

Australian Garden History Society

Western Australian Branch

Autumn Newsletter 2020

The Australian Garden History Society promotes awareness and conservation of significant gardens and cultural landscapes through engagement, research, advocacy and activities.



Western Australian Branch

Contact: Sue Monger
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WA Branch Committee

Chair: John Viska (johnviska@gmail.com)

Secretary: Lynette Petersen

Treasurer: Max Stewart

NMC Representative: Patsy Vizents

Membership: Sue Monger

Website & Newsletter: Lyn Oliver

General Committee: Ros Stewart, Boris Roglich

Australian Garden History Society Inc.
ABN 97 291 212 843



40th Anniversary Theme People, Plants and Places

Welcome to the Western Australia Branch. Our Branch has approximately 75 members throughout the state. We conduct numerous events during the year, including lectures and garden visits. Members, guests and visitors are welcome to all events. We communicate with our members by newsletter, emails and the AGHS website for all events.

<https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au>
info@gardenhistorysociety.org.au

Dear AGHS Member
You are invited to the AGHS

40TH ANNIVERSARY Virtual Garden Party

2020 marks the 40th Anniversary of the formation of the Australian Garden History Society.

Throughout the year our WA Branch is planning a range of activities and events to mark this milestone and we are starting the celebrations with a garden party that will coincide with all the other branches in the country.

It is a national celebration day and time.

WHEN: Sunday 22 March 2020 – 1.30pm to 3.00pm

WHERE: Harold Boas Gardens, Wellington St. West Perth (Approach from the middle of Delhi Street and look for the AGHS Event sign.)

WHAT: A Virtual Garden Party that will occur at the same time, throughout the country, where we can mark the anniversary of the 40 years with a toast, bright conversation and big plans for the future. It is a chance to reflect on what has been achieved by the AGHS and to welcome the future in this new decade. There will be cake, celebratory beverages, camaraderie and a chance to wander around Harold Boas Gardens. Please bring your own chair.

RSVP: Lynette Petersen, email: lpetersen@aapt.net.au, mobile 0439941822 by Friday 13 March 2020

AGHS 40th Anniversary, John Viska

This year is an important one for the Society as it celebrates forty years since its inception, below is a summary of the foreword that Dame Elisabeth Murdoch wrote for the Proceedings of the First Garden History Conference held in Melbourne March 28-29,1980. This was organised by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) in conjunction with the Australian Heritage Commission and over the two days 14 papers were delivered on various topics pertaining to Australian gardens. From WA, Oline Richards, a private consultant who had undertaken a survey of historic gardens in Western Australia for the Heritage Commission, presented a paper titled *Gardens in Remote Areas*. A copy of this important document is held in the Battye Library Perth.

Prior to the formation of the AGHS a series of events took place, with the first in 1978 in Launceston with a group of people who were engaged in the first survey of historic Australian gardens. This had been initiated by a grant from the State Government of Victoria to the National Trust of Victoria for a survey of Victorian gardens. Consequently the Australian Heritage Commission made funds available for surveys to be undertaken in other states. All involved saw merit in bringing people together from different parts of Australia who had a common interest in historic gardens, to exchange views and knowledge and consider forming a Garden History Society. At the end of that conference a Garden History Society was formed, a draft constitution was adopted and ten committee members were elected with power to co-opt five more members from differing areas of expertise..
She concluded:

The Society will be an important organisation for educating the community about garden history of all kinds, from large historic gardens to small cottage

gardens and collection of plant material. It will also publish a journal in which members can exchange views and information and learn of the most up-to-date research and legislation.

Many gardens have been surveyed and recorded but there are undoubtedly more and it is vital that we discover these before they disappear. It is also necessary that we record ,collect, propagate and distribute those plants which are an essential part of old gardens. With the formation of the Garden History Society we have made a positive statement about recognising these gardens as an important element of our history and the National Estate.

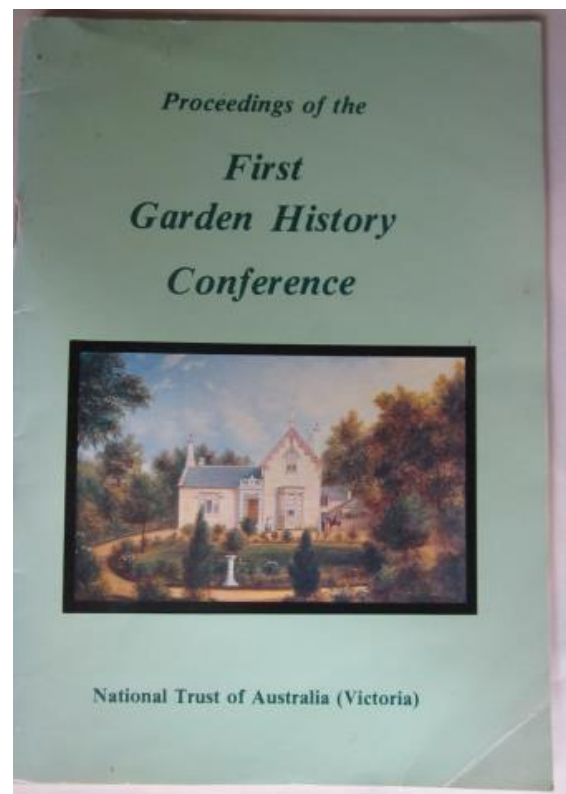


Image of the cover of *The Proceedings of the First Garden History Conference 1980*

These initial aims have been largely met but now it is becoming that the role of the Society is changing with many gardens and landscapes falling into the category of Landscapes At Risk with the recent discussion of a cable car from Elizabeth Quay to Kings Park a prime example.

WA will be celebrating the formation forty years on with the rest of the state branches on Sunday 22nd March at 2.00 pm with a virtual garden party. See your invitation and details of the event on the front page of this newsletter.

A Rare Historic Find

We have heard that a member of the branch recently purchased a copy of the second edition (1824) of J.C. Loudon 's Encyclopaedia of Gardening. Although the majority of his works were concerned with garden design, horticulture and agriculture he also wrote on architecture and interior design.

Landscapes at Risk – AGHS Advocacy Issue

Kings Park Cable Car, Patsy Vizents

The Proposal to run a cable car from Elizabeth Quay on the foreshore of the city, across the Mitchell Freeway and Mounts Bay Road and then up and into Kings Park was presented in 2014 by Planning Minister John Day, as part of the Elizabeth Quay development. The topic has been regularly in the local papers with Tourism WA actively promoting this construction as a way to bring more people into the historic landscape of Kings Park. The concept has been rejected by Chairman of the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority, Richard Simpson noting that this would threaten the aesthetics, values and fabric of the Park. The link is provided here.

<https://thewest.com.au/news/perth/kings-park-chief-rejects-cable-car-proposal-ng-b88524848z>

Chairman of WA Branch of AGHS has written to Friends of Kings Park to join in the protest regarding the impact of a cable car on the heritage landscape of Kings Park and the vista of the city of Perth. There have been letters written by members of the public to The West Australian newspaper and to Members of Parliament, so individuals are speaking out. However, there is no public outcry, mainly because it is in proposal form and it possibly all hinges on the election of the next City of Perth Council and Mayor in October 2020. The NMC of Australian Garden History Society is supporting the WA Branch in their concern for such a development and members are encouraged to contact their local member of parliament to voice their concerns and comments as well.

A survey on the future management of Kings Park was made available to the public in December-January and WA Branch of AGHS forwarded this out to members and the public, explaining how they can contribute to maintaining the Park in its present form.

Images of the proposed location and appearance:



These illustrations have been used in articles announcing the development, showing the pylons alone to be huge (30m) and the required “stations” where visitors can alight also having considerable impact on the location. These will clearly have an intrusive impact on the landscape and amenity of this unique and treasured site of recreation and research. According to the Destination Perth website, 6 million people already visit Kings Park annually.

This proposal will impact the sacredness of the space as a place of memorial and reflection and as a major site for Wadjuk Noongar people, custodians of the land where Perth is located, to gather, identify with and tell their stories.

2019 Christmas Party, John Viska

On Sunday 8th of December the final event of the year was the Annual Christmas Party held at branch member Elizabeth Atkins' historic home in Guildford. The 26 members who attended were met by her in the front garden and heard about the mature plantings of the garden. These included a large Poinciana *Delonix regia* and the remains of a cork oak *Quercus suber* grown from an acorn by her husband. Other highlights were a substantial olive, from the original garden layout, aged camellias, jacarandas, crepe myrtle, oleanders an old wisteria which originally covered a pergola on the front veranda. A rare sight was the seldom seen tropical Rangoon creeper *Quisqualis indica*. The attendees were then privileged to have a guided tour of the principal rooms of the house and were impressed with the spectacular stained glass in the entry vestibule, the size of the drawing room and the high ceilings throughout.



Elizabeth Atkins and John Viska. Photo: L Oliver



AGHSWA members enjoying the dappled sunlight in the garden. Photo P. Vizents

Members then partook in the Christmas fare and the annual quiz on the spacious veranda at the rear of the residence overlooking the tennis court and paddocks beyond leading to the river, as the property still holds its riparian rights.

The red brick residence named Mandoon was completed in 1903 for Dr J Fergusson Stewart and was described as a bungalow and is built in the Federation Style. As well as being his residence it also consisted of a surgery and waiting rooms, accessed by a separate entrance from the front garden. Painted wood graining is used throughout the house and there are two marble fireplaces with one featuring Minton tiles. Elizabeth and her husband the late Peter Atkins purchased the house in 1962 taking up residence in 1963.

AGHS New Zealand Conference Slide Night



Join us for an old fashioned slide night when John will present photographs of some of the highlights and beautiful gardens visited during the AGHS New Zealand Conference. Friday 17th April at 43 Lawler Street, North Perth. 7pm to 9pm. Free event with light supper provided. RSVP Lyn Oliver at laoliver@iinet.net.au by Wed 15th April. Due to venue size the number of tickets is restricted to 20 only.

Handle with Care: Collectable glass for the garden

Sunday 17th May, 2pm to 4pm, \$10 at The Grove Community Learning Centre, 1 Leake Street, Peppermint Grove.* This illustrated talk will explain how the fragile medium of glass was used in commercial and ornamental gardening in the pre-plastic era. Hear the story of how the items from a Western Australian collector were discovered and the subsequent building up of the collection over many years. Examples from this unique collection will also be on display. This talk is part of the celebrations for the ***40th Anniversary of the Australian Garden History Society*** and the Australian Heritage Festival 2020 theme 'Our heritage for the future'. Tickets can be pre-purchased online at Eventbrite or at the door.



Victorian bell glasses. Photo: L Tang

Enquiries to Lyn Oliver at laoliver@iinet.net.au. * Parking available under the Library.

Georgiana Molloy — In Her Own Words

The Royal Western Australian Historical Society Inc is hosting a talk by author Bernice Barry on Friday 20 March 2020. Arrive at 10.00 for 10.30 am start

Venue: Stirling House 49 Broadway Nedlands

Tickets \$10 each and bookings are essential

Tel: 9386 3841 / Email admin@histwest.org.au



Georgiana Molloy was Western Australia's first internationally successful female botanist and yet her work collecting plant specimens for Captain James Mangles began just six years before she died. Her gardens in Augusta and Busselton, and the native plants she found around her in the bush, were her passions but life as one of the first European settlers in the colony meant that she rarely had time to devote to botany. Fortunately for us, many of the letters she wrote and some of her journals have survived. Drawing on historical information from her own writing, this talk will consider her life, work and the world around her, including botany, early colonial settlement in the southwest and the significance of viewing history through the lens of nineteenth century emigrant letters and diaries.

CY O'Connor Lecture 2020

The National Trust WA is holding this talk presented by the Governor of Western Australia, The Honourable Kim Beazley AC on 10 March 2020.

Arrive at 5:45pm for a 6pm start. Finishes at 7:30pm. Venue: State Library Theatre, 25 Francis Street, Perth. Tickets available at <https://2020cylecture.eventbrite.com.au>

Price: Adult \$20, Conc. \$15, Members \$12. Plus booking fee. Tel: 9321 6088

Playing to our Strengths

CY O'Connor casts a long shadow over the history of Western Australia. He was a committed public servant in a period of popular criticism. He was an innovator driven by a vision of the State's development, surrounded by the dully critical. Then, success or failure was cocooned by the embrace of membership of the British Empire. We are strong but exposed. Contemporary global politics and trends challenge us. How we meet this will determine our happiness and maybe our survival. The Governor will comment on these matters. *All welcome. Light refreshments will be served after the lecture.*

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/event/cy-oconnor-lecture-2020/>

New Members

A warm welcome is extended to Belinda Forster.

Members Honoured

Congratulations to founding branch members Bronwen Keighery and Greg Keighery who were mentioned in the this year's Australia Day Honours list. Each was awarded an OAM for service to conservation and the environment. Over the years they have been very supportive, assisting in the 2014 Albany Conference with Greg delivering papers at three National Conferences held in WA as well as the 2013 Tree Forum.