

ACT Monaro Riverina Branch

Newsletter August 2022 No 4



Australian Garden History Society
www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au

ACT Monaro Riverina Branch, PO Box 5008, LYNEHAM ACT 2602
For an e-copy of the newsletter email judy.pearce@netspeed.com.au

BRANCH DIARY

25 AUGUST
AGM, 5.30 p.m.
Annual Lecture, 6.00 p.m.

17 SEPTEMBER
Visit to Nil Desperandum
Camillia Grove

15 OCTOBER
Joint event with NT
A Visit to Lambrigg

20 OCTOBER
Visit to Two before Ten's
kitchen garden

2 DECEMBER
Visit to Richlands &
Riversdale

**AGHS NATIONAL
CONFERENCE,
HOBART**

11-13 NOVEMBER

*Landscape on the Edge:
Challenge and Opportunity*

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

AGHS ACT MONARO RIVERINA BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Thursday 25 August, 5.30 – 6.00 p.m. Venue: Room 6, Griffin Centre

All Branch members are strongly encouraged to attend this meeting. If you can't attend but would like to submit an apology, please email Nancy Clarke on clarkenancy624@gmail.com.

Three members are leaving the Committee at the AGM – Margie Bourke, Fleur Flanery and Greg Johnson. We invite other Branch members to nominate for the Committee. Nominations close on Thursday 11 August.

Nomination forms may be obtained from Nancy Clarke (email above).

AGENDA

1. Attendance
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of the previous meeting held electronically by Zoom on Tuesday 28 September 2021
4. Chair's report
5. Treasurer's report
6. Election of Branch Committee for 2022/2023

Branch committee members are elected for a three-year term, and are eligible for a further three-year term.

Continuing Committee members: Bronwyn Blake, Sue Cassidy, Anne Claoue-Long, Nancy Clarke, Lynne Curran and Susan Phillips. Nominations received by 11 August will be put to the meeting. Further nominations from the floor will be accepted.

7. Confirmation of Anne Claoue-Long as ACT State Representative on the AGHS National Management Committee.

After the meeting (at 6 pm) Dr Stephen Utick will present the Branch's Annual Lecture: ***The Enduring Camellia Tree*** (more information on page 2), and his talk will be followed by light refreshments. Friends of AGHS and members of other AGHS branches are very warmly invited to attend this talk.

There is **no charge** for the AGM or the talk, but you are invited to make a donation towards support for refugees and displaced people in the ongoing crisis in Ukraine. We will forward all proceeds to the UNHCR Humanitarian Appeal for Ukraine.

**BRANCH
COMMITTEE**

Margie Bourke, Chair
Sue Cassidy, Treasurer
Anne Claoue-Long, State
NMC Representative
Nancy Clarke, Secretary

Bronwyn Blake (and Co-
chair of the NMC)
Lynne Curran
Fleur Flanery
Greg Johnson
Susan Phillips

Location	The Griffin Centre is at 20 Genge Street, Canberra City. The Griffin Centre is a freestanding building facing Genge Street, adjacent to the North Quarter Building of The Canberra Centre. Meeting Room 6 is on the first floor. There is a lift just inside the entrance.
Bookings	are required for both the AGM and the talk through Trybooking at https://www.trybooking.com/CAEBE
Parking	The closest parking is in the Civic Open Air carpark. Access during redevelopment work in the Canberra Centre is from Genge Street - the continuation of Lonsdale Street. If coming from Cooyong Street, turn into Genge St and immediately turn left again to access the car park. (Fee charged). There is some street parking some minutes' walk away. By about 5.15 many people should have left the car park so there should be spaces available.

**ACT MONARO RIVERINA BRANCH
ANNUAL LECTURE
THE ENDURING CAMELIA TREE
Speaker Dr Stephen Utick
Thursday 25 August, 6.00pm, following the AGM**

Camellias have played a part in Australia's gardens for just on 200 years or perhaps longer. These much-celebrated flowering shrubs, loved for their diversity of forms and superb flowers, were first planted in the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney in 1823 by then Superintendent Charles Frazier.

Our Branch is lucky to have an internationally recognised expert on this genus as a member in Dr Stephen Utick. This genus has been in cultivation for at least two



thousand years and there have been recent steps taken by the International Camellia Society aimed at conserving ancient and historic camellia trees globally which Stephen will discuss. He will also discuss the issue of managing "living antiques" represented by the colonial camellias of NSW, which were among the first home-raised nursery stock of pre-Federation Australia.

Dr Utick is Vice-President of the International Camellia Society (Oceania), Chair of that Society's Committee for Historic Camellia Conservation and Visiting Curator (Theaceae, the family of *Camellias*) at the Royal Sydney Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust.

History, plants and gardens, the spirit of AGHS!

For booking and venue details see AGM information above.

NIL DESPERANDUM CAMILLIA GROVE

Saturday 17 September, starting 10 a.m.

Seeking Expressions of interest

The tour is dependent on AWD or 4WD vehicles availability

Did you know that at one time there was a specialist camellia nursery at Tidbinbilla? You might get the chance to visit remnant plantings still at the historic homestead of *Nil Desperandum* on Hurdle Creek. Henry Ffrench Gillman built the homestead in the late 1890s using the pisé construction method. Later in 1975 a part of the *Nil Desperandum* plot was transformed from



vegetable garden to a commercial camellia and rhododendron nursery, and operated until 1989 by the then owner Phil Gilmour and horticulturalist Leon Horsnell. Some 600 plants were established but when the nursery closed for the creation of the Nature Park many plants were transferred to Yarralumla Nursery for sale. About 100 plants survive at *Nil Desperandum*, flowering between July and October.

Negotiations are under way regarding an AGHS trip to see the camellias. We have been given permission for a small number of AWD or 4WD vehicles to drive to the site, as it is a 12km return walk. We will meet at the Rangers HQ in Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve at 10 am, pick up passengers, head out to Nil Desperandum, have a walk, refreshments, and then return.

But we need AWD or 4WD cars to access the site. Do you have a suitable vehicle and space for extra passengers? Passengers will be asked to wear masks. Vehicles must be weed free so will be water sprayed at the Depot.

Note that you will need to get to the Tidbinbilla Visitor Centre yourself.

The cost will be \$30 for AGHS members, \$35 for non-members.

If you would like to express an interest in this event please email the following details to Nancy Clarke clarkenancy624@gmail.com by **13 August**.

- Name/s
- AGHS member/s or not:
- I do not have a suitable AWD or 4WD and will need a lift from the Tidbinbilla Visitor Centre to *Nil Desperandum*:
OR
- I do have a suitable vehicle (must be AWD or 4WD)
- My vehicle is a
- Number of extra passengers you can take from the Reserve Visitor Centre to *Nil Desperandum*

PLEASE NOTE: NUMBERS ARE LIMITED – SO RESPOND EARLY!

SAVE THE DATES

A VISIT TO HISTORIC LAMBRIGG Saturday 15 October, p.m.

A joint AGHS/National Trust ACT event

This will replace the event planned to take place as part of the Canberra and Regional Festival on 30 April. Details and booking arrangements will be provided in September.

TWO BEFORE TEN A talk and tour of their sustainable kitchen garden in Aranda Thursday 20 October, 2.30-4.00 p.m.

Two Before Ten had its genesis in August 2008 as a little city café selling coffee and gourmet sandwiches. When the owners also turned to coffee roasting in 2011, they rebranded to *Two Before Ten* and, in subsequent years, branched out into other ventures, including the 'Ten Yards' Regional Produce Restaurant and the very popular A. Baker in the Nishi complex. In 2014, they opened the café in the Aranda shops at a site which had been vacant for almost two decades and is now a thriving community meeting place.

The kitchen garden surrounds the café and provides produce for the Aranda café as well as other venues around Canberra. There is also a bar, coffee roastery, yoga studio, mushroom growing rooms, beehives and fruit trees.

We will hear about the philosophy of the owners – which is to build communities and help save the planet – as well as a little about the history of the Aranda shops which were designed by Dutch architect, Dirk Bolt (1930-2020). In preparation for our visit to this unique Canberra venue, listen to Managing Director, Chris Dennis at <https://twobeforeten.com.au/aboutus/>

Location 68 Bandjalong Crescent, Aranda

Booking Details will be provided in the next newsletter

A VISIT TO RICHLANDS AND RIVERSDALE Friday 2 December

A full day's outing

For our end of year event, we have planned a self-drive day out, visiting two colonial properties in the Goulburn region. In the morning we will visit Richlands, the historic Macarthur family homestead just beyond Taralga. Branch members Rosanna and Stephen Horn, the property owners, have generously invited us to explore this fascinating property – and to admire the abundant roses in the old garden. After morning tea, we will drive to the National Trust property Riversdale in Goulburn, for lunch and a guided tour of the house and the splendid garden. This will be a day to remember.

Details are still being finalised and will be provided once they are available.

PAST EVENTS

JASON CHONGUE AND THE PLANT SOCIETY ZOOM Lecture: Thursday 16 June

In mid-June, AGHS members and other ticket holders enjoyed a real treat, a Zoom Presentation on *Modern Gardening Indoors and Out* by author, architect and co-founder of The Plant Society, Victoria-based Jason Chongue.

Indoor plants have always been a go-to option for new generations of gardeners, especially those living in apartments and in colder climates. They've also become a passion among millennials, and zoomers (generation Z), and COVID-19 isolation in the last two years further enhanced time for, and appreciation of all forms of gardening for more of us.

Jason recounted his own story as a gardener and plants-person, the founding and growth of The Plant Society, his books, being Creative Director of the Garden State Festival, how to grow and select indoor plants and the inspirations and influences in his gardening life.

Early influences came from a childhood in East Timor, close contact with gardening grandparents on their coffee farm, and the verdant abundance of tropical growth. Later as an architect, he saw how the competition for land as space for just more apartments limited room for gardens and parks, and he began to focus on indoor landscaping in interior design work. Jason and his partner, Nathan, have an 1880s inner city house, where most of the garden had been concreted by the previous owner.

This provides both challenges and opportunities - for layered plantings, cacti and succulents, and lots of roses, with overflow soon extending first to 200, and then 400 plants in the house - Mediterranean hot spots outside and rainforest glades inside.



At home in Melbourne (photos by Armelle Habib)

Gardening, working as an architect, and writing articles in his spare time led to The Plant Society. Like many young people as well as working parents, Garden Clubs were not so easy to access so Jason and Nathan started organising events at the rear of a café – with people lining up and down the street to attend, leading on to selling plants, and opening a shop in Collingwood, while still working as an architect full time. Thus was born The Plant Society in 2016, and essential to choosing a site for their shop was to have a café nearby. Later, due to site re-development they moved to another location in Collingwood, but the plus was more space and options. It's no wonder that Jason's books, *The Plant Society* (2017) and *Green* (2019) became a global phenomenon and have been published in three languages so far.

Later came a second store in Sydney – a challenge during COVID lockdowns – but also a living space above that could be shared as a B&B. Media attention and lots of Instagram interest, and a year ago came a third store in Tokyo, with a staff of 26 across the 3 stores. The Japanese store features the Australian aesthetic, as well as Australian ceramics and designers which have been received very well.



The Japanese store (Photos by The Plant Society)

More recently, the Plant Society was approached by the Victorian State Government and the City of Yarra to organise a festival, with Jason as Creative Director, and they chose to celebrate the Garden State and how COVID lockdowns had provided time for so many to garden.

The underlying theme of the Garden State Festival was *Garden State for a Greener State of Mind*. Activities celebrated the modern gardener and gardening as an art form. Held in autumn 2022, it celebrated the diversity of gardeners and gardens - from the person who grows a single plant, to those that have plant-filled apartments or gardens. Festival elements included floral displays, music, workshops for adults and children, plant filled spaces, guest speakers and panel discussions, and creating art in your garden, botanical drawing, and what are weeds in an urban space, to name a few. I thought: Canberra's Floriade needs this!

The last part of Jason's presentation was on the fundamentals of indoor plant gardening and some glimpses of Jason's new 5 acre garden in the country with its own well-documented history. Many questions and very interesting discussion concluded the evening.

So if you missed out, and want to know who Jason's gardening heroes are, the talk will become accessible on the AGHS YouTube in a few weeks' time. As Jason said "gardening is still an experiment for me!"

As part of the presentation, attendees and their family and friends were provided with a discount code for purchasing Jason's books at <https://theplantsociety.com.au> – the code is ALLTHINGSGREENAGHS

Jason Chongue on Instagram @jasonchongue and @theplantsocietyau

Images used in this review are courtesy of The Plant Society.

Greg Johnson

VERSAILLES GARDENS IN FACT AND FICTION

Wednesday 29 June

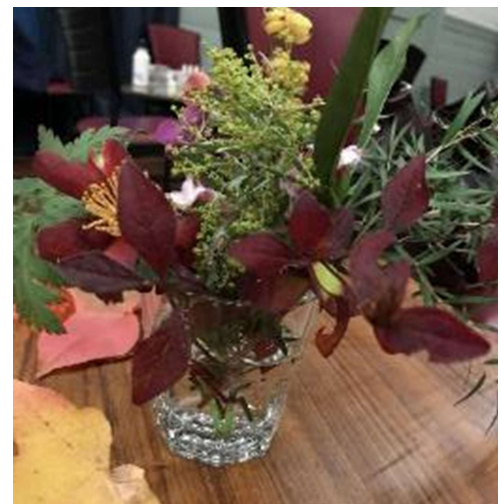
Few AGHS members would have been persuaded by the historical accuracy of *A Little Chaos*, where film director and actor Alan Rickman has created a romantic story about the stunning outdoor ballroom in the gardens at Versailles. But this did not deter the enthusiastic group of Branch members and friends who gathered at the historic Gundaroo Soldiers Memorial Hall on a bitter June day to be transported to late 17th century France. And in any case, polymath Max Bourke's excellent preliminary talk put us in the right mental framework and gave us some fascinating background to the gardens and their creation.

Louis XIV's passion for gardening is well attested – in fact he wrote a manual on fruit trees and vegetable gardens that was published posthumously, and so his commissioning of the superb gardens for his out-of-Paris palace was driven not just by his desire to create the most splendid of all royal residences, but by his real understanding of gardens and their importance. And in 1661 when he began extending and embellishing the palace at Versailles, he poached the services of the already successful landscaper Andre Le Notre from his Superintendent of Finances to work on the gardens. Some twenty years later Le Notre commenced work on the Ballroom Grove (the Bosquet de la Salle de Bal) in the gardens, with its complex and dramatic hydraulic works.

Rickman takes on this part of the story but introduces a fictional female landscape designer, the youthful Madame de Barra (Kate Winslet) to assist in this work, and creates a lavish, exuberant story of love and treachery. But the remarkable design and engineering skill that he attributes to Sabine de Barra - the amphitheatre of greenery with a great gravity-fed cascade running on eight levels, and the shell adorned stonework over which the water flows - are real enough, as are the marble dance floor and the hidden site for the musicians. It was of course Le Notre who masterminded these, not Sabine. The work was completed in 1685, the year the film was set. And the Sun King's real understanding of gardens is introduced in the scene where he finds solace in practical gardening after the death of his first wife.

Amazing though Le Notre was, he did not do all the design work himself, and Max introduced us to one of his co-workers, Jean Baptiste de la Quintinie, designer of the enormous and productive fruit and vegetable garden at Versailles, the Potager du Roi. To satisfy the king's desires, La Quintinie developed cultivation techniques for off-season production – strawberries at the end of March, asparagus in winter and lettuce in December. He also contributed to improving the cultivation of fruit trees, particularly their pruning, and ensured an abundant supply of petits pois, which had become the fashionable rage in the court.

This is the Branch's second film event at Gundaroo, and again we were made most welcome by the Gundaroo Hall Committee, who this year provided our truly excellent lunch - a generous and delicious minestra – perfect for the cold day. We are most grateful to the projectionist Wayne Kotzur, the three cooks, Kylie Martin, Sylvia Gleeson and Helen Curtis, and their behind-the-scenes adviser Colin, as well as our Gundaroo consultant, Bronwyn Blake, Branch Committee member and Co-Chair of AGHS, who masterminded the day. Low lunch tables were set up with charming floral arrangements on each.



Again it was a pleasure to welcome not just Canberra based AGHS members and friends, but our out of town participants, who came from Nimmitabel, Burradoo and near Windsor. The social afternoon tea provided a good opportunity for conversation and discussion.

Nancy Clarke

Photo: Bek Porter

N.B. For those who would like to replicate our delicious soup the recipe, kindly provided by Colin Lee, can be found on page 12. The recipe is for 50, but the ingredients should be able to be reduced for 10 or 5 people.

CALLUM BRAE VISIT Friday 8 July

A blustery cold wind greeted the group which gathered for the visit. Fortunately, although the ground was still wet, it was possible to make our way on a gentle walk to learn about the endangered Yellow Box woodland, once common in the Southern Tablelands Region. Max Bourke explained to the group the significance of this landscape, and the characteristics which define eucalypts, whilst standing beside a beautiful, ancient example of a Blakely's Red Gum.

The walk continued further to the location of three small brick buildings (powder magazines) which had been used to store explosives for use in the nearby quarry. As a security measure, in case of an explosion, the storage buildings are well spaced. When we reached the final building Anne Claoue-Long gave an informative talk about their purpose, and history of these particular buildings, and also mentioned others to be found in the Canberra area.



On our return to the entrance of the park we enjoyed a shared afternoon tea, well timed as the wind had dropped and the sun was warming.

Margie Bourke

Photos: Max Bourke talking beside the Blakely's Red Gum

Anne Claoue-Long talking outside one of the powder magazines.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

The committee would like to welcome the following new members who have joined since the last Newsletter.

- Susan Barrett, Canberra
- Shanta Gibbons, Canberra
- Mary Virr, Canberra

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS BRANCH

**AGM 11AM AND
WINTER SEMINAR 11.30AM -3.00PM
SUNDAY 21 AUGUST**

Speakers: The first speaker will be Chris Thompson to launch her new book *A Struggle for Relevance: The Garden at Harper's Mansion*. The Branch has sponsored the editing and printing of the work and the book will be available to purchase at the event.

The second speaker will be John Siemon Director of Horticulture @ RBG Sydney topic 200 years of History at RBG Sydney.



Cost \$35 members, \$45 non members (includes lunch)

Venue East Bowral Community Hall

Booking Contact the Branch for more details and a booking form (ruthbailey1428@gmail.com)



Photo above: Harper's Mansion

Photo below: RBG Sydney

NATIONAL NEWS



Is the pen mightier
than the trowel in garden history?

WINTER ZOOM WEBINAR

The AGHS National Winter Zoom Webinar, which was broadcast live on Sunday 10 July, proved to be a great success. Just over 80 tickets were sold with \$1000 being raised for the Nina Crone Writing Fund. AGHS members and others tuned in from all over Australia and from New Zealand.

Clive Blazey of the Diggers Club and Diggers Foundation, Julian Raxworthy Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Canberra, and Jennifer Stackhouse of the Horticultural Media Association and Kentish Garden Club talked about both books and gardens. The discussion was entertaining, thought provoking and concluded that both the pen and trowel were needed for understanding gardening and recording garden history.

The webinar has been written up by Francesca Beddie and her summary is available on the AGHS website at

<https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/2022/07/is-the-pen-mightier-than-the-trowel/>

The webinar recording will be made available on the Internet for viewing in due course for those of you who missed it. In the meanwhile check out Francesca's post.

Information about the Nina Crone Writing Fund and how to contribute to it can be found here

<https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/funding/nina-crone-writing-fund/>

UPDATE TO THE AGHS WEBSITE

Landscapes at Risk



West Basin Lake Burley Griffin (Juliet Ramsay)

The AGHS advocacy site on Landscapes at Risk has been updated recently.

<https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/2022/07/https-www-gardenhistorysociety-org-au-wp-content-uploads-2020-11-20-10-18-aghs-landscapes-at-risk-pdf/>

You are invited to log on and have a look by clicking on the green Landscapes at Risk link to download the updated list. Please provide any comments to Lisa Nutting at info@gardenhistorysociety.org.au

Avenues of Honour

You can also explore the updated Avenues of Honour/Memorial Avenues and Lone Pine List You can also explore the updated Avenues of Honour/Memorial Avenues and Lone Pine List at <https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/2022/07/new-website/>

Again click on the green link to download the list and provide your comments to Lisa at the AGHS office. <https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/2022/07/new-website/>

Again click on the green link to download the list and provide your comments to Lisa at the AGHS office.

OF INTEREST

CAMELLIA ARK AUSTRALIA (CAA) SHOALHAVEN AND SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS TWO DAY TOUR

Wednesday 10 and Thursday 11 August

An exclusive garden tour of camellia collections and heritage sites. For more details contact CAA's Secretary Stephen Utick, 0421 972 287, sutick@grapevine.com.au

ACT REGION HERITAGE SYMPOSIUM 2022

Saturday 13 August, 9am – 5pm

Topic – *Heritage and Healing: How Heritage Helps*. For more details go to <https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/event/heritage-and-healing-how-heritage-helps/>

NATIONAL ARBORETUM CANBERRA www.nationalarboretum.act.gov.au

For details on walks, workshops and other events visited the Arboretum website.

THE FIRST CANBERRA GARDEN CLUB 60TH BIRTHDAY www.nationalarboretum.act.gov.au

A celebration for this occasion was held in the Margaret Whitlam Pavilion at the National Arboretum on Tuesday 5 July. A large gathering of members were joined by Lorraine Wilson, President of Garden Clubs Australia and Scott Saddler the Executive Branch Manager of the Arboretum.

For the 50th anniversary the club was allocated a rocky knoll in the Himalayan Cedar Forest which is now well established. Members hold regular working bees on the last Tuesday of the month and visitors are welcome.



The Arboretum is placing a plaque to name the rocky knoll for the First Garden Club's 50 & 60th anniversaries and a commemorative tree will also be planted in the Mesa oak (*Quercus engelmannii*) forest dedicated to the club.

Photo (Mary Lou Lyon): Scott Saddler, Paulene Cairnduff, Helen Stevens and Lorraine Wilson cutting the anniversary cake

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDENS

www.anbg.gov.au

Friends Thursday Talks - for program details and for bookings go to <https://www.friendsanbg.org.au/calendar> This calendar also provides information on other talks, walks and activities in the Garden.

NATIONAL TRUST (ACT)

For details on monthly Heritage walks go to:

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/act/heritagewalks-act/>

HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY OF CANBERRA

<http://www.hsoc.org.au>

LAKE BURLEY GRIFFIN GUARDIANS (LBGG)

<http://lakeburleygriffinguardians.org.au/>

GARDEN HISTORY LUNCH
MINESTRONE SOUP

Prep Time: 15 min **Cook Time:** 45 min **Servings:** 50 **Source:** sbs.com.au – Garden Club, Soups

Ingredients

1 1/4 cups extra virgin olive oil
15 onions, diced
40 garlic cloves, each cut into 3-4 pieces
5 celery heart including the pale, tender leaves, sliced
10 large or 4-5 smaller carrots, cut into bite-sized pieces
20 cups roughly sliced Brussels sprouts/savoy cabbage
10 bay leaves
10 cups fresh flageolet beans, or other fresh (or cooked dried) beans
2.5kg waxy potatoes such as desiree, peeled and diced
2 kg tin Italian tomatoes, crushed
750g carnaroli rice
1 kg green beans
750g chard spinach, roughly chopped
5 cups flat-leaf parsley leaves, roughly chopped
300g parmesan rind, cut into 1 cm cubes
salt, freshly ground black pepper
freshly grated parmesan, to serve

Directions

1. Heat the oil in a heavy-based saucepan and add the onion, garlic, celery heart, carrot, cabbage and bay leaves. Lightly fry the vegetables for 2–3 minutes without letting them colour. Stir in the beans, potato and tomato, then cover the ingredients with water. Once the soup comes to the boil, add the rice and turn down to a simmer. Add a few good pinches of salt and simmer for 20–25 minutes.
2. Add the spinach, parsley and parmesan rind and simmer for another 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and taste for seasoning, adding extra salt if needed, and pepper. Serve with plenty of grated parmesan and crusty bread.