

AUSTRALIAN  
GARDEN  
HISTORY  
SOCIETY

# Victoria Branch News

WINTER 2023

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Members

There is nothing like rugging up and bracing yourself for an invigorating outdoors adventure at this time of year, but I bet you are spending even more time indoors lately? Our online Webinars are a great way to enjoy a stimulating lecture without having to go out in the cold!

Your Victoria Branch is offering two interesting lectures online during the winter months. In June we have Dr Sarah Kirby, a musicologist & historian, speaking to us about the great exhibitions of the C19th and the gardens associated with them. In July we will welcome Dr David Marsh from the UK to entertain us with the history of 'Little Men in Red Hats', - the story of garden gnomes. Details of how to book can be found below.

If you prefer face-to-face events, on 30 August we will hold our annual AGM in Mueller Hall at RBG Melbourne. Last year we had a terrific turnout and I am sure it will be the same this year to hear well-known AGHS member and past Chair Helen Page speak about the Ken Duxbury Postcard Collection. Attendance is free for members but Helen has requested a donation to the Kindred Spirits Fund in lieu of a gift.

While you are keeping warm indoors, in this issue, you can read Allan Willingham's report about our successful Glorious Gippsland trip from early April. A most informative read!

Our Chair, Wendy Dwyer, having cycled across the Netherlands and tramped her way across Scotland is currently 'barging' her way through France. We hope that she and Mark are enjoying their break and come back refreshed with their batteries fully recharged.

Best wishes  
LYNDA ENTWISLE  
ACTING CHAIR



### Committee News:

Wendy Nichol, after organising several successful tours for members, has stepped down as our Events Coordinator. We thank her for her enthusiasm and her positive contributions to the committee. We are always looking for new ideas and assistance so please consider what you might be able to offer and contact a committee member.

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

The committee would like to welcome the following new and rejoining members: Sophie & Andrew Paterson, Andrea Clements, Liliana Flood, Marie Turnbull, Kate McEachern, Suzy Chandler, Rosemary Ulph.

### Diary Dates 2023

#### June

Tuesday 6 - Zoom Lecture, Sarah Kirby, 'Exhibitions, Music and the British Empire'. Details below

#### July

Tuesday 11 - Zoom Lecture, Dr David Marsh, 'Little men in red hats - the story of garden gnomes'. Booking details below.

#### August

Wednesday 30 - AGM and lecture at Mueller Hall. Refreshments from 5:30, AGM 6pm, lecture at 6.15

#### Sept

Friday 30 - Sunday Oct 2. National Conference, Ipswich

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Love of a crowd, a band, and "a gardens":

*Music, Recreation, and Gardens at Nineteenth-Century International Exhibitions*

by Sarah Kirby



Exhibition Building, Melbourne (State Library of Victoria, H35594)

**Date:** Tuesday 6 June 2023

**Time:** 6pm start

**Location:** Online via ZOOM

**BOOKING** [www.trybooking.com/CHCCX](http://www.trybooking.com/CHCCX)

A Zoom link will be provided by email 24 hr before the session.

**Enquiries:** Lynda Entwisle 0466 925 370

Sarah Kirby is a musicologist and cultural historian, specialising in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Australian and British music history. She is a recent doctoral graduate of the University of Melbourne, where her thesis explored music at international exhibitions in the British Empire. She is currently working as the Grainger Fellow at the University of Melbourne's Grainger Museum. Sarah has published widely on music in Britain and Australia, colonialism, women in music, and music in museums, and her first monograph, 'Exhibitions, Music and the British Empire', is out now with Boydell & Brewer. She lectures in undergraduate music history at the Melbourne Conservatorium and at the University of New England, is associated editor of the journal 'Musicology Australia', and was the 2022 Nancy Keesing Fellow at the State Library of NSW.

### Little Men in Red Hats: The Story of Garden Gnomes

by Dr David Marsh, The Gardens Trust, UK



**Enquiries:** Robyn Teed 0447 256 518

**Date:** Tuesday 11 July 2023

**Time:** 6pm start

**Bookings:** [www.trybooking.com/CHQEE](http://www.trybooking.com/CHQEE)

**Location:** Online via ZOOM

A Zoom link will be provided by email 24 hr before the session.

David is an honorary Senior Research Fellow at the University of Buckingham and a trustee of The Gardens Trust UK, the national campaigning body for the protection and support of historic parks, gardens and designed landscapes. He chairs their education and training committee and writes a weekly blog for them which you can find at [thegardenstrust.blog](http://thegardenstrust.blog).

From 2011-2022 David was one of the convenors of the History of Gardens and Landscapes seminar at the Institute of Historical Research at the University of London. From 2012 to 2016 he was also a trustee of Parks & Gardens UK which is the main on-line source of information about historic parks and gardens in the country

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### AGM 2023 followed by Helen Page, 'The Ken Duxbury Postcard Collection'

**Date:** Wednesday 30 August 2023  
**Time:** 5.30pm, refreshments  
**AGM** 6:00 pm  
**Lecture:** 6:15 pm  
**Bookings:** [www.trybooking.com/CHQEE](http://www.trybooking.com/CHQEE)  
**Location:** Mueller Hall, National  
 Herbarium of Victoria



When AGHS member Ken Duxbury, a town planner and landscape architect with a lifelong interest in gardens and a serious bug for collecting, died in March 2022, among his possessions were more than 1,500 garden-related postcards. These featured gardens across Victoria of many botanic and municipal gardens in Melbourne and country towns. Some date back more than 120 years and many show plants and horticultural features long since removed. The entire collection depicting botanic gardens has been accepted as a collection by the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria library. Helen Page will speak about this remarkable collection that charts our changing tastes in plants and garden design and also, our shifting priorities regarding sustainability, climate change and how much space and labour is devoted to public greenery. The talk will be accompanied by illustrations of these gardens 'lost in time'.

## WORKING BEE



**BELMONT, near Beaufort**  
**Sunday 25 June**  
 10 am start

These are MEMBERS ONLY events. Please register your interest with Di Ellerton.

[diana.ellerton@icloud.com](mailto:diana.ellerton@icloud.com) OR telephone 9397 2756



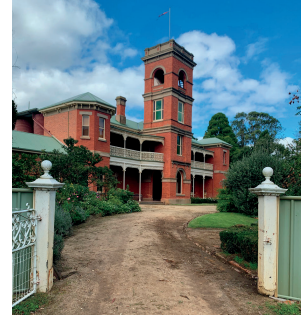
# EVENT REPORT

## Glorious Gippsland

**AGHS Garden Tour  
Saturday 1 – Sunday 2 April 2023**

by Allan Willingham

Our first garden stop was at the historic homestead **The Holey Plain** near Rosedale, where our very obliging hosts were Thea and Richard Crooke. Richard is the great-grandson of Edward Crooke (1810-1873), who purchased The Holey Plain cattle station in 1845. We were led by our friendly hosts to explore the homestead domain and outbuildings, the mature and well maintained gardens (which are largely retained and conserved in their original form and layout), Thea's ever-developing rose garden, the historic trees (including a Coral Tree, Bunya-Bunya Pine, *Michelia doltsopa*, and a magnificent Tulip Tree), the original homestead gates, as well as the fascinating red brick ruins of a culturally significant hothouse and the adjacent near intact boiler house.



A picnic lunch box was taken in the picturesque rear courtyard, where local historian Ann Andrew had earlier delivered an erudite account of the history of the property and the trials and tribulations of the Crooke family, to include extracts from her recently published and authoritative history *Success in Kangaroo Land: The Crooke family of the 'The Holey Plain' (2022)*. Therein, Ann Andrew devotes a page to the horticultural interests and endeavours of Edward Jolley Crooke (1861-1940), a noted cultivator of flowers and exhibitor of chrysanthemums and roses at local and distant horticultural shows. Jolley Crooke also sponsored substantial improvements in the layout and further plantings of the encircling garden and construction of the new brick homestead in 1890, as well as further additions and improvements to The Holey Plains mansion in the early 20th century. Many AGHS members acquired Ann Andrew's publication before departing by coach for the Port of Sale and a cruise on the **EMV Rubeena**.



This electrically powered wooden vessel was built in 1912 and now takes passengers on quiet cruises down the Latrobe River at the weekend to its junction with the McAlister River, to see the historic Swing Bridge, the oldest road/river bridge of this type in Australia. It has an impressive central swing span of near 46 metres. The wrought-iron lattice bridge, which was opened for us during our visit, was designed by the noted architect/engineer John Harry Grainger (1854-1917) and completed in 1883. Grainger also designed the pretty Princes Bridge in Melbourne and otherwise was the father of one George Percy Grainger (1882-1961), our somewhat notorious yet celebrated Australian musician and composer.



Top to bottom: The Holey Plain, The Rubeena, the Swing Bridge

Late in the afternoon, we journeyed to **Kilmany Park** at Wurruk, west of Sale, to survey both the exterior and interior of the massive stucco-rendered Late Boom Style two-storey mansion as well as the surrounding broadly landscaped gardens. Kilmany Park is one of the oldest pastoral seats in Gippsland, being established by Scottish settler William Pearson (1818-1893) in 1841. Whilst there was very little historical information on Kilmany Park in the Tour Notes, a web link therein was most rewarding, for Julie Katz had researched the cultural and social history of this ponderous pile in lucid detail, revealing everything about the place except its formidable architectural origins.

We went upstairs and onto the wide encircling balcony to view the garden from an elevated vantage point.

The surrounding garden was of interest to us all as there were many notable mature trees in the mansion environs, including the symbolic English Oak (*Quercus robur*) planted to the west of the mansion by the Duke of York (later King George V) on 15 May 1901. We also looked at the rejuvenated rose beds and central rose garden, the fountain, and several outbuildings, including the much emasculated brick stables. In recent times the current owner has recovered much of the integrity of the mansion, evidently lost or concealed during its institutional use. Well chosen local wine and cheese were served to us all in the stair hall during our visit, which ended in the rear courtyard right on 5.00 pm.

Overnight, the AGHS crew spent the night at the Matador Motel in Sale, with an early gastro-pub dinner at the Criterion Hotel ('The Cri') followed by an extra hour of daylight-saving nap. Breakfast was one of those so-called Bull Fighter's Continentals, with the coach departing for the Sale Botanic Gardens right on time (8.55 am). At the SBG, the AGHS were met by the Friends, who took our party in two groups on a revealing tour of the Gardens, to include a path following much of their Significant Tree Walk.

## Glorious Gippsland report (continued-)

The **Sale Botanic Gardens** were first reserved as a 34 acre [13.75 hectares] plot on the banks of the Eastern Swamp, with the initial plantings supplied by von Mueller. Of note is the fact that in 1875, a mass of Blue Gums (*Eucalyptus globulus*) were planted, ostensibly to absorb the 'swamp vapours' otherwise held to be linked to the outbreak of fever at Sale. The SBG now covers some 5 hectares and is strategically located on the eastern banks of Lake Guthridge (once the veritable swamp). At Sale, the gardens suffered from municipal indifference and neglect for many years, but in recent times, the Sale Botanic Gardens, like many other regional botanic gardens in Victoria, have been recovered and much of the original character reinstated. Eight Living Collections are now located within the area to include an interesting Climate Matched Collection established under the design/direction of Andrea Proctor and the Friends in 2021. Much contemporary sculpture has also been introduced into the SBG domain in the last two decades to include a Kurrajong Seed Pod by Viktor Cebergs (2003), the Eucalypt Sculpture at the main gates by celebrated local artisan Annemieke Mein OAM (2008) and a Shimmering Penny Tree by Andre Sardone (2022).



**Bon Accord** in Sale, was built for Dr William Forbes MRCS, in the late 1870s. The picturesque Victorian Italianate style single-storey attic villa with red brick stables and timber outbuildings originally stood on a 21 acre [8.49 hectares] parcel of agricultural land on the outskirts of Sale. The house garden was evidently established in the early 1880s in a gardenesque style reminiscent of designs published by John Claudius Loudon in his Early Victorian era encyclopedias and pattern books relating to cottage villa design and horticulture. A very helpful plan of the garden layout for Bon Accord was included in the Tour Notes, with 47 plantings identified with both their common and botanical names. From there we departed for another recently established garden with myriad plantings at Homelea on the Serpentine Creek, west of Maffra.

Clockwise from top: view from Kilmany balcony, Bon Accord, Sale; Boisdale Homestead water tower;

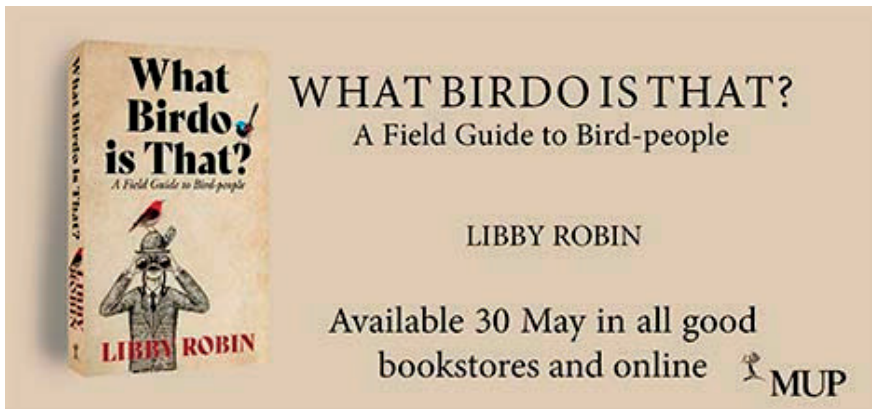
The story of the development of the **Homelea** garden in the last two decades by the Bedggoods is recorded in entrancing detail by Di Bedggood, a local gardening enthusiast and currently the secretary of the Maffra Garden Club. Her notes formed part of the AGHS Tour Notes and during our short visit to this former farmhouse property of 14 acres [5.66 hectares] abutting the Serpentine Creek, we learnt of the Bedggood's incessant work to create a new garden around the old late Victorian era weatherboard farmhouse (now much altered and extended by Ron Bedggood, a noted house builder of Maffra fame). Our meander through the colourful garden beds terminated on the banks of the Serpentine, where magnificent Red Gums line both banks, and a great variety of wildlife is evident.

Then, around midday, we set off for **Boisdale Homestead**, north of Maffra, the final stop on the 'Glorious Gippsland' tour. The coach entered the homestead reserve via a tight bush plantation teeming with Common Brown Butterflies, to arrive at the Boisdale Stables and a welcome from our hosts Sophie and Andrew Paterson. Boisdale Homestead is strategically sited to capture the panoramic views over the fertile flats to the distant ranges and forests. The unusual mansion was built in 1892 for Askin Foster from a pioneering Transitional Arts & Crafts design by Melbourne architect Robert Guyon Whittlesey Purchas (1862-1940). The single-storey red brick mansion is characterised by an unusual 'boomerang' floor plan, wide shady verandahs, towering red brick chimneys, an attic-style monitor skylight over the central hall, and sweeping roof pitches clad with imported Marseille-pattern terracotta tiles. It was a privilege to be able to see the interior of Boisdale and also to wander around the expansive homestead garden on an informal tour led by Sophie Paterson. We came to see and appreciate the Boisdale gardens and the wider cultivated landscape and Sophie's extensive notes of her 'garden features and the things to look out for' made navigating around the homestead driveway, front garden, the Soldiers Point, the pool and the cottage garden area very easy.

Finally, our coach captain Christine brought us back to Melbourne, Federation Square punctually at 5.45 pm. Clearly the tour was very well organised and the coach complement were very appreciative of the efforts of the Committee in attending to our needs. Both days were characterised by a spirit of bonhomie, stimulating banter and a willingness of all participants to benefit from shared experiences.



## ALSO OF INTEREST



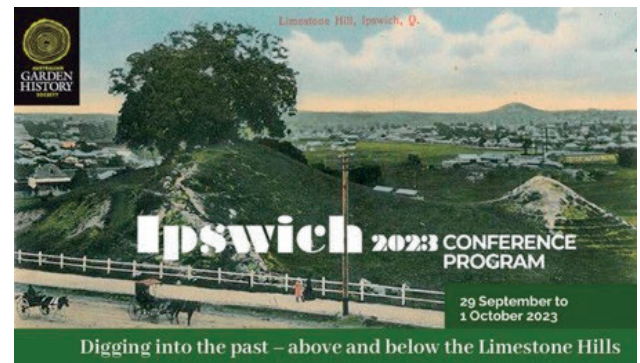
**What Birdo is That?** reveals how bird-people in Australia have gone about their craft across the years. Its stories come from wild places – at sea as well as on the land – from dusty archives, from restoration projects, gardens and urban wastelands. This field guide to Australia's bird-people provides a basis for understanding the complex relationship between people and birds in a land of extremes at the forefront of changing climate and habitats. Professor Libby Robin is an independent non-fiction writer and prize-winning author whose work explores museums and environmental ideas.

### AGHS Annual National Conference 2023

29 September to 1 October 2023  
Ipswich, Queensland

“Digging into the past – above and below the Limestone Hills”

Visit the website to download a copy of the [Conference Brochure](#)



## VICTORIAN BRANCH COMMITTEE

**Chair & Secretary :** Wendy Dwyer  
**Vice Chair and Newsletter:** Lynda Entwisle  
**Treasurer:** Anna Long

**Working Bee Coordinator:** Diana Ellerton  
**Projects:** Trevor Pitkin  
**NMC Rep:** Michaela Hill  
**Catering Coordinator:** Annie Woodside  
**Booking Officer:** Robyn Teed  
**Events Coordinator:** Vacant  
**Advocacy:** Ros Savio & Michaela Hill

We meet on the 4th Tuesday of the month, 4.30- 6pm at Burnley Gardens. We welcome members to join committee meetings at any time. If you wish to discuss opportunities to get involved please contact Wendy Dwyer [aghsvicbranch2@gmail.com](mailto:aghsvicbranch2@gmail.com), or contact a committee member. Go to our Webpage [www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/branches/victoria/](http://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/branches/victoria/) for more news and updates. Contributions to the newsletter are always welcome and should be addressed to [aghsvic19@gmail.com](mailto:aghsvic19@gmail.com) with newsletter in subject line.

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