

# Inflorescence

July 2016

## Sunday 21 August 2016 – AGM and Sorensen Seminar

We look forward to this special seminar on Paul Sorensen—arguably Australia's finest landscape designer. It would be much appreciated if you would book as early as possible. The booking form is on page 7 of this newsletter. Page 8 contains the nomination form if you would like to nominate for the 2016-17 branch Committee.

There has been so much written about Paul Sorensen but the seminar on 21 August will place him firmly in his role as one of the most influential landscape designers for the Southern Highlands.

- Jim Hoskins, grandson of Sir Cecil Hoskins, will talk about the relationship between Sorensen and Hoskins and how it all came about!
- Stuart Read will talk about Paul Sorensen in the Southern Highlands.



Paul Sorensen (Photo by Harold Cazneau, c. 1936)

Although Sorensen is more often associated with Blue Mountains gardens, his work in the Southern Highlands and Illawarra was seminal. He lived in Berrima in the 1930s running a nursery and seed farm with Claude Crowe. This talk explores in some detail eight of ten known jobs he completed across this region between the 1930s and 1970s. His work for Australian Iron and Steel (later BHP) magnates Cecil and brother Sidney Hoskins is the key to many of these jobs—a significant landscape legacy—including *Invergowrie*, Exeter, *Gleniffer Brae* and the Wollongong Botanic Gardens at Keiraville, the Mount Keira Scout Camp and Remembrance Driveway plantings at Berrima.

Colleen Morris wrote a splendid biography of him in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 18, (MUP), 2012, which I am using as the source for the following notes:

Paul Edwin Bielenberg Sorensen (1891-1983) was born on 16 December 1891 at Frederiksberg, Copenhagen, seventh of eight children of Jens Sorensen, civil servant, and his wife Marie, née Bielenberg. Paul was only 11 when he was first employed at Horsholm Planteskole, a Copenhagen nursery, and began studying horticulture at the Horsholm Tekniske Skole.

Following a short period of national service, he worked first in Germany and France, and then found employment in Switzerland, where he worked for Mertens Bros, landscape designers and contractors. In 1914 he decided to migrate to Australia and found his way to England from where he travelled to Victoria.

In 1915 Sorensen worked as a farmhand in Victoria, prior to propagating ferns at Ormond Plant Farm. His first work as a gardener was at the Carrington Hotel, Katoomba, NSW, and not long after he set up a nursery in the town before moving his home and business to Leura in 1920. On 27 November 1919 at the Methodist Church, Sydney, he married Anna Ernestena Hillenberg.

Garden maintenance was Sorensen's major source of income for some time. By the mid-1920s he was planting gardens for wealthier private clients in the Blue Mountains: *Sylvan Mists* (c.1920), *Gabo* (c.1923-27), *La Vista* (1928), *Dean [Dene] Park* (1928) and *Cheppen* (1929). Sorensen assisted Lady Fairfax, the widow of Sir James Fairfax and an experienced gardener, with Sospel at Leura. He started a garden for the Lonergan family at *Heaton Lodge*, Mudgee, in 1932.

From the mid- to late 1930s, Sorensen worked for Anderson & Co. Ltd, seed and plant merchants, in the garden-design department at the Summer Hill headquarters, while maintaining his own private clients. W. H. Anderson and Sorensen met together with major clients. The Anderson team helped to construct a striking rooftop garden (1939), designed by Sorensen, for van de Velde at *Feltex House*.

Sir Cecil Hoskins, the managing director of Australian Iron & Steel Ltd, engaged Sorensen to assist him with the re-design of the garden around his new house, *Invergowrie*, at Exeter, completed in 1936.



*Invergowrie*, Exeter

More projects for this family followed: at *Glennifer Brae*, Wollongong, for Sidney Hoskins; at *Green Hills* and *Hillside* executive houses for Australian Iron & Steel; at Hoskins Memorial Church, Lithgow; and at Southern Portland Cement Ltd, Berrima. Sorensen also began planting on the Mittagong property, later known as *Redlands*, of a Hoskins' employee, Cedric Rouse.

In 1939 Sorensen leased the *Old Rectory*, Berrima, where he established a second nursery, with which Anderson was associated. Sorensen was naturalised in 1940. Following the deaths of his sons Derrick and Neville in action during World War II, he closed operations at Berrima in about 1944.

From the mid-1940s Sorensen mainly constructed smaller gardens in the Blue Mountains but in the following decade he secured large commissions for country properties near Bathurst, Orange, Cassilis and Merriwa.

His life and work is a fascinating story and we look forward to seeing you all at this seminar.

## Saturday 17 September - Coach Trip to Sydney

The booking form for the coach trip Sydney is on page 7. We will be visiting the **Museum of Sydney** to see *Florilegium: Sydney's painted garden*. Entry to the Museum is included in the cost of the trip. Elaine and Les Musgrave will be the tour's leaders. Elaine has three of her exquisite paintings included in the *Florilegium*.

Then we will visit the **Royal Botanic Gardens**—a perfect opportunity for those of you who wish to see the new attraction—*The Calyx*. Entry to *The Calyx* is \$17.50 per person and this is **not** included in the cost of the trip. You may take your own picnic lunch or eat at the cafe. After lunch we will visit the **State Library of New South Wales** to view *Planting Dreams: Celebrating Australian gardens*.



*The Calyx constitutes the sepals of a flower, typically forming a whorl that encloses the petals and forms a protective layer around a flower in bud.*

**For your Diary: Please note the change of date for the Christmas Party to be held at Oldbury: Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2016**

## Conservation of landscapes and places – the past 50 years and the future?

*The following is a transcript of the talk given by Max Bourke AM at the winter seminar on Saturday 18 June 2016. Max very kindly agreed to let us publish it in our newsletter.*

The Australian Garden History Society in its aims and ambitions brings together two dominant themes of my intellectual life: history and environmental management. Gardeners, and more especially those interested in garden history are looking at the world through the lenses I use most. This is my version of it.

In 1963 I arrived at Trangie Agricultural Research Station newly minted with my honours degree in Wool Technology. I thought it gave me a good toolkit of broad based science from the basics of physics, chemistry and mathematics to geology and pedology and the life sciences of botany and zoology. I had also had some experience of station management and droving in Australia in the north-west of NSW and farm management and shearing in New Zealand in the central south island.

One of the earliest tasks I was given, on top of developing my own research program, was to do a survey of an urgent emerging issue that had become a political hot potato. Wal Buddy, a Departmental economist and I, were told to try to determine what was going wrong with the many soldier settlers' blocks from the Bogan River south of Narramine westward to Nyngan. Tyrie Station, near Dandaloo, once a huge pastoral run, had been carved up into 650 acre blocks for soldier settlers after the Second World War, many were for sale or their owners had walked off. It was a well-meaning disaster unfolding.

So we interviewed many of the then struggling, farmers trying to make a quid out of running sheep and growing wheat in beautiful country that had until recently been covered in large forests of belah (*Casuarina cristata*) mixed up with stands of bumble box, gidyea, wilga, false sandalwood and often a thick understorey of several species of bluebush. An ecosystem I quickly fell in love with.

When I studied botany and zoology at university we had been given a then newly published book as a text, by the Odum brothers, simply called "Ecology". So I knew a little about ecosystem theory though nothing about conservation. Indeed to the best of my memory the word "conservation" had never crossed my consciousness.

We spoke at length one evening to a really struggling farmer who told us he was sad to have failed as he had hoped to pass the property on to his children. We were sitting drinking tea on his front verandah, and I noticed that the fence of his garden was buried up to the second strand of wire in obviously fresh mobile sand, though the fence was not very old. As conversation, and being a grassland agronomist, I asked him how that had happened. "Oh," he said, "a bit of the country blows around when the wind is up".

I began to wonder myself how this could happen so quickly, less than 20 years since clearing.

That next year the distinguished CSIRO scientist Francis Ratcliffe called together a meeting of his colleagues and a bunch of interested people, following a call he had read from the Duke of Edinburgh asking people to be more concerned about environmental degradation. The meeting held in 1964 in Canberra of some 44 people included Garfield Barwick, then the Member of Parliament for Parramatta, another, younger Member of Parliament from Victoria called Malcolm Fraser and several distinguished scientists.

They decided to set up a body called the Australian Conservation Foundation, and I was one of its early members. I had seen the future on the Bogan, and clearly something was wrong. My journey into conservation began.

Over the next 52 years I zig-zagged in and out of conservation action, grass roots involvement, to statutory administration of environmental issues, representing Australia on the World Heritage Committee and ICOMOS, running a large philanthropic body in the field and membership of so many not-for-profits I have lost count. But I still enjoy conservation activities and still imagine it is useful! I guess history will tell.

And history has itself been a real driver of my interests. Perhaps forlornly I have always believed one can learn from history. I have been an avid reader of the literature of the great achievers in ecological and environmental conservation from Alexander von Humboldt to John Muir, George Perkins Marsh, Aldo Leopold and Henry Thoreau. They gave us much to build on.

These same figures were all products of the enlightenment, and the role that the sciences play is and has always been central to my way of working. Believe it if there is good evidence, reject or modify if later evidence is to the contrary.

During the 1960s as I worked in western NSW and later in northern South Australia it really came home to me that our impact on the environment was significant and in many ways permanent. I was of course not alone in this as the mood of the times picked up on issues like the damage to south west Tasmania and the push to expand our national estate of parks began. By the late 60s I was working for the ABC where I made programs in both radio and television that addressed environmental issues ranging from the Great Barrier Reef and the Channel Country to south west Tasmania.

In that period I met hundreds of the new breeds of environmental scientists that were emerging, often out of forestry and agriculture schools like I had come from, there were no environmental or resource management schools then. The other great adventure of my life, being married to Margie also began and most or much of this would not have happened without her support and in many cases participation.

While working for the ABC I came into close contact with some far-sighted people like the recently late Tom Lewis, who was the State MP for Wollondilly, he was then Minister for the NSW NPWS which he helped create. He and his permanent head, Dr Don McMichael set out some of the most progressive conservation initiatives of the period such as establishing the Aboriginal management of the Mootwingee NP with a wonderful opening event I attended. I won't go into his

later difficulties with the appointment of Cleaver Bunton to the Senate!

By the early 1970s there was a strong public, more broadly based, concern for the environment from activities such as the Green Ban movement and alliances with the National Trust to new activist nature environment bodies at the local and international level. UNESCO was beginning to work towards a World Heritage system.

Large public demonstrations such as that to Save Kellys Bush in Hunter's Hill, I think really surprised politicians and certainly captured the attention of those backing the ALP at the end of the McMahon era. So that when Whitlam was elected there was not only a Minister for Environment but also a Minister for Urban and Regional Development. I had returned to CSIRO by that stage to manage their film unit and aspects of their public communications programs, and found myself seconded to work as an adviser the first Minister for Science. There I quickly found myself involved in overlapping environmental issues such as the national kangaroo management plan which was highly contentious at the time, almost like the gun buyback program two decades later.

During those few years of the Whitlam government I was lucky enough to work for Tom Uren as well as a year working for Dr Nugget Coombs, a real inspiration. Indeed I have always reflected on how lucky I have been in having some acquaintance with the people I worked for as much as the issues I have worked on!

For those interested in gardens and landscapes the Whitlam government meant the establishment of the Inquiry into the National Estate led by Justice Bob Hope as well as a commitment to international connections through UNESCO. One of the last reports by that government was the Hope Inquiry report which I helped publish, then took leave and headed up to the top of Cape York with my young family to camp in the wild on a property jointly owned by an Aboriginal artist I knew and his whitefella mate. As remote as you could get!

Much to my surprise I got a message that I had been appointed the first Director of the newly established Australian Heritage Commission, by Malcolm Fraser, so beginning a long running acquaintance that I much enjoyed. So I literally abandoned Margie, for a few days at least, to go back to the first meeting of the Commission for a quick visit before we drove leisurely back to Canberra.

The Australian Heritage Commission, closely modelled on a body established by President John Kennedy in the USA, who coined the term 'the national estate', was a wonderful start-up body, which enjoyed the strong support of the Prime Minister throughout his tenure, even when we were at times bloody difficult. Such times included putting Fraser Island on the Register of the National Estate, thereby deeply antagonising the then Country Party who received massive funding from the US firm mining on the island who wanted to expand. But in the end under pressure from the Commission and the World Heritage listing, shut down operations thus saving one of the great jewels of Australia.

The Commission had a truly extraordinary man as Chairman who many of you might not have heard of, called David Yencken. He was a property developer,



who, along with Premier Dick Hamer in Victoria brought in one of the best innovations in urban design, the Cluster Act of that state. He later became a Professor at Melbourne University and Chairman of the Australian Conservation Foundation.

But David's contribution to the Heritage Commission was rich and full of foresight. He argued that it did not matter what laws you passed, unless you had a strong citizen-based layer of support you would never protect 'the things we want to keep'. I guess I had grown up in an environment where I genuinely believed that good legislation was what you wanted to 'protect the environment', but since that time I have totally changed my mind.

David's concept, and I believe he has been proven utterly right, was that we needed a multi-pronged effort to educate and empower people, whether it was through school and higher education programs or the establishment of focussed support structures and organisations that facilitated citizen engagement. So we set about really innovative programs such as our schools education kits and services, the first of their kind, support for a wide range of tertiary programs in teaching and research, and more importantly, for the AGHS, setting about forming appropriate support structures. Let me explain.

At the time there was a national trust movement right across Australia, but not really unified and in some cases extremely fragile. Here in NSW the body was a strong and very professional outfit led by John Morris and Peter James, and in Victoria it was strong too, but elsewhere rather ineffective. We supported the engagement of professional staff for the Trusts in all states such as architects and archaeologists and engineers and materials conservators. But probably more importantly in the long run we started a process of research and identification on everything from historic gardens, to geological sites, industrial engineering history and landscape research. This led to the establishment of bodies in all of these fields. A report on historic gardens was carried out for us led by Peter Watts, then a young landscape architect with the NT of Victoria and later of course distinguished head of the Historic Houses Trust. This led to a conference in Melbourne which David Yencken asked the late Dame Elisabeth Murdoch to Chair, and at the end of the Conference, as Peter has put it to me, David produced from his back pocket a constitution for the Australian Garden History Society! One of my staff was assigned to see it happened!

Meanwhile we were working on the international level to get the concept of the World Heritage system in place in Australia. One of the legacies of the Whitlam era which Malcolm Fraser pushed on with, was firstly signing the World Heritage convention, then slightly reluctantly, allowing us to become very heavily involved in shaping and running it with Australian representation on its inner councils. We had by then also established the International Council on Monuments and Sites, Australian chapter by that time, and gradually reshaped the way that body worked too.

Supporting and growing the work of the Heritage Commission was always a challenge though. Little known publicly at the time we had to contend with a major push by an offshoot of the ultra-conservative,

League of Rights, called The Australian Heritage Society, which they established to undermine us. They did so with letterboxing in marginal seats and some memorable meetings in country towns. One such had me, and my later friend Ian Sinclair, then leader of the National Party, literally run out of town in a police car, from a place appropriately named Deepwater.

Malcolm Fraser was a staunch, behind-the-scenes supporter, of international engagement in conservation as known publicly through his banning of whaling at Cheynes Beach. But he was less known for his World Heritage support. When we put up South West Tasmania on the World Heritage list he was vigorous, below the radar, in backing our pushing hard for it to be listed despite a conservative government in Tasmania employing the distinguished Tom Hughes QC to prevent that. I had a memorable time in Paris pushing to undermine the efforts of the Tasmanians, with daily phone calls to Fraser, on his back with pain at Nareen, to report progress. In this regard, using the external affairs powers of the Constitution, Fraser and Whitlam were on the same page, but never publicly at the time. Isn't politics curious?

I took a year off and my long suffering family accompanied me on a real adventure to live and work in the Belgium city of Bruges while I undertook a graduate degree in conservation management, a Diplome Superieure, at the College of Europe in that city. It was then one of the two premier schools in this field in the world and I wanted to work in the city where one of my artistic heroes, Jan van Eyck had toiled for so long for the Duke of Burgundy 500 years before. I used to, on rare sunny days in that foggy city, sit on the plinth of his statue, not far from where we lived, in convivial squalor.

As part of my research and writing in 1980 I produced a thesis and a major paper on garden restoration called "How will my Garden Grow?"...I was into funky awful titles at the time. In that I explored some of the complex planning and management issues involved in restoring historic gardens which I still feel are more difficult to deal with intellectually than building fabrics. It was widely used by the National Trusts when I returned and became part of the program to stop simply planting Australian natives around historic houses and places, but to do proper conservation analysis and planning on what could and what should be grown. (James Broadbent anecdote?)

A year later I was elected to the governing body of the International Council on Monuments and Sites later becoming Deputy Chair of that body. As well, on return to Australia I began to represent, write and review nominations to the World Heritage list not only from Australia but around the world and eventually was the Australian representative on that body. Gough Whitlam re-entered my life at that point when Bob Hawke appointed him Ambassador to UNESCO and he and I had some memorable times in the councils of that body. (GW anecdote "merde de rat").

My return to running the Commission was taken up significantly with being an "expert witness" in the High Court in the long running "Franklin Dam case". Finally that ended victoriously, and as we and the lawyers walked out of there I made decision to leave the Commission as it seemed to me that was as good as it got.

I went back into the mainstream of the public service becoming a head of the environment division then later the arts and cultural heritage division of the mega government department, Environment, Housing and Community Development.

All the while I remained engaged in grass roots activity forms of conservation work. My proudest achievement being associated with an unusual group of people who decided to buy a dairy farm on the South Coast at Tilba to protect and restore the native coastline. Well we did manage to plant up local endemic species largely, a kilometre or so of coast and a similar length of lake foreshore in what is now an unusual private nature reserve of sorts. Private diversions also included being one of the founders of the Kosciusko Huts Association which set out to stabilise and restore some of the high country huts, and which continues today some 45 years later.

When I left the public sector in 1996 I moved back into active engagement with farmers and farming, hoping I could make a difference in environmental practices. I established a body called Macquarie River Food and Fibre which quickly recruited 400 farmer members and was rapidly cloned in other river valleys. At its heart, from my point of view, was getting irrigation farmers to use water and chemicals more wisely along with improved soil management. I also became involved in establishing a farming business and became Chairman of Rural Funds Management which has developed into a large company now listed in the Top 300 on the ASX. Through that body we were able to not only do profitable agriculture in a wide variety of enterprises from wine grapes, almonds, macadamias, field crops and fruit trees to chicken meat and latterly beef and sheep, but very importantly to do it with the leading edge of environmental management including some very large scale ecosystem restoration projects. And what is interesting was that we showed that our investors wanted this, and that our staff whole heartedly got into it too.

So my journey began as a believer in regulation to protect the environment, strict laws, well administered, a sort of 'socialist approach' but led me full circle into a 'capitalist' approach to trying to achieve good environmental outcomes through the market place.

In the late 90s I was able to take this further when an old acquaintance asked me to assist him in giving away a very substantial fortune he had made, through charitable means. Over the next decade or so, besides some arts and social welfare projects we distributed some \$30 million to various projects (including I should say a couple involving garden history). The bulk of the money was spent on environmental conservation. One of our projects involved getting the four largest land conservation bodies, The Nature Conservancy, Bush Heritage Australia, the Australian Wildlife Conservancy and Trust for Nature to expand their activities enormously by a leveraged acquisition program I helped to set up. Through that mechanism we raised some \$28 million to purchase, on market, some 5 million hectares of land right around Australia in areas of high conservation value, but with low protection. Many of these projects involved engagement with local indigenous communities, assisting them to take control of firestick farming among other means.

But even this largescale expansion of nature reserves is not really enough if we want to keep a large majority of the species of flora and fauna unique to Australia.

For some reason I thought getting the international recognition of World Heritage status and legislation to protect places would do the trick. How wrong I was. I was saying to a friend last year after all of the work we put in during the 1970s and 80s to protect the Great Barrier Reef, legislation, setting up the Australian Institute of Marine Studies and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, as well as World Heritage Listing, 'she'd be right'. But no!

I knew about climate change, after all my hero George Perkins Marsh had written about it in the 1870s, and scientists I knew were talking about it in the 1960s, but I had never heard of Adani or the Galilee Basin. So here we are 30 years later and the reef seems more in peril than ever. Thank heaven for community action groups.

My 'trajectory' through the world of conservation has not been unique in any way. Global movements occurred of which I was only a small part.

We went from the 50s/60s disinterest in cultural or natural heritage to, in many respects, I shall explain "overenthusiasm". Knock it all down in the spirit of the modern age at the end of WW II, to 'disinterest' in several decades. Then suddenly something changed in the western world. In the USA, Canada, the UK and Europe movements to protect and legislate for the protection of the natural environment and the cultural heritage of countries suddenly developed full steam. Kennedy's inaugural speech in 1961 included 'we will care for the national estate' and he set about implementing that. In the UK, Canada and Europe grassroots activism produced new public attitudes and legislation. Growing wealth "allowed" or at least facilitated this as the old adage "you have to be in the black to be green" took hold.

But meanwhile another global ideology was sweeping around the planet. From Chicago University and from Ayn Rand the ideology of 'neo-liberalism' whooshed around the planet sweeping up the right first but later taking hold in even progressive parties, from Reagan to Thatcher to Hawke, Blair and Howard, we all became neoliberals. And this does have a bearing on conservation, which I will come back to.

I was recently reminded of a novel by Frances Spufford which came out about 6 years ago called *Red Plenty*. It is a very amusing conceit about an economist—his hero is "the only Soviet economist to win the Nobel Prize for economics". He is sitting on a train in Moscow during the Khrushchev years and suddenly thinks to himself "this is not going to work"! The article that reminded me of this was saying how the IMF has recently produced a publication called *Neoliberalism: Oversold?*—and the author of that article says "once the technocrats start saying something has failed, watch out"!

This former "conservation technocrat" is saying out loud "watch out"!

The rush to private land conservation is in many respects very admirable, or at least I believe so, as I have been actively involved in it. But in cultural conservation such as preservation of historic buildings and gardens we have seen the enthusiasm of the community and the

eager eyes of entrepreneurs bring what I believe are real dangers to the national estate.

A good example is the once small village of Tilba on the south coast, which I know and love. In 1978, I was invited by a local dairy farmer, Norm Hoyer, to speak to a public meeting about the imminent closure of the ABC Cheese Factory (ABC stands for *Australia's Best Cheese* by the way). I did so in a draughty hall with a surprisingly large turnout of people and we set about a slow process of renovation of the few buildings in the town. This then turned into a tourist juggernaut where today well over half the buildings in Tilba date from the late 1980s to the 1990s. Some would say 'no bad thing' but to me, at an intellectual level we have lost much, and the Tilba of today is a hokey pastiche of something vaguely related to the past and I feel like screaming "this is all fake" every time I walk up the main street.

This process has become widespread. And it could happen in the natural environment too. Recently the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service awarded a tender to manage both wildlife and land on a number of parks to a private organisation, one which I admire by the way, but nevertheless I fear this is the harbinger of a retreat by the state from management of what I still believe should be public assets.

In the garden field of course we see the now 200 year old Royal Botanic Gardens in Sydney moving inexorably down the road to being purely an entertainment site, while the 'back office' intellectual activities of research, classification and conservation of plants becomes dependent on sponsorship or expunged. Our first scientific institution now becoming the 'carnival ground' which Governor Macquarie fenced it to prevent!

All of these are examples in my view of the neo-liberal agenda gone mad.

Over the fifty or so years I have described the idea of conservation of resources has developed along with flourishing manifestations of community and occasionally political support. If humans are going to continue to get their oxygen from plants and be dependent on freshwater and farmed foods, there is good reason to be concerned about our capacity to deal with the urgency of the issues caused by 7 to 9 billion humans.

Garden history though, in a way, brings it all together. Managing a small garden, to me, is an amalgamation of scientific and cultural exploration, managing an ecosystem is gardening on a grand scale. Given that humans have totally altered every ecosystem on the planet, all we can hope to do is to manage, **as gardeners do**, to conserve as long as possible the resources we depend on.

I am worried into the future that besides climate change rearranging the flora of the planet in an inexorable way, we are already seeing some species of indigenous plants going quite feral possibly due to this, there are other important **cultural threats**. Clearly the smaller block sizes in suburbia are going to reduce potential gardens and gardeners, added to that the hours that young people now spend in a virtual world removes much potential to have the experiences I had in and with nature and gardening.

On the other hand community gardening, programs like that initiated by Stephanie Alexander to bring back

school gardens and the enthusiasm of some wealthy individuals to care for great gardens, and even not-so-great gardens is important. I am thinking here of the terrific work that people like Christina Kennedy at Horse Island, Patricia Michell at Foxlow and Tim Throsby at Throsby Park. There are many others.

As well the survival and indeed strength of radio and television, magazine and on-line gardening and garden-related sites suggests there is still a strong community appetite for things to do with gardens and gardening. I only hope it is not all **virtual!** Architectural challenges such as vertical and rooftop gardening also suggest the gardens of the future will be very different to those of the past, this worries me not so much.

I think it is important to remind ourselves from time to time what the Australian Garden History Society set out to do 36 years ago:

**"Our Mission:** The Australian Garden History Society promotes awareness and conservation of significant gardens and cultural landscapes through engagement, research, advocacy and activities.

Formed in 1980, the AGHS brings together people from diverse backgrounds united by an appreciation of and concern for our parks, gardens and cultural landscapes as part of Australia's heritage. The Society promotes knowledge of historic gardens, significant landscapes and research into their history. It aims to examine gardens and gardening in their widest social, historic, literary, artistic and scientific context."

I don't know, and none of us do really know, whether what we do will ever "make a difference" and indeed when one of my granddaughters or grandsons looks back in 50 years or so they might well think what a "duffer that granddad of mine was"!

David Yencken was right. It will only be an informed and engaged citizenry that preserves the environment. I still however believe in the power of engaged citizens to plot a course that seems right at the time, so I will close by paraphrasing the RSL, **the price of conservation is eternal vigilance...and activism.** It could be the motto of AGHS no?

I am still pleased that the Australian Heritage Commission played a role in establishing the AGHS!

I will continue to engage at the local and personal level in good environmental management **until I cannot**, and doing it through engagement with both the AGHS, at Tilba, and in my own garden seems to me personally rewarding.

Max Bourke

*AGHS Southern Highlands  
Branch Committee*

**PO Box 2327, Bowral 2576  
aghs.sh.info@gmail.com**

Jennifer Carroll	Chair	(0419 275 402)
Don Rees	Treasurer	(4869 5958)
John Biffin	(Assistant Treasurer)	
Jo de Beaujeu	Secretary /Projects	(4862 3532)
Narelle Bower	Projects	(4868 3972)
Julianna Greenane	Events Secretary	(4868 1090)
Meg Probyn	Editor & NSW NMC Rep.	(4871 3134)

**Sunday 21 August 2016  
AGM and Winter Seminar**

**Time: 10.30am – 3.00pm  
East Bowral Community Centre  
71 Boardman Road, East Bowral**

**Cost: \$35.00 per member (\$40 non-member) —includes morning tea & lunch**

Your name/s: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of places you require: \_\_\_\_\_

Names of members / guests:

Total payment: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**August Winter Seminar  
Payment options**

1. Cheques payable to **Australian Garden History Society, NSW Branch.**  
Please return this form and cheque to:  
Bookings AGHS, PO Box 2327,  
Bowral 2576

OR

- 2 Direct credit to ANZ Bank: Account name:  
**Australian Garden History Society  
(NSW Branch)**  
**BSB: 012 547 Account no: 237 514 077**

Please make sure you include the following  
reference information:

**21 August and your surname.**

**Email your phone number and names of  
your guests to [aghs.sh.info@gmail.com](mailto:aghs.sh.info@gmail.com)**

**ENQUIRIES: — Jo de Beaujeu 4862 3532**  
Or email: [aghs.sh.info@gmail.com](mailto:aghs.sh.info@gmail.com)

**BOOKINGS CLOSE:**  
**Friday: 12 August 2016**

**PLEASE NOTE: No tickets will be issued.**  
**You will be notified if sold out.**

**Saturday 17 September 2016  
Coach Trip to Sydney**

**Time: 8.30am – 5.30pm (approx)  
Please meet at Mittagong RSL carpark  
at 8.15am**

**Cost: \$45.00 per member (\$50 non-member). Entry to Museum included.**

Your name/s: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of seats you require: \_\_\_\_\_

Names of members / guests:

Total payment: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Coach Trip to Sydney  
Payment options**

1. Cheques payable to **Australian Garden History Society, NSW Branch.**  
Please return this form and cheque to:  
Bookings AGHS, PO Box 2327,  
Bowral 2576

OR

- 3 Direct credit to ANZ Bank: Account name:  
**Australian Garden History Society  
(NSW Branch)**  
**BSB: 012 547 Account no: 237 514 077**

Please make sure you include the following  
reference information:

**17 Sept and your surname.**

**Email your phone number and names of  
your guests to [aghs.sh.info@gmail.com](mailto:aghs.sh.info@gmail.com)**

**ENQUIRIES: — Jo de Beaujeu 4862 3532**  
Or email: [aghs.sh.info@gmail.com](mailto:aghs.sh.info@gmail.com)

**BOOKINGS CLOSE:**  
**Monday: 12 September 2016**

**PLEASE NOTE: No tickets will be issued.**  
**You will be notified if sold out.**

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*Australian Garden History Society*  
**Southern Highlands Branch**



**NOMINATION FORM**

**2016 - 2017 Branch Committee**

I would like to nominate:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

for the Committee of the Southern Highlands Branch of the  
Australian Garden History Society.

Proposed by: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Nominator)

Accepted by: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Nominee)

Please return to: AGHS Secretary  
Southern Highlands Branch  
PO Box 2327  
BOWRAL NSW 2576

(E) [aghs.sh.info@gmail.com](mailto:aghs.sh.info@gmail.com)

By: 10.00am 21 August 2016