

Australian Garden History Society

West Australian Branch

Summer Newsletter 2023

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



Welcome to the Summer Newsletter

Happy New Year and welcome to the first newsletter for 2023.

The outdoor functions of the 2022 program were proven to be popular and well attended by members and their friends. This year's calendar of events is currently being prepared and once again will include the popular day in the country.

The Bassendean Historical Society and the Museum of Perth who have initiated a program to interpret the garden of the Pensioner Cottage in Bassendean have invited the branch to be involved. The property was the venue for the 2022 Christmas windup where 30 members and their friends attended and heard Paul Bridges, the President of the Bassendean Historical Society and Reece Harley, Executive Director of the Museum of Perth, outline their vision for the project.

This year, the Rose Society of Western Australia is celebrating 90 years since its formation in 1932 and these will culminate with the National Rose Show Championships and Conference October 21 and 22, 2023 in Perth.

John Viska Chair AGHS WA Branch

West Australian Branch

Contact: Lynette Petersen (lpetersen@aapt.net.au)

West Australian Branch Committee

Chair: John Viska (johnviska@gmail.com)

Secretary: Lynette Petersen

Australian Garden History Society Inc. (Inc in NSW)
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Welcome to the West Australian Branch. Our Branch has approximately 60 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, email and the AGHS website for all events.

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

New Members

It was pleasing to note that some members friends who attended last year's functions expressed their delight and intended joining the branch. We welcome new members Patricia Clark, Elizabeth Hobbs, Odhran O'Brien, Margie Tannock and Susan Maller. We look forward to meeting you at some of our events during the year.

National Conference Bunbury WA 2024 *John Viska*

The 2024 National Conference in WA will be held in Bunbury on the 18th, 19th, 20th of October 2024 with Monday 21st October as the optional garden viewing day.

Thanks to the members who volunteered at the August AGM to be on the conference sub-committee. At its first meeting the committee's role and the scope of the conference were detailed. The branch executive visited Bunbury in December to meet with the Deputy Mayor to inform her of the conference dates and its format with discussion on the forms of support the City of Bunbury could provide.



Bunbury Regional Entertainment Centre (BREC)

Image: Visit Bunbury.com.au

The Bunbury Regional Entertainment Centre (BREC) has been officially booked and the Bunbury Museum Heritage Centre and Bunbury Regional Art Gallery (BRAG), both within easy walking distance, were visited to investigate how they could be utilised during the conference. A report tabling the dates and current progress was presented to the NMC Committee meeting prior to the Tasmanian Conference.

Congratulations to Caroline Grant *John Viska*

At the 2022 National Conference held in Tasmania, Caroline Grant was elected a member of the National Management Committee at the Society's AGM. In her time as a WA branch member, she has been the State Representative as well as Branch Chair. With Patsy Vizents, the current state representative, the branch now has two members on the NMC. Seven WA members attended the Conference that was held in Hobart.

Historic Gardens of Perth Publication Update John Viska

Forthcoming publication update, *Historic Gardens of Perth: Early Settlement to Modernism*. The work is at the final phase with suggested editorial changes being made and once completed the document will go to the printer for the final proof to be checked before going to the printer.

The Botanical Life of a Plant Punk

Tune into a recent ABC audio about AGHS Patron Professor Tim Entwisle
[Tim Entwisle's Evergreen — The Botanical Life of a Plant Punk - ABC Radio National](#)

Summer Flowering of Brachychitons John Viska

The brachychitons are now in full flower with the Illawarra Flame tree *Brachychiton acerifolius* the most spectacular with its bare branches covered in masses of red bells. Look out for the Queensland lace bark *Brachychiton discolor* which has large, watermelon pink felted bells, two toned maple like leaves and distinctive grey lacelike vertical fissures in the bark. During the twenties and thirties various species were used in hybridising and around Perth in some of the older suburban parks specimens can be observed displaying varied floral characteristics. Mature specimens can be seen in North Perth at Hyde and Robertson Park, Crawley at St Georges College and the grounds of UWA, Subiaco's Rankin Gardens, Harold Boas Gardens in West Perth and the parklet on the south east side of the intersection of Hay and Thomas Streets.



Brachychiton discolor - Bing images

Remarkable Gardens Update Project Sue Medalia

This is the fourth in our series Remarkable Gardens compiled by branch member Sue Medalia and features historic Kings Park. All photos by Sue Medalia.

Covering 400 hectares, Kings Park and Botanic Garden was originally gazetted in 1872 and enlarged to its present size in 1890. A Norfolk Island pine was planted by the then Premier John Forrest in 1895 to symbolise the initial development of Perth Park. It was renamed Kings Park in 1901.

Perhaps the most popular tourist attraction in Perth, it is located on Mt Eliza, only a kilometre from the CBD and boasts spectacular views across the Swan River and the Darling Scarp. Over two-thirds of Kings Park is urban bushland with nature trails and many recreational areas. Kings Park is also where many of the city's most important monuments, including the State War Memorial are located.



State War Memorial



Fraser Avenue honour avenue

The honour avenues in Kings Park serve as war memorials. Fraser Avenue was planted with lemon scented gum *Corymbia citriodora* in 1938 (after the original plantings of red flowering gums had to be replaced). May Drive 1901 was planted with Bangalay *Eucalyptus botryoides*, in the 1940s after the original planting of oak trees failed to thrive. Lovekin Drive 1931 was planted with sugar gums *Eucalyptus cladocalyx*. The most recent addition is the Marri Walk, dedicated in 1999.

During the 1960s a new phase began with the first Director, Dr John Beard (1961 – 70). He oversaw establishment of the seventeen hectare botanic garden, the Arthur Fairall children's playground, and the DNA Tower.



Pioneer Women's Fountain

The 1970s saw the establishment of Kings Park as a research and scientific centre. Management of the bushland areas has also become an important focus. Significant recent works include an education centre, visitor centre, naturescape playground and an upgrade to the lawned areas surrounding the State War Memorial and the Fraser Avenue precinct. A Nyoongar interpretation of the park from aboriginal perspective is the Boodja Gnarning Walk.

Further reading

[Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority - Home \(bgpa.wa.gov.au\)](http://bgpa.wa.gov.au)

[inHerit - State Heritage Office](#)

Webb, M. (2011). Kings Park and Botanic Garden, Western Australia. West Perth: Botanic Parks and Garden Authority.

Landscapes at Risk – AGHS Advocacy Issues

St George's College Oak Tree Lyn Oliver (text and photo)

You may have noticed that the St George's College Oak Tree is currently being discussed in the print media. St George's College is the oldest residential college at UWA and is at 46 Mounts Bay Road, Crawley. The college's website home page does state that 'our original buildings and chapel represent one of the most important precincts of historical buildings in Western Australia, framed by heritage-listed gardens'.

In a letter to The West Australian published on Saturday 21st January 2023, former employee (1980 to 1985) horticulturist Michael Noonan has expressed his 'sadness' and 'dismay' that the important heritage garden is being changed to incorporate a new student carpark at the front of the college on the lawn and that the construction may be putting the English oak tree under stress.

As Mr Noonan had also written a letter to The Post Newspaper (College icon in a bad way, Letters, January 14), Ian Hardy, Warden, St George's College responded with a letter 'College ensures health of oak, Letters, January 21). Mr Hardy explains that "Extensive arborist, landscape design and engineering consultation has taken place to formulate the plans to meet parking needs and to ameliorate conditions so the iconic oak can thrive."

A quick search of the State Heritage Office website shows that St George's College is listed as "St Georges College inc Cork Oak Tree". The last paragraph of the physical description includes: "The Cork Oak Tree (*Quercus suber*) is a mature oak tree located on the front lawn area east of the Sub Warden's House, and is one of several mature trees that include a Norfolk Pine (*Araucaria heterophylla*), an Illawarra Flame tree (*Brachychiton acerifolius*) and a mature English Oak (*Quercus robur*)."

There is no doubt that this is an important heritage garden. The carpark is well underway and time will tell whether the tree is damaged or not.



St George's College English oak

[St George's College \(uwa.edu.au\)](http://uwa.edu.au)

[inHerit - State Heritage Office](#)

[X21CAM_064p.indd \(postnewspapers.com.au\)](http://postnewspapers.com.au)

National Management Committee Patsy Vizents

After a successful national conference hosted by the Tasmanian Branch of AGHS in November 2022, the NMC is hoping to bring back the face-to-face meetings that have been so successful in achieving outcomes prior to Covid. The first face to face meeting will be in February and hopefully we will have two WA representatives at the meeting. Carolyn Grant has joined the National Management Committee as a member and will support the WA Branch very well.

Projects to be discussed at the up-coming NMC meeting will include attempting to have membership payments coordinated at one time of the year so membership numbers and management can be more successfully managed. At present with individual membership renewal dates being scattered throughout the year, it is not possible to give an accurate figure of membership nor is it possible to manage them seamlessly. I'm sure the February face-to-face meeting in Melbourne will allow some clarity on this topic. There has been discussion of an increase in membership fees to be in line with current inflation. This too will be discussed in the Feb meeting.

If you have any topic you would like raised at the NMC, please contact me before the date of the meetings as listed below.

NMC meetings 2023

- NMC Zoom – Saturday 12 February 10 – 12pm and 1pm - 3pm AEDT ZOOM - Planning Meeting in Melbourne
- NMC Zoom – Monday 10 April 4pm – 6pm AEDT
- NMC Zoom – Saturday 8 July 10am – 12pm and 1pm - 3pm AEST ZOOM
- NMC Zoom – Monday 25 August 4pm – 5pm AEST
- NMC Face to Face – Thursday 28 September Ipswich Conference 10am – 12pm and 1pm – 3pm AEST Face to Face and ZOOM
- AGHS AGM – Sunday 1 October, Ipswich Conference
- NMC Election - Brief meeting immediately following AGM 1 October 2022 (5-10 Minutes)
- NMC Zoom - Monday 4 December - 4pm – 5pm AEDT ZOOM

Recent Branch Events

Pensioner Guard Cottage Christmas Party 2022 *Lyn Oliver(text) Leon Tang (photos)*



Paul Bridges, President of the Bassendean Historical Society, with a musket of the time.

The Christmas Party on Sunday 4th December 2022 was a fun and interesting afternoon culminating in the hotly contested Chairman's Quiz. The top prize was shared because all the tie breaker questions were exhausted.

The place consists of two properties. At some point the owners of the circa 1900 house built a walkway to incorporate the two room Pensioner Cottage to use as extra space and fortuitously this is why the 1860s cottage still exists.



Reece Harley, Executive Director of the Museum of Perth and AGHSWA attendees.

Lowlands – A Day in the Country Sue Davis (text) and Patsy Vizents (photos)

On Sunday 18th of September after meeting in Mundijong members and friends travelled in convoy to Lowlands, formerly Serpentine Farm, Mardella.

For some members this was a second visit to this secluded rural retreat and for many a first and engrossing encounter. The following is quoted from Historic Homesteads of Australia, Volume Two, Cassell Australia 1976.

‘Since its inception there has been three distinct periods of farming activity on the property beginning with Thomas Peel and his son 1840 to 1859, the Wellards 1859 to 1874 and the Richardsons 1874 to the present day. The farm was established on part of Thomas Peel’s original 250 thousand acre grant that extended from Cockburn Sound to the Murray River and in about 1840, farming activities commenced within the area in close proximity to the Serpentine River.

Lowlands consists of buildings and plantings of various ages. The entry by road is by a wooden bridge over the Serpentine River that flows to the north and east around the property. The first structure on the right is the workman’s cottages built by the Richardsons in about 1888 and further on, to the left is the earliest surviving building, the barn. The homestead complex, consisting of a series of buildings from the 1840s is next with the stables, 1860, to the east of it. The billabong and adjoining orchard are further south. References to plantings include apple, pear, almond, mulberry, olives and grapes (1845) as well as jacaranda, peppercorn, crepe myrtle and moss roses.’



Mrs Richardson and her family welcomed us and joined us on leisurely walks around the property. Greg and Bronwen Keighery, who have consulted with the Richardsons on plant surveys at the farm, led us on a botanical walk through the garden and orchard. We picnicked in the shade of mature trees on the lawn in front of the homestead.

Sincere thanks are extended to the Richardson family for making us so welcome.

Guildford – Stirling Square and Kings Cottage Sue Davis (text) Lyn Oliver (photos)

On Sunday, 30th October 2022, members and friends gathered in a bracing morning breeze at the soldiers' memorial in Stirling Square Guildford. This memorial, sculpted from Donnybrook stone, was unveiled in 1921 to honour the men of Guildford who served in WWI.

John Viska pointed out the many historic features of the square including the Anzac Rose Gardens which commemorate the memory of the Anzac servicemen who trained in Guildford during 1914-1918. The square is also home to magnificent plantings of *Eucalyptus cladocalyx* which were planted in 1897 to celebrate the Jubilee of Queen Victoria. As mentioned in an earlier newsletter the square, originally twice its current size, has been the forum for many significant events in Guildford's past.

John directed us to meet Martin Quinlan, the current Warden of St Matthew's church, which occupies a central place of prominence in the square. This is the third St Matthew's Church to be built in Guildford, the first being built in 1836 on a piece of land alongside where Guildford Grammar School Chapel now stands. When it fell into disrepair a second church was built in Stirling Square in 1860. In 1872 this building was completely destroyed by a hurricane. The current St Matthew's was immediately rebuilt and consecrated by Bishop Matthew Hale in 1873. Substantial donations towards the rebuilding of St Matthew's are thought to have been given by prominent citizens of the time including Walter Padbury and Charles Harper. Martin generously found time to take our group inside the church and point out its features to us.



Attendees outside St Matthew's church

Following our time in the square we walked down Meadow Street towards the river flats and the historic home of Barbara and Graham Dundas who very kindly opened their home to us for lunch in the grounds of their spring garden. Barbara and Graham spoil us completely with a beautiful lunch enjoyed at tables in the shade of their rambling garden, replete with antique teacups and exquisite table linen. This was another day of engagement with history, gardens and the indulgence of members and supporters of AGHSA. Thank you Barbara and Graham.



Members Lynette Petersen (Secretary) with host Barbara Dundas and Elizabeth Atkins.



The restored grape walk that could be seen in many of the colonial gardens.

WA Public Events of Interest

Garden Clubs & Societies Plant Fair

Plant fair at South Perth Community Hall, cnr Sandgate Street & South Terrace, South Perth
Saturday 18th February 8:30am to 4pm / Sunday 19th February 9am to 2pm
Entry \$5 / Cash only at entrance and all stalls including refreshments (EFTPOS not available)
Organiser: Helen Martin-Beck 0417 946 221
<https://horticulturalcouncil.com.au/event/garden-clubs-societies-plant-fair/>

Branch Event Diary

Wanneroo Botanic Gardens

Thursday 16th February. Celebrate the 40th anniversary of Wanneroo Botanic Gardens by meeting at 10am at Leapfrogs onsite café for a Devonshire Morning Tea followed by a guided walk through the deep shade of the botanic gardens. Tickets \$20. Address: 25 Drovers Place, Wanneroo
<https://www.wanneroobotanicgardens.com.au/>

Bishop Hale's Garden Unearthed

Talk by John Viska for City of Perth Boorloo Heritage Festival
Sunday, 2nd April, 1pm.

The Chairman has been invited to give his talk, Bishop Hale's Garden Unearthed, as an event in the City of Perth's 2023 Heritage Festival. Members who missed the presentation last August will be able attend this free event on Sunday 2nd of April at 1.00 pm at the City of Perth library.

34th Annual General Meeting

Sunday 13th August, 2023. Details will be provided later.

A Day in the Country – York

Details will be provided later.

Christmas Function

Sunday, 3rd December. Details will be provided later.

National Events

2023 Annual National Conference will be held at Ipswich, Queensland from the 29th September to the 2nd October.