

# Inflorescence

January 2024

The Newsletter of the Southern Highlands Branch of the AGHS



## Events for 2024

<p><b>Berrima District Museum 1 (A) Market Place Berrima</b></p> <p><b>Now open Friday, Saturday and Sundays</b></p>	<p><b>Come and see <i>Gardens and Landscapes in the Southern Highlands Then and Now</i></b></p>
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## Upcoming Tours and Events 2024

**20 February** *The Gardener* at the Empire Cinema Bowral

**17 April** Garden Visit to Upper Woodlands

**27 and 28 April** Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens Autumn Fair

**7, 8 & 9 May** 3 day coach tour to NSW South Coast

## Report from the Chair

Welcome to 2024 from the AGHS-SHB Committee!

You will all be pleased to learn that Sue Trudeau has joined the Committee as our secretary as of December 2023. I'm in the process of transferring many secretarial responsibilities to Sue but this will take several months. Please watch for changes in the email response. These responses will now be going back to our formal email address at [aghs.sh.info@gmail.com](mailto:aghs.sh.info@gmail.com).

I would also like to welcome Narelle Bower back to the AGHS-SHB and to the Committee. Her knowledge of the AGHS and passion for trees will be a great addition to the Committee especially as we document our wonderful trees in the Southern Highlands.

You will see in this issue of *Inflorescence* that Advocacy is taking a larger and larger role in our activities. Bud is our lead in this endeavour and I assist where it's appropriate. Please let us know of any garden, cultural landscapes or community trees which are under threat where you feel we may be able to be of assistance. Bud and I are also members of Friends of Bowral so we keep abreast of activities throughout the Highlands in that way as well.

We would like to join all branches in Australia collecting oral histories of people who have made significant contributions in support of the AGHS mission within our branch geography (promotes awareness and conservation of significant gardens and cultural landscapes through engagement, research, advocacy and activities). If anyone has prior experience in taking oral histories and would like to help us (as an off-committee contributor) with this activity please don't hesitate to contact me. It's a fascinating process as one learns about people's often quiet contributions to the preservation of our communities and environment.

As has been our routine practice you will see that the annual event calendar listed on the last page includes a variety of events. Some are free, and others need a contribution to cover costs. Several events are single day activities and others are over several days. We hope to meet the needs of our diverse members by offering this range of events. We hope to see many of you over the next 12 months at one or more of our events.

Our association with the Berrima and District Historical & Family History Society continues at the Berrima Museum. The Garden and Landscapes Exhibition has evolved. We now have a Claude and Isobel Crowe module, a module on Thrushwood, and the most recent addition is a module on the making of the new Charlotte Atkinson Statue which is just across the park from the Museum. If you have not had a chance to see any of these new additions it is well worth a visit.

A special welcome to Carolyn Turcinskis of Bowral who has just joined AGHS.

The documentary film we are showing in collaboration with the National Trust "The Gardener" is showing on 20 February at 2:30 pm at the Empire Cinema. It will fill your hearts with wonder so I'm looking forward to seeing you there!

Best wishes,

Ruth

## Charlotte Atkinson Statue unveiled 9 December Berrima Marketplace

“The Charlotte Project” completed its mission with the unveiling by the Governor of New South Wales, Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, of the bronze statue of Charlotte Atkinson on 9 December in Berrima Marketplace. It is an initiative of the Wingecarribee Women Writers who raised the funds to create and install a bronze life sized statue which was created by local sculptor Julie Haseler Reilley. AGHS-SHB contributed \$1,000 to the project.

Charlotte Waring Atkinson (1796-1867) was one of the most accomplished women of her era. She emigrated to Australia in 1826 after being employed as a governess by Maria and Hannibal Macarthur. On the voyage she met agriculturist James Atkinson, they were married a year later and settled at Oldbury in Sutton Forest. Charlotte was a pioneer in the fight for women’s legal rights, defending a landmark case in the Supreme Court of NSW to retain custody of her own children, after suffering violence at the hands of her second husband. In 1841, Charlotte wrote *A Mother’s Offering to Her Children by a Lady Long Resident in NSW*. It was the first children’s book published in Australia, and the first to feature Australian children, landscapes, history, flora and fauna, and the lives of its First Nation people.

Charlotte had four children and the youngest daughter, Louisa Atkinson (1834-1872) was the first female Australian-born novelist, journalist and botanist. Her early articles and drawings were published at the age of 19, in *The Illustrated Sydney News*, and she continued to write a long running series of articles *A Voice from the Country*, for the *Sydney Morning Herald*, as well as articles for the *Sydney Mail* and *The Horticultural Magazine*. Several of these focused on Indigenous Australian culture and artefacts. Louisa’s first novel, *Gertrude the Emigrant*, was published in 1857 when she was aged 23. This was followed by several novels including *Cowanda*, and *Debatable Ground*. Louisa’s most notable achievements were her contribution to the knowledge of natural history and botany, collecting and sketching numerous specimens, several previously unknown, and sending plants to eminent botanists such as William Woolls and Ferdinand Mueller.



Unveiling day speeches at Berrima Marketplace on 9 December.



Margaret Beazley and two great-great-great-granddaughters of Charlotte Atkinson, Kate Forsythe and Belinda Murrell unveiling Charlotte - her four children are represented by the four stone blocks.



Charlotte in her new surroundings with landscaping by Chris and Charlotte Webb



In the Berrima Museum we have a bust of Charlotte lent to us by Julie Haseler Reilley. Here it is in the display case along with Charlotte’s book *A Mothers Offering to her Children* plus other books by Louisa Atkinson.

On the large screen next to this display case we have a fascinating presentation by Julie Haseler Reilley on the creation of Charlotte’s statue. Well worth a trip to the Berrima Museum.



## Advocacy

### 33 Boolwey St also known as 2 Edward St



33 Boolwey is on the corner of Edward and Boolwey Streets.

On 29 January, Bud Townsing, Dennis McManus and Ruth Bailey attended the start of a conciliation meeting between the WSC and the developers with Acting Land and Environment Commissioner, Emma Washington. The DA at 33 Boolwey St is for an additional new dwelling to be built in front of the existing 1935 Art Deco dwelling, and the land is then subdivided thus getting around the minimum lot size restrictions. This is a permitted use, with consent. Our view is that dual occupancy/subdivisions should not be permitted in any conservation areas and is certainly not consistent with the original “garden suburb” plan of the Glebe subdivision.

Bud and Dennis addressed the Commissioner giving the history of the Bowral Glebe Estate and its importance as a conservation area.

As the Chair of the AGHS-SHB Ruth had written a letter to the WSC in June 2023 objecting to the DA, based on the removal of 6 significant trees on the northern side of the house fronting Boolwey St as well as the need for a new driveway on Edward Street leading to a new garage on the site for the proposed new dwelling. This new driveway could potentially adversely impact the verge which is along Edward St.

The developers have submitted an arborists plan in the DA which recommended keeping some of the current landscaping. Most of the trees and shrubs on the

property have not been managed well in recent years so look large and mis-shaped. However, they could easily be pruned back to reshape them and lower them to improve the look of the 1930's garden.

However, they recommended the removal of the following trees with their estimate of age:

- 2 Lawsons Cypress trees (*Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*) estimated to be 40 years old,
- 1 Sawara Cypress (*Chamaecyparis pisifera*) estimated to be > 40 years old,
- 1 Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum*) estimated to be > 40 years old,
- 1 Rhododendron estimated to be > 40 years old,
- 1 Chinese Windmill Palm (*Trachycarpus fortunei*) estimated to be 15-40 years old.

Our view is both of the Lawsons Cypress trees are likely to be much older as they are multi-trunked and very tall. They were likely planted when the house was constructed in 1935 (90 years ago). The above listed trees represent the types of plantings surrounding houses of this age as similar trees can be seen in the landscapes of other 1930's homes in the Southern Highlands. The remaining old trees listed as greater than 40 years were also likely to have been planted when the house was constructed so it would be a sad loss of old trees in the Glebe if all of these were to be removed.

The views from the surrounding streets of Boolwey and Edward Street will also be significantly changed as the Lawson's cypress each have 5-6 trunks which from a distance look like individual trees. Many local residents and visitors alike enjoy walking in the Glebe environment due to the presence of these magnificent old trees so removing them would markedly change this welcoming environment.



One of the Lawson cypress on the corner of Edward and Boolwey Streets.

A magnificent English Oak tree on the boundary of the neighbouring property on Boolwey St is at risk from the planned works which may also impact on other mature trees in the area. Finding a solution to this dilemma will be interesting if the DA is approved.

Of additional concern is the approval of this DA could precipitate more subdivisions in this heritage conservation area with subsequent loss of additional significant trees.

## Medium Density Housing in Bowral

Council in its Wingecarribee Local Housing Strategy (WLHS) and various consultant's reports such as in the recently released Wingecarribee Shire Medium Density Study quote a figure that Wingecarribee is 91% low density housing and 9% medium density housing. This number is derived from the Census 2021 number for Wingecarribee that 91% of dwellings are detached (freestanding) and 9% are attached (semi-detached, flats, attached villas etc.).

The Census does not measure density, it simply counts whether dwellings are detached or attached. Trying to measure medium density is difficult for the people doing the Census. It is therefore common practice throughout Australia for the Census data for detached and attached dwellings to be used as a proxy for measuring low and medium density.

Bud Townsing from previous work has observed that many medium density developments in Bowral such as the Karrara Estate on the corner of Links Road and Moss Vale Road and existing developments such as Annesley and Mt Eymard are made up of mainly detached free standing dwellings. This means the accepted practice of using Census detached and attached dwelling categories as a measure of medium density does not work well in Bowral.

To prove this hypothesis Bud decided to count freestanding medium density dwellings and see what it does to the Bowral numbers. Two weeks later he had this surprising answer.

- We agree with Census 2021 that dwellings in the Southern Highlands are 91% detached and 9% attached.
- If we focus on Bowral, East Bowral and Burradoo as a group the dwelling proportions are 84% detached 16% attached.
- After deeper analysis to look at Bowral on its own, the proportion is 75% detached and 25% attached.
- If detached medium density buildings are then added to the attached dwelling tally, the Bowral figure is 64% free-standing low density dwellings and 36% (both attached and detached) medium density dwellings.
- There are a large number of medium density dwellings, both attached and detached, under construction in Bowral at present. When these are completed it is likely the Bowral ratio will be low density dwellings 58%, and medium density dwellings 42%.

We have prepared a detailed paper titled *Medium Density Housing in Bowral* which sets out the analysis in full. If you wish to see a copy please contact either Ruth Bailey or Bud Townsing.

Council is concerned in the WLHS about the low (9%) level of medium density dwellings in the Southern Highlands, and that there is a low uptake of medium density dwellings. It even goes as far to say that the current dwelling stock is unsuited to our future population and requires more medium density.

What we are saying is in Bowral medium density housing in Census 2021 was 36% which is well above the normally quoted figure of 9%. It appears to us that State Government policies such as Seniors Housing (which can be built anywhere in the R2 Low Density Zone) are having a significant impact, and there are a large number of medium density dwellings currently being built in Bowral. Medium density dwellings do not require any further incentives based on our numbers.

At this stage we have not extended our detailed analysis of medium density to Moss Vale and Mittagong.



**The Bundanoon History Group has a new exhibition in the Old Goods Shed Bundanoon highlighting garden history in Bundanoon.**

They have invited members of AGHS-SHB to the opening of the exhibition on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> February at 4:30pm. The opening will include drinks and nibbles in front of the Old Goods Shed on Railway Parade Bundanoon.

If you wish to attend could you please RSVP to [historygroupbundanoon@gmail.com](mailto:historygroupbundanoon@gmail.com) by 10th February.

The exhibition is divided up into sections exploring Bundanoon's Historical Gardens, its Nurseries, the Town Gardens, The Boronia Festival, The Garden Ramble and The Bundanoon Garden Club.

AGHS-SHB has assisted this exhibition with a section on Berrima Bridge Nursery, and photographs of some of the historic houses and gardens including Dorothy Friend's House in Bundanoon.



## **Oral History – Support Needed**

In 2001, as the 25th anniversary of the foundation of the Society approached, the AGHS initiated a program of oral histories (the National Oral History Collection). Some branches of the Society have also conducted interviews within their own regions (Branch Interviews).

AGHS-SHB has undertaken a range of interviews with people such as Rick Shepherd, Simon Branden, Les Musgrave, Eileen Musgrave, Janet Storrier and Ian Carroll. These interviews are available on the AGHS website ([www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au](http://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au)).

AGHS-SHB wish to recommence doing oral histories. We are seeking a person either with prior experience, or would like to learn, to undertake oral histories. You can do this as a committee member or if you prefer as an associate member. We have the recording equipment and can assist with training. If you are interested in participating in this rewarding activity please contact Ruth Bailey on [ruthbailey1428@gmail.com](mailto:ruthbailey1428@gmail.com) or 0409126718.

### **AGHS-SHB Committee**

Chair	Ruth Bailey
Secretary	Sue Trudeau
Events Coordinator	Eleanor Dartnall
Treasurer	Lynda Cowley
IT Coordinator/Research	Jenny Woodwell
Editor/Research	Bud Townsing
General Member	Chris O'Brien
General Member	Narelle Bown

### **Associate Members**

Tours	Ray Bradley
NMC Representative	Lyn Barrett
WSC Heritage Representative	Laurel Cheetham
Oral History	Vacant



## The National Trust & Australian Garden History Society

invite you to join them at a one-off screening of this delightful film:

**“The Gardener” - Empire Cinema, Bowral, Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> February at 2:30pm.**

This beautiful Canadian film was shown in Bowral a few years ago. It tells the story of the establishment of Frank Cabot's **Les Quatre Vents** garden (the Four Winds) from its beginnings in 1975 in Malbaie, Quebec. The garden covers over 20 acres and is widely considered as one of the most ambitious private gardens in North America, if not the world. **Tickets are:** \$28 pp, include a Choc-top or drink, buy at the **Empire** or on-line with this link to the **right >>>**



**We are fundraising for our two great organisations**



Contact for details: **NT:** David Collingridge 0419 268 169 **AGHS:** Eleanor Darnall 0409 122 909

<b>AGHS –SHB</b>	<b>Events Program for 2024</b>
<b>20 February</b>	<b>The Gardener – Empire Theatre Bowral at 2.30 pm. Tickets are \$28 pp.</b>
<b>17 April</b>	<b>Garden Visit to Upper Woodlands Garden 2pm to 4 pm.</b>
<b>27 and 28 April</b>	<b>Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens Autumn Fair</b>
<b>7, 8 &amp; 9 May</b>	<b>3 day coach tour to the NSW South Coast</b>
<b>23 June</b>	<b>Winter Solstice Seminar at the new Southern Highlands Botanical Gardens Education Centre.</b>
<b>25 July</b>	<b>Guided visit to Caroline Simpson Library – self travel by train to St James Station, 11am to 1 pm, can view The Mint as well, maximum of 20 members.</b>
<b>18 August</b>	<b>AGM and Winter Seminar at East Bowral Community Centre.</b>
<b>September - date to be confirmed</b>	<b>Garden visit to a historic home in Moss Vale.</b>
<b>October – date to be confirmed</b>	<b>Day coach tour to Vacluse House and Elizabeth Bay House Sydney.</b>
<b>October – date to be confirmed</b>	<b>A joint event with the Heritage Rose Society to visit a heritage garden.</b>
<b>18-20 October</b>	<b>National AGHS Conference in Bunbury WA with pre and post conference tours in Margaret River Region.</b>
<b>November – date to be confirmed</b>	<b>Wine and Roses Event at Harpers Mansion Berrima.</b>
<b>19-21 November</b>	<b>3 day coach tour to Hunter Valley</b>
<b>6 December</b>	<b>Christmas Party at Tavistock in Exeter</b>