



AGHS Queensland Branch Newsletter

February 2021

Qld Branch Report

Welcome Members to 2021. With COVID hanging around, uncertainty in relation to our ability to hold events still faces us. The Committee's position will continue to be that a few events will be scheduled for this year, however we need to remain agile and understand that events may be cancelled or postponed at short notice.

Committee member Helen Mackay has arranged with the owners a new date to visit Nindooibah Homestead on Tuesday 20 April 2021. You will receive an email invitation and booking form for this event.

A trip to Mackay is being planned for early June. The itinerary is currently being finalised and will include a visit to Greenmount Homestead, the location of AGHS Qld's 40th Anniversary project, which has been



John Taylor and Jane Lennon

coordinated by John Taylor – see the report in this newsletter, page 4.

The photos on this page were taken at the Christmas picnic at Tamborine Mountain Botanic Gardens, enjoyed by thirty or so members. Read more about this on page 2.

Ann Wegener
Chair



Catherine Brouwer, Glenn Cooke
and Graham Hesse

AGHS QUEENSLAND BRANCH Vice-Chair: VACANT
COMMITTEE CONTACTS

Chair: Ann Wegener
annwegener@me.com

Secretary: Lois Closter
lmcloster@gmail.com

Treasurer: Elizabeth Teed
geteed@bigpond.com

Newsletter Editor: Roberta Blake
roberta.r.blake@gmail.com

Members:

Tamborine Mountain Botanic Gardens

Alison Curtis

Tamborine Botanic Gardens in south east Queensland was a pleasant place on a hot summer day and was a great destination for an end of year recognition and gathering of AGHS Qld members.

With a rich history in mountain gardens, horticulture at elevation and on beautiful krasnozem soils, the botanic gardens were a great place to meet and visit. To see members – both familiar and new faces was also a welcome sight.

The Gardens show diversity which is also related to aspect, topography, resources, socio-cultural inputs and development timelines. As the Gardens were created by volunteers, there are various walks, views and spaces, all delightful. I enjoyed seeing the *Araucaria*

plantings and the remnant native eucalypt forest, and watching the other visitors engage with the gardens, imagining the many years of working bees and morning teas, stopping at the native hydrangeas (these were in my garden on the Toowoomba escarpment) and the beautiful drive to a regional place I hadn't visited before.

Thank you to Brian Davison, Curator, and Chris Davison, Historian, from the Botanic Gardens for their welcome information and

guided tour. Thank you to AGHS organisers as well.

After this gathering, I hope all had a pleasant festive end to the year and that you may take away some ideas – on how plants and gardens create social engagement, provide open space and evolve over the years and how the volunteer group has maintained its vision and tangible impact at that site, and as an example of a regional botanic garden.

For more information about the Botanic Gardens please see:

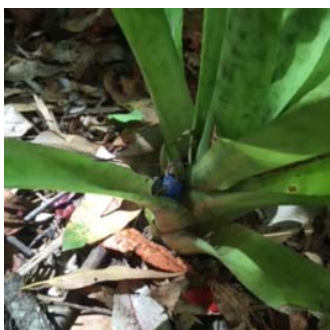
<https://tmbotanicgardens.org.au/>

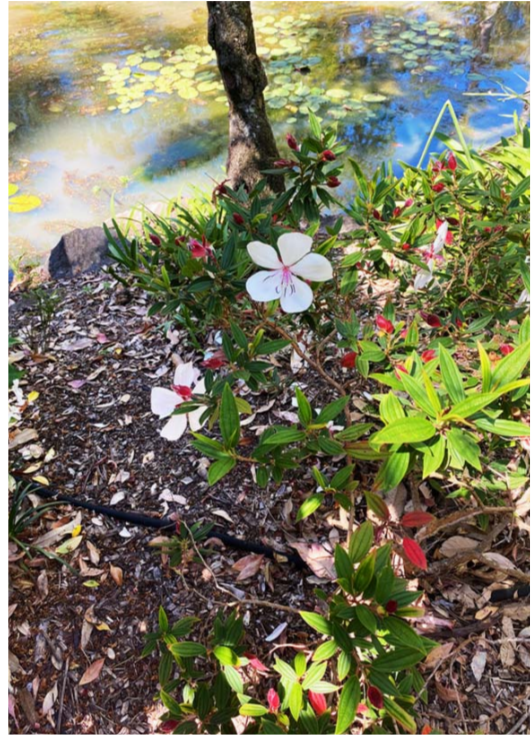


The Palm Grove section features the piccabeen palm, *Archontophoenix cunninghamiana*, which is indigenous to this area. These palms have aerial roots (shown right and below) that are exposed above the soil surface. This unusual feature allows them to absorb oxygen despite the water-logged soils of this place.



Native hydrangeas at Tamborine Mountain





Visitors were taken by this Princess flower, a species of Glory trees (*Tibouchina*).
Botanical name: *Tibouchina urvilleana*.



Flooded gum (*Eucalyptus grandis*).



Several signs are placed throughout the gardens, imploring visitors not to steal the plants!

Restoration Project for the AGHS 40th Anniversary Celebrations: Garden of Greenmount Homestead, Pioneer Valley, Mackay, Queensland

Greenmount Homestead, consisting of the main house and various outbuildings, is situated on an easterly slope with a ridge to the southwest. The site, one of the few elevated sites in the area, overlooks canefields, and contains a formal garden to the north, a dam to the east, and mature trees.

The main house is a single-storeyed timber building with a corrugated iron gambrel roof with projecting gables. The building is encircled by verandahs with lower skillion roofs which connect a kitchen house on the southwest and an office on the southeast, both with corrugated iron hipped roofs. The building has timber stumps with timber slab and woven sheet infill.

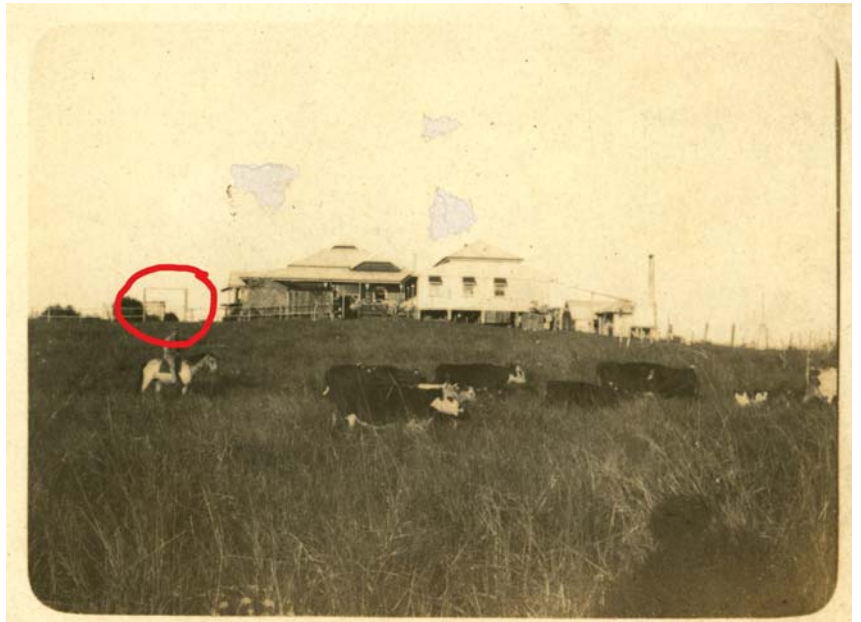
The formal garden to the north of the building comprises a circular drive and lawn enclosed by hedges and palms. A fernery is located to the west of the building. An avenue of mango (*Mangifera indica*) trees lining the original driveway is located to the south of the building and continues onto the adjoining property. Large figs (*Ficus sp.*) are located around the site, which is currently accessed from the northwest.

Catherine Brouwer completed a conservation study in 1997, and has been consulted in the process of drawing up these restoration proposals.

The property is owned and run by Mackay Regional Council and is staffed and open to the public every day.

The projects are as follows:

Project One – Replace several trees and plantings in the grounds immediately surrounding the homestead that have died or disappeared over the years. This includes a small number of commemorative trees



Greenmount Homestead in 1917. The arbour is circled.



Arbour in 1997 – in almost total disrepair.

planted by ‘important visitors’ to Greenmount throughout its history as a working cattle property. The Cooks had a tradition of having their special visitors, including the Governor of Queensland and other dignitaries, to plant a tree commemorating their visit at the time. These trees are identified by a low concrete marker in the ground that holds a plaque with the name of the visitor and type of tree.

Cost estimate = \$6,000.00.

Project Two – Replace a simple timber arbour in the garden immediately to the east of the homestead. The photo taken in 1997 on page 4 shows the arbour in poor condition (the original top piece had been replaced at some stage with a piece of steel cane track, also used for other makeshift repairs to fences on the property in the very late years). The arbour is a significant feature of the garden as Tom Cook, from the last generation of the family who owned and ran Greenmount, would meet his staff at the arbour each day to discuss the day’s work, and it is referred to as the ‘buddleia arbour’. The timber structure no longer exists, but the original buddleia remains in the same position. The replica would be in full timber, as per the original, and the selection and sourcing of the timber will be based on further research to establish the closest possible match.

Cost estimate = \$4,000.00

Total cost = \$10,000

The Queensland Branch will negotiate to have a suitable plaque recording the Society’s funding of the project installed on the arbour.

Progress report: Part One completed

The photos below and on the next page show some of the new plantings from Part One of the Greenmount project.



Two frangipanis, planted in the east side garden, outside the office wing.



A plaque at Greenmount Homestead.



Coffee tree, north lawn (existing tree planted by Vida Cook, first generation family member); pruned and protective ring added. We’ll keep an eye on this and have more pruning done when needed.



Cassia javanica, north lawn.



Hoop pine (*Araucaria cunninghamii*), north lawn.



Frangipanis planted outside the office wing.



Existing Chinese fan palm.



New Chinese fan palm.