



**eNewsletter  
No. 43  
May 2026**

## Northern NSW Branch

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

Larger images are available from the editor on request

### *Pyrus calleryana*

Deciduous small tree, growing to 5 to 8 m tall, often with a conical to rounded crown. It has oval leaves, 4 to 8 cm long, glossy dark green above, and pale beneath. The white, five-petaled flowers are produced abundantly in early spring, before the leaves expand fully. In summer, the shining foliage is dark green and very smooth, and in autumn, the leaves commonly turn brilliant colours, ranging from yellow and orange to more commonly red, pink, purple, and bronze.

It is native to mainland China, Japan, the Korean Peninsula, and Taiwan and was introduced into the United States, Canada, Iraq, and the Western Himalayas region of India as well as Australia. In much of North America, these cultivars, particularly 'Bradford', are widely planted as ornamental trees. The trees are tolerant of a variety of soil types, drainage levels, and soil acidity. The Bradford pear and related cultivars of *Pyrus calleryana* are regarded as invasive species in many areas of the Eastern and Midwestern regions in North America where they form extensive, nearly homogeneous stands in old fields, along roadsides, and in similar disturbed areas.

Numerous cultivars of Callery pear are offered commercially, including 'Aristocrat', 'Autumn Blaze', 'Bradford', 'Capital', 'Chanticleer' (also known as 'Cleveland Select'), 'New Bradford', 'Redspire', and 'Whitehouse'.

Ref: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyrus\\_calleryana](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pyrus_calleryana)



*Pyrus calleryana*

Image: <https://www.olelantanaseeds.com.au/product/pyrus-calleryana-mongolian-or-callery-pear-seeds-x-25/>

**Join AGHS Northern NSW Branch**

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

Send articles & photos to: Reports/Newsletter Editor Maria Hitchcock  
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## From the Chair:

Our last excursion was a very enjoyable afternoon in Guyra visiting the Mother of Ducks Lagoon, Memorial Park and the significant trees at the Showground. The trees at the Memorial Park and the Showground were planted during the 1951 Jubilee celebrations.

Graham Wilson provided historical notes and Bill Oates found some wonderful early photographs. Many thanks to Robyn and Bryan Jackson for inviting us to visit their garden with amazing trees and plantings. The afternoon was capped off with a delicious dinner at the 'Blind Chef' and a lovely celebration of Owen Croft's 94th birthday. Thank you Owen for an excuse for another party.

If you haven't already done so, please book for the Orange Conference which is sneaking up on us and will be a wonderful occasion.

I'm very much looking forward to our next excursion to Maitland and Newcastle. Dinner has been booked on the Saturday evening at a cost to be advised. Please pay on the night.

Maitland art gallery has a lovely café so after our Cintra House visit you can get a cup of coffee and maybe lunch after our gallery visit and our local Judy Anne Moule's exhibition.

Lynne is working hard to determine details of our June meeting so watch this space.

Cheers  
Helen Wilson

Chair | Northern NSW Branch  
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*Dear Friends of the Northern NSW Branch of the  
Australian Garden History Society*

*As a Friend of our Branch you have been receiving a copy of our  
monthly newsletter as a courtesy. We have now decided that in  
future you will receive a copy of our calendar only and not the full  
newsletter in the hope that you will want to become a member of  
this Branch in order to participate in all of our activities.*

*We do hope you will want to join us as a member.  
We are a very sociable and friendly group with a shared interest.*

*Joining is easy. Just go to:*

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

## Out and About in Guyra - Mother of Ducks Lagoon

Text: Graham Wilson

Images: As credited

The history of the Mother of Ducks Lagoon began with the occupation of the Lagoon by the Banbai and Anaiwan people. Guyra is a Banbai word meaning place of ducks or white cockatoos. The abundant wildlife and the pleasant wooded surrounds meant that this was an important meeting place. Local Aboriginal people camped here at various seasons for the water and food reserves. Apart from waterfowl, there were eels, frogs, tortoises, snakes, swamp wallabies and grey kangaroos.

In early days of European settlement, the Mother of Ducks Lagoon was seen as a watering place for travellers and their stock as well as a place of recreation. In September 1892, 250 trout from Wairarapa, New Zealand were placed in the lagoon and at the same time efforts were made to purchase a steam launch - the 'Florrie'. In 1949 the lagoon was still part of the common and 'embraced a golf course and racecourse'. The lagoon was deliberately drained for agricultural purposes in 1923, 1951 and 1963.

Today the Mother of Ducks Lagoon is protected as a nature reserve and passive recreation site for visitors and residents. The National Parks and Wildlife Service maintain it. The Mother of Ducks Lagoon restoration and beautification project was carried out as a Bicentennial Project. It demonstrated a partnership between community including the Quota Club, Guyra Bicentennial Committee and Local, State and Federal Governments.



L to R: Bill Oates, Fran Webb, Helen Oates, Caroline Fitzroy, Helen Nancarrow, Lexia Nielsen, Owen Croft, Robyn Jackson, Bryan Jackson, Helen Wilson at the lagoon.

## Memorial Park

Text by Graham Wilson  
 Images as credited

A major event took place in Guyra in 1951 as part of the **Jubilee Tree Planting Project**. A quarter of a million seedlings would be distributed to organisations and the general public at nominal charges for the 'plant a tree for Jubilee' campaign started by the Minister for Conservation, Mr. G. Weir. The Jubilee celebrations were held to mark the 50 years since the Federation of Australia proclaimed on 1 January 1951. The trees were to come from the Forestry Commission, Soil Conservation Service, School nurseries and Main Roads nurseries.

The Horticultural Society organised a public meeting in the Shire Chambers on Thursday 26 July 1951. The President of the Guyra Shire Council promised support from Council for planting but could not promise support for maintaining the trees. The P.A. and H. Association had a proposal to plant trees in the showground. The Hospitals Commission was asked for ground plans of the hospital so that it could be prepared for plantings. Returned soldiers were also interested in the proposal.

Sites included Dutton Parade and the corner of Ebor Road and Prisk Street where Liquid Amber and Japanese Maple were recommended as trees. The R.S.L. offered support and announced that an Arbor Day would be held on 25 August. He suggested that a memorial grove of trees might be planted in the new hospital grounds as the hospital was to be a war memorial to fallen soldiers of the last two World Wars. It was decided to plant up to fifty trees at the hospital as a wind break.

Council was asked to dedicate land near the Bowling Club and opposite the Golf Club as a Memorial Park. It was also decided to plant memorial trees in the park. The Show Committee reported that the Association would order fifty trees from Orange for planting at the showground.

The *Guyra Argus*, 6 September 1951 published a detailed report on the celebrations held on Saturday 1 September. Trees were planted at the various venues and moved to Memorial Park near the Shire Council Chambers where the Guyra Brass Band played. Memorial Park was dedicated to the memory of those who gave their lives in the service of their country. Trees were planted by representatives of the R.S.L., Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, Guyra Hospital, Horticultural Society and C.W.A. A tree was planted at the Bowling Club as well as trees and shrubs at the C.W.A. grounds



Trees in Memorial Park showing their autumn colour. The ground is covered with a carpet of fallen leaves. Image: Bill Oates



The group near the war memorial  
 Image: Helen Oates



The war memorial  
 Image: Maria Hitchcock

## The Showground



Chinese Poplars ring the field.  
Above Image: Bill Oates

Right Image: Maria Hitchcock



## Robyn and Bryan Jackson's Garden

The group then drove to the Jackson's garden for a brief tour. By now it was getting cool and we all headed indoors for a quick meeting before heading off for dinner at the Blind Chef.



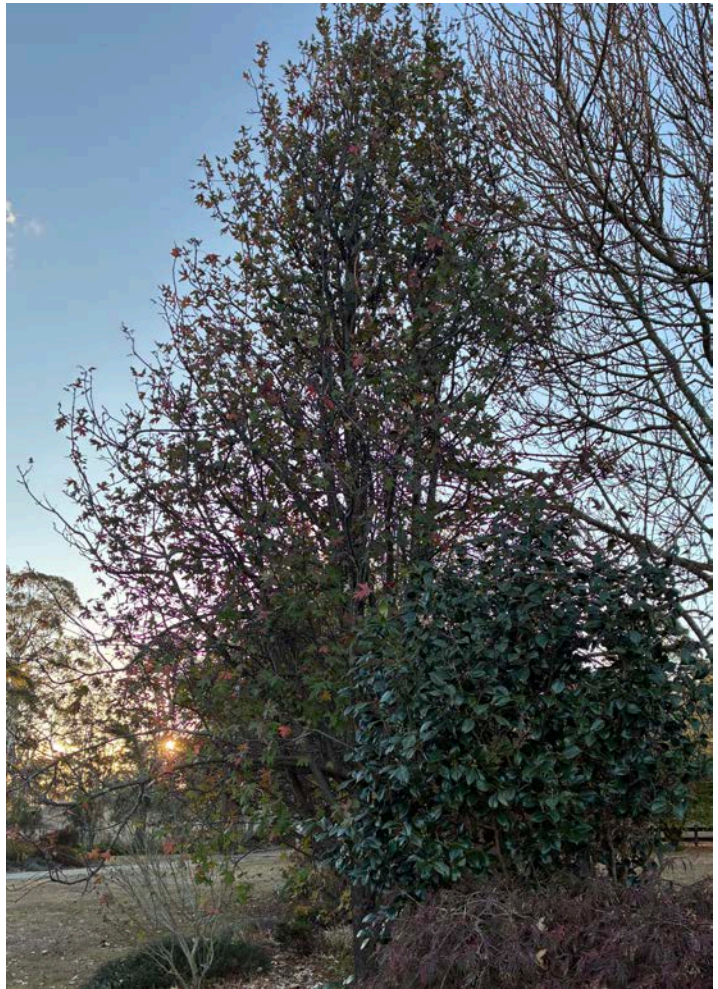
*Acer palmatum dissectum* 'Emerald Lace'  
An American hybrid form of the well known Japanese Maple. It prefers moist well-drained soil. Image: Maria Hitchcock

Right: Bryan Jackson, Owen Croft,  
Richard Bird and Bill Oates.  
Image: Helen Oates





Bradford Pear *Pyrus calleryana* 'Bradford'  
An ornamental pear growing to 12m.  
Originated in China  
Image: Maria Hitchcock



Crabapple (*Malus*)  
Image: Maria Hitchcock

### Owen Croft's 94th Birthday

Our Branch had ordered a wonderful birthday cake at Blind Chef. This would be our dessert.





The group had an excellent meal at Blind Chef.  
Image: Helen Oates

**Notes from 26th April 2026 at Robyn and Bryan Jackson's home at 5.00 pm**

Taken by: Helen Nancarrow

Present: Helen & Graham Wilson, Robyn & Bryan Jackson, Maria Hitchcock, Fran Webb, Linda Skipper, Caroline FitzRoy, Helen and Bill Oates, Lexia Nielsen, Owen Croft, Richard Bird and Helen Nancarrow.

Apologies: Liz Chappell & Elton Squires, Lynne Walker

Oral Histories: Liz Chappell has advised that the grant to collect oral histories has now been exhausted. Ian Telford and Maria Hitchcock oral histories have been recorded. Marilyn Pidgeon is to record the oral history of Lou Forsythe, which would be of local interest.

Beadle Grove Park, Lynches Road, Armidale: Enquires have been made to have this park cleared of weeds and fire hazard material. The RFS were contacted but conveyed that it was not a rural fire matter. Helen Wilson will follow up with the Armidale Council to encourage them to clean up the area.

AGHS Membership Lists: Two lists exist – one as a Membership List and the other a “Friends” List. It was agreed that only the Membership List participants receive the AGHS Newsletter and the “Friends” receive a truncated calendar of forthcoming events.

AGHS badges: Instead of the paper badges sent by AGHS, it was suggested that we have more robust badges, similar to those of Guyra Garden Club. Helen Oates to investigate.

AGHS Newsletter: Maria Hitchcock was congratulated on the professionally produced Newsletter that we all enjoy.

AGHS Membership Fees: All AGHS membership fees will fall due in March 2027 as an annual fee only. This will regulate AGHS membership fees for the organisation and give the society a clearer fiscal picture of their income.

AGHS excursion to Maitland 30th - 31st May 2026: Helen Wilson needs to know the numbers for the dinner on Saturday night. If you haven't already let her know, please do. Newcastle Living History was discussed and the visit to Cintra House, Maitland, home of Catherine Blanch. Car pooling has been organised amongst those going to Maitland.

Thanks: Thanks were conveyed to Graham Wilson and Bill Oates for organising the delightful and informative afternoon about the Mother of Ducks Lagoon history, memorial trees and the Guyra Showgrounds. Robyn and Bryan Jackson were also thanked for inviting us back to their home and for the opportunity to see their beautiful garden.

Meeting concluded at 5.25 pm and the group adjourned to The Blind Chef, Guyra for dinner and to celebrate Owen Croft's birthday.

### Petticoat Lane Penola SA

Cottages from the mid 19th Century have been preserved to allow visitors a glimpse of life at that time. These are among the original buildings of the township of Penola which was developed through the initiative of local pastoralists Alexander King Cameron and John Riddoch of Yallum Park (featured in the April newsletter). Five of the cottages are State heritage listed and maintained by the Penola Branch of the National Trust. The oldest building, Sharam Cottages, was constructed of blackwood slabs and originally had a bark roof. It has a working herb and vegetable garden.



St Mary McKillop was a nun who founded the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart (the Josephites - an order that established a number of schools and welfare institutions throughout Australia and New Zealand, with an emphasis on education for the rural poor. In 1860 she took a job as governess at the estate of her uncle, Alexander Cameron in Penola, South Australia, where she was to look after his children and teach them. She included the other farm children on the Cameron estate as well. In 1866, she and her sisters Annie and Lexie came to Penola to open a Catholic school.



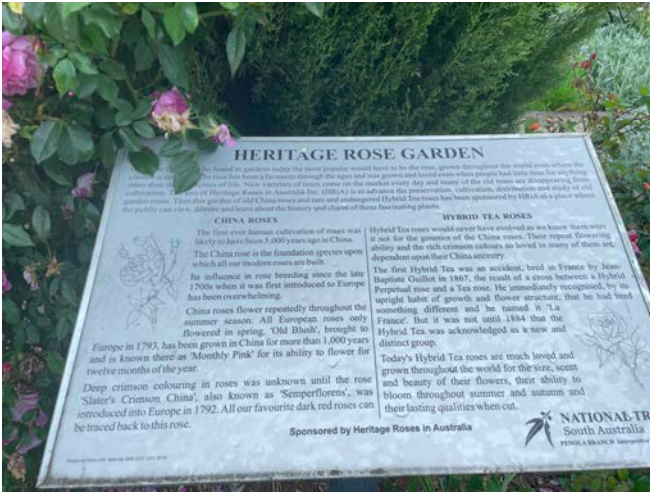
Side wall of the old church.



**Wilson's Cottage**  
 Scottish born William Wilson immigrated to Australia in 1849. He was employed as a shepherd at Killanoola Station and later at Maaoupe Station. He then joined the gold rush to Ballarat leaving his wife and three children for two years. On his return having acquired enough gold to purchase this allotment, he set about creating a market garden and orchard. He influenced John Riddoch to establish the Coonawarra Fruit Colony. Wilson's Cottage was donated to the National Trust in 1985.



Windlass well



A heritage rose garden features old China roses and endangered hybrid tea roses.



Irishman David McAdam arrived with his wife Ann in Adelaide in 1855. They moved to Penola about 1863 where David became a 'carrier'. This slab hut was their house. They had 11 children.



Above and right: Interior of Gammon Cottage (1869) Phillip Gammon arrived in Australia with his parents in 1868 at the age of 18 years. He was the owner of this property in 1885 as well as two other blocks of land. The building is described as a four room stone cottage with a weather board detached kitchen.



External chimney built of stone



## National Management Committee Report Meeting 7th April 2026

### **Marketing**

An advertising brochure is to be produced for each Branch to assist with promotions.

### **Finance:**

The aim is to have an efficient administration and aim for maximum interest on Term Deposits. The conferences are a major fund raiser. A modest rise in membership fees should help with the balance sheet.

### **Membership:**

Branches will be looking at encouraging Friends to become members.

### **Governance:**

A performance review was undertaken of the Executive Officer. A review of the constitution is planned to update it and make it more suitable for current operations. The Chair Helen Oates is planning to attend a Good Governance and Understanding Constitutions Seminar.

### **Conferences**

The Orange Conference planning is well underway. Registrations have now opened. The Monday Optional day has limited numbers due to the capacity of the buses.

The ACT Conference in 2027 is underway with bookings being made of venues. The Conference and Conference Dinner will be held at the Rex Hotel in Northbourne Ave, Canberra and a cocktail party will be held at the National Arboretum. Gardens are in the selection stage. Speakers have been finalised and are now being invited. The Conference will follow after Floriade.

Victoria is not able to hold the 2028 conference. It was suggested holding a conference on the North Coast of NSW. This would need a large amount of support from the NMC and local organisations.

### **Honorary Memberships**

The protocols regarding Life and Honorary memberships are to be reviewed.

### **Next NMC Meeting**

The 13/14th June meeting will now be held by Zoom rather than having a face to face weekend in Sydney. This is due to the current fuel crisis which has produced a great deal of uncertainty with travelling.

## Bookings are now open for the **2026 AGHS Annual Conference** **Orange NSW**

**Register here:**

<https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/events/2026-annual-national-conference/>

## Calendar of Events

Date 2026	Event	Notes
<b>May</b> <b>Saturday 30th</b> <b>Sunday 31st</b>	Trip to Newcastle and Maitland gardens  Event shared with our AGHS Sydney branch friends.  Bus from Maitland to Newcastle Gallery and return \$35.00 per person <a href="#">Book here</a>	Leaving Armidale by car pooling on Saturday morning, we'll travel to Monte Pio Accommodation in Maitland. 1.30pm Bus leaves for the newly expanded Newcastle Art Gallery where Francesca Beddie will share the delights of the collection with us. We then return by bus to Monte Pio. Group dinner to be organised. On Sunday morning, we'll visit historically significant <i>Cintra House</i> in Maitland, owned and loved by our AGHS member Catherine Blanch, where we will discover over an acre of garden to explore. We will also catch Judyann Moule's exhibition at the Maitland Regional Gallery after the garden visit.
<b>June</b> <b>Sunday 28th</b>	Tree Walk at UNE	We will walk through the grounds of UNE looking at significant trees. Herbarium visit (depending on permission) Details to come
<b>July</b> <b>Sunday 26th</b>	AGM	U3A Details to come
<b>August</b> <b>Sunday 23rd</b>	'A Day with Camellias'	Winter Speaker Program Visit to Nan and Roy Robertson's magnificent garden 'Wanderriby' at Wollomombi. Lecture by world renowned Camellia expert Dr Steven Utick
<b>September</b> <b>Friday 25th to</b> <b>Sunday 28th</b>	AGHS Annual Conference	Civic Theatre, Orange NSW Registrations opened 13th April See link for registrations on previous page.
<b>October</b> <b>Sunday 18th</b>	On the Road to Walcha	We will be visiting four Walcha gardens. Details to come.
<b>December</b> <b>Saturday 5th</b>	Annual Celebration Lunch	Peterson's Winery

Inquiries and ideas - please send to Lynne Walker (Events Co-ordinator)  
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