

Inflorescence

July 2024

The Newsletter of the Southern Highlands Branch of the AGHS



Events for 2024

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

3 August guided walking tour of Station St camellias.

24 August AGM and second winter seminar.

13 September Park Hill Margaret Stuart.

13 October visit to Vacluse House and Elizabeth Bay House .

Report from the Chair

Only one more month to go for winter to be over and the temperature will be slowly increasing as we head towards Spring. The winds can become worse during this change of season so stay warm.

Our next event is the AGM/Second Winter Seminar with two interesting speakers. The AGM will be brief (30 min) to reveal the many events we've staged this year and how this has impacted our membership and community. One of our Committee members will be standing down after four years of invaluable support so it is time for another one or two members to come and join us. Please call me if you would like to discuss this opportunity. We have monthly meetings to discuss what we need to do throughout the year for the benefit of our members. I'm sure you would enjoy the camaraderie! You should by now have received my emails reminding you to register for this meeting by 19 August so please do so once you know your availability for the date. Michael Bligh will show us how heritage gardens can still be modified by new owners or existing owners to retain the integrity of the old garden and to add new plantings. Linda Emery will take us back over 130 years and describe the vibrant commercial activities in the Exeter region.

We had a very successful Winter Solstice Seminar in the new education building at the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens (SHBG). Charlotte and Chris Webb (as well as many Friends and volunteers) have been working very hard for a very long time to create the SHBG and learning the challenges experienced along the way was an eye opener! I hope everyone visits the SHBG in the coming

months especially during Spring when the colours start to shine through.

Our Advocacy activities are ongoing with encouraging impact of our objections and suggestions. Bud has outlined the current status of our submissions relating to the Berry Hotel Development Application, Wingecarribee Community Heritage Study, and the Bowral South New Living Area.

A group of curious members attended the recent Caroline Simpson Library visit and were delighted with the effort made by the librarians to explain what can be accessed in the Library. There is an extensive collection of many personal materials from Isobel and Claude Crowe as well as a myriad of books, and catalogues from some of the nurseries in the mid 1800s. Garden ornamentation and edging is featured as well as in books and catalogues so there is much to see. If you have a trip coming up to Sydney and you have an hour or two to spare I would recommend you visit the library. The building itself behind The Mint building is amazing. Please let the librarians know of your interest and they can locate some items for you. They conduct many tours such as the one we experienced and can be diverted in their attention but selecting a date with them when they aren't busy might be worthwhile.

Another garden visit is scheduled for September. Margie Stewart lives at a lovely property called Park Hill in Moss Vale. The big old rambling garden was designed by Claude Crowe and Margie does much to keep it under control! We'll provide afternoon tea which you all know is a wonderful experience.

We have a coach tour to Vacluse House and Elizabeth Bay House in October. The weather should be lovely by then so a visit to the foreshores of Sydney harbour and heritage houses should make a great day tour. I haven't been to either since I lived overseas for so long but have heard both properties are wonderful to visit. Please keep an eye out for emails where you can register to participate.

Looking forward to seeing you at one of our upcoming events.

Best wishes,

Ruth

Chair- AGHS-SHB

23 June Winter Solstice Seminar at the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens Education Centre.

MAKING THE IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBLE

By Jenny Woodwell and Bud Townsing, photographs by John Swainston and Bud Townsing.

AGHS-SHB held its Winter Solstice Seminar at the new Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens (SHBG) Education Centre building. It was the first event to be held at the new Education Centre and we thought that the logical thing was to ask Charlotte Webb to outline the history of SHBG. Her talk was aptly titled “making the impossible possible”. Forty-five members attended and Charlotte kept us spellbound for an hour and a half telling us how to make the seemingly impossible possible.

Charlotte and Chris Webb have been associated with the establishment of the Southern Highlands Botanical Gardens for over 25 years. Their determination and enthusiasm are being acclaimed for the creation of a delightful botanical space and landscape.



Eleanor Dartnall thanking Charlotte, courtesy John Swainston.



The new Education Centre at the SHBG.



Nearmap view showing the SHBG in 2014



Nearmap view June 2024.



Charlotte presenting her talk, courtesy John Swainston.

The following is a brief overview of Charlotte’s talk.

1998 - A group of enthusiastic gardeners, some from the Highlands Garden Society, had an idea that the Southern Highlands area needed a central park, open to the public.

2001- Ann and Tony Emmett, Chris and Charlotte, Tony Davis and others were the central group that gave numerous presentations to council and the community about the benefits of a central park and arboretum.

At the time, the site of the SHBG, had on it an old derelict skin shed.



A circa 2001 view of the skin shed, courtesy *A Window to the Southern Highlands*. The shed collapsed in 2006.



In 2009 the 33-acre old skin shed site was finally selected for the SHBG.

Taylor Cullity Lethlean were engaged in 2010 to develop a masterplan for the garden with a vision to display the native and exotic flora of the region that contribute to the uniqueness of its seasonal character.



The group approached Council, because this land, on the corner of Kangaloon Road and Old South Road, seemed like a good central location. Other clear sites were sporting fields and or were in private hands. No other big space was in public hands.

Council would only give a 5-year lease, and SHBG were not allowed to fence the area and so over the coming years many other sites were considered. These included Hillview, Throsby Park, Our Ladies of the Sacred Heat (OLSH), Berrima Remembrance Driveways, and Bong Bong Common. For a mixture of reasons none of these came to pass.



Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir the Governor of NSW officially launched the SHBG on 28 September 2010. The Governor planted a Bunya Pine as a landmark tree. Also planted were some eucalypti, and crab apples, being a collection of natives and exotic trees. All the eight garden clubs in the area were invited. Eleanor Dartnall and Laurel Cheetham planted a tree on behalf of the Australian Garden History Society.





The gardens were visited by the Federal Compliance Inspectors because there are some endangered bird species on the land, such as the Latham Snipe. It is checked every year. The inspectors were happy that the work that had been done was more than what was required. Dogs are kept out of the bird habitat. Original design was dog and cat proof.

In 2015 a lease for 21 years on the 33-acre site was granted by Council to the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens Limited.

The Leaping Frog was donated by John Olsen. It was installed in 2017.



Grants, generous donations and the unflinching work of the volunteers are what has built the SHBG. Volunteers have been and still are so important to the SHBG and there is 90 years between the oldest and youngest volunteers.



The Leaping Frog, courtesy John Swainston.



Claire Daggart was sitting beside me, and she was smiling along with Charlotte (shown in the top photograph) about the age difference so I could not resist taking this photograph of her.

Strong bonds have been created by the volunteers and the excellent morning tea, which is provided by more volunteers, is eagerly attended. What a wonderful group of people, all pulling together to create something world class and beautiful.

Future activities planned include an upcoming Garden photo workshop, winter propagation and succulents for Christmas, kite flying, collectors plant sale and hydrangeas sale. There is also a Parkrun every Saturday morning which is proving very popular.

Congratulations to Charlotte and Chris and all in the Friends Group, who have pulled together to achieve this amazing Botanic Garden which is providing what was

envisioned – a place for the community to gather and enjoy nature, learn about horticulture, biodiversity and plant conservation and have fun with others. This learning space is to be enjoyed by all locals and visitors from far and wide.

Thanks for making the impossible possible!

After lunch groups had guided tours around the garden and saw firsthand the size of the garden and the progress to date.



The all important lunch, courtesy John Swainston.



Discussing types of trees first planted courtesy John Swainston.



The Eastern boundary and start of the Atkinson Walk courtesy John Swainston.



The Bunya pine planted by Governor Marie Bashir in 2010, courtesy John Swainston.



Courtesy John Swainston.



Advocacy

AGHS-SHB put in a considered objection to the Berry Hotel development.

The Shoalhaven City Council recommended against Berry Hotel development on 24 June and the development was refused by the Southern Regional Planning Panel on 27 June 2024 on the grounds of adverse heritage impacts, noise and amenity, traffic and parking, character, compliance with controls, community impact, overdevelopment, cumulative impact and operational concerns.

The owner of the Berry Hotel has appealed the decision, and the matter is now before Land and Environment Court where a Commissioner will make the final decision on the proposed development of the Berry Hotel.

Wingecarribee Community Heritage Study

On 15 and 16 July 2024 the Local Planning Panel considered a report on the results of the public exhibition that was undertaken throughout June of the Independent Peer Review 2024 of the Draft Community Heritage Study 2021-23.

Broadly speaking the Local Planning Panel endorsed the findings of the Peer Review and is recommending the heritage listing of some 425 items with a further 15 being deferred. The Community Heritage Study recommended some 471 items. Taking a pragmatic view the independent Peer Review and independent Local Planning Panel endorsement of 425 heritage items is a huge step forward in terms of extending heritage protection in the Southern Highlands and is one of the few mechanisms available to retain local character and landscapes.

The next step is Council will on 7 August consider whether to endorse the recommendations of the Local Planning Panel.

The independent reviewer Robert Staaaz has changed his mind and has now recommended the listing of the Station Street Pin Oaks and the heritage camellias at the Station. The following is a quote from his review on the submission from AGHS-SHB:

"Ruth Bailey (Bowral) Submission on behalf of the Australian Garden History Society indicating broad agreement with the Peer Review and the recommendations that would protect the towns villages and landscapes of the Southern Highlands. The submission recommends the inclusion of the 'heritage' camellias and Pin Oaks at Bowral railway Station site for inclusion as originally recommended in the

Community Heritage Study. Despite my previous comments that these items are included in the proposed Heritage Conservation Area, I have no objection to their specific listing as heritage elements pending the creation of a future Significant Tree Register. It is therefore recommended that the original listing in the Community Heritage Study now be adopted. "

This goes to show that advocacy by AGHS-SHB does yield positive results.

Bowral South New Living Area

The Wingecarribee Shire Council (WSC) has put on public exhibition the Bowral South New Living Area (BSNLA) project for a period of eight weeks from 29 July to 23 September 2024.

It is now planned to put 2,500 dwellings in the BSNLA, and the proposed "small" shopping centre has grown to 10,000 m² of gross floor area. Coles in Bowral has a floor area of 5,500 m² so what envisaged is now a large shopping centre.

The Draft Landscape Master Plan is shown below.



For further details on the BSNLA see the WSC web site: <https://participatewingecarribee.wsc.nsw.gov.au/bowral-south>

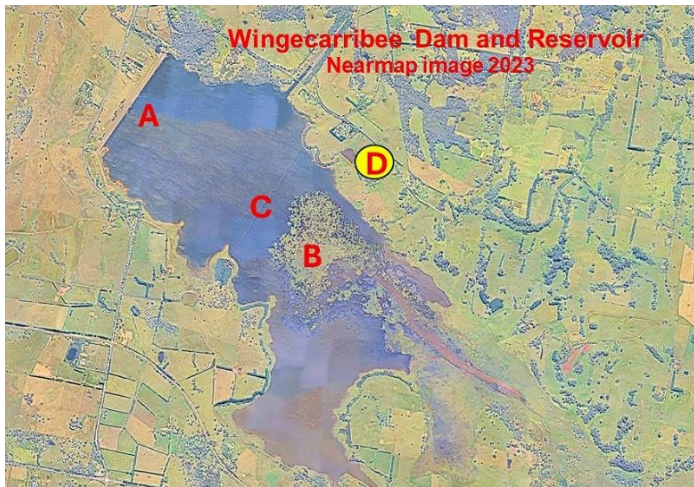
The development is about half detached housing and about half attached housing such as town houses, terraces, semis, manor houses and flats. The BSNLA development will be much denser than existing developments such as East Bowral.

BSNLA will have 2,500 plus dwellings and a population of about 6,000 people. The Census 2021 population of East Bowral was 3,811 people, Burradoo was 2,976 people and Bowral was 6,685 people so this is a large development.

There has been considerable community concern about potential flooding of the BSNLA during heavy rainfall events.

In response to this community concern WSC has undertaken to do a full flood impact statement.

Community concern has also been expressed about the Wingecarribee Dam and Reservoir. It is not known whether the WSC has addressed the Wingecarribee Dam and Reservoir risks in establishing the BSNLA below the Wingecarribee Dam.



Wingecarribee Dam and Reservoir, Nearmap image 2023

(A) is the Wingecarribee Dam wall.

(B) is a peat island in the centre of the Reservoir and **(C)** is a barrier fence to stop the peat island floating to the dam wall.

(D) is the epicenter of the 1961 Robertson earthquake.

The peat island **(B)** is a result of the disastrous 1998 collapse of the ancient heritage listed peat swamp as a result of peat mining. According to the 2013 *Wingecarribee Shire Local Flood Plan* “there is some potential for the peat island to become remobilized during a significant storm event and move towards and block the spillway entrance. This could restrict the flood discharge capacity of the dam, increasing the risk of embankment overtopping and eventual failure.”

The Robertson earthquake of 1961 was of similar strength to the 1973 Picton earthquake and the 1989 Newcastle earthquake. These are the three largest earthquakes recorded in NSW. The epicentre of the Robertson earthquake **(D)** is beside the Reservoir and 2 kilometres from the Dam wall.

The Wingecarribee Dam Safety Emergency Plan does contain maps showing the modelled extents of inundation from a dam failure. These maps are not available to the public and thus the potential impact on the BSNLA of a dam failure is not known to the community at this point in time.

Visit to the Caroline Simpson Library at the Mint

On 25 July fifteen AGHS-SHB members made a visit to the Caroline Simpson Library (CSL) at the Mint building in Macquarie Street Sydney.

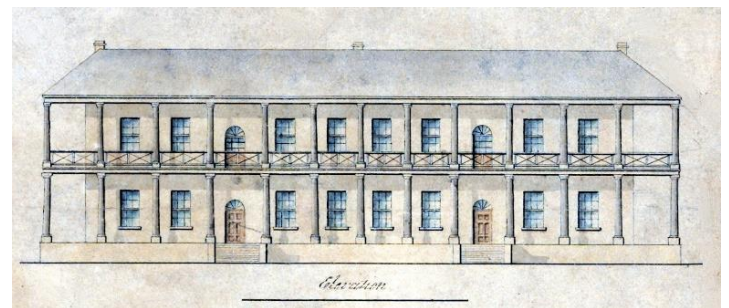
The CSL began as the Lyndhurst Conservation Resource Centre in 1984. It was renamed in 2004 in recognition of

the extraordinary cultural gift donated by the children of Caroline Simpson OAM (1930–2003) to the Historic Houses Trust of NSW (now Museums of History NSW). The gift included furniture, artworks, books and decorative arts from their mother’s collection, along with an endowment for the library. A keen collector, Caroline had a passion for colonial history, heritage and an eye for rare and significant material.

Caroline Simpson was an extraordinary woman. Born into Australia’s famous Fairfax family she was the sister of James Fairfax of Retford Park. Caroline forged her own unique place in Sydney’s history, becoming a champion behind many National Trust and other heritage projects and publications. She was one of Australia’s great philanthropists, supporting a wide range of causes.

The Mint was constructed in the 1810’s as the Rum Hospital. It has remained an imposing presence in Macquarie Street. First as the south wing of the General Hospital, then as the Sydney branch of the Royal Mint and then the home of various government departments and now the home of the CSL.

The CSL is a specialized research library open to anyone with an interest in the history of house and garden design, interior furnishings and domestic life in NSW. Its collection features a wide range of formats, including architectural pattern books, architectural fragments, wall and floor coverings, trade catalogues and sample books, garden ornaments, hardware and fittings, soft furnishings and trimmings, personal papers, manuscripts, pictures, photographs, books, periodicals and oral histories.



1854 detail from a plan and elevation of the South Wing of the General Hospital courtesy State Archives Collection.

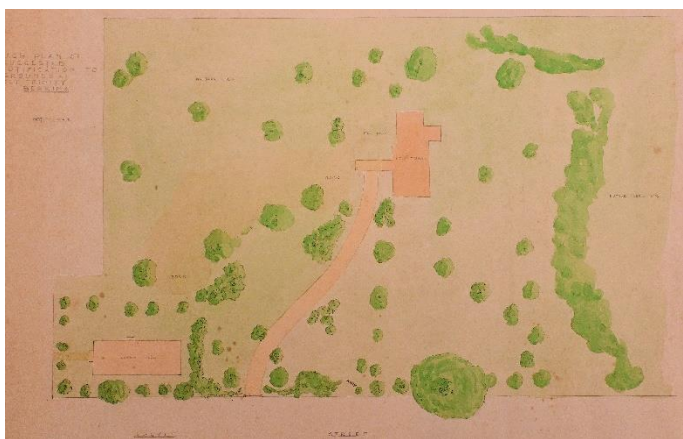
We were welcomed to the CSL by Mel Flyte and Michael Lech who had put an enormous amount of work into putting together a special display of items of interest to us.



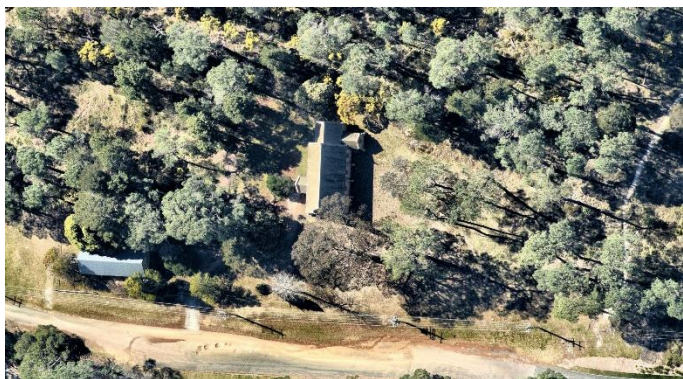
Google Earth view of the Mint as it is today.



Mel Flyte of the Library showed us some of CSL's impressive Claude and Isobel Crowe Collection.



On display at CSL was this 1948 sketch by Claude Crowe entitled "A rough plan of suggested beautification to the grounds at Holy Trinity Berrima".



A 2023 Nearmap image of Holy Trinity Berrima still very much in keeping with Claude's 1948 sketch.

The CSL has a wealth of material and if you are researching a project it is a great place to visit. If you intend to visit, they recommend that you book a time so you can be sure they have space and staff available to assist you. If you want to view specific items you need to request these items at least three days in advance.

On leaving we gave the CSL a copy of our Claude and Isobel Crowe book *The Southern Highlands is our Landscape* as an addition to their Claude Crowe collection.

Camden Park House and Garden

Camden Park House and Garden are having a spring open weekend on 21st and 22nd of September 2024. If

you are interested you can book on the Camden Park web site. www.camdenparkhouse.com.au

Save The Date

3 day tour to the Hunter Valley departing Tuesday 19 November to include Hunter Valley Christmas Lights, the Bath House Garden, guided tour of Kuri Kurri murals and the historic town of Morpeth. Itinerary to be released early September.

An extended 8-10 day tour to Western and Central Victoria departing Tuesday 1 April 2025 to include Mt Gambier's Sinkhole and Cave Gardens, Mt Macedon and the Daylesford area.

Park Hill Moss Vale

AGHS-SHB will be visiting Margie Stuart's home Park Hill Moss Vale on Friday 13 September – more details to come nearer the time.

Park Hill was part of the original 1819 land grant to early settler and explorer, Dr Charles Throsby, - it was the first land grant outside of the County of Cumberland. Charles Throsby's nephew and heir, also Charles Throsby, and his wife Elizabeth (Betsey), built Throsby Park, in 1845. They also built Christ Church Bong Bong, and the family built several of the very early houses in Moss Vale, Redbraes and Bibury in Valetta Street, and Farnborough, on Illawarra Highway. Charles and Betsey Throsby were Margie Stuart's great, great grandparents. Park Hill is WSC Heritage listed.

Park Hill was cut off from Throsby Park in 1901, and was bought by Jane Crick. In the 1930s and '40s it was the home of the Nicholsons, parents of Highlands Garden Society member Elizabeth Symonds. Elizabeth's mother had well known Berrima nurseryman, Claude Crowe, to help plan most of the plantings in the front garden.

AGHS-SHB Committee

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