



INFLORESCENCE

JULY 2020

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS BRANCH OF THE AGHS

Events 2020—for your diary:

Sunday 19 July	Winter Seminar via Zoom: Rick Shepherd—"Sustainable Gardening at Retford Park"
Sunday 23 August	AGM via Zoom: Guest Speaker: Dr John Pickard—"Lines Across the Landscape"
September—Date to be advised	Opening of the Harpers Mansion Colonial Camellia Walk. Free event for AGHS Members
October 23– 26	AGHS National Conference: Sydney
Friday 4 December 4.30 to 6.30 pm	Christmas Party at <i>Rotherwood</i> , Illawarra Highway, Sutton Forest



The cartoon says it all! We are all fed up with this virus and wish it would go away but unfortunately it may be with us for another 6-12 months—which is why we are getting used to Zoom.

Using Zoom for our meetings

We are delighted that Rick Shepherd has agreed to present a Zoom session at a second winter seminar. The first winter seminar on Sunday 21 June with Georgina Reid was enjoyed by 35+ members and friends from the Southern Highlands, West Australia, Tasmania, Sydney, Armidale and Canberra—and proved to be a rip-roaring success, judging by all the warm messages sent to the committee.

Congratulations to Georgina, who 'gave a wonderfully unpretentious and original presentation...face to face, rather than from a lectern'; 'an inspiring presentation'; 'it was terrific'; 'lots of great references and carefully thought-out authentic insights'; it's a wonderful way to spend a chilly

afternoon'. Many thanks to Georgina and to Jenny Woodwell (the newest member of the Branch Committee, who managed all the technical arrangements) and to Ruth Bailey (now Secretary and Events Co-ordinator), who compered the session.



Wintry view of Linden walk (*Tilia corifolia rubra*), Retford Park (photo: Rick Shepherd)

Sunday 19 July: 2nd Winter Seminar via Zoom with guest speaker Rick Shepherd



Rick Shepherd, Head Gardener at *Retford Park*, was born in rural Western Australia and lived his early years on a farm, where his father ran sheep and cattle alongside mixed cropping.

In what seems like an idyllic childhood, much of his time was spent outdoors — collecting insects and spiders, mushrooming after the

autumn rains, tadpoling in the roadside ditches in the winter, damming the creek that flowed through the property... Weekends were when visitors came, and this often involved picnics and barbecues in the nearby state forest, Dryandra. When it came to choosing what to study at university there was a dilemma between Botany and Zoology—so he majored in both.

Early work progressed from dressing-up as a convict handing out flyers for a pancake restaurant to research on the

horticultural potential of Western Australia's floral emblem—the Kangaroo Paw. Then he moved into landscaping, and loved it. His creative side had been engaged.

The next twenty years were spent designing, creating and maintaining gardens in Sydney under the banner of *Sustainable Gardens*. In 2011 came the opportunity to work at *Retford Park*, the then home of James Fairfax AC, and his dream job had arrived. His talk will explain how he has developed his passion for gardening sustainably without the use of chemical fertilisers—and no glyphosate, pesticides or fungicides and engaging the plants, animals, fungi and bacteria from the site to build soils, biodiversity and resilience.

Retford Park has an impressive collection of Rhododendrons and Azaleas—to control the dreaded two-spotted mites, he uses predatory mites which are released three or four times over the warmer months. His work has seen *Retford Park* become a showpiece for sustainable garden practice.

To register your interest in taking part in this Zoom session 19 July, please contact Jenny Woodwell by email: woodwell@optusnet.com.au

For those of you who would like to see Rick's photos on Instagram, just click on: https://www.instagram.com/rick_shepherd
Below are two of his posts, the first one of particular interest to AGHS members:



Camellia japonica 'Helenor' was bred in NSW in 1848 and is of major historical significance. It is one of over thirty *Camellia* varieties at *Retford Park*. They have recently been identified with the assistance of *Camellia Ark*, and discretely labelled with the generous financial assistance of the Australian Garden History Society (Southern Highlands Branch).



At lunch with the birds waiting . . .

Tours: Unhappy and Very Happy News!

Millthorpe Garden Ramble

It is with regret that the Committee has decided to cancel the tour to the **Millthorpe Garden Ramble** (scheduled for 31 October—2 November 2020) due to the uncertainty of the Covid-19 virus and restrictions which may be imposed by the Government, health authorities and Millthorpe Garden Ramble Committee. This decision has been made to protect the health and safety of our members and Friends of the Society. The committee plans to reschedule the tour for either 2021 or 2022. At this stage a decision has not been made by the Millthorpe Committee whether the 2020 Ramble will proceed and this advice may not be available for some weeks.

Tour to Adelaide

Planning is underway for a tour to **Adelaide** with a planned departure date of Tuesday 27 April 2021. The tour will occupy approximately eight days. The planning is in the early stages but the tour is expected to include Carrick Hill, the historic Adelaide Botanic Gardens, Sophie's Patch (*Sophie Thompson from Gardening Australia*) and gardens recommended by the Rose Society of South Australia, to mention a few of the venues being considered. In these uncertain times travel is dependent on any Government and health restrictions in place at the time.

AGM and Zoom meeting Sunday 23 August: with guest speaker John Pickard



John Pickard describes himself as 'an eclectic naturalist fascinated by landscapes'. During his career he has mapped vegetation in western NSW and Lord Howe Island; studied lichens on the ice sheet in Antarctica and glaciers in the Yukon Territory; been a senior administrator in state land management agencies; taught postgraduate students at Macquarie University, and for over

twenty years has studied rural fences. His fence research has been wide, integrating the structures, components, purposes and social conditions, publishing numerous papers leading to his PhD. He is currently completing a *Guide to Australian wire strainers* and revising his 2009 *Illustrated glossary of Australian rural fences*.

John was awarded his PhD from Macquarie University, Faculty of Science, Department of Environment and Geography, in 2010—his thesis was entitled '**Lines across the landscape: history, impact and heritage of Australian rural fences**'—and that is the title of his talk.

His fence survey was featured in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in April 2004:

Before Dr Pickard's fence survey, the last one conducted in NSW was in the 1890s—conducted by stock inspectors, it found 1.6 million kilometres of fences worth, in modern values, about \$3.6 billion. 'But we haven't had another survey for more than 100 years.'

Should there be another? 'Most definitely,' he said, arguing there could be ten times as many fences today, possibly making them rural Australia's most valuable private investment.

He suggested it could be done by the Bureau of Statistics adding a few questions about rural fence lengths and replacement values to the next national census. He fears many rural fences, built in the 1950s and 1960s when the rural economy was strong, need replacing, presenting farmers with a new burden. 'Stock escaping on to roads will become a liability issue.'

Dr Pickard, a semi-retired Antarctic landscape scientist, said: 'If you drive down a country road, the fence on the left will be different from the one on the right. The owners always say theirs is best.'

When Americans began building wire fences they used soft-wood posts, stapling the wire to the sides. But Australians, using wire from as early as 1851, employed local eucalypts, too hard to nail wires onto. 'So they drilled holes through the posts,' Dr Pickard said. In doing so, they started an Australian fence-building tradition.

Another local development was the three-pointed metal star post, invented in 1926. Like its wooden counterparts, it had holes for the wires.

'America has its own metal design—instead of holes they have knobs to hold the wire.'

When Dr Pickard completes his current research, he will return to Chile to study more fences. But this time it will be 'just to have fun'.



John Pickard sampling remains of the original Queensland Border Fence on the eastern side of the Simpson Desert.

To register your interest in taking part in this Zoom session on 23 August, please contact Jenny Woodwell by email: woodwell@optusnet.com.au.



Remains of Tyntynder stub: Salt-encrusted stumps are all that remain of a stub fence built in the 1870s against rabbits on 'Tyntynder', Vic.



Dog-leg fence with logs resting on forked posts, Mt Trooper, NSW.



Dog-leg fence with logs resting on large sandstone blocks, Warkworth, NSW

Developments at SHBG

The new playground at the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens opened in June to the delight of the youngsters in the area—and their parents and grandparents. The gardens have never been so popular with pre-school children arriving as soon as the gates open. The playground features colourful animals and exciting moving elements—with softfall underneath. The playground funding was made available from grants funds from My Community Project (NSW Government) following a competitive round of applications that included many people in the community supporting the SHBG's proposed playground.



View from the drone



Brightly coloured equipment



I know you're in there! (photos C. Webb)



The new native garden



Charlotte Webb OAM with Mr Stephen Jones MP, Shadow Assistant Treasurer and Shadow Minister for Financial Services

Hon. Stephen Jones MP came for morning tea on 3 June 2020 to present a cheque for \$20,000 for the new native garden which is to be established at the eastern end along the cycle path. Work on this new venture will commence during the latter part of 2020. The funds were given by the Federal Government under its Community Environment Program.

The plantings will occupy over one acre and include many species from the endangered ecological community, Southern Highlands Shale Woodlands. Many of the seeds and plants for the project have been supplied by Wingecaribee Shire Council.



*Stephen Jones and Charlotte Webb standing by the tree he planted ten years ago—*Eucalyptus amplifolia* (Cabbage gum)*

Station Street Upgrade and Realignment—Where is it at?

Station Street Bowral is listed as a “Landscape at Risk” by the Australian Garden History Society, and the entrance pin oak avenue and heritage camellia street planting is listed as a significant cultural landscape by the National Trust. Most members will be aware of recent proposals by Wingecarribee Council which will destroy this streetscape and reduce the commuter car park at Bowral Station by half, and many of you have written to the Council objecting to this.

You will have received a standard response, either from the General Manager or the Mayor, which refers you to documents in “Your Say, Station Street Upgrade” on Council’s website. This tells you what the Council wants you to know, not necessarily what you may want to or should know.

It would be wonderful to be able to report that the project will **not** be proceeding, but unfortunately we can’t. However there is still hope as time could run out.

The Council has been given until December 2021 to complete the project by the State Government. Otherwise the grant of \$7.5m. administered by Infrastructure NSW will be withdrawn. The Council does not want to lose this grant and Senior Management and many Councillors have expressed frustration that the Project has been delayed, and continues to be delayed. **Why the delay?**

There are two major hurdles before construction can commence. The first of these also means that if Council carries out any works which are part of the project including the destruction of the pin oaks, it would be in breach of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.

1. The project must meet the requirements of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (EP&A Act). Council has elected to prepare a Review of Environmental Factors (REF), rather than an EIS to justify that the “activity” will have little or minimal impact on the environment. The Act requires the proponent (the council) to investigate all environmental impacts (including social, economic, heritage, cultural), “to the fullest extent possible”, and ways to ameliorate any adverse impacts. These include not proceeding, and modifying the project. The Council has admitted it is still working on the REF and the impression we get is that it is still a long way from being finished. Consultation with the community is not mandatory and despite many requests for the community to be consulted, Council is refusing to do this. Only if it is made public can it be challenged by the community. Friends of Bowral have requested a copy of the REF under GIPA (Freedom of information legislation), but the Council may still refuse access.

2. Transport for NSW is requiring the Council to enter into an agreement with Roads and Maritime, Sydney Trains, and Transport for NSW to lock the Council into a design for the northern high capacity roundabout, the design of the car park at Bowral Railway Station and the construction of a 70 space car park on Railway land at Mittagong Station. Information on where this is at is currently being sought from Transport for NSW. Construction cannot commence until this is signed, but the pin oaks could be removed.

It is expected that completing these two requirements will still take some time. Provided Transport for NSW requires the completion of the REF process before it will execute the Deed of Agreement the time could blow out significantly, leaving less time (hopefully not long enough) for construction.

In the meantime opposition continues to grow, and many letters have been written to the Council, the Premier and Ministers, and government departments and the pin oaks and camellias are still there.

For more information and to keep up to date please check the facebook page for Friends of Bowral and the website friendsofbowral.org.au (now online but still being developed).

Laurel Cheetham, a member of Friends of Bowral Inc.



Northern entrance to Bowral (photo John Swainston)

Have your say on memorials and statues WSC

Did you see the article on page 3 (29 June edition of *Southern Highlands News*)? A draft *Public Memorials Policy and Guidelines* is now on public exhibition, and Wingecarribee Shire Council is asking for feedback from residents. Council’s asset coordinator of parks and buildings, Rachel Forte, said, “These documents provide guidelines on the planting of memorial trees, the erection of monuments, statues and plaques, and the naming of public spaces.” Feedback can be made on-line or in writing to Wingecarribee Shire Council, PO Box 141 Moss Vale 2577 or alternately by email at mail@wsc.nsw.gov.au

We wonder whether Ms Forte recognises the asset of the avenue of pin oaks planted in honour of Coronation of King George and Queen Elizabeth in May 1937? Obviously the Planning Department is oblivious to the heritage of Bowral.

Feedback and submissions to close on Monday 27 July 2020.

Update on George Street Park, Berry

Work is now underway on the final stage of the Berry Garden Club's George Street Park project. The curved timber pavilion, echoing the curves in the escarpment beyond, will be a focal point of the park, adding height and interest. In years to come, this height will not be as apparent as the trees around grow and become features themselves.

The project's working party has been very pleased with the response to our [Berry Garden Club] tree sponsorship program. As we hoped, offering this opportunity has increased community awareness and ownership of the park. We would like, quite belatedly, to formally thank you for your donation. We had hoped to hold an afternoon tea in April for our tree sponsors and to 'officially' open the footbridge to Albert Street. Unfortunately this was delayed by the coronavirus outbreak.

The trees are growing well, the trunks are thickening and the branching is more pronounced. This year there was more autumn colour and we can look forward to brilliant displays in years to come. We are now preparing for our final plantings, a native 'forest' on the far eastern side of the park in the area above the roundabout. Our records show that, subsequent to a visit to some Berry gardens, your branch has sponsored a Blueberry Ash *Elaeocarpus reticulatus* 'Ballerina'. If you have any questions about this, please get in touch with Mary Seelis on 44 641191 or Lyn Pepper on 44 642480.



Beautiful blossom of the Blueberry Ash (Elaeocarpus reticulatus 'Ballerina')

We hope that it is not too long before we can invite you to a gathering in the park. We are joined by all members of the Garden Club and the Berry community as a whole in expressing our gratitude for your interest and support. If you pass through the park you would be aware that it is well-frequented by Berry residents. Appreciation for this new facility and for the work entailed in its creation has been wholehearted.

George Street Park Working Party: David Ball, Bob Croker, Carol Hampson, David Lambert, Keith and Lyn Pepper, Mary Seelis, Margaret Street (co-ordinator), Mary Williamson

John Edmonds (President Berry & District Garden Club)

Sugar Pine Walk

Members and friends who travelled on the Monaro tour in 2016 will be saddened to learn that the Sugar Pine Walk we visited in the Bago State Forest south of Batlow was destroyed during the recent bushfires.



Among the trees (photo Jenny Carroll)

Work is being undertaken to remove the trees for public safety and planning is underway to plant a new five-hectare grove of sugar pines close to the current site for future generations to enjoy. Native to the west coast of America, Sugar Pine (*Pinus lamertina*) is the largest and tallest of all pine species.

The Bago Forest site was planted in 1928 as part of a trial of different exotic species by the forestry industry. The pine trees' size and stature made them sentimental favourites of both Forestry Corporation staff and the wider community with close planting of the species and the way the trees have grown over time creating a unique cathedral-like experience for visitors walking under the canopy.

Ray Bradley

Please consider standing for the election of Committee Members

At a recent branch committee meeting Ruth Bailey agreed to take on the role of Secretary in addition to Events Co-ordinator with assistance from Jenny Woodwell as Technical Officer and Meg Probyn as Minutes Secretary. The committee is very small and extra pairs of hands would be much appreciated. If you would like to stand for election at the AGM, the Nomination Form is on the last page of this newsletter. For further information and arm twisting, please contact Lyn Barrett on 0475 356 084.

A warm welcome to new member:

Janine Armstrong

Advance notice about the Christmas Party: 4 December



Rotherwood

We are delighted that Ken and Katrina Cooper have offered to host the Christmas party at their property. Two special guests will join us: Howard Tanner AM and Michael Bligh. Howard was the architect/designer commissioned by the Cooper family to extend and modernise the house in 2004. Michael was involved in the landscape design of the five acres of beautiful garden.



The back lawn of Rotherwood (photo M. Probyn)

41ST ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2020



This year's conference will be held at Luna Park, Milsons Point. Bookings opened 1st May 2020. You should have received a Conference brochure with your April 2020 *AGH Journal*. The Optional Day on Monday 26 October will explore the rural area of Camden. Stuart Read will lead pre- and post-tours to The Blue Mountains (October 19–21 and October 27–29).

Check the AGHS website for further information.

An Invitation from ACT Monaro Branch (A joint event with the Friends of the National Library)

Gardening for health and wellbeing:

6 pm Tuesday 13 October 2020

Speaker: Sophie Thomson



Sophie Thomson's enduring love affair with gardening stems from growing up in the family nursery in the Adelaide Hills and has led to her becoming a national figure in the horticultural media. In more than 14 years on television Sophie has actively promoted gardening and its benefits. Seen on ABC TV's *Gardening Australia* program (voted Most Popular Lifestyle Program at the 2019 Logies), her infectious enthusiasm inspires people of all

ages. In addition she is a popular national public speaker, TEDx presenter, broadcaster, author, weekly newspaper columnist and horticulturalist.

Sophie's first award winning book *From the Ground Up* was a complete guide for South Australian gardeners and her most recent one, *Sophie's Patch*, released in March 2018, is a national best seller.

Known for her strong environmental views and resilience, combined with her infectious enthusiasm, vitality and love of sustainable gardening, Sophie describes herself as an "obsessive-compulsive gardener" who, were it not for her family and career, could spend every day in the garden.

Sophie is an Ambassador for Horticultural Therapy SA and Nature Play SA as well as patron of many environmental organisations. She lives at Sophie's Patch—a three-acre property in the Adelaide Hills, with her husband and five children, and an assortment of animals. Over the last eight years they have created a remarkable garden around the old stone cottage, on what was once a bare paddock.

The lecture will concentrate on Sophie's passion for the role gardens and gardening can play in our physical and mental well-being.

Sophie's passion for the benefits of gardening expand out to cover its importance for our environment and communities' health and well being. She even goes as far as to claim it can save the world and bring about world peace. But, let's start with what it does for each and every one of us.

For more information about Sophie visit www.sophiespatch.com.au

Venue Theatre, National Library of Australia

Booking Bookings through the NLA (the link for bookings will be provided nearer the time).

INVITATION from Stephen Utick:

To all Camellia Ark Australia members

First, we would like to invite you to a wonderful grafting workshop day on **Sunday 2 August 2020 at Parker's Camellias 34 Harrisons Lane, Glenorie NSW (11.00am - 3.30 pm)**. Individual lunch provided and rare camellias for sale. Spacing and sanitisers provided.

Cost for day: \$40 individual/\$65 couple.

Bookings to Joanne Parker on (02) 96522879 by cob Friday 31 July. You can still renew your subscriptions to CAA if you haven't done so.

Second, raffle for rare silver pink formal double Nuccio 'Mrs Tingley', second prize deep red single 'Jessie Gale' both donated by Neil Mitchell. Tickets \$2 each or \$5 for 3. Raffle drawn at the workshop, but you can still purchase tickets even if you are unable to come (limited to NSW and VIC members currently due to transport difficulties). For those not coming to the workshop, tickets can be obtained by emailing sutick@grapevine.com.au and depositing monies (\$5 minimum deposit) into our account at **Westpac, Camellia Ark Australia, BSB 032376 Account Number: 345468.**

*Dr Stephen Utick
Secretary CAA*

AGHS Southern Highlands Branch Committee

Chair & NMC Representative:	Lyn Barrett
Treasurer:	John Biffin
Secretary and Events co-ordinator:	Ruth Bailey
Technical Officer:	Jenny Woodwell
Tours:	Ray Bradley
Editor/Minutes Secretary:	Meg Probyn
WSC Heritage Rep:	Laurel Cheetham

Email: aghs.sh.info@gmail.com

AGHS Southern Highlands Branch

Nomination Form For the 2020/2021 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 SH Branch: PO Box 2317,
Bowral NSW 2576

or

aghs.sh.info@gmail.com

by 1.45 pm 23 August 2020