

Australian Garden History Society

West Australian Branch

Winter Newsletter 2022

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



Welcome to the Winter Newsletter

The lingering effects of Covid have been felt with smaller attendances at our recent functions, which incidentally has also been observed by other societies, but we hope to see a good representation at the forthcoming AGM in August, details below.

In Hyde Park, the City of Vincent has commenced its modification of the former toilet block to incorporate a café /kiosk. Although the Mayor reassured ratepayers that every precaution would be taken to protect the 120 year old trees, a heavy truck drove across the root zone of the trees as well as a turtle nesting site!

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)
ABN 97 291 212 843
ARBN 654 108 915

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

Vale Carol Mansfield

The committee was saddened to hear of the passing of Carol Mansfield since the last newsletter. Carol was a founding member of the WA branch when it was formed in 1988 and on the first committee. During her time she helped organise a workshop on restoring gardens, wrote garden history related articles that were published in the society's journal on Charles Harper at Woodbridge, the State Nursery at Hamel and botanical artist Edgar Dell. She researched and contributed entries to *The Oxford Companion to Australian Gardens* published in 2002 by the society as well as gardening articles for the *West Australian Gardener*. As a guest speaker for the branch, she presented talks on Charles Harper at Woodbridge and the Gardens of China. As an avid plant collector she maintained a wide range of friends from the gardening fraternity and developed a remarkable garden in Carmel. Here were grown hellebores, narcissi, species cyclamens and heritage roses of which she was also a society member. Being involved in gardening activities in the hills she was instrumental in the formation of the rose garden at Falls Farm, Lesmurdie. She participated in the original Open Gardens program by opening her garden at Fawkes House, featured in the May 1992 issue of *Your Garden* magazine, and was a selector for the scheme. Along with her husband Dr Frank Mansfield, she organised and led a wildflower walk in the hills for the 2005 Perth National Conference. In 2020 an oral history was conducted by committee member Patsy Vizents and now AGHS has a permanent record of her involvement in our branch. An obituary was published recently in the 19th of July 2022 issue of the *West Australian*.

National Conference Bunbury WA 2024 John Viska

Since the last newsletter the branch executive has visited Bunbury on two occasions and venues recommended by the Bunbury Visitors Centre were inspected. The Bunbury Regional Entertainment Centre (BREC), The Rose Hotel and Lord Forrest Hotel were visited to gauge their suitability and discussions took place at each in regards to their costs and availability. All the sites are in close walking distance from each other and in successive visits transport and catering options will be investigated. A call for nominations to assist on the Conference subcommittee will take place at the August AGM and once it is formed specific duties will be allocated.

Grant Application Sought John Viska

For the second year in a row the branch has made a submission to the WA History Foundation for a grant to redesign and reformat the 2007 *Guide to Conserving and Interpreting Gardens in Western Australia*. This time we hope we are successful!

Historic Gardens of Perth: Early Settlement to Modernism John Viska

Forthcoming publication update, *Historic Gardens of Perth: Early Settlement to Modernism*. The work is in its final stages of completion before going to professional editors for reviewing. A meeting has taken place with Scott Print on its format including paper quality, binding and costing and a flyer to promote the publication is being finalised.



It was a pleasure to meet Yolanda Cool at a recent committee meeting. Yolanda has spent some years since leaving the field of education, researching the possibility of establishing an association which would harness the fast-disappearing skills involved in the care and repair of heritage places. Yolanda travelled to the Netherlands where artisan skills groups are a thriving part of their communities and has formed links with similar associations in the UK.

Years of research and planning have come together with the formation of the Heritage Skills Association, the first of its kind in Australia. This platform will provide a basis for professional specialists and people working in heritage trades to share their skills and to educate others in their craft.

Yolanda has brought together key stakeholders and interest groups including government agencies, local councils and community working parties to form a wide-ranging collaboration of diverse talent. A local restoration project is under way at the Goods Sheds in Collie and project planning for work at Sandilands in Busselton will soon be underway.

Yolanda hopes to promote the growth of the association in all Australian states. The AGHSWA looks forward to adding some horticultural expertise as Yolanda's reach extends beyond the built environment into heritage landscapes and other spheres. We wish the HSA every success.



Carpentry instructor Robert Brodie, from Victoria in Australia, on the left, has been teaching students at Holland College in Charlottetown, how to build a hand tool out of eucalyptus wood.

Images: HSA Website

For more information please click on the link below:

[Heritage Skills | Heritage Skills Association](#)

Landscapes at Risk – AGHS Advocacy Issues

Guildford Sue Davis

Sue Davis recently visited Barbara Dundas at her historic home in Guildford for a personal tour of places of interest and concern in the area.

There could be no better guide than Barbara. For many years Barbara has been actively involved in the Guildford Association whose platform of advocacy has fought to preserve and promote the historic nature of Guildford and its environs.

Guildford is a microcosm of West Australian colonial history, reflecting development of agricultural practice, education, religion, military involvement, convict labour, landscape plantings and WA society from first settlement. That any of this has survived the onslaught of relentless development and general disinterest in our heritage is truly remarkable and a tribute to small but vocal groups of those concerned, both individuals and lobby groups who have cared for and protected the town for generations. For First Nations people the area is a rich source of cultural significance.



Barbara Dundas dwarfed by *E. cladocalyx* at the site of the Guildford Showgrounds. A pair of these trees formed a gateway to the grounds.
Image: S Davis

A drive around the area showed how important to the preservation of the precinct is the flood plain of the Swan and Helena Rivers which almost entirely encircle the town. Whilst the floodplain and its soils were of vital importance to early agriculture it also created a barrier to proliferating commercial and residential development ensuring, until bridges were built, a cocooned community and a riverine focus of transport between Guildford, Perth and Fremantle.

As we drove through Guildford, Barbara pointed out street by street the wide ranging and complex threats which will see the gradual erosion of Guildford's heritage. The built landscape is disappearing under pressure from residents to have large homes on small blocks. Fashion, not replacement frequently determines planting. Heritage plants are under threat from phytophthora - eight varieties have been documented - as well as chilli thrip, gall wasps and the polyphagous shot hole borer.

Forward planning with conservation in mind is severely hampered by lack of local and state government decision making in respect of by laws which would enforce protection of significant trees and the built environment. The minefield of conflicting interests which engulfs anyone attempting effective conservation is overwhelming. Readers of this article

will be familiar with the frequency with which heritage buildings mysteriously catch fire and are subsequently deemed unsound, therefore ensuring demolition. Guildford has not been exempt.

The central town square in Guildford is listed on the AGHS website as a landscape at risk. The square, which was originally more than twice its current size, has been the focus of many heritage battles over the years. The local community has twice seen off attempts to remove the magnificent *E. cladocalyx* trees which were planted to celebrate Queen Victoria's Jubilee celebrations in 1897. A special Act was passed to prevent the Commissioner of Railways from directing the rail line through the square. A local referendum ruled that no part of the square could be exchanged for an Anglican rectory or, more recently, accessioned for parking. The preservation of the square as a recreational space is an ongoing challenge.

AGHSWA will continue to advocate and support the Guildford community in their ongoing appeals to raise the profile of conservation.

I would like to extend my thanks to Barbara and her husband Graham for their time and hospitality during my visit and for Barbara's preparation of documents listing current issues for the information of committee members.

[History of Guildford \(swan.wa.gov.au\)](http://swan.wa.gov.au)

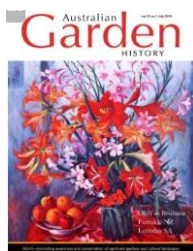
AGHS Landscapes at Risk Register Patsy Vizents

The AGHS Landscapes at Risk register is a very full and intriguing list of landscapes that are considered at risk throughout Australia. If you are at all concerned about a particular place or street that you consider under risk in a similar way, please feel welcome to contact any of the committee members. We would require a short appraisal of the situation, giving the location and even a photograph (not always necessary) so we can investigate to include on WA's watch list. The information required really is quite simple and would be appreciated.

<https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/wp-content/uplo=ds/2022/06/22-6-13-AGHS-Landscapes-at-Risk.pdf>

<https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/wp-content/uplo=ds/2022/06/22-6-14-Avenues-of-Honour-sorted-by-states-website.pdf>

AGHS Journal Required John Viska



AGHSWA is providing back issues to form a complete set of the AGHS journals to the WA State Library. There is one missing. Please review your collection and if you don't mind donating Journal Vol 31 No 1 (2019) please contact John Viska so we can fill in the gap.

The Roselyn Project Sue Davis



Several AGHSWA members recently enjoyed an afternoon at The Lieutenant's Mess in Fremantle presented by Annie Kavanagh to promote her floral photography and give background to early garden history in WA.

Annie and her husband have acquired a property at Spencer's Brook near Northam and have become accidental farmers. She has produced a range of photographic floral portraits in a modern interpretation of 16th Century Dutch style using flowers from the farm garden.

To give substance to the photography project Annie scheduled a series of events at the Lieutenant's Mess one of which was an illustrated talk by John Viska discussing how the garden would have been designed in the 1880s. John's excellent presentation outlined the various ways plants were sourced at the time, the varieties used, the necessity of planting fruit trees, vines and vegetables for household consumption and the likely rose species which would have been in the formal front garden.

Early photographs show the original large house on the Roselyn property which boasted a shearing shed, carriage and horse stabling, governess's houses, cook's quarters, award winning livestock and its own racecourse. The earliest known chatelaine of Roselyn, Mrs Alice Hancock, has become Annie Kavanagh's muse on which to base the Roselyn Project bringing art, food, flowers, history and community together.

The Lieutenant's Mess, a restored reception room in Mouat Street, named after Lieutenant J A Mouat of HMS Challenger, Captain Fremantle's ship of 1829, located in the heart of historic Fremantle, was the ideal gathering place for tea, cakes and garden history.



Images: The Roselyn Project

[Botanical Art | The Roselyn Project](#)

Education John Viska

Dr Maria Ignatieva, professor of Landscape Architecture at UWA, has invited the Chairman to deliver a presentation to third year landscape students on conservation plans. In the unit, Landscape and Cultural Heritage, the topic of Conservation Plans is treated and in conjunction with a site visit to Hyde Park will be the focus of the lecture.

National Management Committee Patsy Vizents

Don't forget to check out YouTube for uploaded presentations by AGHS invited speakers and members. AGHS has an account with YouTube and we are so fortunate to dip into presentations from forums, conferences and webinars that inform us and promote the Society.

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=australian+garden+history+society

Planning day for July was held as a Zoom meeting and we covered many topics including changes due to occur to the NMC office bearers at the next AGM to be held in Hobart. Stuart Read, Bronwyn Blake (AGHS Co-chairs) and John Maurer (Public Officer) are retiring this year and Stuart encouraged the Committee to think about potential new NMC members and to forward ideas to everyone for discussion. If you would like to join me in participating in the NMC or you have a suggestion of a suitable person, please contact either Lisa Nutting at head office or contact me at patsoir@gmail.com and I can discuss it with you and forward your nomination suggestion to the appropriate officer on NMC.

The Hobart 2022 Conference is fully booked, although there are many places available for virtual attendance (lectures only). Please consider, if you are not able to attend in person, attending as a virtual attendee. The cost for the three mornings of lectures is \$200 and will be well worth "tuning" in, even though you will not be able to share the garden experiences, the face to face camaraderie that always accompanies these marvellous conferences or the morning teas. Please go to the AGHS website to register.

<https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/product/aghs-conference-registration-2022/>

There have been issues in mail delivery to the office in Melbourne – Birdwood Avenue and the delivery of mail has been erratic; sometimes it arrives in the mail box, others it doesn't. Lisa Nutting (Tuck) has suggested that the official postal address should remain, Private Bag 2000, South Yarra, 3141.

Bishop Hales Garden Unearthed John Viska

In 2008 the Chairman purchased at auction, letters concerning Joseph Wylde a colonial nurseryman. One was part of an 1868 letter of introduction on note paper headed with a Bishop's mitre but missing the last page.

Being a former student at Hale School he receives regularly the *Haleian* magazine and on one edition was featured the handwriting of Bishop Hale which he recognised as being identical to his anonymous letter writer. Then in 2015 another *Haleian* article appeared informing that through the generosity of the Hale Family in England, the Bishop's diaries from 1857 to 1875 had been lodged with the school's archives. Being available for research, he studied them to find the circumstances for Wylde's letter and they subsequently revealed that Hale was a keen gardener and the diaries provided an insight into his garden and gardening in the colony. This will be presented in his talk, titled *Bishop Hale's Garden Unearthed* at 10.30am on Wednesday 24th August at the Royal WA Historical Society's Headquarters, 49 Broadway, Nedlands. Enquiries to admin@hiswest.org.au

Recent Branch Events

Gascoyne Park *John Viska*

A sunny afternoon in April was ideal for the second event that was a field trip to Gascoyne Park, Woodvale. Members met in the gazebo to hear George Sevastos from the Palm and Cycad Society of WA, outline the role they had in establishing the park using an album of photos to illustrate. He then led a walk explaining the design, identifying a selection of palms in the collection and how theft was a major problem of some of the rarer cycads. At the conclusion a shared afternoon tea was enjoyed by all back at the gazebo.

Right: George Sevastos (right) led members and friends on a walk through Gascoyne Park. Image: S Monger



Chrysanthemum Society *John Viska*



The third event for the year was a talk by Dr Carl Slusarczyk from the Western Australian Chrysanthemum Society. The first part of his presentation covered the story of chrysanthemum culture since its introduction from China to the west in the 18th century. With the aid of Chinese and western artworks he illustrated the development of the flower and its various forms. The second section was on the history of the society since its formation in 1965 and an ephemera display and flowers grown by Dr Carl, was much admired especially the exhibition blooms of the variety Louisa Pockett.

Left: Dr Carl Slusarczyk of the WA Chrysanthemum Society with some of the very fine specimens he grew. The splendid blooms are the large exhibition white Louisa Pockett developed by her husband Thomas. The cover of AGH Journal Vol 27, No 1 (July 2015) features Thomas with Louisa holding the bloom named for her. Image: S Monger

WA Branch Event Diary

33rd Annual General Meeting

Sunday, 14th August, 2022

Gather at 1:45pm for 2:00pm start

Venue: Meeting Room, Royal WA Historical Society, Stirling House, 49 Broadway, Nedlands. The guest speaker is Ailsa Allen on the topic of “Rose Gardens of Perth”. Price includes afternoon tea and raffle tickets.

RSVP (or for any enquiries, assistance or apologies regarding this event) please contact Lynette Petersen / Mobile: 0439 941 822 / Email: lpetersen@aapt.net.au

Cost: \$10.00 (AGHS members)

50 cent ticket fee applies to online bookings

Bookings: Through Trybooking

<https://www.trybooking.com/CAYLF>

Day in the Country

Sunday, 18th September, 2022

Details will be provided later.

Guildford Historic 1860s Property

Sunday, 30th October, 2022

Details will be provided later.

National Events

2022 Annual National Conference, 11th to 13th November, Wrest Point Casino, Hobart

The conference is sold out however tickets for virtual attendance to the lectures are available online.

[2022 Annual National Conference - Australian Garden History Society](#)