

BRANCH CUTTINGS



Issue 69 – October 2022

This branch is affiliated with the Royal Australian Historical Society & National Trust of Australia (NSW)
We acknowledge and pay respects to the traditional owners and custodians on whose land we walk, work & live.

AGHS FORTHCOMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER

Date: 11 November - 13 November

Event: **AGHS 2022 Annual National Conference** Landscape on the Edge: Challenge and Opportunity
The Full Conference is FULLY BOOKED.

However, **Conference Lectures Only** are still available in-person or online

<https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/product/aghs-conference-registration-2022/?>

Venue: Wrest Point Hotel, Sandy Bay, Hobart

DECEMBER



Sydney Branch Christmas Party

Date: Sunday 4th December, 4:00pm

Event: Christmas Party in the secluded garden of an 1847 property in Glebe, the home of two of our members

Venue: Glebe

Cost and Bookings: details to come

FEBRUARY

Date: To be finalised

Event: Ferdinand Bauer and the Hapsburgs -an illustrated talk by David Stuart

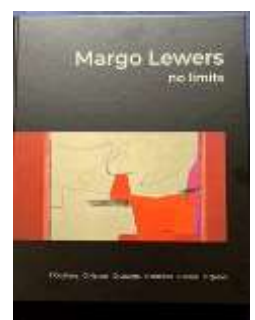
Details to be finalised

MARCH

Date: Saturday 18 March 2023, 3-5pm

Event: Book Launch of *Margo Lewers no Limits*. Darani and Tanya, Margo's daughters, will be launching the book at The Penrith Regional Gallery and the Lewers Bequest

Venue: The Penrith Regional Gallery



THE GARDEN AT YASMAR

NEW MEMBERS

The Branch would like to extend a warm welcome to the following new local members: Libby Anderson, Liane Colwell, Simone Lourey, Susan McGregor, Caroline Miller, Julie Lyengar, Kim Watson, Rebecca Xiouri



Yasmar, located on Parramatta Road in Haberfield, is on the traditional lands of the Wangal people of the Dahrug clan. The garden at Yasmar (Ramsay spelt backwards), is a treasure trove of rare plants. Many are unusual in Sydney gardens. Some of the trees date from the 1860s when the garden was established by Mary Learmonth (née Ramsay) and her husband Alexander Learmonth in this strip of land between the house and Parramatta Road. Tree-lined paddocks lay on either side, one for horses, the other for the dairy cow I surmise from the aerial photos.

The garden is thought to have been designed in the Gardenesque style according to principles of JC Loudon, the Scottish-born landscape gardener, horticulturist and author who coined the term. Plants were spaced out separately so that each could develop and be appreciated individually, their particular character manifest. Foreign plants were used to heighten the appearance of the garden as a work of art; the garden owner was the artist.



In this garden are trees not often grown in Sydney even now: for example, the dusty-pink flowering *Brachychiton discolor* (lacebark kurrajong) and *Cryptocarya obovata* (Pepperberry) from northern NSW and Queensland rainforests. The only other *Ehretia rigida* (puzzle bush from South Africa) known to exist is in Camden Park's garden. Some trees are endangered in their countries of origin such as *Agathis lanceolata* (Khogis or Serpentine Kauri) from New Caledonia and the *Picconia excelsa* (common name palo blanco or whitewood), the latter endemic to Canary Islands but endangered there. It is one of 2 specimens extant when I first visited Yasmar in the late 1980s as a Public Works Landscape Technician. The other grew near the driveway edge towards the front gate but recently died as its trunk rotted at its base due to an excessively deep layer of mulch dumped by an unscrupulous landscape contractor. That mulch recently killed another NSW/eastern Qld rainforest tree – a white booyong (*Argyrodendron trifoliatum*). As there are only about 6 other *Picconia* specimens known to

exist in Australia, Yasmar's is treasured. It will be difficult to find replacement specimens of either tree.

When I first visited Yasmar in the late 1980s, it was to assess the condition of the garden that was being partially and poorly maintained by detained youths on remand, housed in the high-walled wings flanking both sides of the garden; plants were being whipper-snipped and mutilated, weeds were proliferating.

Public Works had created an ambitious landscape plan for the garden that had not been implemented. I organised for the secondment of Anne Steng, Elizabeth Farm's heritage gardener to work at Yasmar for 6 months, during which time she trained some of the detainees and worked with them to weed and plant some of the more usual Victorian era plants you can see when you walk around the site such as the native *Alpinia zerumbet* (shell ginger), blue mist plant (*Bartlettina sordida*) and yesterday, today and tomorrow (*Brunfelsia bonodora*) among others.





Some of the camellia were only identified this year by world camellia expert Steven Utick. All have mottled flowers except the most recently planted deep red, waratah camellia on the left going towards the front gates and Parramatta Road. Most fascinating of all Yasmar's camellias is the pale pink *Camellia japonica* 'Aspasia Macarthur' beneath the Ginkgo with 2 or 3 different types/forms of flowers on that one bush.

Unfortunately, in spite of Yasmar's weekly weeding and unwanted seedling-removal-ministrations by our band of dedicated Garden volunteers - who are kindly giving up their Saturday morning to provide our morning tea and escort you in the garden, many other old plants have died since we began working here in 2018 under Crown Lands licence – possibly due to factors such as the prolonged drought, the afore-mentioned mulch and this year's prolonged period of heavy rain. Fortunately though, Stuart Read and I have been recording Yasmar's plants and their locations since the '80s, and tree stumps remain to confirm and remind us of what once grew where for future

replacement plantings.

Until now, Yasmar has been 'maintained' by its most recent owner - Crown Lands who initially provided us with funds for tools and removed some of the weedy tree species too large for us to remove by hand. But much more needs to be done/more money be spent for a sustainable, manageable garden recreation to take place based on a commissioned Master Plan and Landscape Plan as recommended by existing or updated Conservation Management Plans.

Earlier this year, The Metropolitan Aboriginal Land Council was given Freehold title over two thirds of the Yasmar Estate, including the garden. The handover should be complete by year's end. They will have to comply with the existing Heritage orders. We understand the Land Council wants to use the place for 'Community Purposes' and look forward to continuing our garden work under their stewardship, hopeful that more funds are forthcoming for it and the house's restoration and conservation than have been provided to date.



The Yasmar Garden volunteers are grateful to AGHS Sydney Branch for donating the funds for the plant labels we have recently installed around the site, including in the stumps of trees that have died.

Gina Plate is the Yasmar Garden Volunteer's Team Leader. She is a horticulturist, member of the Australian Garden History Society and member of the Haberfield Association.

Images: Anne Smith

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Sydney Branch

I am honoured to be the new Chair of the Sydney Branch of AGHS. At the AGM in August we welcomed some new committee members and farewelled our much valued and indefatigable Chair, Christine Hay, whose allotted time of 9 years on the committee was up. Christine was asked to stay on for an extra year to steer us through the Conference, which she did so ably, making 10 years in total. She will be greatly missed. Committee Office bearers were elected at our September committee meeting. The new Sydney Branch executive committee is: Anne Smith, Chair; Steve Halliday, Vice-chair; Susan Stratton, Secretary; David Low, Treasurer; Jan Churcher, Stephen Hathway, Ba An Le, Wendy Robinson and Judie Rawling.

The Sydney branch has enjoyed some interesting and thought-provoking presentations in the last few months with James Broadbent's talk on Fernhill and the Mulgoa Valley at the AGM and a camellia talk and walk through Lisgar Gardens at Hornsby led by Stephen Uttick. Our Western Sydney event from Haberfield to Horsley was an outstanding day of historic colonial properties and gardens, hero trees and good company. It was good to be joined by some visitors from the Southern Highlands once again. Our Christmas Party is in Glebe this year at the beautiful historic property of two of our members. It will be great to see some of you there.



On a recent visit to friends in Perth we loved walking around their large wildflower-filled block. As always when in Perth, Kings Park Botanic Garden was a must see. I love seeing the many banksia species there especially those which flower at ground level, plus all the kangaroo paws and walking over the elegant footbridge above the valley.

I hope the rain here hasn't done too much damage in your gardens, and to the farmers I hope your crops and animals are safe. Our rock orchids in our garden are just finishing and have been a delight but the weeds are flourishing.

I am looking forward to attending the National Conference in Hobart next month and hope to catch up with many of you at this much-anticipated event.

Anne Smith

Chair (Ph: 0418 961 943 or email: smith777@bigpond.net.au)

RECENT EVENTS

LISGAR GARDENS



International camellia expert Dr Stephen Uttick gave the Sydney Branch a fascinating talk in July at Lisgar Gardens at Hornsby on the history of the gardens and the camellias there. He then led us on a walk through the lovely landscape. The Friends of Lisgar Gardens welcomed us and provided a wonderful morning tea.



AGM

At the AGM in August at the National Trust Centre, Observatory Hill, Dr James Broadbent presented a talk on Fernhill and the Mulgoa Valley explaining the importance of the landscape and the ongoing advocacy for the conservation of the landscape. For the first time the meeting was both in-person and also online.

See the list of Committee members in the Chair's Report.

*Right: Talk by James Broadbent on the Fernhill Estate
(Image: Stephen Halliday)*



HABERFIELD TO HORSLEY TOUR

YASMAR



On Saturday 10 September 2022, 30 Australian Garden History Society (AGHS) Sydney and Southern Highlands Branch members and friends visited Yasmar's garden on the first stop of a 'Haberfield to Horsley' self-drive day trip run by the Sydney branch.

The Yasmar Garden volunteers had been preparing the garden for weeks, installing the plant labels – donated by the AGHS Sydney branch – pruning and weeding. Final touches - leaf litter-blowing by Juvenile Justice Staff Training Centre and our large stockpile of garden waste and seedy-weed bag removal by the Landscape Contractor - were done on Friday, so the place looked well-tended on that sunny Saturday morning. Our guests were suitably impressed.

Morning tea with a huge variety of homemade cakes and biscuits was provided by the Garden Volunteers (for a small per person fee to be paid into the Yasmar Garden account).

Vincent Crow (Haberfield Association & Garden History Society member) gave a really good history of Haberfield and the Ramsay family and their part in the creation of Yasmar and its garden. Gina Plate (Garden History Society and Haberfield Association member) talked about the garden – its Gardenesque design and rare plants – and Angie Gallinaro (Haberfield Association member, Friends of Yasmar & Yasmar Garden Volunteers Convenor) talked about her part in seeking and successfully applying for the grants with which we have paid for the teak bench now installed in a quiet spot under the rare pink-flowering kurrajong tree near the JJC centre, the tables and chairs we use for our working-days morning tea, and the safety fence that has been installed around the collapsing sunken fernery until funds are forthcoming for its stabilisation or reconstruction.

With the display of enlarged historic and aerial photographs examined, and the garden visited, the guests departed for the Appian Way and the rest of their day.

Many thanks to all involved.

Gina Plate
Yasmar Garden Volunteers Team Leader

(Images: Graham and Anne Smith)



HABERFIELD to HORSLEY

What a delightful day we had on Saturday 10th September visiting significant historic properties in western Sydney! Starting at Yasmar in Haberfield, then proceeding to The Appian Way at Burwood, Elizabeth Farm in Parramatta, Wistaria Gardens at Parramatta Park and finally Horsley at Horsley Park. See Gina Plate's report on the Yasmar visit above. The garden at Yasmar with all its treasures is a tribute to Gina and her team of garden volunteers. At Elizabeth Farm, located in a significant historic part of Parramatta, we had this beautiful property almost to ourselves and enjoyed lunch in their peaceful courtyard. Afterwards en route to Horsley some of the group braved the receding crowds at Wistaria gardens in Parramatta Park to see the blossom. Later, wandering the grounds of historic Horsley after a stroll up the magnificent long Bunya-lined driveway we enjoyed afternoon tea made by the committee and supporters - a wonderful way to end to the day. Thanks to the Kerfoot family for hosting us. These three homesteads still managed to make the visitor feel that they were stepping back into the past into a rural setting of colonial times.

We were very pleased to be able to hold this event as it was one of the Covid-cancelled tours which had originally been planned for the 2020 National Conference. Next spring we hope to hold the Camden district tour also planned for the 2020 Conference.



Above: Appian Way, Burwood



*Above and left: Elizabeth Farm
Below right: Wistaria Gardens*



(Images above: Anne and Graham Smith)



*Right and below:
Horsley*



(Image above: Bob Kerfoot)

(Image left: Susan Stratton)

COMMITTEE MEMBER PROFILES

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I am an artist making jewellery that is autobiographical in content. My art jewellery training brought to light the connection of belief and how it manifests itself into material. I believe what one holds as their belief inside is true in its expression outwardly, such as the clothes we wear, and the things that we surround ourselves with. Following my art practice, I became interested in landscape architecture and currently study a 'Masters of Landscape Architecture,' at University of Technology Sydney. My interest in the relationship of the human body and its environment was how I began and entered into the space of landscape architecture through analogical reasoning including the practises of

cartography, ecological thinking, systems, machines, and biology. I've currently completed one-and-a-half-year of study into Landscape Architecture and my reflections are currently: The realisation that the life that I live, and my reality does not express the love of nature, leading to point (1) learning to love nature and its processes, and as an extension, (2) applying my strengths in conceptual development with better grounding in how nature works, and (3) developing my verbal and public communication skills, and architectural drawing. From my brief introduction, I hope to have expressed that I desire and learn to love nature better, have a common love for all who are in it, and responsibly design landscapes of value in their respective communities.

My recent introduction into the Australian Garden History Society in May, has enabled me to enter into a community of which my values of personal stories and narratives are aligned with the vision of the AGHS. My love for stories, and critically thinking about landscape narratives, has been increasingly important in communicating landscape values which are otherwise forgotten, or intentionally ignored.

JAN CHURCHER



I developed a love of gardening growing up on a farm in the Southern Tablelands. I have always enjoyed visiting open gardens for inspiration and have worked on many different landscape projects assisting my husband who was a landscaper.

During my teaching career I was very involved in environmental education. I planted trees, developed an environment track, established school vegetable gardens, native gardens, a frog pond and many other gardens. I applied for grants and liaised with local council in the preservation and conservation of local areas.

I joined AGHS because I'm interested in visiting all different kinds of gardens and in advocating for their preservation, restoration and rescue.

Now retired, I do voluntary work at my local school garden and volunteer to help in other gardens. And at last I have time to work in my garden too.

BOOK REVIEWS

See two new book reviews on the AGHS website:

Tim Entwisle's *Evergreen The botanical Life of a Plant Punk*,

Thames and Hudson, 2022, review by Max Bourke, AM

<https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/2022/08/the-mick-jagger-of-the-plant-world/>

NEWS



James Quoy's AGHS gift thanking him for his contribution to the committee has finally happened, with his gift of a *Camellia japonica* 'Anemoniflora' (Camden Park waratah-flowered camellia) arriving. James reports that his camellia is in the ground and shooting and that he has planted a companion plant for it, a *C. japonica* 'Aspesia Macarthur' to keep the new one company. Thanks to past committee member Christina Kanellaki Lowe for organizing this with the



Macarthur-Stanhams at Camden Park.

Above: *Camellia japonica* 'Anemoniflora' flower at Camden Park 18th Sept 2022

Right: James' baby camellia
(Images: James Quoy)

ADVOCACY

See the advocacy pages on the AGHS Website.

https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/garden-history-now/?category=Advocacy#filter=.iso_4

As a reminder, any advocacy requests to the Sydney Branch should be accompanied by an outline of succinct points about the required support.

Gregory Place Build-to-Rent

A couple of our members wrote quick individual private responses to the Gregory Place Build-to-Rent proposal for Parramatta. Unfortunately we found out about this proposal too late to do any more than this as the cut-off time at the end of August was imminent.

The proposed concept development is for an affordable housing and build-to-rent development comprising approximately 483 dwellings within three freestanding four to eight storey buildings. This development is close to Hambledon Cottage and within the Harris Park area of National Significance.

OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST

DENBIGH OPEN GARDEN

Sat 12th and Sun 13th November 2022

531 Cobbitty Road, Cobbitty

Garden entry \$10 for Turning Point, Camden

www.myopengarden.com.au/

BBQ, Devonshire tea, coffee & cakes served in the hayshed,

Pottery studio open as part of the Australian Ceramic's Association

Open Studio weekend

ShakeShake Puppet théâtre performing on Sunday



YARALLA OPEN DAY

Members can read an interesting article by members Margaret & Chris Betteridge about the well-head at Yaralla in the latest issue of Australian Garden History.

Yaralla's open day is on 30th October this year, an opportunity to go and see the Venetian Well in situ.

Booking for a 1-hour tour can be made on the Canada Bay Heritage Society website

<https://www.canadabayheritage.asn.au>

Royal Botanic Gardens

<https://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/what-s-on>

Guided walks led by volunteer guides -daily 10:30 AM to 12 PM and Saturday and Sunday 2 PM to 3 PM

National Trust

See National Trust website for details of properties including the ones below:

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

Experiment Farm Cottage 9 Ruse Street, Harris Park -open first and third weekend of each month,
10.30am – 3.30pm

It is part of an historical Parramatta precinct which includes Hambledon Cottage (1824), Elizabeth Farm (1793) and the Queen's Wharf, all within easy walking distance of each other.

Entry Fees: National Trust members – FREE, Adults - \$10, Concession/child >5yrs- \$8, Family- \$25

Everglades House & Garden, 37 Everglades Avenue, Leura –open daily, 10am – 4pm.

Entry Fees: National Trust members – FREE, Adults - \$15, Concession - \$10, Family- \$35

Eryldene

Friday, 4th November, 2022. Gardens open 10:00am to 12:00pm

<https://www.eryldene.org.au/>

Newsletter collated and edited by Anne Smith. Contact Anne on smith777@bigpond.net.au