



## eNewsletter No. 18 October 2023

### Northern NSW Branch

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

Larger images are available from the editor on request

*Bougainvillea* seen here in the garden of Gooloowan, a stately home built on Denmark Hill, Ipswich. The name is indigenous meaning 'house on the hill'. *Bougainvillea* was selected as the floral emblem for Ipswich in 1930.

Originating in Brazil, this species was collected in 1766 by the French Admiral Louis Antoine de Bouganville. When the Endeavour reached Rio de Janeiro in 1768, Solander painted a version which is now believed to be a hybrid of the species.

*Bougainvillea* has been a common species in Queensland gardens for many years. Between 1904 and 1936 Frederick Turley conducted a breeding program and so many were planted in Ipswich the town held a Bougainvillea Carnival in 1931.

The species can grow up to 12 metres tall, scrambling over other plants with their spiky thorns. They are evergreen where rainfall occurs all year, or deciduous if there is a dry season. The actual flower is small and generally white, but each cluster of three flowers is surrounded by three or six papery bracts with the bright colours associated with the plant, including pink, magenta, purple, red, orange, white, or yellow.



**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:**

Hello everyone,

No sign of that much needed rain yet, but gardens in the New England are looking wonderful anyway. I hope you've had a chance to enjoy your own, or to marvel at the results of the labours of other gardeners. As you will see later in this edition, the AGHS National Conference held in Ipswich was a resounding success, with interesting speakers, a wonderful venue, fabulous pre-conference and optional day tours, delightful garden visits and, as usual, great company. The Queensland Conference Committee is to be congratulated on their efforts. Conference delegates, including the nine from Northern NSW (the Maurers are always included in our numbers), gave the event a big thumbs up. We can't wait to meet again in Bunbury in Western Australia next year.

It was the last conference for our efficient, enthusiastic and personable National Executive Officer, Lisa Nutting, who finishes up in the position at the end of October. She will be missed, and we wish her well in her future undertakings, which no doubt include ongoing involvement in the Victorian branch of AGHS. We welcome with great anticipation Sarah Edwards, who replaces Lisa, and begins work on Monday 16 October. I know you will find dealing with Sarah to be just as pleasant an experience as you have had with Lisa. Welcome Sarah!

**Our next NSW Branch excursion is Saturday November 4<sup>th</sup> to the Peony Farm at Arding. Helen Wilson and Marilyn Pigeon have kindly arranged this. We will meet at the farm at 10 am and proceed to Uralla after the visit. Unfortunately Linda Bell's garden is not available this time but I'm sure you could manage a coffee or some retail therapy before lunch at the Top Pub at 12.30. Please RSVP to Helen Wilson [g.wilson42@bigpond.com](mailto:g.wilson42@bigpond.com) as soon as possible as numbers are needed for the lunch booking. I look forward to seeing you there.**

**New England Garden Festival**

We have booked a stall at the New England Garden Festival to be held at the Armidale Racecourse on the weekend of **18/19 November**. Our plan is to promote AGHS and our branch through a display of historic garden photos, AGHS information and give aways of back issues of our wonderful Journal, a display on the benefits of using gravel mulch to conserve water and to suppress weeds, and the sale of the potted roses we've been looking after since our Open Garden last year. Have a look at the Festival website for a full description of the weekend's activities. It should be a really enjoyable and interesting weekend.

*We need volunteers* to help set up on the Saturday morning, to greet visitors to the marquee during the weekend, and to help pull down and pack away on the Sunday afternoon. Please let me know if you will be able to assist.

I can assist:

- Setting up marquee and display early on Saturday morning
- Greeting visitors on Saturday morning
- Greeting visitors on Saturday afternoon
- Greeting visitors on Sunday morning
- Greeting visitors on Sunday afternoon
- Pulling down and packing away on Sunday afternoon

Volunteers are also needed by the organisers of the festival to assist with a number of tasks including: Bump in and bump out; Information and guiding; Ticket collection and sales; Activities and workshops; Open Gardens – welcome and supervise visitors in Open Gardens; Parking and traffic management. Please complete and return the Volunteer Registration Form to assist with festival organisation. <https://negf.com.au/volunteers/>



## AGHS 43rd Annual Conference Ipswich 2023

Text and images Maria Hitchcock

The selection of Ipswich as a conference venue was an inspired choice. Too often we select a venue for its landscape or attractions but we tend to neglect the underlying reason for the original occupation by settlers of that particular place. In Ipswich we were reminded why the city stands where it is. Its industrial base brought prosperity (and hardship) to many as they struggled through bad times, floods, technological change and industrial downturns. Nine of our Branch attended the conference, which included day trips to Toowoomba and the Scenic Rim.



Anne & John Maurer with Helen Wilson in the Boyce Garden at Toowoomba.



Bill Oates, Graham & Helen Wilson, Helen Oates at the Ipswich Art Gallery where we all had drinks before inspecting the civic art collection.

Below: Richard Bird at Spring Bluff Railway Station



Maria Hitchcock at Laurel Bank Park Toowoomba  
The Carnival of Flowers festival was coming to a close so we were lucky to enjoy the massed displays.





**Out to dinner at the Rusty Nail, a Tapas Bar in the Ipswich CBD. We had a large outdoor table with high stools and managed to cram our large group in. This became our 'Stammtisch' (regular table).**

Images: Lynne Walker

Below: Richard Bird, Graham Smith, John Maurer, Ann Maurer and Anne Smith



L - R: Ann Maurer, Prue Slatyer, Stuart Reid, Bill Oates, Graham Smith, Lynne Walker, Alan Duke, Lisa Nutting

Image: Anne & Graham Smith



## Heritage Rose Garden

Text and Images by Lynne Walker

John Hiscox and the Back Track team arrived last Tuesday and did a great job almost completing the application of gravel mulch to Stage One (just three Rugosas beds left to go) and completing the long trellis between Stages One and Two. Just three beds in Stage Two are left to go. The garden is looking amazing and with five different kinds of gravel being applied to certain quadrants it really looks like a lovely mosaic. The rose growth is amazing and so many are already flowering. Many thanks to John, the BackTrack team and also to Graham Wilson who fearlessly attacked the Rugosa hedge on the edge of the garden to great effect and to Richard Bird who did the same with the Rugosa beds.



John Hiscox with the Dingo spreading gravel mulch



Graham Wilson and the *R. rugosa* hedge

Below: C bed completely mulched with gravel.





## Heritage Rose Garden

The Back Track team assist with spreading the gravel mulch.  
Images: Lynne Walker



Above: The Back Track team among the Moss Roses

Below: The Back Track team hard at work





## Spring Bluff Railway Station

Text: <https://springbluff.com.au/>

Images: Maria Hitchcock

Spring Bluff Railway Station is a heritage listed site located on the main railway line between Ipswich and Toowoomba. Its significance stems from 150 years of railway history and the attraction of its beautiful landscaped gardens.

The station was decommissioned in August 1992, and the ganger and fettler crew withdrawn in September 1993. The importance of the station was recognised with the formation of the Spring Bluff Railway Station Trust to preserve and maintain the grounds and station. The original trust consisted of Toowoomba City Council, Gatton Shire Council, Crows Nest Shire Council & QR and following amalgamation in 2008, changed to Toowoomba Regional Council, Lockyer Valley Regional Council & Queensland Rail. The National Trust of Queensland listed the Main Range Railway on its Register in March 1994.



On 25 February 1864, the construction of the Ipswich-Toowoomba line commenced. The project was tackled in five stages, culminating in the sixteen mile section from Murphy's Creek to Toowoomba known as the "Main Range". The Main Range was regarded as a notoriously difficult section of rail to construct, given the steepness of the area. To accommodate the terrain, the track had to be lengthened by 9 miles, costing the Queensland Government an extra £100,000. Approximately 1,600 men were involved in the project under the supervision of railway engineer Robert Ballard. For 100 years, the Main Range was the most significant ascent on the Queensland Railway and a principal factor influencing locomotive design.





On April 12 1867, the first train from Ipswich reached Toowoomba. The journey from Ipswich to Helidon took three hours with the remainder taking over two hours. Highfields Station, commonly known as the Main Range Station in its early days, was the principal crossing and watering station because of its suitable gradient and abundant water supply. In February 1890, the station was renamed Spring Bluff. The station served as an outlet for timber, dairy and other produce for the Highfields area. It played an integral role in community life and after the construction of a dance hall in 1907 was an important centre for social activities.

Back in 1914, Queensland Railways launched a garden competition to encourage railway staff to beautify the stations and grow vegetables. This challenge was enthusiastically embraced by Station Master Ralph Kirsop and his wife Lillian. During the 1930's and 1940's, Ralph, Lillian and their Night Officers removed 50 tons of stone and gravel in a wheel barrow to level the foundations, removed a bank 300 feet long and 20 feet high for better perspective, terraced the whole garden with 120 tons of blue metal supplied by the Department and planted thousands of Iceland poppies, roses, bulbs, azaleas, sweet peas and tulips.



Together the employees provided approximately 22,000 man hours of work. Their efforts were rewarded with first prize in the Southern Division for at least nine years. In 1962, Don Wharton was appointed Station Master with the condition that he maintain the gardens which had fallen into a state of neglect. Together Don and recently arrived Night Officer Barry Stone embarked on a restoration project that took more than three years. Their efforts were rewarded with the "Most Improved" prize in the Queensland Railways

From 1967, Queensland Rail required railwaymen employed at Spring Bluff to participate in the upkeep of the gardens. Over the years, railway staff were involved in restoring the terraces, clearing lantana to create picnic grounds, which were levelled by a Queensland Railways bulldozer, planting the lawn areas with couch and kikuyu, adding a cricket pitch for leisure and planting shrubs to provide a longer floral display.



## The Boyce Gardens Toowoomba

(Conference Handbook and garden interpretation signage)

Captions and Images by Maria Hitchcock

This magnificent garden, forest and park covering six hectares was established as a private garden by leading Toowoomba citizens Leslie and Margaret Boyce over almost 60 years and was given by them in trust to the University of Queensland. The land comprised a spur of eucalyptus woodland running south from Mt Lofty on its northern border, a remnant of natural rainforest and a run down dairy farm. Margaret designed the house site, drive and surrounding terraces. In developing their garden the Boyces were well ahead of their time. The gardens were heritage listed in 2001.

Appointed curators for life, the Boyces started a trust fund for ongoing estate maintenance, to which they contributed annually and gave the remainder of their estates upon their deaths. This generosity ensured the property was supported by an endowment, allowing it to be enjoyed for generations to come.



Orange flowered form of *Leucospermum cordifolium*. The species grows naturally near the south coast of the Western Cape province of South Africa. There are several varieties and hybrids of this species available in Australia.



The red flowered form of *Anigozanthos flavidus* (Kangaroo paw) in the front garden. All the gardens were built with brick edging and the shallow drains and pathways were also lined with red brick. These may have been recycled from demolition sites. Note the upright sprinkler to the right. In the rear is the entry to the rainforest walk.



Interesting design for the retaining walls of the terraces giving another level for small bulbs or annuals. Below is the rock garden constructed of large sandstone rocks.







Police officers look at the felled tree at Sycamore Gap, next to Hadrian's Wall. Image: Owen Humphreys/AP

## It wasn't just a tree: why it feels so bad to lose the iconic Sycamore Gap tree and others like it

[Rebecca Banham](#) Postdoctoral fellow, University of Tasmania  
*The Conversation* October 5, 2023

The famous Sycamore Gap tree was felled last week, prompting global expressions of sorrow, anger and horror. For some, the reaction was puzzling. Wasn't it just a single tree in northern England? But for many, the tree felt profoundly important. Its loss felt like a form of grief.

Trees tell us something important about ourselves and who we are in the world. That is, they contribute to ontological security - our sense of trust that the world and our selves are stable and predictable. Trees –especially those celebrated like England's sycamore or Tasmania's 350-year-old **El Grande** mountain ash – feel like they are stable and unchanging in a world where change is constant. Their loss can destabilise us.

### What makes a tree iconic?

Individual trees can become important to us for many reasons. When the wandering ascetic Siddhartha Gautama sat at the foot of a sacred fig around 500 BCE, he achieved the enlightenment which would, a few centuries later, lead to his fame as the Buddha. This sacred fig would become known as the **Bodhi Tree**. One of its descendants attracts millions of pilgrims every year.

Other trees become famous because they're exceptional in some way. The location of the world's tallest tree – a 115-metre high redwood known as **Hyperion** – is kept secret for its protection. Niger's **Tree of Ténéré** was known as the world's most isolated, eking out an existence in the Sahara before the lonely acacia was accidentally knocked down by a truck driver in 1973. Its site is marked by a sculpture. In 2003, the mountain ash known as **El Grande** – then the world's largest flowering plant – was accidentally killed in a burn conducted by Forestry Tasmania. The death of the enormous tree – 87 metres tall, with a 19 metre girth – drew 'national and international' media attention. This year, vandals damaged a **birthing tree** sacred to the local Djab Wurrung people amidst conflicts about proposed road works in western Victoria. And in 2006, someone poisoned Queensland's **Tree of Knowledge** – a 200-year-old ghost gum famous for its connection to the birth of trade unionism in Australia. Under its limbs, shearers organised and marched for better conditions. The dead tree has been preserved in a memorial.

Sociologist Anthony Giddens defines ontological security as a 'sense of continuity and order in events'. To sustain it, we seek out feelings of safety, trust, and reassurance by engaging with comfortable and familiar objects, beings and people around us – especially those important to our self-identity.

Read more: <https://theconversation.com/it-wasnt-just-a-tree-why-it-feels-so-bad-to-lose-the-iconic-sycamore-gap-tree-and-others-like-it-214841>