

BRANCH CUTTINGS



Issue 60 – February 2020

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

AGHS FORTHCOMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY

Date: Wednesday, 19th February, 2020, 6:00pm

Event: Emma Dortins will present an illustrated talk “Lives of Stories”, which traces three stories of Aboriginal-settler friendships that intersect with the ways in which Australians remember founding national stories, build narratives for cultural revival, and work on reconciliation and self-determination.

Venue: Annie Wyatt Room, National Trust of Australia (NSW), Observatory Hill

Cost: AGHS Members \$20, Non AGHS Members \$30, Full time Students \$5, includes drinks and nibbles.

Online Bookings: www.trybooking.com/BHRUN

MARCH

Date: Sunday, 22nd March from 2:30 to 4:30

Event: 40th Anniversary Garden Party to celebrate the society’s 40th birthday.

Venue: Eryldene in Gordon, the historic home of camellia expert, Professor Waterhouse. The house was begun in 1913. This was the start of a twenty three year association between Waterhouse and Hardy Wilson which saw the creation of the garden and its many structures. A garden study and a walled fountain were built in 1921 followed by a tool shed and pigeon house in 1922, a Chinese-inspired tea house in 1927 and a bold lattice screen and garage in 1936. A temple in the front garden was built at the same time as the house. The house and garden symbolise a genteel way of life, tranquil, devoted to culture, beauty, and good taste.

Online Bookings: www.trybooking.com/BHSWQ

Cost: Free for members, Guests \$20. Bookings essential as numbers are limited. Members who have already booked will be reimbursed

APRIL

Date: Wednesday, 8th April, 2020, 6:00pm.

Event: Stuart Read will present an illustrated talk ‘Avenues of Honour’

Venue: Annie Wyatt Room, National Trust of Australia (NSW), Observatory Hill

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

Email david@davidlow.com.au

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**

NEW MEMBERS

The Branch would like to extend a warm welcome to the following new local members: Ari Anderson, Fiona Binns, Katie Caban, Jan Churcher, Sunni D’Elton-Howard, Kathleen Gardner, Anne Griffiths, Oliver Halley, Alex Hawthorne, Dianne Herbert, Ian Hoskins, Julie Jones, Joan Lester, Judith Meeske, Alison Noland, Linda Pearson, Angela Preda, Collin Randall, Kevin Riley, Janie Symon, Barbara Wheatley.

Journey to the Landscapes of Great Britain: Part 3

Stowe in Buckinghamshire is one of the greatest English landscape gardens. The gardens are now managed by The National Trust which took over a very neglected site in 1989; over 100 hectares of gardens and more than 300 hectares of parkland. Our Australian NT membership gave us free entry. A golf style buggy took us from the front gate to the garden, then a second buggy up to the house. This saved a lot of walking but also gave us a terrific guide; one of the buggy drivers was having a quiet day, and explained everything we passed. The house is now an exclusive boarding school with its own golf course in front, but our guide said this was soon to be removed. The garden was developed between 1711 and 1750's for the



Dukes of Buckingham, and is the only landscape worked on by all 3 of the greats, John Vanbrugh, William Kent and Capability Brown. In fact Brown worked here with Kent until the latter died in 1748. Brown was Head gardener, but left in 1751 to start his independent career as garden designer. Our guide pointed out the large 'Grecian Valley' that Brown excavated but was never able to fill with water. It had 3 garden paths, with statues, temples etc. designated as Vice, Virtue and Elysium.

In 1734 Kent had built the Temple of British Worthies, with niches for busts of 16 notable people such as Shakespeare, Milton, Sir Isaac Newton and the Black Prince. Queen Elizabeth I is the only woman included. The Rotundo seen across the eleven acre lake, was designed and built by Vanbrugh in the style of a Roman temple. Among many other statues and constructions, in a quiet spot beside a stream, is a pedestal-mounted globe built in 1778 to honour Captain James Cook.



His head is depicted in relief on the base. Every garden ornament carried great significance, added over many years by people of insight and immense wealth. What a legacy.



Powis Castle is in Powys, Wales. It started life on a narrow ridge as the medieval fortress of the Welsh Prince of Powys, mid 13th century. By the 17th century it was in the hands of the first



Marquis of Powis (the spelling changed), who laid out the long terraces that step down the steep hill at the front, in a Dutch formal manner. They have been maintained now for 300 years. With four long walks, each level connected by stairs, these sheltered gardens contain a huge variety of colourful plants. Climbing roses were in full flower the beautiful day we were there, but the most striking features are the yew 'tumps'. These were planted as pyramids at intervals along the gardens, but are now huge, wonderful, lumpy shapes, clipped in fanciful topiary. If you peer into the centre, as one of the working gardeners advised me to do, you can make out the original modest form. At one end of the terraces





is an enormous 'cloud' yew hedge that goes right down the whole hillside to the valley floor (and further gardens) below. This hedge is 14 metres high and requires a man standing on a crane for pruning. Across the valley are lovely views of Welsh hills. In 1784 Lady Henrietta Herbert married Edward Clive, son of 'Clive of India', uniting the Powis and Clive estates. There is a collection of many different *Cliveas* in the conservatory. By the 20th century the 4th. Earl of Powis lived here and his wife Violet brought the garden back to life. Today it is a National Trust property and beautifully maintained with the help of volunteer gardeners, some of whom we met on the day. The mild climate in the valley supports an impressive collection of exotic trees. Lead statues in the garden were added to display the use of the metal from the family's mines in the hills.

Mottisfont in Hampshire is a National Trust property. Mottis means 'meeting place' and font refers to the source, an endless spring of clear water that flows gently into the River Test where we saw trout. A medieval community gathered here and it became a place of pilgrimage and contemplation. The main building was a priory and this still exists within the current edifice as it was transformed into a tudor house, then an 18th century country home. Maud and Gilbert Russell took it over in 1934 and made it a centre for arts and politics. Everybody who was anybody visited Maud in those years. The large garden was designed by Norah Lindsay with sweeping lawns, large trees and rushing water, maintaining the atmosphere of the past



abbey. A lime walk was designed by Geoffrey Jellicoe to reflect the medieval columns that once formed the priory cloisters. There is a well preserved underground ice house, and a haha. During WW II the house was commandeered as a hospital. Maud Russell gifted the property to The National Trust in 1957 but continued to live there until 1972.

Mottisfont Abbey is well known to all rose lovers. The walled rose garden created by Graham Thomas in the 1970's saved rare and beautiful blooms from extinction and now houses The National Collection of pre-1900 shrub roses. This is sited a fair way from the house. Even though a large part of it was closed for redevelopment

there was still much to delight. The perfume of all those roses in full bloom enclosed by very high red brick walls was intoxicating.



It was Bank holiday weekend the day of our visit and the lawns were dotted with family groups having picnics and small children running around filling in questionnaires on the garden and its features. One little boy near me had completed it all except his choice of water feature. When his mother pointed this out he said: 'I want THAT.' indicating the crystal clear 'font'. Coming from droughty Sydney, I could not have agreed more.



Angela Low

Angela is a member of the Sydney AGHS committee member. She is a biologist who volunteers part time at The Australian Museum working behind the scenes curating the marine Invertebrates.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Sydney & Northern NSW Branch

Branch News – January 2020

Happy New Year to all our members. With the grim conclusion to the hottest year on record and the start of 2020, I would like to acknowledge the stress and sadness that many Australians are experiencing at this time. For our members in the affected areas who may have suffered damage by the destructive fires, our heart goes out to you and if you think the AGHS can assist, please give me a call on the number below. An uplifting story was shared by Stuart Read and Bronwyn Blake (Co-Chairs of the National Management Committee) who sent a link to the extraordinary effort that was deployed to protect the only wild stand of the Wollomi pine, without revealing its location. At the time of the making of the video, the pines were only scorched but they survive. Stuart and Bronwyn describe the stand as one of Australia's botanical wonders. The branch would like to join with the NMC to congratulate the courageous efforts of the emergency services to protect and save this significant landscape, described in the article as 'The Opera House of the Natural World.'

The last event of 2019 was the annual AGHS Sydney Jacaranda Cruise aboard the Sydney Heritage Fleet's steam powered heritage tug 'Waratah', built in 1902. This was followed two weeks later by our Christmas party held at a garden on the harbour in Elizabeth Bay which provided privileged access to the water's edge, where a group of stingrays were observed and we all enjoyed a very pleasant lunch. The harbour is also a theme for several events this year, including the AGHS conference with lectures held at Luna Park.

For our branch, this is a year of hard work, celebration and renewal – this year marks the fortieth year since the AGHS commenced. There are many regular and diverse events planned starting with Emma Dortins in February, who will be talking about her recently published book: '*The Lives of Stories*,' in which Emma traces three stories of Aboriginal settler friendships that intersect with the ways in which Australians remember founding national stories, build narratives for cultural revival, and work on reconciliation and self-determination, framed by the Australian landscape.

On 22 March this year, across Australia, AGHS (or those members that are able to) are marking the fortieth anniversary with an event of their choice. The Sydney Branch is organising high tea (with champagne) at Eryldene in Gordon, under the shade of the angophoras, with a musical accompaniment of the duo 'Smokin' Hombres'. The society has been assisting Eryldene for a couple of years with essential arboriculture management of the site and I know the house is significant but believe the garden is the most significant garden in Australia. There you go – I declared it so. This declaration is based on the fact that the garden at Eryldene is consistently nominated on all lists compiled of the significant gardens of Australia by the boffins, while others may vary. Please join us in March as a few speakers share their stories, we plant a few trees or shrubs and, in theory, link hands with all members of AGHS across Australia to mark the day and enjoy an old fashioned afternoon tea.

Thank you to all the members who support our Society. I look forward to meeting new and existing members at one or all of this year's events. I hope 2020 is a remarkable year for us all.

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

AT THE CHRISTMAS PARTY AT ELIZABETH BAY



BUSHFIRE RECOVERY ON THE BELLS LINE OF ROAD

Over a month ago the Bells Line of Road area in the Blue Mountains was closed due to extreme bushfire. While visiting last week I witnessed its devastating effects; hectares of blacked vegetation and bare rocky landforms. In the foreground however, after recent welcome rain, were hopeful signs of plant regeneration - tender green sprouts poking through the ash, and, on some Eucalypts, fresh, glossy, pink and lime epicormic shoots. Time will tell about the biological effects of the fire's intensity and the recovery of native plant and animal communities. On



my return, I dug out a booklet [Vegetation, Fire and Climate Change in the Greater Blue Mountains WHA](#) to discover the area had been hit by fire at least twice in the last 40 years. It is interesting to note that the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area was listed (in 2000) for two major reasons, the first because *it possesses outstanding examples of ecological and biological processes significant in the evolution of ecosystems and communities of plants and animals*. And secondly, *it contains important and significant natural habitats for the conservation of biological diversity, including threatened species of outstanding value*. I trust data about the recent fires, adding to the work already compiled, will assist our understanding about conserving these values and those of other significant natural habitats.

Christine Hay

Vice-chair, Sydney Committee AGHS

NORTHERN NSW

Heritage Rose Garden Saumarez - February 2020;



Despite the continuing drought the AGHS Heritage Rose Garden at the National Trust property, Saumarez has continued to thrive with very little water being available. Saumarez Homestead itself ran out of water and generous donors have provided water to Saumarez and also to the rose garden itself, including donations from the National Executive of Heritage Roses in Australia. Visitors have been astonished by the vigour of the



roses including those in Stage Two, The Rose Breeders Garden, which was only planted in July 2018. Visitors have come from far and wide to explore the garden which continues to open seven days a week despite the conditions. There have of course been some casualties which will be replaced when conditions improve. There are several structures to be completed in the garden including shade pergolas and extra seating. It is hoped that the rose garden will be completed by Spring this year, depending on the climate.

Rugosa Roundabout, New England Hwy, Armidale Airport;

Another, more recent venture, this time in partnership with the Armidale Regional Council was undertaken just last year. The Armidale airport is expanding and a new roundabout has been constructed on the New England Highway. Some members of the Nth NSW sub branch approached the council with the suggestion that rather than fill the roundabout with concrete, the structure could be planted with Rugosa roses which thrive in this climate, are extremely hardy, have wonderful Autumn colour and require little maintenance. The Council agreed to supply the soil, drip irrigation, scoria mulch and the roses themselves and in return the AGHS members undertook to plant and maintain the garden. This was all agreed to before the already two year drought tightened its grip but



as the 170 roses had been ordered we had to go ahead and plant in July. By then this drought was the worst in the region in living memory and it continued to be so for the rest of the year. Remarkably the roses were only watered three times – once on planting and twice more with donated water until the new year brought some very welcome rain. Despite the arid conditions the roses have thrived – in most cases doubling in size and in some cases tripling. The use of scoria mulch has excited much interest and presentations have been given at local sustainability events in two local shires. The roses are flowering and setting hips and attracting a lot of traffic driving very slowly through the roundabout.

Photographer Lynne Walker

A to Z of Weather: Talk by Dr Linden Ashcroft



On Tuesday 21st January AGHS Northern NSW Sub branch together with the Armidale and District Historical Society were privileged to host **Dr Linden Ashcroft**, a lecturer in climate science and science communication at the University of Melbourne. Linden's work in climate science includes historic weather data rescue and she has used the meticulous records from "Eversleigh" by Algernon Belfield as well as data from "Salisbury Court" and other 19th century information from the New England region to provide information relevant to an overall picture of southern hemisphere climate variation and change. Dr Ashcroft's career highlights include presenting climate videos with the Bureau of Meteorology, working with

farmers, librarians and volunteers to recover historic weather observations across the country and being part of the winning team of the 2014 Eureka Prize for Interdisciplinary Research. Some 70 people attended the talk which was a vivacious presentation of facts, graphs and meticulous research. Linden endeared herself to the audience with her charming personality and wit but left everyone wanting to ask questions and make comments. It was a thought provoking lecture on changes in climate.

Photographer Bill Oates

Helen Wilson
Secretary NNSW Sub Branch

PROTECTING LANDSCAPES FOR FOOD PRODUCTION

It's heartening to read good news about cultural landscapes. One such inspiring story emphasises the importance of protecting landscapes for food production and supporting healthy, sustainable local economies.

See link to recent article from *Living Landscape Observer* by Brenda Barrett.

<https://livinglandscapeobserver.net/conservation-and-controversy-agricultural-landscapes-of-marin-county-ca/>

The article starts by pointing out the agricultural land and open spaces of Marin County in the San Francisco Bay area were not long ago threatened by over development. *Common cause*, efforts by conservationists and the community, outlined in *Farming on the Edge: Saving Family Farms in Marin County* by John Hart 1991, however changed this. The key to securing the long term health of farmland it proposed is locally produced food. Written thirty years ago, the area now generates an annual \$113 billion through its food economy. The article discusses the successful strategies which led to the protection of farmland; local government adoption of agricultural conservation zoning, and the establishment of an agricultural land trust.

Pastoral lands in the county however remain at risk due to incompatible ranch/farming practices and environmental protection concerns. This debate (about the impacts of elk herding) was elevated to Congress. Interesting. The article concludes by stating the CA National Park Service criteria, centred on scenic, resource and historic protection, need to add provision for living and working landscapes. These challenges are examined further in Laura Watts *The Paradox of Preservation: Wilderness and Working Landscapes at Point Reyes National Seashore*, 2016.

I'm thinking about our Cumberland Plain, and its challenges...anyway enjoy reading.

Christine Hay

Vice-chair, Sydney Committee AGHS

OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST

OVERSEAS: For those travelling to London, UK

Orchids at Kew: 8 February - 8 March



Discover Indonesia's natural beauty at Kew Gardens' 25th annual orchid festival. Immerse yourself in the tropics as Kew brings Indonesia to life through vibrant orchid displays. Step inside the tropical paradise of Kew Gardens' Princess of Wales Conservatory as it is transformed to celebrate the beauty and biodiversity of Indonesia.

Book your timeslot to the festival when you buy your ticket to Kew Gardens.

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

OPEN WEEKENDS- second weekend of every month from April to September.

Entry: Adult \$12 / Concession \$10 / Children 6-16yrs \$5. National Trust members free.

TWILIGHT JAZZ

Sunday March 8, 2020 5.00pm – 8.00pm. Gate opens at 4.00pm. Tickets \$10-\$95.

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/>

Devonshire Tea at Riversdale, Goulburn

Sunday, 16 Feb 2020 10:00 am -2:00 pm, Sunday, 15 Mar 2020 10:00 am- 2:00 pm

Tickets: Adults \$10, Concession \$8, National Trust members free.

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