



## eNewsletter No. 29 November 2024

### Northern NSW Branch

**Newsletters are sent out monthly  
except for December and January**

Larger images are available from the editor on request

#### ***Davidia involucrata***

Handkerchief tree, dove tree

*Davidia involucrata* is the only living species in the *Davidia* genus. It was formerly included in the Dogwood family. It was named after Father Armand David (1826–1900; "Père David"), a French Vincentian missionary and keen naturalist who lived in China. David first described the tree in 1869 as a single tree found at over 2,000m altitude, and sent dried specimens to Paris; in 1871.

It is a moderately fast-growing deciduous tree, growing to 20–25m in height, with toothed, alternate, ovate-cordate leaves resembling those of a linden, the leaves are mostly 10–20cm long and 7–15cm wide. *Davidia involucrata* is best known for its flowers that feature large, white bracts surrounding a purplish-red flower head about 1–2cm across. The flowers hang in long rows beneath horizontal branches, and appear in late spring. On a breezy day, the bracts flutter in the wind like white doves or handkerchiefs. The fruit is a very hard nut surrounded by a green husk hanging on a 10 cm stalk. The nut contains 3–6 seeds. It prefers a moist humus rich soil and should be planted preferably in a sheltered site.



*Davidia involucrata* 'Columnar'

Image: Frank P. Matthews

Ref: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Davidia\\_involucrata](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Davidia_involucrata)

#### **Join AGHS Northern NSW Branch**

<https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/membership/>

Send articles & photos to: Reports/Newsletter Editor Maria Hitchcock  
[maria.hitchcock@gmail.com](mailto:maria.hitchcock@gmail.com)

## From the Chair:

Hello everyone,

With 2024 drawing to a close, this is our last newsletter for the year. Maria has done a fabulous job of keeping us all informed and entertained throughout the year, for which I thank her most sincerely. We still have our much anticipated Christmas lunch at Petersons Winery to enjoy together before the year is finished. Our lunch is booked on Sunday 24th November, at midday. Helen W has once again organised our end of year festivity at our favourite venue. **Numbers need to be confirmed one week beforehand, so your booking through TryBooking is essential TODAY.** I look forward to your company and to sharing some Christmas cheer.

Our recent meeting to discuss the future of the Heritage Rose Garden at Saumarez Homestead was well attended and allowed the opportunity for all to speak. A small committee has been formed to facilitate the decision of the meeting, which was for contact to be made with the National Trust to communicate our intention to step away from the ongoing management of the garden. An initial meeting has been organised from which the outcome will be communicated to our members. This is a sad and disappointing end to what has been a significant and worthwhile project for our branch for over a decade, but is nonetheless inevitable in the current climes. I hope the remainder of 2024 is kind to you and that you enjoy the festive season with those you cherish. May 2025 bring you and your family much love, laughter and good health. We have some great excursions planned so I look forward to your company as we explore interesting towns and gardens around the north of NSW.

Kind regards,

Helen Oates

Chair | Northern NSW Branch

Co-Chair | Heritage Rose Garden at Saumarez Homestead Sub-committee

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### **2024 FESTIVE LUNCHEON at PETERSONS - Sunday 24 November gathering 12 noon**

This should be another wonderful year-end Sunday afternoon.  
Helen Wilson has arranged our annual  
Festive year end lunch at Petersons,  
where we can be assured of a delicious two course meal  
(share platters of meats, fish, vegetables, salads, and then individual desserts).  
Cost will be \$60 per person with everyone buying their own drinks.

#### **URGENT!**

**Please book and pay TODAY through this TryBooking link.**

**<https://www.trybooking.com/CWVOY>**

For those who need to book and pay by cash,  
please contact Helen Wilson to discuss 0427959392

**[helenakw@bigpond.com](mailto:helenakw@bigpond.com)** .



## AGHS Conference Bunbury WA 18th - 20th October 2024

Text and Images: Maria Hitchcock

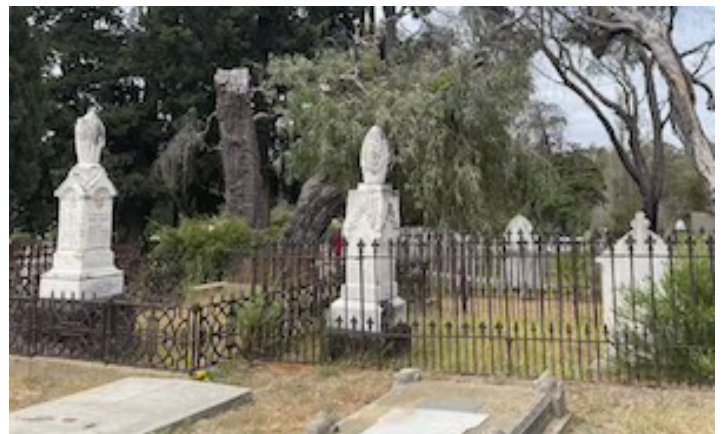
The Conference had a theme of Hesperia: Looking West. The presentations covered much of the early colonial history of the South West of WA, how the settlements were apportioned and sold off with the prized good soils being coveted by those who could afford them or if they were persons of influence. It was a story of success and failure in an environment so different to what was known in England. It was also a story of entrepreneurs who introduced a variety of plants with economic or horticultural potential, many from the colony at the Cape of Good Hope in Africa. The original Noongar people had their own rhythms of settlement moving from the coast to the shelter of the hills in winter when the winds blew strong and it became uncomfortable. WA is blessed with some amazing tall and hardy timbers like Jarrah which was used for everything from buildings to railway sleepers. The town of Bunbury itself, located on the Leschenault Estuary was established in 1836 on the orders of Governor James Stirling. It became the major port for the South West. First sighted in 1803 and named by the French explorer Louis de la Freycinet, this part of the WA coastline features several French names such as Geographe Bay. Whaling brought visitors to the area up to the 1850s but timber was the main port activity. These days coal and other minerals plus agricultural products are exported from Bunbury. The city of over 70,000 inhabitants today is considered one of the most prosperous towns in WA.

### The settlement of Australind

Originally considered as a place to breed horses for the British army, the Western Australian Land Company purchased 103,000 acres of land in 1840 at Australind with a plan to create an English-style village populated by settlers. Before long, the settlement began to fail owing to poor soils and climate - no water in summer and too much of it in winter and the settlers drifted away. Little of the planned town was ever developed. The company folded, the land was mostly resumed by the Crown, and the settlement plans were officially abandoned in 1875. Today it exists as a northern residential area of Greater Bunbury.



St Mark's Anglican Church at Clifton is one of the oldest surviving churches in WA. Originally built of wattle and daub construction, it is now covered in weatherboards and has a Casuarina Shingle roof which has been replaced several times. It was built by Colonial Chaplain Rev. John Wollaston, who had received a stipend as compensation for having migrated to be chaplain at the failed Australind.



The church grounds contain an historic cemetery (above), a memorial rose garden and a very old Moreton Bay Fig tree (below)





## Leschenault Homestead

The two buildings on this site were built for William Clifton in the 1840s using wattle and daub. A large English oak planted in 1910 stands at the entry. A Cape Lilac tree (*Melia azederach*) stands nearby. The remnant oldest wattle and daub buildings are currently protected by construction safety fencing. The garden features Hortensia hydrangeas, roses, crinum and bella donna lillies and several herbaceous South African perennials. Along with a mixed planting of exotic trees, some remnant eucalypts such as *E. rudis* and *C. calophylla* can be seen as well as the remnants of an old orchard.



Top: Homestead

Above: Remnant building featuring wattle and daub wall

Right: Old oak tree



## Alverstoke

The farm complex was established by Marshall Clifton in 1842. By 1844, a number of thatched buildings were constructed and 25 acres of wheat planted. Alverstoke doubles today as both a working farm and wedding venue. Many of the original buildings are still standing. A later brick house built from clay in 1886 dug out on site was originally covered with casuarina shingles. It was restored in 1993. The original Clifton school was relocated to the grounds and is open as a small museum. The formal rose garden planted out in 1997 features a wide range of heritage roses. Hydrangeas provide wedding flowers and the garden features a number of specimen tree such as Chinese Elm, Cape Lilac, Illawarra Flame tree and Lilly Pilly.







Above: The original Clifton school is full of school memorabilia from earlier times.  
Below: The very old European olive was planted in 1842.





## Dardanup - Ferguson Valley

The name Dardanup is derived from the language of the original Noongar peoples meaning 'low lying ground by the water'. The district itself has a rich colonial history being first settled in 1852 by Thomas Little, a staunch Catholic who developed a grain growing property, 'Dardanup Park' on the fertile soils of the Ferguson Valley and who donated land for the building of the first Catholic church outside the Perth area, the Church of Immaculate Conception, which has since been rededicated as the Thomas Little Hall where we had lunch. He set about establishing an Irish Catholic community in the area. The Catholic influence remains dominant today with Our Lady of Lourdes School and a new Catholic church of Immaculate Conception. The township features many old buildings and is a tourist destination today increasingly known for its burgeoning wine industry.

Right: *Agonis flexuosa*, the Weeping Peppermint was in bloom.





## Tranquil Gardens - Crooked Brook

The websters live in an old weatherboard cottage which was transported to the site 24 years ago. It sits amidst a plant person's garden developed over 12 years featuring an eclectic mix of natives, exotics, and tropical plants with the upper storey dominated by deciduous trees. The garden also features a number of well grown Wollemi Pines and several Waratah plants which were in full bloom for our visit.

The lake at the bottom of the site is fed by a spring and is used to irrigate the property. This amazing garden features collections of bush tucker plants, hydrangeas, bromeliads, cliveas and Brugsmania. A magnificent specimen of the NSW Christmas tree (*Ceratopetalum gummiferum*) was in full flower. Around December, the white flowers fall off giving way to red bracts which are the major feature of this species.

Right: Shady Lady Waratah in full bloom  
Below: The lake is a wonderful feature of the garden.







Above: The magnificent NSW Christmas Tree in full flower. The red bracts which develop later make this plant sought after at Christmas time.

Below: Some of the beautiful flowers seen on our visit.





## Dining out in Bunbury

Text by Maria Hitchcock

Image: Helen Wilson

While in Bunbury the members of AGHS were treated to a Civic Reception, drinks at the Rowing Club and dinner at the Lighthouse. We also explored the restaurant scene and were advised to try the delights of the seafood restaurant 'Cray' not far from where many of us were staying at the Bunbury Hotel. I was tipped by Coffs Harbour member Brian Thomas to try the Moreton Bay Bugs. When the plate arrived it was a real event - a dramatic tour de force! The other members of NNSW Branch seated near me at the table couldn't let it pass without a photo and a promise to include it in the next newsletter. I have to say the meal was as delicious as it looked and no - I didn't max out my credit card. It consisted of 6 Bugs sliced in half lengthways and piled on top of one another. I think my smile tells it all.





## Rosey Roundabout - Armidale Airport

Text and Images by Lynne Walker

Weeding the Rosey Roundabout at the weekend was proof positive of both the sustainability and growing power of Rugosas and the great benefits gravel mulch has. It is hard to believe the growth of the roses which were planted in June 2019 and are now above head height. The two varieties used – *alba* and *rubra* – have flourished with virtually no irrigation (they were watered twice in the Spring of 2019 and not since) and despite the toxic environment they live in, I believe the addition of the red scoria mulch, applied in January 2020 by the Back Track team has also aided their progress, cooling their roots in the summer and keeping them warm in the winter. The mulch has certainly paid off in terms of weeding with many of the thistles which were thriving around the perimeter of the roundabout were so easy to pull out from the mulch. Inside the circle the growth of the roses is so dense that it largely excludes weeds.



Planting out the Roundabout in 2020 with *Rosa rugosa* roses.





BackTrack were hired to spread Scoria mulch in 2020. This is a volcanic material which is an excellent landscaping material as it allows for good drainage and aeration.  
Below: the rugosas are flowering very well. The thistles (right) on the edge are easily pulled out.





## Calendar of Events

Inquiries and ideas - please send to Sandra Welsman (Events Co-ordinator)  
[sandra.welsman.frontiers@gmail.com](mailto:sandra.welsman.frontiers@gmail.com) Ph. 0411100048

Date	Event	Notes
<b>November</b> Sunday 24th 12 noon	Christmas Function <b>Peterson's Winery</b>	This should be another wonderful year-end Sunday afternoon. Helen Wilson has arranged our annual Festive year end lunch at <b>Petersons</b> , where we can be assured of a delicious two course meal (share platters of meats, fish, vegetables, salads, and then individual desserts). <b>Cost will be \$60 per person</b> with everyone buying their own drinks. <b>Please book and pay as soon as possible through this TryBooking link.</b> <a href="https://www.trybooking.com/CWVOY">https://www.trybooking.com/CWVOY</a> For those who need to book and pay by cash, please contact Helen Wilson to discuss 0427959392 <a href="mailto:helenakw@bigpond.com">helenakw@bigpond.com</a> .
<b>February</b> Friday 7th - Sunday 9th	<b>ON THE ROAD to Tenterfield, Deepwater and Glen Innes</b>  Self drive or car pool Pack own chairs	<b>Fri 7th - Tenterfield:</b> 4.30pm Opening of 'Beyond the Lawn' exhibition then 7.00pm group Pub dinner. <b>Sat 8th - Tenterfield:</b> 10.00 visit to Henry Parkes Museum 11.40 The Bungalow and Ivy Leaf Chapel Garden and buildings for light lunch of sandwiches, fruit, cakes, tea, coffee and water. Cost for visit and lunch about \$35 per person. Host Kim Massie 3pm drive to Glen Innes via Deepwater Railway Station - historical talk by Graham Wilson. Pub dinner or free time. Overnight accommodation. <b>Sun 9th - Glen Innes:</b> 10.00am Meet at Rotunda in ANZAC Park with historical talk by Graham Wilson. 11.30am drive to historic Waterloo Station, 18km west for BBQ lunch with dessert in the Shearer's Lodge room and verandah at \$68 per person (wines available at \$7-\$10/glass). Plus \$20 per person for guided buildings tour. Host Deborah Anderson. Sandra Welsman organising Book own accommodation
<b>March</b> Sunday 30th	Branch meeting, speaker/s and dinner.	Venue t.b.a. Helen Oates, Liz Chappell, Marilyn Pidgeon presenting on the AGHS Oral History project.
<b>April</b> Saturday 12th Sunday 13th	Visit Moree Gardens	This trip is being arranged by Fran Webb and the Moree Garden Club. More details to come.
<b>May</b> Sunday 25th	Branch meeting and local speaker.	Details to come
June 29th?	WINTER SPEAKER PROGRAM	Details to come
July 27th?	WINTER SPEAKER PROGRAM	Details to come
August 31st?	WINTER SPEAKER PROGRAM	Details to come
<b>September?</b>	Yulgilbah Trip	Details to come
<b>October 31st - November 2nd</b>	AGHS National Conference	Mount Gambier, South Australia.