



AUSTRALIAN
GARDEN
HISTORY
SOCIETY

Victoria Branch News

SUMMER 2022



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Members

Welcome to our summer newsletter. It is so wonderful to have warmer weather after all the rain and our sympathies go out to everyone in flood-affected areas. Certainly, the warmth and abundant moisture has led to phenomenal foliage growth in my garden, not to mention the weeds!

The branch has had a very busy few months and we hope you have been able to attend some events. On Sunday 25 September, the weather was perfect for our visit to the Nobelius Heritage Park and Emerald Museum followed by a picnic lunch and the launch of Tim Gatehouse's latest garden history of "Gorongu", the production of which was funded by our branch. We thank the Frasers for their generous hospitality and allowing us to document this important property. See below for how you can get a copy and view the magnificent on-line pictorial which complements the booklet. This was created by committee member Trevor Pitkin and was also financed by the branch. An excellent self-drive weekend on 8-9 October of the Bellarine Peninsula took us to a diverse collection of gardens and landscapes with very generous owners sharing their stories and hospitality. You can read the report below.

On 14 October we were again lucky with the weather as we visited the gardens and interiors of Government House and La Trobe's Cottage being the homes of our current Governor and Victoria's first Lieutenant Governor appointed in 1851. Again, our excellent guides were so generous with their knowledge. The report is below.

We also had a productive working bee at Longacres on 23 October which was our last for this year. Hopefully the weather will be kinder next year and allow more of our scheduled working bees to occur.

Finally, our last event for the year was the recent walk and talk at Kamesburgh Gardens in Brighton. It was great to see so many members and friends explore this hidden gem and enjoy our picnic and Christmas raffle afterwards.

The committee thanks all members for their support during the year and sends best wishes for the festive season and the new year.

Below is the schedule of events for the start of 2023, so please book in early and we look forward to seeing you soon.

Best wishes

WENDY DWYER - CHAIR

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

The committee would like to welcome the following new and rejoining members: Anders Van vliet, John Urbano, Isobel Williams, Bryce Raworth, Maria & Mike Smith, Geraldine Roberts, Maryjane Crabtree, Jim Mavromatis.

Diary Dates 2023:

February

Thursday 9 - Mont Park - free walk and talk

March

Wednesday 1 - Self-drive visits to Beluera House and Garden and Peter Nicholson's garden, Mornington

April

Sat 1 - Sun 2 - Bus trip to Gippsland gardens

Note: If you need help booking online please contact a committee member.

UPCOMING EVENTS

BELEURA HOUSE AND GARDEN AND PETER NICHOLSON'S GARDEN

THIS WILL BE A CO-EVENT WITH AUSTRALIAN DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS SOCIETY



Beleura House, Mornington

WEDNESDAY 1 MARCH 2023

COST: MEMBERS ONLY - \$75

BOOKINGS: Limited to 20 Members, closes 5pm Tuesday 21 February, please book early.

SELF DRIVE: to Mornington Golf Club car park, Tallis Drive for a 9.40am courtesy transfer to Beleura. Courtesy transfer returns to the car park by approx. 3.45pm.

INCLUDES: Entry fees, courtesy transfers, morning tea, house tour and garden tour with a light lunch in the Melba Room. Tour of the Nicholson garden with Peter.

BRING: AGHS Name Badge, water, mask, hand sanitiser, insect repellent

NOTE: THERE IS A LOT OF UNEVEN GROUND SO MEMBERS MUST BE CAPABLE AND PREPARED FOR THIS AND WEAR STURDY SHOES.

Bookings: TRYBOOKING

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

Beleura, an Italianate villa, was designed by architect Joseph Reed in 1863 and it remained as a private residence for 120 years. The elegant original furnishings of the last owner, John Tallis, are in place today. The five-hectare pleasure grounds unfold from one garden into another to create a lively sense of theatre, aligning with the stewardship of Sir George Tallis of the JC Williamson entertainment empire. Features include huge specimen trees and a rear stone courtyard from the original nineteenth century garden with later overlays such as, large hedges, reflective pools, and a charming kitchen garden. The romantic ambience existing today is the Italianate style realised by benefactor, John Tallis, with his 1953 research trip in northern Italy yielding much antique statuary.

Peter Nicholson's garden, just a few minutes' walk away, has been created as a naturalistic counterpoint to the steadily encroaching urban sprawl. The property has been in the family since 1916 and has been returned to shrubland with garden terraces built into the steep slopes. We will see the Beleura Cliff Path where Eugene von Guérard painted Dandenong Ranges from 'Beleura' 1870 with views over Port Phillip Bay.

EVENT REPORTS

Threads and themes Bellarine Peninsula tour October 8-9, 2022

By Trevor Pitkin
Victorian Branch Committee member

Over two amazing days, the AGHS Bellarine tour enjoyed the storied histories and explored the grounds of six diverse properties, along with a taste of the Geelong Botanic Gardens for good measure. All property owners engaged enthusiastically, both by supplying detailed notes ahead of the visit, as well as on the day with refreshments and generously offering their time for AGHS visitors.



ARILPA is quite unique on the Bellarine, representing a restoration of a coastal heath and grass tree ecosystem that existed prior to colonisation. Once the previous generation of owners decided to move in this direction under the umbrella of Trust For Nature's covenanting system, several steps have been taken. First steps include the removal of over-storey plants (mainly tea trees) and non-indigenous trees along the entrance driveway (sugar gums). Next grass trees were planted, and this continues today. Finally, the practice which threads back to the land management methods used by traditional custodians (cool burning) has been applied sequentially to sections of the 4-acre ecosystem. The rich array of orchids (not all in flower at the visit) and ground cover plants that are now thriving as a result was a joy to behold.



At CORIYULE, the resonance with the story of the original couple who developed the property from around 1850 (Anne Drysdale and Caroline Newcomb) and the present owners was marked. 'The Ladies' of Coriyule were extremely energetic and inventive in establishing a diverse productive farm and charming homestead, even though Anne died just a few years after arriving. The achievements of the present owners since acquiring Coriyule in 2007 are equally remarkable. They were faced with major renovation challenges with the house and in bringing some order and productivity to the grounds. An impressive array of growing shelters for vegetables, herbs, specialty fruits and other exotics has been established. Visiting members were treated to a wander around the restored house and a wonderful lunch on day 1 served in the atmospheric cellar.



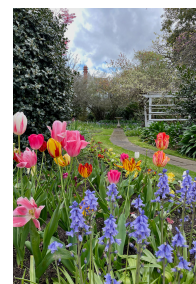
SPRAY FARM house is situated on a small rise overlooking Corio Bay, and the vistas are truly spectacular. Present owners have modestly extended the garden that sits up close around the house, where they describe the wind coming off the bay as 'pretty wild' at times. Thousands of fence line trees have been planted, significantly enriching the birdlife on the landscape. They also reported the origin of the name Spray Farm was traced back to the property where J C Langton (first owner) lived in England before arriving (Spray Farm House). Since taking over about 8 years ago, the owners have also added significant productive acreage (wheat growing on the acres rolling to the shoreline from the homestead) as well as continuing with the vineyards for a local winery. Langton and the next owner Charles Ibbotson were running a farming operation, and at least in part the true working farm has now returned to Spray Farm.



ARUNDEL is approached via a single-vehicle lane created by the subdivision process over the years, and these days presents as a charming country lane that takes you slowly from the bustle of the main road below into the expansive garden that surrounds the house. At that entrance the effect is dramatic as you emerge from the narrow lane into a space full of interest. This garden is the work of one person's enthusiasm to try new things, and if they don't thrive then to try something else appealing. So, it is also a work in progress. Around the garden are placed several structures reflecting the owner's attitudes to waste –redundant components from other structures, including the house, are re-purposed for charming effect. This theme is reflected in the management of the productive and ornamental gardens, where even fallen sticks and twigs get a job, as a giant insect hotel at the feet of one of the major trees.

At **CLAREMONT**, the feeling of development is quite the opposite – this place exudes stability and heritage, fully settled both in the garden and house. One is taken into the world of the English country garden, where space is generous from the formal front garden through to the more relaxed plantings and productive areas.

The original propagating/glasshouse remains in use and is nestled into the garden at a respectful distance nearby the house. Some visual idea of the age of the garden, originally part of a very large block, can be scaled by admiring the size of a glorious English oak at the rear of the property's present limits, where its branches form a complete cover over what is now a laneway.



CHESTERFIELD's front garden contains three huge horticultural symbols that exist solely due to the determination and knowledge of the owner – three huge Norfolk Island Pines. These trees were brought back from the death penalty verdict of some arborists to the picture of health they are today through a combination of soil treatment (injection of fungal microflora, composting, feeding and a strict watering regime), innovative approaches to deterrence of pest bird attacks and the commitment of time all this entails.



Lunch on day 2 was taken at the **Geelong Botanic Gardens**. This was a brief visit led by two very experienced and knowledgeable guides from the Friends group. The focus was the recently planted out 'Pacific Rim Garden', which displays rare plants from the Pacific region that either face or have faced deforestation. Plant collector Alistair Watt began the journey of this garden by travelling to the regions to find the threatened species. A restored water cart by John Furphy, used by the gardens over 100 years ago, was a reminder of the challenges global specimen gardens face today, as always. Our guides reported the recommissioning of an old water catchment and storage system near the new garden.





Visit to Government House and La Trobe's Cottage October, 2022

By Wendy Nichol
Victorian Branch Committee member

Government House Victoria – offices and home to the 29th Governor, Her Excellency the Honourable Linda Dessau AC and her husband Anthony Howard AM KC.

State Apartments, Garden and Grounds Tour led by a senior member of the staff.

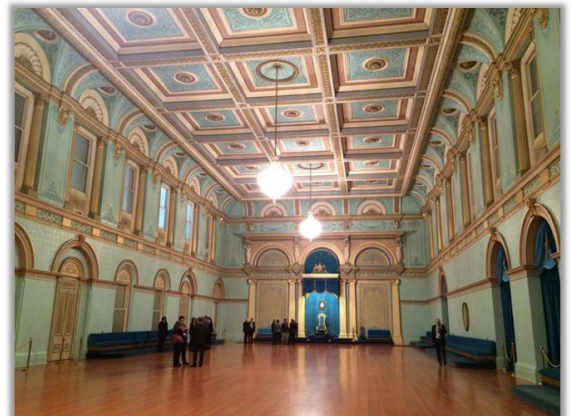
We toured the State Apartments comprising the Hall, Billiard Room, Drawing Room, Dining Room and Ballroom. All Rooms are quite grand and a Conservatory leads off the elegant, light and bright Drawing Room with its large casement windows opening out to the Fountain Court.

Furnishings, gleaming chandeliers and art works in these State Rooms hold great historical significance.

The tour of the extensive Peace and Prosperity Kitchen Garden and orchard was a delight with well labelled sun-filled garden beds holding plentiful healthy produce. An inclusion for us, was a walk around the parklike setting close to the western and northern boundaries where there are many beautiful trees, including those planted by King Charles III, the late Princess Diana and the now Prince of Wales. This walk is not usually included in group tours. We may well return in 18 months to see the garden in a different season.

La Trobe's Cottage – this tour was most interesting and well led by Helen Botham and other volunteers and it was good to be reminded of the history.

La Trobe's Cottage was the home of Charles Joseph La Trobe, Victoria's first governor, and his wife Sophie and their children from 1839 to 1854. Originally erected on his Jolimont estate, the single-storey dwelling is constructed of timber, replicating the original prefabricated structure brought by him from London. The locally built dining room (1839), the first of many additions made during La Trobe's tenure, is the oldest surviving Melbourne building. The modest yet elegant family home contains many pieces of La Trobe's furniture and other historic artefacts. They were keen to re-create a garden with plants similar to the ones they remembered at home. At first the garden was very ornamental with star and moon crescent shaped beds full of hollyhocks and flowering annual plants. However, due to lack of man power (the gardeners having left for the goldfields) and also lack of water, their garden changed to a romantic and slightly wild garden, where Charles planted species that were drought tolerant.



The tour group poses for a photo in the State Room



ALSO OF INTEREST



AGHS & Climate Action

Like many organisations AGHS recognises the threat climate change poses to the world and our valued landscapes. As such, we have drawn up a position statement, accompanied by resources published on the website, to inspire and guide both custodians of old gardens and existing landscapes and gardeners creating the history of the future.

Go to www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au on the Web to learn more or write to the Editor if you require a copy of the Policy Statement to be sent to you.

LATEST GARDEN HISTORY BOOKLET AND PICTORIAL

GORONGA – by Tim Gatehouse is available from the AGHS website SHOP for purchase for \$20 in hardcopy or as a free pdf download for members (remember to log in).

You may also contact Head Office on Phone: 0419 977 703 to order a copy.

Also on the website under “Projects and Report/Pictorials” view the complementary Pictorial of Goronga.



VICTORIAN BRANCH COMMITTEE

Chair & Secretary : Wendy Dwyer

Vice Chair and Newsletter: Lynda Entwisle

Treasurer: Anna Long

Working Bee Coordinator: Diana Ellerton

Advocacy: Trevor Pitkin

NMC Rep: Anna Long

Catering Coordinator: Annie Woodside

Booking Officer: Robyn Teed

Events Coordinator: Wendy Nichol

General: Michaela Hill

We meet on the 4th Tuesday of the month, 4.30- 6pm at Burnley Gardens. We welcome members to join committee meetings at any time. If you wish to discuss opportunities to get involved please contact Wendy Dwyer aghsvicbranch2@gmail.com, or contact a committee member. Go to our Webpage www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/branches/victoria/ for more news and updates. Contributions to the newsletter are always welcome and should be addressed to aghsvic19@gmail.com with newsletter in subject line.

AGHS VICTORIA BRANCH - PHONE: 03 9650 5043 TOLL-FREE 1800 678 446
MAIL: PRIVATE BAG 2000, SOUTH YARRA VIC 3141
ARBN 654 108 915