robin’s interview.]

Initially the NSW Branch was based in the Southern Highlands and informal functions were organised in Sydney. The first AGHS event Robin attended was a weekend tour of Orange in the late 1980s which she and her husband, Warwick, thought was marvellous; she remembered the welcome by Keva and Tim North and their encouragement to establish a branch in Sydney.

The Sydney Branch was formed in 1993 at a meeting at *Lyndhurst*. The first Committee was small and included Robin, who recalled the architect, *Ken Digby*, had previously tried to arrange meetings ... had opened a bank account which *Beth* (Bond) and *I* and *Rosalind* (Eldershaw) became signatories to.

After a decade as a stay-at-home mum Robin returned to study as a mature-age student and between 1973 and 1981 (when her children were still at school) she completed the HSC, a Bachelor of Economics and Master of Economics and began fulltime work at Ord Minnett.

Yet in the midst of this hectic decade when Robin was also a Director (and Treasurer and Chair) of the Sydney Home Nursing Service, a public hospital in Glebe, she learnt about the Society and joined, becoming State Treasurer, then National Treasurer from 1989-98. In these years before teleconferencing Robin remembered how difficult it was to be a member of the National Management Committee with the requirement of three meetings in Melbourne and in Sydney and, for those committee members not employed in a *government department that supported historic organisations, ... it was very expensive to ... be on those sorts of committees.*



Initially the Sydney Branch met at *Lyndhurst* in Glebe, head office of Historic Houses Trust. Barely formed, the new Society was particularly galvanised when asked to present the Sydney Conference in 1995; the very notion was a shock. Robin remembered that meeting with Beth Bond, John Challis and Jan Gluskie and John's horror ... *'Oh no, no, no we couldn't do it. But they did! Robin recalled: we went 'Oh wow ... that's OK!' It was terribly hard work but it was successful.*

As finances improved the Branch grew more confident ... *in fact so confident that Peter Watts asked if we could spend \$25,000 over three years ... on the Oxford Companion.*ⁱⁱ Scholarship has been a plank of the Society and the first edition of *Studies in Garden History* was published about the time Robin was interviewed. She questioned whether *Studies* was really garden history stuff. *I mean we're still ... very much stuck in the Walter Burley-Griffin and Edna Walling (conversations whilst) ... garden history to me doesn't seem to advance past those or Guilfoyle.*

Reflecting further on the diverse views and membership of the Society Robin said: *You've got the professional historians, the professional landscape architects and the garden owners – all with different preferences. The professional historian is looking very much at the old gardens and often the remnants which most people couldn't see. Some of the professional landscape architects are looking for new business. And the garden owners ... quite often they seem to be dismissed as just wanting pretty gardens and there's this feeling with the professionals that they don't want the Garden History Society ... to become just a garden club. Now I've never belonged to a garden club so I don't know what they are really like, but I've been always impressed by the knowledge and the expertise of a lot of the garden owners and I'd like to see that encouraged more and nurtured as it was in the earlier days.*

The Society's National Oral History Collection continues to grow and interviewees' recollections offer insights into the developing role of the Society and garden history. In 2020 the Society celebrates its 40th anniversary: a remarkable achievement in advocacy, scholarship and much more.

Roslyn Burge

- i Robin has written about her beautiful home and garden: 'San Michele, Garden Profile', *Australian Garden History*, V7, no4, November / December 1995, pp18-19.
- ii *The Oxford companion to Australian gardens*, edited by Richard Aitken & Michael Looker, Oxford University Press (published in association with the Australian Garden History Society), South Melbourne, 2002.

Acknowledgement: I would like to thank Jan Gluskie, Colleen Morris, James Quoye and Stuart Read for their assistance.

Varroville update

For all members who have been following the fate of the Varroville Homestead, one of our earliest colonial estates (July Branch Cuttings), there has been a recent disappointing development. In June 2019 the Planning Minister directed the Independent Planning Commission (IPC) to consider the cemetery application. On 19th July 2019, the Sydney Western City Planning Panel approved the development application for an adjacent cemetery following the direction of the IPC. This came at the end of a lengthy consultation and debate on the significant values of the site. The proposal, lodged in 2017 by the Catholic Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust (CMCT), included the staged development of a cemetery with capacity of up to 136,000 burial plots including six new buildings and a network of internal roads, pathways, sculptures and landscaping. The proposal was stated to address the recognised shortage of burial space in Sydney with a focus on Western Sydney. In February this year, the IPC endorsed the expansion of the SHR curtilage over a portion of the site of the proposed cemetery, pending the approval of the Minister for Heritage. To date there has been no response from the Heritage Minister on the SHR curtilage expansion.

NORTHERN NSW



On Sunday 21st July Dr Tanya Hoolihan presented a talk entitled “Beyond Exploration, illustrating the botanical legacy of Ludwig Leichhardt” to a captivated audience at the new England Regional Art Museum. Dr Hoolihan established where and when he collected significant specimens and examined Leichhardt’s influence on botanical discoveries and his connection to important gardens and institutions. Tanya’s talk was enthusiastically received as was her stunning and detailed botanical artwork. Tanya was thrilled to be shown through the University of New England herbarium by a local member of the AGHS, Dr Ian Telford, where she was thrilled to locate a Leichhardt specimen, *Boronia occidentalis*. A subsequent specimen has been identified since Dr Hoolihan’s talk. Exciting news! NNSW members had the privilege of joining Tanya and her husband Darren for dinner following the talk.

Rosey Roundabout



The AGHS NNSW sub branch embarked on an exciting project to install a sustainable drought resistant garden by planting 160 roses in the centre of the newly formed roundabout on the New England Highway near the Armidale airport. The roundabout is a perfect link to the nearby Saumarez Heritage Rose Garden, another significant project of the local branch. Rugosa roses feature in the roundabout due to their low maintenance, toughness and glorious long lasting flowers. The roses are mulched with scoria gravel which promotes moisture movement directly into the soil. The joint effort by Armidale Regional Council and the AGHS NNSW sub branch has been generously supported by the Back Track Boys, Black Mountain Nursery,

Ducats, Armidale Pumps and Irrigation, Roads and Maritime Services and John Hiscox.

Saumarez Heritage Rose Garden

Regular working bees are keeping the garden pruned and tidy, ready for spring visitors but the ongoing drought is a huge worry. To date the garden is surviving despite receiving no substantial watering since June. We’re hoping for a show of flowers to brighten the landscape and even more hopeful of some storm rain at least to keep the plants alive.

Helen Wilson
Secretary NNSW Sub Branch



OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST

AGHS Southern Highlands Branch upcoming events: www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au

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/>

Church Street Spring Festival, Maitland-

19 Oct 2019 10:00 am -3:00 pm, 20 Oct 2019 10:00 am- 3:00 pm, 26 Oct 2019 10:00 am -3:00 pm, 27 Oct 2019 10:00 am- 3:00 pm, National Trust members: \$4.00 per day, General public: \$5.00 adult; concession \$4.00; family \$15.00; children free.

Harper's Mansion's Garden and Plant Fair, 27 October, Adult \$5, children free (buy on the door)

Lindesay Christmas Gift Fair, 14 November 2019 until 16 November 2019

Eryldene Historic House and Garden <https://www.eryldene.org.au/>

ERYLDENE CHRISTMAS FAIR, Saturday 23 & Sunday 24 November, 2019, 10.00am – 4.00pm

Entry: \$5 Adult / Concession. Children free

Millthorpe Garden Ramble

November 2-3 Millthorpe is a village between Orange and Bathurst. Properties in and around Millthorpe open their gardens to the public from 10am to 4pm on Saturday and Sunday Further details at [Millthorpe Village](#) or Lyndall Harrison 0419 431 785, millthorpegardenramble@gmail.com bookings at [TryBooking](#)

EVENT DETAILS

NOVEMBER

Event: Sydney Harbour Jacaranda Cruise on the *Waratah*

Date: Sunday 10th November, 11:30 for a departure at midday

Venue: Sydney Heritage Fleet wharf at Gate 4, James Craig Road, Rozelle

Cost: AGHS Members \$50, Non AGHS Members \$60, Full time Students \$20.

Online Bookings: www.trybooking.com/BGDWQ

This event was to be held on the Sydney Heritage Fleet's steam launch "Lady Hopetoun", but they have just advised us that the Lady Hopetoun has "blown a boiler tube" and is out of action for several months. Sydney Heritage Fleet have kindly offered their steam powered heritage tug "Waratah", also built in 1902 as a replacement, at the same price.

While the Waratah does not have quite the charm of the Lady Hopetoun, we have decided to accept their offer. Two advantages of this new arrangement are that the Waratah will carry more passengers and as a result, we have reduced the member price to \$50. The non-member price is \$60 and full-time students are \$20.

The cruise starts at midday and runs for approximately three hours, but guests are asked to be ready to board at 11:30.

Further details will be forwarded to all who book. David Low will be in New Zealand for the annual conference and only returns the night before the cruise but can be contacted on 0407 464 876 or his new email address of david@davidlow.com.au Note that this is a permanent change of his email address.
