

Inflorescence

September 2023

The Newsletter of the Southern Highlands Branch of the AGHS



Events for 2023

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

25 October self-drive to Camden Park.

23 November one day coach tour to Braidwood. Tour is fully booked and is now wait list only. Should you wish to be placed on the wait list please contact Ray Bradley.

1 December Christmas drinks at Harpers Mansion.

Report from the Chair

With Spring upon us many events in the Southern Highlands are available for us to enjoy. We have been very busy these past few months organising events for the remainder of the year so we hope to see many of you attend if you can.

Our AGM and Winter Seminar in late August was a great success with over 50 attendees. Jenny Woodwell has captured the presentations in her report. I hope you too will be fascinated by the skill of dry stone wall construction and the beauty of Great Dixter.

We say farewell to our long-term member and delightful friend Hazel King. The Berry Garden Club, Berry Historical Society and AGHS-SHB members will miss her can do approach to gardens and history. A service to celebrate her life will be held on 27 October in Berry. All are welcome to attend.

The Heritage Study will soon be available for all to review online. Denis MacManus, Bud Townsing, Laurel Cheetham and Charlotte Webb plus many others have worked very diligently for years to advocate for the protection of our Southern Highlands heritage. Please support their efforts by writing to the Wingecarribee Shire Council if you agree with this initiative.

While Thrushwood, the beautiful collectors garden in Bowral has been sold we are showing some lovely photos of the garden in this newsletter and encourage you to go to the Berrima Museum and see the full slide presentation of the garden. Due to lack of available parking in the street this almost 50 year old garden was never shown to the public but was immensely enjoyed by family and friends. Also view the Isobel and Claude Crowe slide deck at the museum, it will provide much joy and insight into this industrious couple who helped change the landscape of the Southern Highlands.

The Balmoral Village Association held a Garden Party on 26 September to thank all of those who helped contribute to the

renovation of the Village Hall and surrounding areas after the Green Wattle Creek fire in December 2019. We helped a little and the results are wonderful. It was a lovely event to see them proud of their accomplishments and grateful to all who supported their efforts.

The Committee with the help of Deirdre Hill will be participating in the Greener Footprint Fair on Saturday 30 September in Bendooley precinct (near the Memorial Hall and Library) from 11-4pm to advocate for the planting of trees in current and new housing blocks, irrespective of size, the retention of trees where possible in existing gardens and local landscapes and to record gardens as the climate changes. Please come down and support our efforts.

We hope to see many of you at the Camden Park self-drive event on 25 October. Edwina and John Macarthur-Stanham worked very hard during Covid and since to make considerable changes to this old garden. If you have never visited Camden Park, the history of the family and their accomplishments illustrated within the house is remarkable.

Enjoy the promised warmer weather!

Regards,

Ruth

Chair

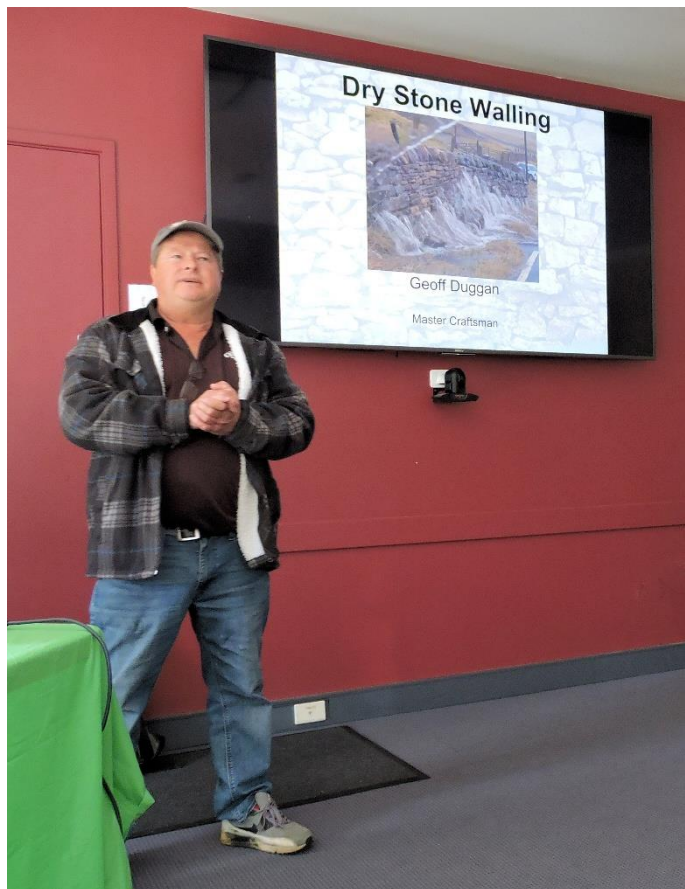
AGHS-SHB Committee

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

AGHS-SHB AGM and Seminar

East Bowral Community Centre 27th August 2023.
By Jenny Woodwell

Our first speaker was Geoff Duggan who is a Master Craftsman of Dry Stone Walling.



Geoff has more than 25 years experience in the construction of dry stone walls throughout Great Britain, NSW, Victoria and Tasmania for a variety of clients. He was instrumental in the design, construction and development of dry stone walls and dry stone sculptural features at the Australian Botanic Garden and Royal Botanic Garden, Sydney. He has developed and conducted more than 120 dry stone walling workshops over the last 20 years.

Geoff started with a poem:

Dry Stone walling by Pamela Ayres

*I'm a dry stone waller
And all day long I dry stone wall
Of all appalling callings
Dry stone walling's worst of all*

Geoff is passionate about his craft, and he says it is easy to tell the difference between a good dry stone wall and a bad one. It took Geoff quite a few years to become a master. He was working for the Royal Botanical Gardens in Sydney and went to the UK for training. Geoff has worked with different people, different stone and different accents!

What is a dry stone wall?

- Dry stone walling is the oldest form of stone construction. It is done without mortar holding the stones together. Each stone is "worked" or "placed" to fit perfectly to the stone beside it. This creates strong traditional structures that still stand for thousands of years to this day.

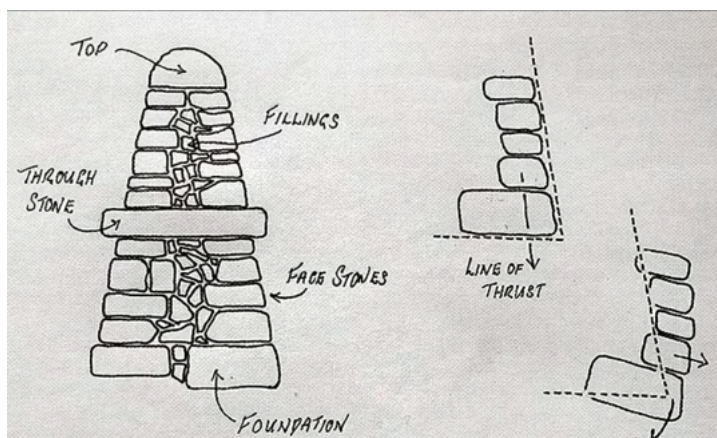
- Stones were used for shelter, fortification, gardens and landscapes and for sculptural purposes.
- Stones have been used around Australia for tidal fish traps.
- An example of neolithic housing exists at Skara Brae in the Orkney Islands.

Geoff explained the main principles of Dry Stone Walling:

- Dry stone walls are held together by the weight of stone and the skill of the builder who selects and fits the stones together.
- Dry stone walls contain no mortar. Only gravity and friction hold the wall together.
- Dry stone walling maintenance involves either stripping and rebuilding existing walls that have fallen into disrepair, or repairing gaps where the wall has collapsed.
- Walls are built up to the desired height layer-by-layer (course by course).

At intervals, large tie-stones or through stones are placed which span both faces of the wall and sometimes project. These have the effect of bonding what would otherwise be two thin walls leaning against each other, greatly increasing the strength of the wall.

Geoff explained that the higher the wall, the more complex the build. Structures can be put into the walls to help preserve the wall, such as steps and stiles, garden seats, retaining walls for steep slopes. Build like a Capital A, wider at the bottom. Arches and Bridges, moon gates, stone landscaping features



The Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain (DSWA) was established in 1968 and is a registered charity that works to advance education in the craft and heritage of dry stone walling for the public benefit. Since its formation the DSWA has grown into a national organisation recognised and respected for its work. The national office is based in Cumbria

and there are 18 regional branches spread throughout the UK. Aims – to promote the craft and hold examinations to provide certification.

Kiama quarry was used for dry stone walls in the 1860's to late 1800s, and a very interesting article about Dry Stone Walling around Kiama is found on this link, with an article by Thomas Newing of the Kiama Historical Society : [Dry Stone Walls Kiama Library \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.kiama.nsw.gov.au/dry-stone-walls)

Our second speaker was **Ben Hayman**, a Horticulturalist working on many gardens in the Southern Highlands.



Ben is a local lad and started as an apprentice motor mechanic before switching to study horticulture at TAFE.

Ben had the privilege of a visit to **Great Dixter** last July for a week and met its manager Fergus Garrett. There is an old timber gate and wandering path which provides an enchanting entrance way to the house.

The whole garden from every side engulfs the house. There is hardly a need to water, and the garden is improved with mushroom compost. It was decided that there would be no more mowing. A team is brought in for pruning every year. Ben showed a collection of interesting photos of the garden surrounding the house.

Great Dixter is a house in Northiam, East Sussex, England. It was built in 1910–12 by architect Edwin Lutyens who combined an existing mid-15th century house on the site with a similar structure brought from Benenden Kent, together with his own additions. It is a Grade 1 listed building. The garden, widely known for its continuous tradition of sophisticated plantsmanship, is also Grade 1 listed in the National Register of Historic Parks and Gardens.

The original Northiam house, known as Dixter, dating from the mid-15th century, was acquired by a businessman named Nathaniel Lloyd in 1909. He had a 16th-century house in a similar style moved from Kent and the two were combined with new work by Lutyens to create a much larger house, which was rechristened Great Dixter. It is a romantic re-creation of a medieval manor house.



Great Dixter photos courtesy Pinterest.de

Lloyd and Lutyens began the garden at Great Dixter, but it was Lloyd's son Christopher Lloyd, a well-known garden writer and television personality, who made it famous. The garden is in the arts and crafts style, and features topiary, a long border, an orchard and a wildflower meadow. The planting is profuse, yet structured, and has featured many bold experiments of form, colour and combination. The garden is currently managed by Fergus Garrett, who worked closely with Lloyd up until his death in 2006 as Head Gardener and introduced a number of innovations into the planting scheme.

The house and garden are open to the public from the end of March to late October each year, while the nursery is open year-round. In 2003, the Great Dixter Charitable Trust was established by Christopher Lloyd to ensure the property was preserved after his death. Education is at the heart of the trust's work. A number of student placements and scholarships are offered every year to ensure that the skills of managing an intricate, complex garden are passed on. In addition, study days, week-long Symposia, workshops and lectures are held frequently.

Ben gave us a great insight into the beauty of the garden with his slideshow and commentary.

Balmoral Village Thank You

By Ruth Bailey

In December 2019 the Balmoral Village was almost totally destroyed and the Village Hall was surrounded by fire. Much of their surrounding landscape, fence, playground and tennis court were severely damaged. Fortunately, the hall was saved and was used as a base for fire operations during the devastating Green Wattle Creek fire. We pledged \$1,200, the proceedings from our 2021 online book auction, to help replace trees lost in the fire. A plaque acknowledging our support will also be installed at a future date.

I attended the Garden Party at Balmoral Village on 26 September 2023 which was a thank you to all those groups who donated funds to the renovation of the Balmoral Village Hall surroundings. The organising committee and the community have worked very hard together over the 3 years and are nearing the completion of their plans. It was time to celebrate and thank all who supported their efforts. They were so appreciative of the many donations made to them including AGHS-SHB.

The hall has been painted and upgraded and gardens and facilities are now used by young and old in the village. Weddings and significant birthdays have been held there recently and its service capacity (solar panels and large battery) is well designed and prepared to deal with any unforeseen catastrophic event in the area. The gardens, tennis court and playground look amazing due to their hard work and careful use of funds provided by NSW State Government fire grants. The Wingecarribee Shire Council (WSC) has worked closely with the Organising Committee and integrated the committee into their strategic plans for future coordination with other rescue groups, if the need arises.

They have used our donated funds to plant a row of 8 Manchurian Pears behind the side garden and our Wariapendi gift certificate allowed them to purchase a lovely selection of native plants. These were intermingled with exotic hardy plants which were donated by the Highlands Garden Society Bowral (and I think the Bundanoon Garden Club). The gardens are really beautiful as you can see from the photos below.



Photograph courtesy John Swainston, Ruth standing in front of the Manchurian Pears.

Viv May, Administrator for WSC and Lisa Miscamble, General Manager for WSC were present as was Judy Hannan MP, Member for Wollondilly.

Ruth Bailey
Chair

Heritage Study

By Dennis McManus and Bud Townsing



The continuing good news on the Wingecarribee Community Heritage Study (the Study) is that it will now be on public exhibition from 3 October. You will now be able to see online all 609 items examined and the recommended listing of 464 sites and 16 conservation areas.

The Study provides an informed basis for the community to make a decision on the listing of heritage items in the Shire. Listing is a fairer and more transparent way of ensuring good management rather than ad hoc last-minute attempts to save items which has occurred in the past. **It is important that the Study receives active community support so please consider making a submission as noted below.**

Recognition of gardens and landscapes in the Study. A focus of most heritage studies is on built heritage, but it is worth noting that of the 464 recommended items 74 of them specifically mention the garden setting in the listing. While listing covers the building and site, the garden notation provides an additional flag that the garden is of interest in its own right. Importantly the Study recommends the future implementation of Landscape Conservation Area status to the historic Sutton Forest and Exeter district and Northern and Southern extensions to the current Landscape Conservation Area for Berrima.

The Study also recommends the listing of Hampden Park in Robertson, the Northern Entrance to Bowral (including the Pin Oaks and Camelias in Station Street, and the War Memorial Park), the Southern Entrance to Bowral including the Lions Park, and early roads in Robertson and East Kangaloon.

How to find out about the Study. You can access areas and make a comment by going to the council's website as explained below. There are many useful documents on the Community Heritage Study on council's website see:

<https://www.yoursaywingecarribee.com.au/community-heritage-study>.

How to make a submission or nominate an item. The public exhibition commences on Tuesday 3 October 2023 and will end on Monday 6 November 2023. All the documents will be available on the site from 3 October including the details of each of the sites and areas recommended and not recommended for listing by the Study. Members of the community are welcome to attend any of the numerous drop-in information kiosks that will be held in various locations across the Shire between 9 October and 1 November 2023. These sites and times are listed on the same internet site.

It is easy to make a submission or to nominate a site online. If you are not registered to use the Council's *YourSay* site, it's quick to do and you can make a submission or nominate an item straight away. **Closing date is 6 November 2023.**

The feedback submission form simply asks what you want to comment on and to give your comments:

https://www.yoursaywingecarribee.com.au/community-heritage-study/survey_tools/feedback .

The nomination form simply asks the item you want to nominate and why you think it should be listed.

https://www.yoursaywingecarribee.com.au/community-heritage-study/survey_tools/nominate-a-property

Two of the 74 items to include garden in the notation are Highdown and Beatrice Park:

Highdown is in Crago Lane on Notts Hill in Bowral. In the 1940s May Crago largely created its garden, with advice, plants and help from Berrima Bridge Nursery proprietor and garden designer, Claude Crowe. May Crago opened Highdown's garden to the public, attracting many through Bowral's Tulip Time for the benefit of local charities. It is currently the home of Jeanne Villani OAM who has restored and cared for the garden over the last six years.



Highdown October 2021 Bud Townsing photo.

Beatrice Park in Bendooley Street is of significance for its strong association with the gardening community and earlier garden competitions and open garden days. Beatrice Park and Yarrabin next door were prize winning gardens as early as 1958.



Nearmap image of Beatrice Park and Yarrabin 9 September 2023

Vale Hazel King

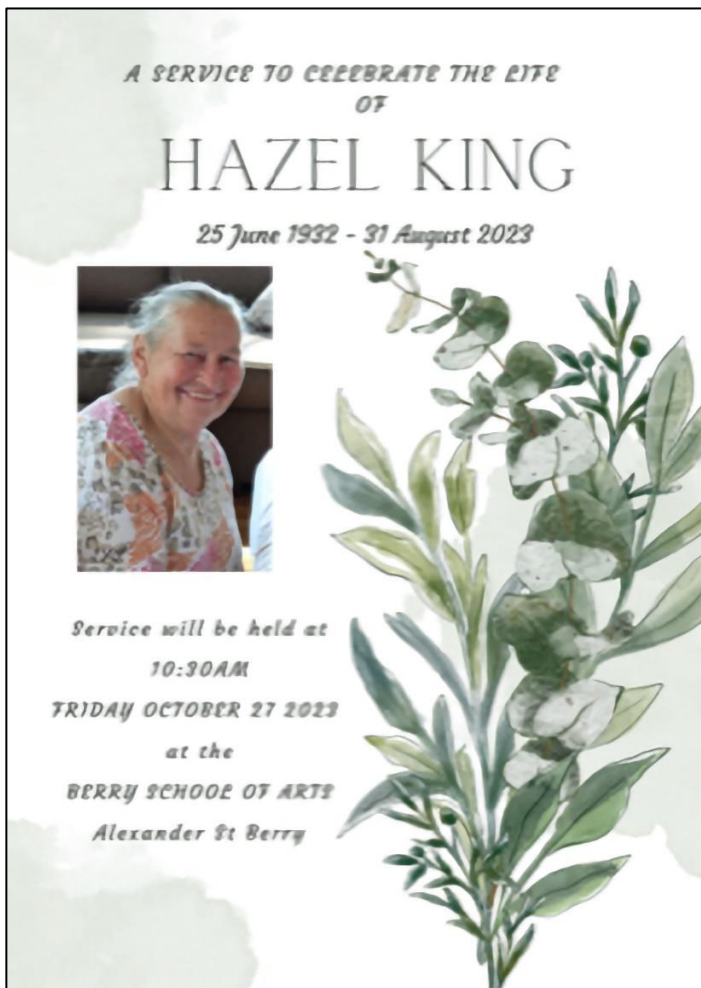
One of our beloved AGHS-SHB members Hazel King passed away on 31 August 2023.

Hazel's interest in the plant world began as a child as she grew up on the Dame Edith Walker Estate, Yaralla, where her father was the head gardener. Later Hazel spent much time in horticulture working in retail nurseries and teaching students. As secretary of the Australian Institute of Horticulture, NSW Council, Hazel took the opportunity of organising lectures, conferences and exhibitions for members and this enabled her to meet people from all sections of the gardening world. This work was recognized by making her a Fellow and Life Member of the Institute. In later years, with her great knowledge of plants, Hazel led garden tours both in Australia and overseas.

After retiring to Berry in 2001 and choosing to live in an area of historic beauty and where an interest in gardens was a high priority, Hazel continued her interest with the Berry and District Garden Club, Berry & District Historical Society and the AGHS-SHB. In 2020 Hazell and Peter Milthorpe wrote and published a beautifully illustrated book *Trees of Historic Berry* which is a wonderful publication to remember and reflect on the life and work of Hazel.

Hazel was awarded the Order of Australia Medal in 2021 for her service to horticulture and community history in the Shoalhaven.

A service to celebrate the life of Hazel is being held on Friday 27 October at the Berry School of Arts.



Ros Brooks, Eleanor Darnall, Ruth Bailey, Hazel King and Mary Williamson at Woodhill on 22 February 2023.

Nearmap Images Help Berry

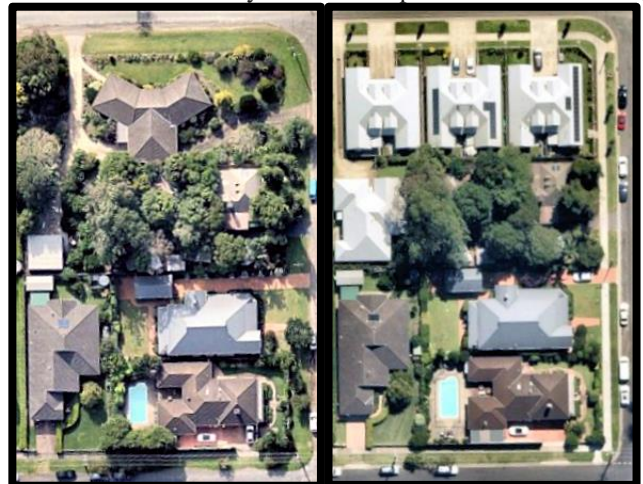
The Berry township and landscape setting is listed in the AGHS "Landscapes At Risk Watch and Action list", which says inter alia:

"rising tourist trade, day and weekend visitors/owners from Sydney, a Princes Highway bypass and a Council that seems to under-value its real 'asset': This lush farming landscape is a sharp contrast to town boundaries which are eroding its integrity. There is a risk of precedent in questionable approvals, piecemeal strip development south to Bomaderry and sprawl as rural blocks are bought, and subdivisions not-otherwise-permitted are approved. Many heritage houses and areas lack statutory listing, making them vulnerable."

To attempt to counteract this situation members of the community produced a new Development Control Plan and Heritage Conservation Area for the town, east of the Princes Highway. Representations have been made to Shoalhaven City Council and are on-going.

The Nearmap images provided by AGHS-SHB have been a powerful tool to influence local councilors on the need for immediate action. The images clearly show the rate of urban consolidation that has already occurred to this rural township between 2011 and 2023. The town and its buffer are listed by the National Trust of Australia (NSW), *"but it lacks legal protection, careful planning, heritage leadership and active management."*

The Nearmap image below left is the corner of North Street and Alfred Street Berry in 2017 compared to 2023 on the right



Thrushwood Garden

Thrushwood is a private garden in Bowral which had been in the same family for 47 years until its sale earlier this year. The owners were avid plant collectors and over the last decade had introduced many rare plants into the garden. It is a 2,782 m² property nestled under the western side of the Gib in a unique microclimate.

There is a presentation on Thrushwood at the Berrima Museum as part of the *Gardens and Landscapes of the Southern Highlands Exhibition*. These photographs are a sample of what is in the Museum presentation.



