

BRANCH CUTTINGS



Issue 77 – June 2025

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 Sydney UPCOMING EVENTS

July

Managing Historic Gardens – talk by Stuart Read

Date: Wednesday, 23 July 2025

Venue: National Trust Centre, Observatory Hill, Sydney

Cost: AGHS Members \$20, Non-members \$30, Students \$5

Stuart Read describes the 'what', the 'how' and sources of help, to manage and conserve historic gardens. Giving an overview of heritage 'listings', pieces of law and differences between 'statutory' and other listings: what needs approvals and who from... Teases out what is 'significance' and how does it drive management? Where to go for more information, relevant history or 'time period' hints: online and physical resources open to garden owners, heritage consultants, designers, gardeners. Gives lots of examples from gardens, illustrating his points.



Coolringdon, Cooma. Image source: Stuart

Honey / Apiculture and Gardens – talk by Liane Colwell

Date: Postponed, new date to be advised

Venue: National Trust Centre, Observatory Hill, Sydney

Cost: AGHS Members \$20, Non-members \$30, Students \$5



Image source: Simon Cadula, Unsplash

September

Meiji Shrine Gardens, Tokyo – talk by Hisashi Nakamura

Date: date to be advised

Venue: National Trust Centre, Observatory Hill, Sydney

Cost: AGHS Members \$20, Non-members \$30, Students \$5



Image source: Aestelle, Unsplash

October/November

Beyond the Garden Fence – AGHS National Conference 2025 Mount Gambier

Date: 31 October – 2 November 2025

Bookings: [Information here](#)

Celebration of Berrys Bay Precinct (Carradah Park)

Christine Hay

On a sunny afternoon in May several years back, I happened upon a parkland at Waverton on the shores of Sydney Harbour. Its elevated landform forged by industry, was woven with design features and an indigenous plant scheme alive to the sound of frogs. It had stories to tell.

By 2018, I knew the place well having nominated it for State heritage listing. One of six 'Green Necklace' inner harbour headland reserves, it forms part of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architect's (AILA) Landscape Heritage Conservation Project. Thrillingly, on 28 March, this year, the listing was gazetted.

The saltwater people north of the harbour, the Cammeraygal occupied these 'rising uplands' for thousands of years. Evidence of their ongoing connection to Country survives across the cultural landscape known today as Waverton Peninsula. The park is named after a Cammeragal man.

These unceded coastal territories were given to shipping trader Edmund Wollstonecraft in 1821. The grant of 524 acres included the western shores of Berrys Bay - present day Carradah Park. Wollstonecraft's business partner Alexander Berry, who later inherited the estate, modified these shores and cliffs which were adjacent to deep sheltered waters. Here, a storehouse built by convicts in 1835 became a centre for his port facility activities.

The visual and landmark qualities of these steep shores also inspired creative achievements. Conrad Martens, colonial painter, produced views from an unspoilt north shore, including over Berrys Bay and the Carradah Park area, towards Sydney for local and British markets from the 1830s to the 1850s.

Berry Bays working harbour transformation began in the 1860s. By the 1910s, its built forms juxtaposed with natural foreshores inspired a Modernist era of celebrated artists. Roland Wakelin, Lloyd Rees, and others, painted from the bay's western vantage points (Carradah Park) and Berry's stone storehouse inspired experimental work by Wakelin and Roy de Maistre.



Elevated view from Carradah Park over Berrys Bay towards Sydney CBD, from the Larkin Street viewing platform. The archaeological site for Berry's store house is (the light green patch) to the right. (Image source: James Quoy)

Berry's descendants in 1906 handed the estate to government. From c.1908 an oil company (later BP Australia) leased the western shores of the bay, dramatically modifying the place for infrastructure, demolishing Berry's old stone warehouse in 1933. By 1967 the site accommodated over 30 tanks. Many in spaces gouged out of its steep landform. Numerous Aboriginal sites remain across the peninsula, an enduring legacy of Traditional Custodians' life on the waterway.

By the 1990s many harbour industries were redundant. Community resistance to housing on the site saw NSW Premier Bob Carr in 1997 announce it would be preserved as public open space. A strategic master plan in 1999 (Clouston Associates) and a Conservation Management Plan in 2000 (GML) guided its future. In 2005, a public recreation area opened. Landscape architects McGregor Coxall, and North Sydney Council received AILA awards in 2006 for its design and development.

A new public precinct which reimagines Waverton Peninsular using ‘a whole of landscape approach’ is an ardent dream of the author. It would include the structural interpretation of Berry’s old warehouse, the conservation of the Woodley’s shipyard and connection to the exceptional ecological and cultural places of this landform - including Berry Bay Precinct (Carradah Park) one of the fascinating gems of the ‘Green Necklace.’

For further details about the Berry Bay Precinct (Carradah Park) listing refer to the Heritage NSW website. Artists mentioned in the article, and their relevant works, can be viewed on the Art Gallery of NSW website (Wakelin and Rees), the National Gallery Victoria (de Maistre) and the State Library of NSW (Martens).

An article about the AILA ‘Green Necklace’ harbour listings will appear in the July edition of the AGHS Journal.

Christine Hay is a Landscape Architect (RLA, AILA), heritage practitioner (M. Herit. Cons. USYD) and author of the State Heritage Register nomination of Carradah Park, Berrys Bay Precinct (as part of the AILA Landscape Heritage Project (Hay, Morris and Quoyle 2018).

NEW MEMBERS

The Sydney Branch would like to extend a warm welcome to the following new local members:
Michael Chin, Margo Leach, Alex Oonagh Redmond, Jane Taylor

Message from the Chair, AGHS Sydney

Stuart Read

Welcome to autumn, with shorter days, cooler nights and (it seems, near endless) coastal rains. Some serious flooding on some of NSW’s mighty rivers – a good reminder if it were needed of their potential might, but a major wake-up call for some, alas. Yet drought over the ranges, too.

Members are getting familiar with some of Sydney’s ‘Green Necklace’ of harbour parklands – with a terrific walk round Ballast Point Park in East Balmain in April. As follow up, we enjoyed a packed, blissful wander around 2 contrasting Birchgrove parks in early May: 1970s ‘bush park’, Yurulbin (former Long Nose Point) created from a quarry and shipbuilding site ... and up Louisa Road, Birchgrove Oval and Park, from the 1890s, partly from reclamation of a former swamp, with football fields, tennis court, grandstand and an array of trees, native and others, framing all.

Co-guide Christine Hay was, with Colleen Morris and James Quoyle, behind nominating Yurulbin Park for state heritage listing, and we look forward to that listing soon. Read about the Bery, in this newsletter, with more about the study behind it, in the next AGHS journal issue. Sydney Branch of AGHS has enjoyed three on tours to date, including one to Berrys Bay & Carradah Park and we made submissions supporting their state listings. It’s very good to see these advancing.

Bookings are open for AGHS’s 2025 conference in Mount Gambier, South Australia and I encourage you to go. Don’t dally, if you’d like to do the pre-conference tour, from Adelaide. The last time we were in Mt. Gambier was 1999 – and the pre-conference tour under Richard Nolan’s guidance, was a major eye-opener for me, tracing limestone country south along the Coolong – red wine country, Mary McKillop and some marvelous, climate-specific gardens. You may not realise, but the world’s 3rd-largest volcanic plain is between Melbourne and Adelaide, with over 300 dormant volcanoes / remnants – hardly Etna or Vesuvius, action-wise, but a legacy of rich lava-based soils, productive agri-/horti-cultural lands and diverse flora. Mount Gambier has some major parks and reserves in ‘sink holes’ – giant ‘craters’. Bizarre.

Your branch committee is turning its mind to oral histories and putting out feelers to a couple of people we think are priorities to record. More on this when it's advanced a bit. We'd be interested in your ideas about people good to consider recording – do let us know. AGHS at national level and each branch are working on oral histories, and gradually, more recordings and transcripts are being uploaded on the Society's website – check them out and have a listen!

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RECENT EVENTS

Walk – Ballast Point, Birchgrove

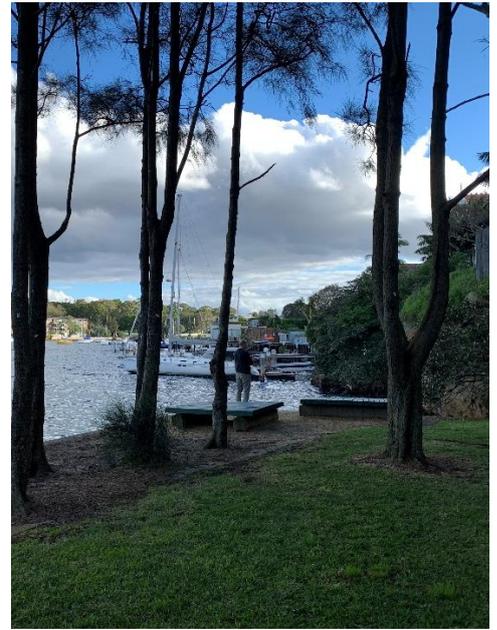
Colleen Morris and Christine Hay guided the walk around Ballast Point, sharing insights into the multi-layered history of the place; from the Aboriginal past through to being quarried for ballast, used as a harbour estate, an industrial site and the boldly landscaped parkland of the present day.



Images by Anne Smith

Walk – Yurulbin Park, Long Nose Point Balmain

The close to the series of 'Green Necklace' events took place on a crisp autumn day on the southern side of the harbour. Guided by Christine Hay and Stuart Read, members explored the reconstructed foreshore landscape of Yurulbin Park, designed by Bruce Mackenzie, and Birchgrove Oval.



Images by Christina Kanellaki Lowe

OF INTEREST

NSW Heritage Strategy on exhibition

The NSW Minister for Heritage, Penny Sharpe MP has launched a Heritage Strategy for the state, which is on exhibition until 13 July 2025. She's calling for feedback, ideas (such as gaps, priorities not listed) and comment from the public. See the Strategy and have your say at: <https://www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/nsw-heritage-strategy>

ADVOCACY

See the advocacy pages on the AGHS Website.

https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/garden-history-now/#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.

OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST

Daytime bus tour to Rookwood Necropolis / Cemetery, with historian Max Solling

Thursday, 26 June 2025

Ticket includes light lunch of Greek specialities. Further information and bookings:

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/rookwood-cemetery-and-back-registration-1332657367059?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>

Botanic Gardens of Sydney

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

Guided walks led by volunteer guides 10:30am-12:00pm daily.

Growing Friends Plant Sales: Sydney: Monday to Friday 11am-2pm, Weekends 10am-2pm.

Mount Tomah: Daily 9am-5:30pm, Mount Annan: 9:30am-4:00pm

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 Friday and Saturday of each month, 10.30am- 3.30pm. Entry Fees: National Trust members -FREE, Adults -\$12, Concession/child >5yrs- \$10, Family- \$34
Experiment Farm Cottage is part of an historical Parramatta precinct which includes Hambleton Cottage (1824), Elizabeth Farm (1793) and the Queen's Wharf, all within easy walking distance of each other.

Everglades House & Garden, 37 Everglades Avenue, Leura – open Wednesday to Monday, 10am – 4pm.

Entry Fees: National Trust members – FREE, Adults - \$17, Concession - \$15, Family- \$49

This newsletter was collated and edited by Christina Kanellaki Lowe.
Anne Smith will be returning as the regular editor for the next issue.