

# Inflorescence

November 2023

The Newsletter of the Southern Highlands Branch of the AGHS



## Events for 2023

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

**Tuesday 7 to Thursday 9 May Tour of NSW South Coast including Rectory Garden at Bodalla.**

**Tuesday 19 to Thursday 21 November Hunter Valley Tour including the Bath Garden at Maitland.**

**See page 7 for more details of these tours.**

## Report from the Chair

This is our final issue of Inflorescence for 2023. I hope you have enjoyed reading our newsletter this year as Bud Townsing as editor and multiple members of the Committee and the membership put significant effort into keeping you aware of our past years events and future plans for events and tours. Our current advocacy activities are also outlined in this issue.

We are keeping you up to date on our advocacy activities designed to protect our heritage areas in towns and also protect cultural landscapes. As I'm sure you know both locally and in large cities advocacy is becoming more important by concerned communities as the pressure to create new housing in Australia intensifies.

Our visit to Camden Park has been described by Bud Townsing to show how continuous family ownership of the house and residual property has made a significant contribution to the social history of Australia by the Macarthur family. The gardens are substantially intact and considerable effort is being put into propagating many of the rare trees and plants to ensure continuity of the species on the property.

The Braidwood tour enabled our members to visit Bedervale and Mona, both formerly owned by the Coghill and Maddrell families. The owners of Bedervale together with the National trust since 1972 have ensured that the contents of the house have remained intact so provides an excellent insight into the lifestyle of the families in the early 1800s. Our host Sonia Horan generously provided her sumptuous cake recipe which is definitely worth a try! Mona has had many owners over the years but still retains a sense of history despite considerable changes to the house and gardens. Being a function center with new accommodation it would be a delightful country getaway.

Harper's Mansion provided a fabulous venue for two events involving the AGHS-SHB. We participated in the Wine and

Roses event for the Southern Highlands community to learn more about heritage roses and provide necessary resources for Challenge Southern Highlands and for the conservation of old roses by the Heritage Rose group at the property led by Peter Rezek (also an AGHS-SHB member). We also held our Christmas drinks with AGHS-SHB members at Harper's Mansion and enjoyed the beautiful gardens under the leadership of long-term AGHS-SHB member Les Musgrave - a must see for those unable to attend on the day.

Advocacy activities seem to be escalating as additional housing for many people moving to the highlands is being developed. I have written multiple letters outlining our concerns to the Wingecarribee Shire Council over several years. We need to be true to our mission of protecting our house and garden heritage as well as our cultural landscapes. Our list of 'Landscapes at Risk' which can be found on the AGHS website shows how many areas in our branch geography are being affected by development. Please read my letter of support for the Heritage Survey which was endorsed by members at our AGM in August. Bud Townsing has responded to a request for support from Berry members to object to the Berry Hotel and Adjoining Land Redevelopment which if it proceeds will have a substantial impact on the character of the town. Please let Bud or me know if you would like to read the full submission.

The Land and Environment Court has upheld an appeal by the owner of 35-37 Station Street to create a new development which encompasses both housing and retail space. The Statement of Environment Effects" states that Bowral doesn't have a particular cohesive architectural character, so a modern building downtown has no impact on the character of the town. We need to address this in the coming months to protect our community from converting Bowral into another high density suburb of Sydney!

We have 6 new members who have joined our branch in the past 2 months! Please introduce yourself to them when you meet at an upcoming event to make them feel welcome.

Ann Beaumont - Bowral  
 Rod Broadbent - Wingello  
 Lyn Fraser - Mittagong  
 Colin Lines - Mittagong  
 Marga Tilley - Bowral  
 Anna Wisken - Burradoo

I wish you and your family a happy, healthy Christmas and a fabulous New Year!

Best wishes,

Ruth

## Visit to Camden Park October 2023

By Bud Townsing, photographs by Bud Townsing, Lynda Cowley and Ruth Bailey

On the 25 October 2023 thirty AGHS-SHB members and friends visited Camden Park, the family home of Edwina and John Macarthur-Stanham. They are the seventh generation to live in the house. Camden Park was designed by John Verge, a leading 1830's architect who, inter alia, designed Denham Court, Elizabeth Bay House and Bedervale.



Camden Park, 1843, water colour by Conrad Martins courtesy Library of NSW

Morton Herman considers Camden Park to be the finest building to come from Verge's drawing board. In Herman's 1954 book *The Early Australian Architects and Their Work* he gives this (and still accurate seventy years later) description of Camden Park: *"The house is in wonderful repair. It has been lived in and loved for more than a century, and such treatment has put an indefinable stamp of architectural quality upon it. The gardens are superb and are so well designed that the setting and the house seem to be one. The garden front has a large-columned loggia along its full length and this, though just a little coarse in some of its details, makes nevertheless, with the garden, a superb composition."*



A sketch of Camden Park by Morton Herman from his 1954 book *The Early Australian Architects and Their Work*.



Camden Park October 2023, Bud Townsing photograph.

John and Elizabeth Macarthur are well known for their pioneering role in the development of the Australian wool industry. Work began on the Camden Park house in 1832 and it was completed in 1835. John and Elizabeth's two younger sons, James and William became the first residents of the house. John Macarthur died in 1834 and Elizabeth remained at Elizabeth Farm until her death in 1850.

Camden Park ranks amongst the most important historic houses in Australia. It does so by combining an almost unrivalled set of characteristics and attributes:

- The character and quality of its design,
- A high degree of intactness and authenticity of fabric,
- The quality of its setting, landscaping and garden that remain substantially intact,
- A rich and substantial collection of furniture and fine arts from its early days,
- A substantial documentary collection,
- Continuity of family ownership and contribution to the social history of Australia by the Macarthur family, and
- Camden Park's association with the early development and history of a number of industries in Australia, including wool, viticulture, dairying and horticulture.



Our hosts at their family home John and Edwina Macarthur-Stanham courtesy [camdenparkhouse.com.au](http://camdenparkhouse.com.au)





General views of the garden at Camden Park



## Braidwood Tour.

**By Bud Townsing, photographs by Bud Townsing and Ruth Bailey**

On 23 November forty-five members of AGHS-SHB went on a marvellous tour to Braidwood organised by Ray Bradley and driven by “our” special Kennedy Bus driver Ron Hewitt. We visited Bedervale and Mona two wonderful houses and gardens that were both originally owned by the Coghill and Maddrell families.



Bedervale circa 1910, courtesy Bedervale Historic Homestead



Bedervale November 2023

Bedervale homestead was built between 1836 and 1840 by Captain John Coghill as a country cottage for his family in Braidwood. The house was designed by John Verge, the designer of Camden Park.

For over 130 years the house was lived in by the Coghill and Maddrell families. John Coghill died in 1853 and the property passed to his daughter Elizabeth who had married Robert Maddrell in 1848. The contents of the house that accumulated during this time are still in place - a remarkable time capsule. The collection reflects changing tastes and social habits from Victorian through to Edwardian times.

Margaret and Roger Royds bought the property in 1972 and worked tirelessly to preserve this part of Australia's heritage, and their work is now being carried on by their daughter Sonia Horan and her family.



More views of Bedervale







Photograph of John Coghill on the left and the Maddrells on the right.



The wonderful original verandahs at Bedervale



Bedervale has its own railway track to bring firewood to the house.



We enjoyed lunch on the front verandah of historic Bedervale overlooking the garden and surrounding countryside. Included with lunch was a delightful cake which a number of passengers asked if the recipe could be secured. Our welcoming host at Bedervale, Sonia Horan, was happy to oblige.

### **Bedervale Coconut and Sour Cream Cake**

#### **Ingredients**

125g butter softened  
 1 cup of brown or white sugar depending on preference  
 2 large or 3 small eggs  
 1 carton of sour cream (say 150 to 175 mL)  
 1/2 cup of coconut  
 1 1/2 cups of SR flour  
 Sultanas or berries – optional

#### **Method**

Whisk sugar and butter together in bowl then add eggs and whisk again. Add the sour cream.

Add sultanas or berries if using.

Add the Coconut and flour mixed.

Put into a greased or baking paper lined cake pan.

If you haven't added sultanas or berries, put some sliced apple and a sprinkle of cinnamon and sugar on top to make it crunchy, or thinly sliced lemon.

Bake in 180 degree oven for about one hour. Cake is cooked when skewer comes out clean.

**NOTE:** If you bake this cake, please let Ruth know the volume of sour cream you used as Sonia's recipe did not specify the volume, so we have taken a guess.



## Braidwood Tour Mona

By Bud Townsing, photographs by Bud Townsing, Ruth Bailey and Jan Newby



**Mona Homestead**

Following Thomas Braidwood Wilson's death in 1843 Braidwood Farm was sold to John Coghill for £2,000.

John Coghill died in 1853 and Braidwood Farm was inherited by his daughter Elizabeth and her husband Robert Maddrell, who renamed the property Mona Farm.

The Maddrells built a home for their flour miller on the Mona Creek junction. This became their family home in the 1860's and today is the main homestead on the property.

Robert Maddrell died in 1900 and his son, Henry Francis Maddrell, inherited the property.

Henry Francis embarked on a "grand design" converting the homestead into a 30 room mansion to accommodate his six children and servants.

Henry Francis died in 1919 and left Mona Farm to his son Garnet who sold the property in 1934 to Arthur E Wilton.

The Great Depression prompted Arthur Wilton to reduce Mona Farm's operating costs by halving the size of the homestead and eradicated much of the garden. The magnificent elm trees, Victorian walls and entrance steps all survived.

In 1947 Arthur Wilton sold Mona Farm to Janette and Jock Mackay. The Mackays added a new wing to the west of the existing house, built a tennis court and a walled garden and generally resurrected much of the garden.

In 1995 the Mackays sold the property to Kerry and Greg Schneider who commenced extensive works as part of converting Mona Farm into a function centre with accommodation. These works included Mona Lake and the Palladian Bridge.



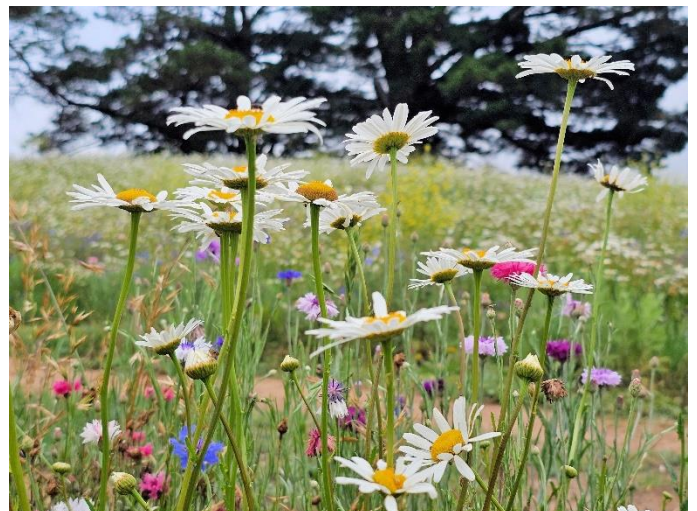
**The Palladian Bridge**



**Mona Lake**

In 2013 the property was purchased by Rose Deo whose love of horses saw the building of an Olympic sized Equestrian Centre.

In 2018 Mona Farm was purchased by Belinda and Bill Pulver. Since this time, Mona Farm has undergone a transformation with the installation throughout the estate of over 15 Australian and International sculptures, and one of the most significant contemporary art collections in Regional NSW.



**Photograph by Jan Newby.**



## Wine and Roses by Ruth Bailey

Committee members, Ruth Bailey, Eleanor Dartnall, Bud Townsing and Jenny Woodwell volunteered to support the inaugural Wine and Roses event created by the Illawarra/Southern Highlands Heritage Rose Group on Friday 10 November 2023 at The National Trust property Harper's Mansion in Berrima.



The Southern Highlands community was invited to attend the event so they could wander through the gardens at Harper's Mansion as well as the Mansion itself. About 400+ people attended the event which helped raise much needed funds for Challenge Southern Highlands, supporting people with disabilities in our community as well as the Regional Heritage Rose Group, to fund the conservation of old roses.



Jenny Woodwell interacted with many people throughout the gardens and distributed AGHS-SHB brochures listing our past 3 years' events and our mission. Ruth, Bud and Eleanor were located in the AGHS-SHB tent next to the Heritage Rose Group. They also engaged with many people and informed them about our activities and mission in the Southern Highlands as well as the AGHS nationally.

It was a glorious warm evening event from 4-7pm. The long shadows of the late afternoon sun cast a glow over the gardens which were spectacular. Les Musgrave (a long-term AGHS-SHB member) as well as his army of volunteers at Harper's Mansion garden, manage an extensive garden filled with beautiful perennials, camellias, old fruit trees plus many more shrubs and plants. Peter Rezek and his Heritage Rose Group volunteers, who tend heritage roses, provided an opportunity for people to view the collection of over 100 heritage roses many of which were in full bloom. Attendees were also able to enjoy a glass of wine from some of our best local wineries as they strolled the garden or sat in small groups throughout the garden to catch up with friends and family.

We were entertained also by a short play called "Persephone - The Goddess of Spring" performed by the Melting Pot Theatre which was enjoyed by all.



If you haven't been to Harper's Mansion recently, I encourage you all to take family and friends to visit and not only enjoy the heritage mansion and the gorgeous gardens but also explore the maze which is superb.

## Three Day Tour Programme for 2024

In 2024, it is proposed to include two, three day, tours in the Branch programme.

**From Tuesday 7 – Thursday 9 May** the New South Wales South Coast to include the Rectory Garden at Bodalla with accommodation at Batemans Bay. The Rectory Garden is a private garden with 12 unique gardens featuring approximately 1,000 plants and trees across the three acre property located adjacent to the historic All Saints Church.

**From Tuesday 19 – Thursday 21 November** the Hunter Valley including the spectacular Hunter Valley Gardens Christmas lights where you will create lasting memories strolling through magical themed light displays created with over 4 million lights. Also included will be a visit to The Bath Garden – a peaceful 4-acre country garden with climbing roses, stone walls and fruitful green spaces set in the rural surrounds of Historic Maitland.

## Advocacy

On 28 October Ruth Bailey wrote the following submission to Mr. Viv May the Administrator of WSC supporting the WSC Community Heritage Study.

“Dear Mr. May,

The mission of the Australian Garden History Society (AGHS) is to promote awareness and conservation of significant gardens and cultural landscapes through engagement, research, advocacy and activities. The AGHS - Southern Highlands Branch (SHB) is one of nine branches throughout Australia and we endeavour to stay true to this mission statement.

Consequently, as the Chair of the AGHS-SHB, I've been closely watching the creation and submission of the Community Heritage Study and have read through all of the available documents. The credentials of those who compiled the data underpinning the listings for heritage consideration are without reproach. Their motivation to help preserve the character of our towns and cultural landscapes is to be admired and supported. The due diligence in collecting the historical data associated with each property is outstanding.

While we recognise that not all owners of heritage properties may wish their home and gardens to be heritage listed, we hope the majority will understand the role that their property can play in preserving the character to the community as well as the value to their families by accepting heritage listing.

Without heritage designations many of our wonderful old homes and cultural landscapes are at risk from the NSW Government's Statewide aggressive high density development mandate. We are already experiencing the outcome of this directive in many green fill areas in the Southern Highlands. Whilst the AGHS-SHB is not against development we acknowledge there is a need for homes for all people within our community regardless of financial situation. However, developers are seeking to demolish old homes and gardens because many are on large blocks of land with significant trees and plantings which they deem expendable. If not stopped many old trees will be torn down and shrubs and perennial plantings removed which are irreplaceable. These developers already are subdividing large blocks into significantly smaller blocks with little, if any, space for trees or plantings. Once the heritage properties associated with our forebears are gone, the character of the Southern Highlands will be changed irrevocably to the chagrin of many people who live or move here to enjoy our unique environment.

The creation of new and extended Conservation Areas is also a positive and welcomed initiative. While there are heritage homes in these areas not all properties fall into this category. The creation of these Conservation Areas will create significant hurdles to developers who wish to build “high density” homes in heritage areas by demolishing homes which are not heritage properties.

The Conservation Area designation will also protect the Northern and Southern Entrances to Bowral plus many localities in the Southern Highlands not previously recognised as needing protection from development.

The AGHS SHB, with its almost 200 community members, strongly supports the Community Heritage Study and we hope this will be endorsed and implemented by the WSC.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Bailey PhD  
Chair AGHS-SHB”

## The Oasis of the Backyard by Patrick White

Whilst the Editor was consulting Morton Herman's book *The Early Australian Architects and Their Work* to write the Camden Park article he noticed a press clipping by Patrick White from the *Sydney Morning Herald* that Maureen Townsing had tucked into Herman's book in November 1973.

It is worth reflecting on Patrick White's letter fifty years later and wonder whether much has changed with the NSW Government increasing pressure for greater densities in most areas.

*“SIR - It is a sad reflection on our so-called civilisation that residents of Sydney in times of threat to their homes or way of life are forced time and again to turn to the Builders Labourers' Federation, involving them in constant vilification, misrepresentation by the media, and frequent loss of pay. It is a rare thing to find a union with so advanced a social conscience. But how much longer can the citizens of Sydney ask these men to endure the responsibility for protecting a citizen's right to live comfortably and without anxiety, a responsibility that should be taken by the Government if the Government were in good faith?”*

*Neither the NSW Liberal nor the NSW Labor Party appears to have more than a vague program of environmental protection. There is no real indication that historic buildings will not be capriciously destroyed, or that small communities of human beings will not be herded off like cattle, in the rush to accumulate money for certain individuals, and alas, power for the politicians who depend on them.*

*Anyone in his senses who has visited the large American cities of today (and who among the powerful has not?) ought to see that this is what we are headed for joyless warrens from which all the peaceful and consoling village aspects of life have been banished. Only the rich can afford to live in such cities because they can escape at will to what the majority are denied. As I see it, the oasis of the backyard is more important than the ultimately suicidal tower if the average citizen in our still developing cities is to preserve his peace of mind. He must also have more say in what is to become of him and his spiritual heritage. These vital needs are, I believe, what the much maligned builder's labourer and those that support him understand.”*

**PATRICK WHITE** Centennial Park *Sydney Morning Herald* Letters to the Editor 5 November 1973



## Advocacy

### 35-37 Station St Bowral

On 26 October 2023 a Land and Environment Court, Commissioner Peter Walsh, upheld an appeal by Djuric Property Pty Ltd (Djuric) on the basis of a deemed refusal by Wingecarribee Shire Council (WSC). A deemed refusal is when WSC has not determined the DA within 40 days of having received it.

The building will accommodate ground floor tourist and visitor accommodation in the form of hotel style rooms and serviced apartments, with a cafe and bar area, a street frontage commercial space and residential apartments. There will be a two-level basement car park.



The proposed new building is the above two brick structures on the left.



The site as it presently is with the Nissen hut on the left.



35-37 Station Street is now for sale, and the new building will obscure this view to Wingecarribee House in the background.



## FOR SALE

EOI - Now or Auction FEB 24

### DEVELOPMENT SITE

### DA APPROVED

MIXED USE RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL

MOTEL B&B

WEDDING RECEPTION

COFFEE BAR-RESTAURANT

si957@hotmail.com

ENQUIRIES: 0415 087 043 / 0425 070 217

The first plans submitted for the development submitted in 2022 have been amended with a modified building which will appear as two structures.

The parties (WSC and Djuric) reached agreement on the amended plans.

The Commissioner made the decision to approve the DA as he, rather than WSC, is the consent authority once a matter goes before the Court.

A summary of the Commissioner's reasoning in approving the DA is as follows:

1. The building satisfies design quality principles,
2. The parties were in agreement,
3. The development is permitted with consent in the Bowral E1 zone,
4. A joint report was prepared by heritage experts and the experts were satisfied, subject to certain provisos, that development was acceptable,
5. The driveway entry was acceptable based on the traffic studies and response from TfNSW.
6. The amended proposal had been notified to neighbours on 14 July 2023 and "only one submission was received which was supportive".

### Lessons to be learned from this DA.

This 35-37 Station Street building gives us a taste of what we can expect in Bowral as the building complies with the zoning.

Being next to a heritage listed item, the former butter factory, did not stop it. The joint report by Heritage experts referred to by the Commissioner is not available online.

The Statement of Environmental Effects of May 2023 supporting the 35-37 Station Street DA states:

*"The Bowral town centre as a whole, notwithstanding a very small number of individual heritage items, has no particular cohesive architectural character and is certainly not particularly sensitive in heritage terms in the same way as parts of Mittagong or Moss Vale town centres are."*

**This statement comes as something of a surprise to many of us and it is clearly a view of Bowral that we must actively dispel.**

The second lesson from the approval of 35-37 Station Street is the amended DA did not receive any objections when it was advertised in July 2023. Clearly, we need a system of regular monitoring of DA's and to put in submissions on developments such as this.



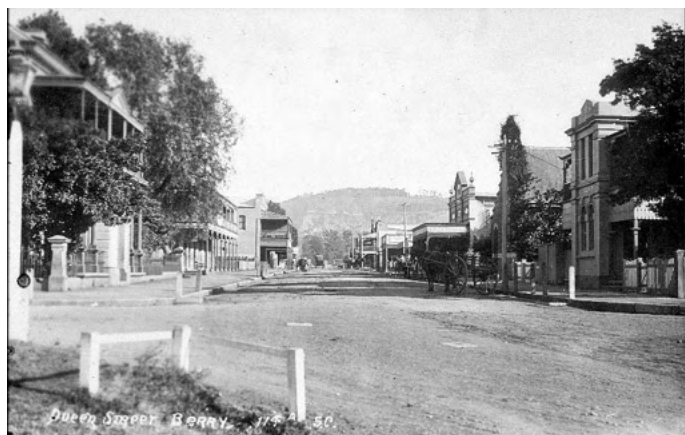
Photograph of the butter factory from the Bowral Jubilee Souvenir 1886-1936



## Advocacy - Berry Hotel Redevelopment RA23/1002

On 12 November AGHS-SHB submitted a 19 page objection to the proposed re-development of the Berry Hotel and adjoining land.

The Shoalhaven Council publishes on its web site, in the interest of transparency, all submissions in full when they are received. There were some 380 submissions on the proposed redevelopment of the Berry Hotel and 340 of these were objections.



Queen St Berry circa 1912, the Berry Hotel in its original form is the second building on the left. Image courtesy of the State Library of NSW.

The town of Berry is a significant cultural landscape of historical, aesthetic, architectural and community importance.

Australian Garden History Society has an Australia wide Landscapes at Risk list which includes the following section on Berry:

“Berry township and landscape setting, Shoalhaven.

Historic Berry was the key village servicing the vast 1822 Coolangatta Estate owned by Alexander Berry and his partner, Edward Wollstonecraft. Its 60,000-acre plus holding was originally used for cedar timber, then became prime dairy land, much of which remains.

But there is ever increasing unsympathetic development, much of it driven by Airbnb and complying development (which bypasses local council and neighbour notification). Council seems unable to value its real ‘asset’: this lush farming landscape with its sharp contrast at town boundaries, and views to the Cambewarra escarpment. The historical integrity of old Berry (east of the Princes Highway) which is listed by the National Trust as the Berry Township Urban Conservation Area, is being eroded. There is a risk of precedent in questionable approvals, piecemeal strip development south to Bomaderry and sprawl as rural blocks are bought.

Many heritage houses lack statutory listing, making them vulnerable. A new Heritage Conservation Area and a Development Control Plan specific to old Berry was written up gratis by the local historical society, but the Council seems unwilling to find the funds to implement them.

While the National Trust of Australia (NSW) has classified Berry District Landscape Conservation Area, it lacks legal protection, careful planning, heritage leadership and active management. The English ‘Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty’ classification is one option – strict zoning as ‘rural’ with non-variable minimum lot size, and strict urban boundaries.

Unless Shoalhaven City Council funds and takes an active management role in preserving local heritage, this unique township’s role in first European settlement on the east coast, will be lost.”

Our main objections to the Berry Hotel Redevelopment were:

- The development is out of scale and character with the historic town of Berry and in particular the Queen Street Conservation Area.
- Two existing significant trees at 120 Queen Street, a London Plane and a Tulip tree, are being removed as well as three old palm trees.
- The development will have an adverse impact on the 1889 CBC Bank at 122 Queen Street including the removal of a significant section of front fence.
- The proposed two/three story accommodation block fronting Princess Street is totally out of scale and character with Berry and in particular Princess Street.



The 1889 CBC Bank building, designed by G. Mansfield, heritage listed in the SLEP, and classified by the National Trust of Australia. Most of the original fence in this photograph below will be removed.



Opposite the Berry Hotel is the 1885 State Heritage listed, William Wardell designed, former ES&A Bank, now the Museum, and on the right is the former Post Office.

**If you want to read the AGHS-SHB submission please contact Ruth Bailey or Bud Townsing.**



## Christmas Drinks at Harpers Mansion

By Ruth Bailey photographs by Bud Townsing and Ruth Bailey.

Fifty AGHS-SHB members attended the annual Christmas Drinks at Harper's Mansion, Berrima on Friday 1 December.

We appreciated being able to hold our event at Harper's Mansion which would not have been possible without the support of Peter Rezek and Eric Savage and two National Trust volunteers who made the Mansion available for us to visit. The lawns and paths in the garden were in great shape after recent rain. There were some dark clouds in the sky but the weather held off.

Lloyd Brothers Wines from McLaren Vale in South Australia provided delicious red and white wine and Pascal from Kookabar Cafe provided canapés so together with the gorgeous gardens it made for a relaxing and enjoyable evening. We have received multiple notes of appreciation for the evening and for the programmes we have made available to our membership this past year.

We look forward to providing new opportunities to learn about garden and landscape heritage in 2024!



Ray Bradley, Bud Townsing and Mark Woodwell



### AGHS-SHB Committee

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

### Associate Members

Tours	Ray Bradley
NMC Representative	Lyn Barrett
WSC Heritage Representative	Laurel Cheetham