AUSTRALIAN GARDEN HISTORY SOCIETY

NATIONAL ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

ACT MONARO RIVERINA BRANCH

Photo: Roslyn Burge

Interviewee:	JULIET RAMSAY
Interviewer:	ROSLYN BURGE
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All quotations	MINOR EDITS HAVE BEEN MADE TO ENSURE SMOOTH READING OF TEXT. ALL AUDIO EXTRACTS SHOULD REFLECT TRANSCRIPT AND SHOULD BE VERIFIED AGAINST ORIGINAL SPOKEN WORD IN THE INTERVIEW.

This is an interview with Juliet Ramsay, who is being interviewed for the Australian Garden History Society's National Oral History Collection, particularly the ACT Monaro Riverina Branch. The interview is taking place on Yuin country at Juliet's home in Moruya on the south coast of New South Wales on Thursday, 12 December 2024, and the interview is Roslyn Burge. Juliet, thank you for your contribution to this Collection and your time today. So I think we might start with some brief biographical details where, when you were born and grew up.

Big sounds of cicadas

Oh, well, I was actually born in Granville during the war. My father was away in the Air Force, and my mother was living with her parents in Parramatta. And after … after dad returned from the war, he worked in a bank, and we moved to a few different places, from Dee Why to Gunnedah to Barellan in southern New South Wales, and then we ended up in Goulburn, which is where we stayed for most of my years … my childhood years.

And you were schooled locally.

I was schooled locally, yes, at Bourke Street Primary School, and then later at PLC in Goulburn for secondary school.

And what did you decide to do when you left school?

When I left school I went nursing to the Children's Hospital, Camperdown, and I did my nursing training, I also did midwifery in Canberra, and then I travelled around a bit … worked in southern Queensland, and then came back eventually to Canberra, and I left nursing, and I started to do drafting, architectural drafting, because … nursing, was quite a satisfying career but it had limitations like doing night duty and sort of … I couldn't pursue the hobbies I wanted to while I was a nurse. I wanted to get something with regular hours.

I started ... I did go to the TAFE and do architectural draftsmanship and I met up with Brian during those years and he was a student at ANU, doing his PhD. And after he graduated he went back to America, and I joined him over there. We were married in America and he got a position in Papua New Guinea at the National Museum there and during those years I worked for the architect James Birrell as a drafts-person.

Why did you want to do drafting?

I just … I think I wanted to do something with my hands that was slightly like drawing, but not quite. And, yes, so while we were in New Guinea, we … we bought some land near Canberra in the bush, and we decided to build a house. We were going to build it ourselves out of rocks on the block, which was a pretty wild idea. But anyhow, then we decided to save a bit more money and get a builder to do most of it. So we stayed there for a few more years, did some plans and got them approved and got a stonemason to do a sort of stone base for this house, and we moved … came back from Papua New Guinea, and we had a child by then, Henry, and I was expecting another child. We finished the house, which was quite

difficult I might add, and every time I went to town I had to buy sheets of gyprock and this and that.

Sounds of house construction nearby

In the end Brian got a position in … well he was working for National Park Service during those years I might add, he was actually working on Aboriginal Land Rights, so he worked on the Gulaga area.[1] In the meantime, he did get a position at Port Arthur, managing the conservation project. So we all went off to Port Arthur, the family and the dog, and ended up in Port Arthur. And so that's when I really became interested in historic gardens, because walking through Port Arthur, it was really very interesting with the plants that were there. And I remember walking down the avenue of oaks and elms from the church, and I thought … those leaves on the ground, they're not oaks or elm leaves, they were actually blackwood wattle, not black wattle, *Acacia melanoxylon* leaves and those trees were sort of just set back a little bit from the avenue, but they had grown up so high their canopies were all intermingled. And then I got interested in what the colonial management was doing regarding native plants, and they were trying to utilize them. They had an avenue of blue gums at Port Arthur that went down to the shipwright's area and then there were records by some of the officers of them trying to use the native plants for industrial purposes. So I was quite interested in that, and that was intermingled with all the historic plants that were in Port Arthur, and there were many old apples and old roses and so on.

And the project actually employed a horticulturalist to study those old garden plants. And then somehow I started to go to study environmental design - that was in Hobart in those years, and so I was learning about native plants a lot and all those heritage plants that was also fascinating me.

And I think was then Peter Cripps was one of the architects at Port Arthur, and the message came down that I should talk to Ann Cripps. And it was Ann Cripps who encouraged me to join the Garden History Society and I think they might have had an outing at Port Arthur while I was there. I'm a bit blurry on that, because I also had outings with some of the university people as well that I talked to about the gardens. And there was a lot of archeology being done. So the old garden paths were being uncovered, and it was sort of getting this pattern of what was planted, what was sort of planted for use – you know, vegetables and the roses, the elderberries and things like that. Lots of fruit trees, old Damson plums and the actual flower gardens were sort of … had more or less disappeared, though there had been new, some new plantings around some of the houses, because some of the houses were still in active residence.

Port Arthur had had its convict era, and then it had the later, early 20th century period when it had another settlement happening there. So I think it was nearing the end of our time at Port Arthur I started to write an article about the historic landscape of Port Arthur. And I did

[1] inland from Tilba Tilba, southern NSW

that, it was published in *Landscape Australia* in two editions, and I did quite a bit of research for that. I went to the old plans and photos and things in the archives and yes, there's so many things that are interwoven into this story, because there was a convict of Port Arthur whose name I've just forgotten[2], but he did the records of all the buildings that were there, not just at Port Arthur, but all around the peninsula. Because … there were outstations, convict outposts at the coal mine site and a few other places around the peninsula. And there were … where they had the semaphore stations they had a little house there for someone to live in so, he did all the plans of all those buildings …

Gosh – how fortuitous to have that …

They were a fantastic record. And he was an architect who'd been accused of forgery or something and ended up with up in Port Arthur, and he kept getting reconvicted, coming back and ... it was sort of sad, isn't it?

Yes, did you … we've taken a leap forward, but while we're on Port Arthur, were you living at Port Arthur itself?

Yes, we were living in what was the surgeon's home.

And that was habitable?

Oh very nice. No, no, it was a very nice old home. I guess it was about 1860 I think it was built, so …

How fortuitous that all that those trees and trees were still there?

Yes, indeed, yes. And yeah, yes, some of these apples I'd never heard of, and they were just lovely.

Are they still there?

I think so. I think they were trying … they were trying to keep them and the old roses – the old damask roses. And, yeah.

Did you prompt that garden survey? Or was that …?

No, I think, I don't think it was me in particular, I think other people were interested too, and so they had the horticulturist come down. I had in the back of my mind an interest in old gardens, because growing up in Goulburn, we had an old house, late-19th century house on the outskirts of Goulburn, and it had some nice old plants there. I know when we moved in, I can remember how exciting it was to see things come up, jonquils and other bulbs, but there was also sort of Cecil Bruner roses and violets and all sorts of things that were interesting, but it was a very, very old, established garden.

How old were you when you went there?

[2] Henry Laing

I was about 12?

So old enough to make some observations.

Yes, yes, and my parents were both interested in gardens - they weren't creators, except dad made a vegetable garden. And dad liked native plants too. So he planted a few native trees, eucalypts, around in the paddocks. But Mum was always sort of keen to get the water to the garden, because Goulburn was a pretty dry place and we only had tank water to use. But I remember Dad put a pump on the dam and she could water the garden whenever she pleased so that was nice.

Did you have help in the garden? Or did your parents do it all?

No my parents did it all.

So they grew the vegetables as well as flowers.

Yes.

So coming back to Port Arthur …

Well, while I was there, I started doing environmental design at what was then the College of Advanced Education in Hobart, and later became, while I was there, it became the Institute of Architecture, Planning and Landscape Architecture.

Some traffic noise

I think we might pause just for a moment.

Port Arthur, yes, well, while we were living at Port Arthur I started the environmental design course, thinking I'd do architecture, but I got far more interested in landscape architecture, so I sort of went into that area. But one of our lecturers was Phyl Frazer Simons, and she was actually doing this little study of the historic gardens in Tasmania. And we … her students, we kind of helped a little bit on the periphery, not much but she did most of it herself. But I didn't realize, and it was only later when I was back - and I'll tell you about that … I'll tell you about the connections.

When we finished at Port Arthur and returned to New South Wales to our little house at Burra, Brian worked for Parks Service before he went and got a job in the university. But I got some work, first of all I worked for landscape architects, and I did that for a few years and Judy van Gelderen was the landscape architect, she's very good.

Then we, then I started to do some work for the Heritage Commission, and I was given a job to assess historic gardens. And I realised that the Commission had funded these projects in all the states on historic … to do historic garden studies, and so all those sort of booklets, including the one by Phyl Frazer Simons but also, I think the one in South Australia, one in New South Wales, James Broadbent did one, I think was Whitehill and somebody else[3] in

[3] R.O. Beames & J.A.E. Whitehill

South Australia, and unfortunately, I can't remember the names of the people, but they all did these booklets on these important historic gardens of the states.

And as a result of those studies, all these nominations had been made to the Register of the National Estate and they needed sort of a final assessment before they could go on the Register. And so that was my job, to do these assessments.

So that was a lovely little job. I loved doing it. And I started to get very interested in garden styles, because they're quite distinctive. And I did a report on garden styles and Sandy Blair, who was my supervisor at the time, said, "Well, I think we should publish that." And so we made it into a little publication on garden styles and assessing gardens for the National Estate, and I still have a copy of it here.[4]

Oh, yes, and still used I understand.

Well, that's good to know it's still used. I don't know whether it's been upgraded or not, but I think it was useful because when you assess something, you have to have a kind of guide to structure your assessment. So that's a good example of a garden. But what else can you say about it? Is it a sort of Federation style? And is it a good example of a federation style? Is it an earlier style? And there had been a few things … different things have been done by people - like Howard Tanner who had done *Great Gardens of Australia*, which was wonderful in the way it sort of reported on gardens, and actually also garden styles. So I sort of, I kind of used some of their terminology. He talked about the Arcadian style of early, early colonial gardens so I used that as sort of the early colonial gardens and there were other more modern styles too interwoven into these assessments so it was a pretty interesting project.

You must be very proud of that book.

Well, I, am, but it was only, it was only done as a guide, but it's the plans that tell you about the styles. So you really have to have the plans to understand. And most of those people had done plans in their books, and I was able to use to use those but I redrew them so that the book kind of had some … something that hung it together.

Yes.

But it was funny about Phyl Simons, and I was still in touch with her when I did this and she said, "Oh, I don't like that Heritage Commission," she said, "I drew all those plans for them, and they lost them." She'd done her book and the plans were in her book. But as I was going through the files for these assessments I realised what they've done. Someone had taken all these plans and actually punched holes in them and filed them in the files. I didn't tell Phyl that, because I … it was too embarrassing.

Are they still around? Still available?

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[4] Juliet Ramsay, *How to Record the National Estate Values of Gardens,* Australian Heritage Commission, Canberra, 1991

The files from the National … from the Australian Heritage Commission went to some archive somewhere, and I hope they're still around, but an incredible amount of information, and you worry about it being lost, not just these, not just the ones of gardens, but there are all sorts of important studies that were done before the Heritage Commission folded up, and some of the Indigenous studies were really important, and I don't know what's happened to them.

So just, just coming back to Port Arthur, and that time there, you said you wanted to study architecture, but you became more interested in landscape. So how did that, well, more interest develop there?

Well I'd worked for architects for a number of years by then, over six years, but, and I was sort of a little bit critical of the way architects work, but in Tasmania, the way the course was run … there was a base course of environmental design, and then you went into your … chosen specialist area. And at that stage I was really getting interested in the natural environment and Port Arthur is in a very beautiful part of Tasmania. So every time you drive to Hobart from Port Arthur, you'd go through forest, the beaches were fantastic and I really didn't know a lot about … I didn't know very much about identification of that … of native plants very strongly in those years, although I knew what was growing around our house at Burra. But when I went there, I suddenly sort of started to learn in more detail plants and there are forests and forest associations and I really became more interested then in landscape architecture, and it was a fairly new profession in those days. So that's what I did.

And the people in the course in Tasmania … teaching the course … what were they like?

20.00

Well, Phyl Simons was a very nice, erratic character. *(laughter)* The other people were very nice, too. We had a guy from Europe I think he was Hungarian, and he was nice. And everyone was pretty enthusiastic on their topic. But when you did environmental design, you did a bit of planning and a bit of architecture and a bit of building management, that sort of thing. So there were lecturers that taught those particular topics.

And just going backwards, leaving Burra, a very different environment - for Port Arthur …

Oh, yes, yes.

What was the impact of Port Arthur for you?

Oh, it was a most amazing … oh, beautiful impact. We were building that house … it was just slogging away trying to get the house to a state we could … where we could leave it when we went to Tasmania, so we were working on it, and it was very hot and dry and (we) had two children, and we went off. We finally left and drove down to wherever you go to get the ferry, and the ferry ride across - all the family was sick except me, for some reason I don't get seasick. The dog was even sick. Anyhow, we got in our car after this sort of hot experience, up near Canberra, and we drove down, down to Port Arthur, and this lovely cool

mist was sort of rolling up from the sea. It was beautifully green and very picturesque with the old buildings. So I fell in love with it. I had been down beforehand too to see if I'd like it I think was the reason so …

Before taking the job?

Yes, they told Brian to bring his wife with him, because they had had someone before, and the wife didn't like it. So … but I was very happy to go ... I was very happy to leave that house … building that house that had been such hard work, trying to get it finished, and go to a place it wasn't owned by me. And …

What about the sense of the history of that place?

Well, it was overwhelming. You just couldn't get away from it. It was everywhere and … and it was all fascinating. And there were … and there were lots of people connected. You'd talk to somebody, oh yes, she used to work there when she was young and things like that, and knew all about it. And so it was yes, and it was also a fishing port too. So it was a fishing industry coming into Port Arthur, so as well as the tourism and history, but … and so much was being done at the project that was interesting because there was historian and an interpretations officer, two architects, a few archeologists, the museums person as well, so there was … they were all … they were all … it was all new work for them, and they were just uncovering more interesting things all the time.

And I do recall the journals of Lempriere,[5] who had written them in French I think, but someone had … they had been translated, and they were just sort of fascinating on his observations of Port Arthur and what the Royal Engineers did, and just knowing what they did too, they just did such tremendous work. All the roads were sort of strong and beautifully cobbled and even up the hills to those semaphore stations, when you walked up on these old paths, you could see how beautifully well-made they were. And all the gutters and things around the place, beside the roads, were all beautifully done. So yes, the various buildings, of course, some were already in ruins and they were just sort of stabilized ruins. In fact, they were all … the convict ones were stabilized ruins so it was very interesting what was being done there all the time. And every summer there'd be a dig there so students would come down to be involved in the archeological digs … that was going on every year. So it was very interesting.

Must have been exciting and to have all that money.

Well, they did have a big amount of money, but, and it was all sort of allocated for the projects. There were, I mean, big projects were done to stabilize things like the old church which had to have new foundations put underneath it. All the houses were looked at to check their foundations and the old penitentiary building too, some of its foundations were on logs, wood just lying on the ground - that was the way some of them were done in those

[5] Thomas James Lempriere: https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/lempriere-thomas-james-2349

days. Yeah.. So that's more or less what happened. But I mean, major projects were done down there when we were there and then there was sort of the history that was being written, and other things, booklets and information sheets on various aspects.

Yeah. Did you see much else of Tasmania or other engagement with the Garden History Society?

Oh no, I did not of the Garden History Society, except I had a friend who had an old home with a lovely old garden in Hobart - that garden is called *Summerhome.*[6] It's quite a famous one, but mostly when we got leave, we went up into the mountains, Lake St Clair, and sort of stayed in cabins and walked around from there, and so there's so much beautiful forests - there are many beautiful forests in Tasmania: you just can't help but be overwhelmed by them. And those going up to Lake St Clair[7], you go through these layers of forest and through the … what they call the Myrtle, the *Nothofagus cunninghamii*, and then higher up on the higher slopes is the *Nothofagus gunnii* and the cushion plants at the very highest parts and then around these little lakes, celery top pines and other beautiful plants. It was just fascinating.

The diversity of it … the excitement comes through.

Yes and different too, different to New South Wales, and different to what I'd seen in New South Wales.

And different to New Guinea where you had also lived.

Oh, yes, yes, yes.

So this was the … you mentioned earlier that that you were introduced to Ann Cripps. Did she get you involved in the Society then?

Yes, I joined it then.

But you weren't very involved in the committee or activities.

No, that was in the 1980s, yes.

Because the Society just begun then.

Well, it began, I think about 82 or so, I'm not exactly sure what date, but it was fairly new, I understand.

Did you have a sense, any sense of it being innovative?

I didn't really. I didn't. I knew there'd been a big meeting, an art exhibition I think that started it off. But Ann Cripps might have told me that, but I didn't quite put everything together really, until I was in Canberra.

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6 https://friendsoftmag.org.au/event-2790478

7 Misspoke – Lake Dobson

Then. Then, why did you leave Port Arthur?

I think Brian's contract was expiring, and I think he was fairly keen to leave I think.

Were you?

No, I think I probably could have happily stayed there the rest of my life. But on the other hand, I had family up here, and my parents were getting on, so, yeah, I think I wanted to come back too to a degree. We had our little house at Burra that was being rented, and we wanted to, you know, go back and live in that. So it was a big thing to move back. It was big thing for the kids too, because they had been going to Tasman District High School, this was the only school on the peninsula, and they had friends and so forth there. So yeah.

It's an adjustment for you all.

Yes.

And how did you come to be working at the Australian Heritage Commission, did you apply?

I must have applied …

Or did someone put you in touch with that?

Brian might have, he had lots of heritage connections, and maybe he heard that they were looking for people to do odd contracts. I was still working for the landscape architecture firm, for Strine Design, and I was starting to do these contracts then. So it was just other contracts that I was doing, as well as my other work.

I might come back to the Australian Heritage Commission, but just continuing the Garden History theme, you joined the Canberra Branch?

Yes.

And were involved in the committee there?

Yes. I was for a while, yes.

Do you remember some of the people you worked with on the committee?

30.00

Well, I think it started off Trisha Dixon, being the president of that first of all. But then it went to Virginia Berger. A very nice person, Virginia, and that was when we did the conference in Canberra that I was involved in, and the Canberra group used to do walks, evening walks, which was one of their activities, which was great. We called them rambles or whatever, and would go to a suburb and just walk around a few streets looking at suburban gardens. I think I organized one for Queanbeyan at one stage. But yes, Gabrielle Tryon, she took over as president of the group, I think after Virginia, and she was very good too, and we continued with doing … having odd conferences, sort of local ones, I think, sort of day ones – these

walks fairly regularly: Victor Crittenden was a member when I was there; and then there's the National Conference which … well Dick Ratcliffe organized one in Albury, because our group used to take in Riverina as well.

Yes.

And so, yes, I went … so I went to that conference and talked about these garden styles, gave a presentation on that. Dick … I must have had done something in Canberra first of all, and Dick said, "Oh, you must give a talk at the conference." So I did. And the other thing they used to do is record gardens. And so Dick had written a book on how to record historic gardens, and it's quite a technical piece of work, and how to measure them out and how to document the plants, and it's quite hard work. I'm just trying to remember what ones they did. They did do one at Braidwood, and the one that's at Ainslie that Anne Somers did, but for the life of me I can't remember the others, but there were a couple done during my time at the AGHS.

Did you work on … on any of those or all of them?

No, I didn't do any of the measuring, any of that actual measuring … but I did help, we all helped Anne Somers. I redid plans. She'd done kind of rough sketches and I did them for a publication. And my son, Henry, was at home at that time and he helped put them digitally together. And Gabrielle did some very nice photographs for that work as well. So, yeah …

The Canberra Branch seems to me always … they all punch above their weight in different ways … but the production of those booklets and the recording gardens …

Yes

… the scholarship is very much present in the Canberra Branch. Is that your sense of it as well?

Well I thought it was very active and I was very impressed with the talent that was in the Garden History Society and the things they did, and Dick also encouraged me. Oh … there was a … there were things that were done that weren't part of the Garden History Society: there was a Marian Mahoney Measured Drawing Competition that was done annually, and Dick got me involved in that as a judge. So I was involved in that for a few years. And I think Diane Firth, who was one of the lecturers at the University, was also involved in that as well.

You did … just touching on the Heritage Commission, you published a number of works … writings with Marilyn Truscott, was she involved in the Society as well with you?

No, but she was in the ACT Heritage … Historic Society, and she was also in the local Archeologists Society, I'm just trying to think what that's called, but yeah, yeah.

You also published a number of articles, the one in 92 in the journal, you published a number in the journal, the one about the Renaissance inheritance.[8]

Oh, yeah. Well, that was one of the gardens we went on a tour to at Yass, and I didn't organize that tour. I think that was an early one, but I went on it, and I was fascinated by that garden because of the way it was set out in sort of rooms, and it had a beautiful rose garden and statues, all these white statues running down.

Were they there when you visited?

Yes, they were and there was someone, what's her name[9]… she was doing horticulture. She said she wanted something to study. I said, "Well, go and do that garden". So I used some of the work she had done and did some more research, and it was more and more fascinating. A man called Harold Triggs[10] owned the property and his brother was a well known architect, arts and crafts architect in England, and they were descendants of Inigo Jones[11], that renaissance architect, that's why I got that title, and there were all sorts of odds and ends there. Harold Cazneaux had taken photos of the family in the garden, so that was a wonderful research. And then I found out years later when I used to go up to the Snowy Mountains to do work, but there's a place, a place up there[12] that we'd go and we used to go and stay at and it was built by Harold Triggs, so he used it as a mountain place for his sheep grazing - a mountain grazing place. So it's just all these connections sort of happen.

Are you going to write a second version of that article to update it?

No, I'm not doing any writing now. I can barely write an email message, yes, so anyhow, but so yes, that, well, no, that article stood alone by itself, I don't have to do another. Oh, the place got sold, unfortunately, and this … and the interesting thing was, in the auction for the property, I realized these statues were lead and they'd all been painted white to probably stop them being taken for bullets during the war. So those lead statues that are painted white all went … the people … it had been used as a veterans home for many years after the Triggs family had sold it, but the war veterans wanted a more modern place, so they had used some of the land that belonged to the property and built a modern place with a native garden across the road, and they put the statues in that which was ridiculous. They looked stupid. But anyhow.

Are they still there?

I don't know, yeah, but yeah …

Those things have a way of vanishing.

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8 'The Renaissance Inheritance of a Yass Country Garden', *Australian Garden History,* Nov/Dec 1992, 4 (3), pp7-10

9. Margaret Drew

10 Misspoke - Arthur Bryant Triggs (not Harold)

11 Arthur had a younger brother called H Inigo Triggs because they were related to Inigo Jones! ADB

12 Curango Station

Yes, yes.

When you visited Yass by any chance, did you happen to visit Cedric Bryant's nursery there?

Not at Yass, no, but he had one in Canberra

Yes

At Pialligo so I knew that one. I didn't know he had one in Yass. No that garden was, it was sort of built at the turn of the century that Linton, it wasn't, it wasn't a 19th century garden at all. It was all done by the Triggs family, redone by the Triggs family. And it was more, I'd say, similar to the arts and craft style that his brother had worked on in England. So it had sort of a walled garden with a lovely arched gateway, and the … just the sort of, there were elements of Federation within that garden, the fence around the front and the gate on the front entrance to the place. And yeah …

Makes me want to go and visit it.

Yes. Well, it was bought by a couple afterwards, who I think were … I don't know whether they … I don't know what it's like, what it's like now, no idea.

In one of the Cazneaux photographs I noticed there's a very small statue. There are the big statues on a wall, and there's a very small one, like two children or two fairies or so it's especially for children. It's only, you know, a couple of feet high …

I can't remember that one ..

I suppose because I've looked at it most recently.

Yes, yes, it's so Cazneaux's name pops up every … all over the place. I've just been out to the Flinders Ranges and there's a tree out there called the Cazneaux tree, because he stayed out there and visited that tree and took photographs.

Thank goodness that's still there then … you also visited … you also spoke about visiting Tilba Tilba in one of the other reports?

Yes, I went, did that with Sandy Blair and Peter Freeman, or Peter Freeman was the project manager for that, and Sandy and I were, I did the landscape parts, and Sandy did the historical parts. And we did that report on Tilba Tilba, yes, wonderful. Tilba is a wonderful place: the mountain, Gulaga, behind it is where Brian was involved with the hand-back to the Indigenous people of Gulaga and Biamanga, another Indigenous place further south, near Bega. So that was a sort of big thing in his life, too. They had … they had to do research to establish the rights for that to be handed back to the Indigenous people.

40.00

There was discussion at that time about the gender of landscape too, I think, in relation to those mountains.

Well, Gulaga seems to have always been known as the Mother Mountain, and Deborah Cheetham now sings about it in one of her songs, *Mother Mountain*, it's about Gulaga … she's from the Yuin apparently.

Oh, is she.

Yes

Wonderful

Yes … things pop up all the time.

Then in 97 -- and perhaps this is the conference you were thinking of, *The City as Garden,* that the Canberra Branch organised …

That's right - that one yes.

There must have been a … tell me about the effort involved in that.

Well, I think it was getting the speakers, and … in particular, it was important to get Dick Clough because he was the landscape architect that worked for the NCDC, and the NCDC was the government body that did all that early building of Canberra and the construction of the Lake, and they did it really well. They had a model of the lake in a quonset hut to test the waters to see how they flowed, to get the right flow through the Lake and they designed the parklands around the Lake, and there was Dick … (*an important name has just dropped out of my head) …*

That happens, we can return to that.

… anyhow, we had some of these old, older people who had been involved within the NCDC …

Not John Gray?

John Gray! And John Gray and Dick had written, you know, done a number of, done a couple of papers together and the work they did researching the trees to plant around Canberra was really fascinating. And so it didn't just, it didn't just stop with Weston[13] (who's given most of the credit for the tree planting), there were people post-Weston, Lindsay Pryor did an enormous amount of work, introduced a lot of plants from Asia and places and then the planting work that was done around the lake, thousands of trees were planted, an incredible amount of work to establish the parklands around the Lake. So we really were focused on the building of Canberra and how it was planned, and getting some of that information out to people. But some of the people in the Garden History Society were not very happy with that conference. Apparently, they like going to private gardens, and we didn't have many in the tour.

[13] https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/weston-thomas-charles-9054

You can't please all the people all the time.

No, you can't, and that's so important. You know, Canberra is the national capital, and to see how well it was planned, it's really important. And things have gone on in Canberra too - the Arboretum that's been put there, but in … in not long … that long, but it's another big, a big plus to the Canberra landscape has been the planting of that Arboretum.

That was in response to the fires wasn't?

Yes, it was - not the 2003 fires, but the ones before where it burned out a lot of that area, and also Griffin had plans of an arboretum also in that area.

So you've studied his work?

Well, as much as I can.

Quite a bit.

Yes, well, you do need to understand Griffin, I think to understand Canberra. But I think people are now sort of going back to Griffin and not recognizing the important work that the NCDC did, because they made Griffin's plan … Griffin's plans work, yes, and it was an incredible achievement, but now they're barely mentioned in Canberra.

We're going to come back to the … to Lake Burley Griffin and to Canberra. There was also … just leaping forward whilst we're on conferences … there was a conference in the mid to fifteens, I think 2015/2016 that science, *The Gardener's Science*[14] … I haven't got the right title, but I remember there was some fuss about people thinking … there was a man who spoke about grasses, and people thought it was way too scientific. It was a wonderful paper, wonderful.

Yes.

So you always have that … does that say something about the vitality of the Society that there are people who are prepared to like things and people prepared to speak up not liking it?

Well grasses also became very popular in landscape architecture, and that was sort of about in the early two thousands, I think, and in America and places, people were planting all their gardens with grasses. And they started doing it here in Australia as well. But there's, there was both the preservation of native grasslands where they existed, and also the planting of native grasses in in gardens, that was popular then and is still fairly popular.

Then we come to your … your garden entries, *Companion* entries.

The Oxford Companion, the Companion, Companion, yeah.[15]

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14 Misspoke - *The Scientist in the Garden* 14-17 Oct 2016

15 *The Oxford Companion to Australian Gardens,* Richard Aitken & Michael Looker (eds), Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2002

So you made an entry for Triggs.

Yes.

You're clearly quite fond of the man having done that work.

Well, I think Dick Aitken had read the article and he said he wanted a bit of an article about that and I know it was the day before I was going overseas, so I wasn't very happy with having to turn around and do something.

In a day?

Yeah. Well, do something quickly about Triggs. Yes, Diane Firth too was … and I were both doing the Canberra bits together …

Just the two of you?

Well, I think mostly the two of us. I don't know what others were involved but I know I was working with Diane mostly - there could have been others involved in the Canberra bits and pieces.

What do you think about the *Companion*?

Well, well, I think it's a major work, indeed, yes and Richard Aitken, and another scholar were involved. They got funding from the Heritage Commission to do some early work towards the … before the *Oxford Companion* and I was involved in kind of managing that project to a degree, yeah.

And with the Society as well at that time or not yet.

No, it wasn't really with this … it wasn't a Society project at all. So I know they were involved and Richard was, might have even been Editor – no, not then I don't think. But, yeah, I'm not sure …

Right …

How involved in the Society, and I don't think the Heritage Commission was involved either.

Right. You also wrote an entry about the Lodge.

Okay, well, I was sort of trying to do them but Dick Radcliffe was the expert on the Lodge, but he'd probably died by them. He'd written articles on the lodge, and he was a wonderful speaker, and he would throw in some … what could be construed as anti-political comments when he spoke about the garden.

I want to touch on the politics without sort of going down that path too early or too deeply, but it's hard to avoid politics I think in any of these … any part of life. Another one that you … another entry you had was about Lookouts.

Oh, okay.

You had a lovely phrase (lookouts) which "entrance and exhilarate humans by capturing views".

Yes, yes.

Such a lovely phrase.

Yes. They do don't they.

Are lookouts important for you?

Well, I haven't been to any for a long time, any new ones, but yes, I think they are important to people and yes, I'd come across that with … strongly with the forest work, when I was working on that with the Commission - how important lookouts were.

And the last one that I saw was the National Triangle that you also wrote an entry about.

Yes, well that had been … that had been listed in the National Estate quite early on by people who worked there in the Heritage Commission. And yes, it's important that it was listed. What happened, of course, was the Heritage Commission was given the heave ho, and we had a new Act, the Conservation of Biodiversity Act (formally - Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999), and that was what took over and our new list, called the National Heritage List, became the focus for the work of the department and the Commonwealth Heritage List, which was to be places owned by the Commonwealth that have heritage significance.

So the wonderful thing about the Heritage Commission was that it covered the whole of Australia and you could look at things and compare them across the country. The National Heritage List became a series of national icons that you all know about, Harbour Bridge, etc, etc, but also some new ones being put in. It's very difficult to get things listed and … and a lot of work is needed to get them to the National Heritage List now.

When it first started, it was quick for getting things on the list. So the architects were very smart, and they go, they did a list of all their most important architecture, architectural works in Australia, and pushed them in (and most of them went on the National Heritage list), but other places have been struggling - we've been struggling to get them on. And I think also what I didn't mention earlier was talking about when I went and did a consultancy on historic gardens for the Heritage Commission, I was also given a pile of cultural landscapes to assess because they were also … that was also a fairly newish concept - cultural landscapes, and a lot of … the National Trusts had done a lot of nominations for these, but they were extremely difficult for the Commission to deal with because often they covered big areas with multiple owners living in them, and anything that went on the Register of the National Estate, any owners had to be notified and given a chance to object.

So they just couldn't handle big, big area nominations. For example, one nomination was for the Illawarra escarpment and it extended for 60 kilometers and you can imagine how many properties were in that. And it was a thing … the thing that should have been looked at was

getting that sort of space protected through LEPS - land and environment plans – it would have meant they would have been better off … protected under that than the Heritage Commission because it couldn't handle those huge, big areas with multiple property owners.

Just going back, you said that was all happening quickly. Were you involved in getting that up as well as the architects?

I wasn't involved in nominating any of these things. I was involved at the other end, assessing, assessing them, right? I probably did some nominations to help people, but yeah, I just can't think of any at the moment. But yes …

And you say buildings and architects rather than landscapes and gardens?

And yes, they were mostly buildings, except for the Sculpture Garden and I think I was involved … I might have been involved in that nomination, but I did a lot of work on that and it was really fitted with the National Gallery. It was the architectural style of Colin Madigan, the sort of extended … the geometry extended into the garden in the pattern of paths and triangles that he used throughout the Gallery: it's all reflected in the garden.

And landscape architects, Harry Howard and Barbara Buchanan, did the landscape design and it was all using local native plants. It was, it was *really innovative* in its time, and it was a great work, and it extended across to the High Court as well. So it was it … they, they were all … it was nominated - we had it in the National Estate as the High Court National Gallery precinct that included the Sculpture Garden and it went on to the National Heritage List also as that.

And that's been changed of late hasn't it?

There is a competition at the … just started that the designers have been chosen to rework the Sculpture Garden or something.

Why do we need to tinker with things?

Absolutely! Peter Watts wrote a very cutting little comment in the *Canberra Times*, 'Why? Why fiddle with something that's already beautiful and well done?' Yes, but I don't know. I don't think they've got the money to ever do this work. I think it's one of these crazy ideas, crazy ideas to get money to designers so they get chosen to do the comp … they did this … they did this Lodge on the Lake too for the Prime Minister.

A Lodge on the Lake?

A Lodge on the Lake for the Prime Minister. And it was all done in black marble; that was the winning entry. And it was appalling, because it cut off public access… would have cut off public from walking around the Lake, you would have had to swing right out. The whole concept was appalling and thank goodness that no Prime Minister has ever given money to that - and if they do, there'll be an outrage, I'm sure. And why? Because there's land right next to the Lodge that can extend the Lodge if they want to redevelop in some … redevelop

it in some fashion. So that … whole idea was just another sort of brainstorm of someone's to raise money for designers to try their design styles.

You also mentioned in that you're speaking then about the National Trust had done a lot of cultural landscapes.

They had, and some of them actually did go on that Register of the National Estate. But what's happened to them since I don't know, because after the National Estate closed down, the states were supposed to pick up those places that had been in the Register and list them in the State Heritage Lists.

And it was difficult because the National Estate didn't have any … the National Estate Heritage Act[16] at that time didn't have any teeth, but it operated by encouraging people to look after heritage. So there was no law that you had to do this or that, you just had to try … fund a management plan for the house or the garden that the Commission would … they'd get funds for that with grants and to encourage owners to look after heritage. So it was all about encouragement, except for Commonwealth-owned places.

So the National Trust had done, I don't want to get down the rabbit hole of the National Trust, but clearly they'd done a lot of work on cultural landscapes quite early.

Yes, they had, they had.

And was that Canberra or nationally?

It was different states, different National Trusts have been doing them so and when you talked about lookouts … there were some lookouts in those, I think in those early nominations, but they'd kind of not nominated what you looked out onto too, which was, again, an impossible thing to put on a Heritage Register. If you can imagine, sort of looking out and trying to put all the properties as far as you can see, whereas the Lookout itself was important to get … to that they stayed and they stayed as they were. So you'd often … they had been designed so you walked up and then abruptly you got to a lookout point: so you got a wonderful surprise when you went … got to that point.

There's a lovely lookout at the Arboretum …

Those statues …

Just before we leave the Society .. oh yes the Society has been very involved in advocacy.

Yes.

Do you think it's done enough in its advocacy role?

I think, I think advocacy is extremely difficult-but I think they're doing very good work that I've seen, and I know with the Lake Burley Griffin Guardians it's good having the Garden History Society doing something as well. So we … both organizations are doing advocacy in

[16] The National Estate Heritage Act 1975

that the letters to managers or the government or whatever. So yes, I think they're doing well with it, but some of that's quite difficult too to get organized, you know.

In what way?

Well, you've got to have a community group behind you, I think, to support what you're doing in advocacy and you're also trying to work against or you're trying to object to work done by big organisations, big companies, big industrial organisations or governments that are controlled by the big organisations. So it's quite tricky.

Yes, you say all that with great feeling.

Well, we have just seen what's happened to the War Memorial which was a proud piece of architecture in its time, and now I haven't been to see it since they've done this new work on it, but it was certainly … didn't look like ... I didn't like the look of the plans and things that were done. So yes, those little gems should be kept and they are kept in other countries. I don't know why Australia has to redo things.

60.00

There's a perpetual dissatisfaction …

Or other organisations putting their fists in, maybe the weapons industry.

Of the War Memorial?

Mmm … I mean, it's a Memorial. It's not a museum of weaponry.

One place that I read along the way that you were involved in were the heritage gardens at Lanyon, you were involved in helping with that, that's 2003 - quite a time ago.

Yes, I'm trying to remember what I did …

I just know that the gardens were under attack … perhaps in some way changing?

Right? I don't think I can take too much credit for doing work on those gardens. I might have written letters or done something to support the heritage gardens, but I don't, didn't do anything. I think it's had some very good managers there: Lainie Lawson and Ian Stephenson, they were excellent managers, well, of the historic sites, yeah.

Were they working there together?

Look, I'm not sure how that worked. I think Lainie might have been working just for Lanyon, but I think Ian worked on other historic sites … historic houses that the ACT looked after as well.[17]

[17] Ian Stephenson followed Lainie Lawson as Senior Curator Historic Places in the ACT

It seems looking back, that there was a different atmosphere in the 80s, all of your cohort were all younger, we were all younger in the 80s. So there's a different … there was a frisson there that doesn't seem to be …

Well, I suppose the majority of that sort of heavy conservation work was done in those years. I don't know what's happening there now, but I and I'm not sure …

But not just Port Arthur …

Yes.

Generally, with that garden survey …

Yes, they did very good work, I think. And they had some good consultants, good builders. I remember Jack Bobby, this builder who loved working there and he did all the early … did the new foundations of the church and other buildings to set them up. And, yeah, so it was, it was, there was a big, a lot of activity going on, and there was a heritage engineer that came around too, and he and the Port Arthur project paid also for advice for the other convict-related buildings on the peninsula that were now owned by different people, and so they had that help from Port Arthur project to help them conserve their buildings. And yes, I think some of them were very grateful for that and did a lot of work themselves, restoring their buildings, but, but got the initial push from those experts that came down to Port Arthur.

More than Port Arthur there seems to have been nationally an interest in gardens, an interest in history of landscapes that hadn't happened before.

I think it was happening before Port Arthur. I think it was, those historic gardens were all … all that work had started. I think it was the Heritage Commission actually, that would have encouraged all this, because …

Going outside Port Arthur …

Yes …

Putting that aside …

Yes.

The Garden History Society was formed … generally …

And that's I'm saying, I think it's the Australian Heritage Commission, that got all that going, gave funding for grants for various works. And yes, that was very much there - they encouraged all that work. I think.

So how does that time in the early 80s compare now to the early 2020s?

I think, unfortunately, I don't think there is that interest now that there was. I think we've kind of been through that, and people have moved on, and, yeah, it's a hard job trying to keep people interested in heritage now. I think there was a lot of excitement when people could go to some of these old gardens and see them and enjoy them. New owners come in.

And there's also been sort of crazy ideas about historic gardens and what they should look like.

Can you think of examples?

Yeah, I can think of my own home in Goulburn that we had, and my parents were not renovators in any way, but after they'd sold the house on … we bumped into the new owner down the street. 'Oh, you must come out and see — we've made the courtyard into this new this Tuscan courtyard, we've put in box hedges'. And yes, my mother said, 'Well I'm never going back there to have a look.'

Yes but that's the sort of thing that's happening. And it's just something I think, well, sellers of plants, probably plants people, are encouraging gardeners that alter old gardens - old house - it should have neat little box hedges and it should have this and it should have that and one of the gardens that were put in at Port Arthur, I was quite critical of personally. This was after we had left and they put in a garden like that around one of the old houses that was a ruin, it was a standing ruin, but it got this new smart olde garden style. But some people loved it, but there was not much integrity in it at all. And people get this desire to have an old garden. Anyhow …

It's a trajectory we could go off for some time. Just returning to the Society, in 2010 you went to Tidbinbilla, Rock Valley garden.[18]

That was … I'd finished work, I'd retired and it was the National Trust had a half-done project and I finished it off more or less.

Oh, you did the work on it, not just visiting and speaking about it …

No, I wrote the report on that one, and there was some good work done by different people, and it was sort of pulling it together and preparing the conservation management plan for it. But I think something else is happening there now …

That's another garden you don't revisit.

Well, the garden was … a bush fire had been through there and there were odd bits that had remained and odd bits that had regrown from the bush fire and so it was sort of putting in a garden that linked to various … historically to things. I mean originally there'd been a tennis court, originally there was a wind break and originally there had been an avenue across a low slope going to the garden. Well those things weren't put back, because it's in the National Park[19] now for native plants and animals. And so it was trying to get something that enhanced the garden, reflected the old garden and was workable.

But then I found out there'd been remains of a privet hedge, which wasn't the privet that goes wild, it was the other privet, but that had all been chopped out by an enthusiastic ranger

[18] Misspoke – Rock Valley Homestead
[19] Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve

of course. And also after the fire everyone was so distressed and I think someone put in a whole row of cypresses because they found all the seedlings so they put them all in this place that hadn't been there before but it was like new life for an old place I suppose and I think it was being organized by the Pioneer Society[20] and they had their other views on the garden.

There's a lot of politics in managing all the interests.

It's difficult with gardens because it's not like a building which is straightforward in its architecture: gardens are very flexible.

For good and ill.

Yes.

Then you … so I'm just thinking too the one other thought I had about, was there any difference … what was the difference, rather, between the ACT Branch of the Society and the Tasmanian Branch but if you weren't involved so much …

I wasn't involved in the Tasmanian Branch at all, so I didn't go on any of their garden tours that I can think of - none of them.

Have you been on any garden tours at all?

Been to a lot of conferences and gone on tours, yes.

So the Garden History Society conferences.

Yes.

So you're a regular attendee?

Well, yes, I went to quite a lot, not every one and I should have gone to this last one in Perth but it just didn't suit me time-wise. And it's also expensive too.

How do you feel about that expense?

1 hr 10 mins / 70 mins

I think it's too expensive mostly because you've got to pay your fees, you've got to pay your airfare, got to pay your accommodation. Unless you've got a friend or someone that you can stay with it gets to be very expensive. The same with ICOMOS conferences, that's the same thing - they've become too expensive, for me anyhow.

Also you wrote in the Journal in 2014 *Lake Burley Griffin losing an inspired vision* about the fiftieth anniversary.[21] And I just have to put this on the record: you had a lovely phrase, lovely … the article is terrific, but something caught my eye: *The lakefront by right, belongs to the people. Not a foot of its shores should be appropriated by individuals, the exclusion*

[20] Tidbinbilla Pioneer's Association

[21] 'Lake Burley Griffin: losing an inspired vision', *Australian Garden History*, 25 (4) (April/May/June 2014), pp. 35-36

of people and the slopes leading down should be quiet stretches of green. **So how, how do you feel about that?**

I feel most unhappy what's happened to Lake Burley Griffin. They … they got it into their heads that they could … the government. I think what has happened … in Canberra Local Government, I can't remember what year that came in, but immediately developers all moved in, and they changed the whole feeling of Canberra and they started developing around Civic and making it sort of like a very … the centre of the city as a big city, which wasn't the original plan at all which was to have like satellite cities.

And then they developed Kingston on that southern, southern eastern side of the lake, which was fairly appropriate because Griffin always had planned for developments there, but he hadn't planned for developments on west … West Basin at all. And they got this idea they could fill in part of West Basin and they would actually follow a Griffin plan.

But this is, as I said, NCDC did the final Lake plan and they didn't accurately follow Griffin's lines … more or less, but not accurately, because they had to make the Lake work. And they had the three basins, the central basin, the East basin and the West Basin. Now they've taken out half of the West Basin and put in a concrete walkway and they're going to develop behind that with an estate, an apartment estate, and I think it's awful and that's what they (all these developers) are pushing all the time in Canberra, more and more high-rise, and packing it into the centre of Canberra.

And then the Labor/Greens government, when they got in, they wanted to put in light rail, which is fine to go out to Gungahlin. Now they want it to go to Woden and they have to put it across the lake - the light rail. So the next thing that's going to happen is a new bridge in between the spans of the Commonwealth Avenue Bridge that exist now that will take the light rail across there.

The light rail technology was redundant before they even got it finished. They could have had a better system, like they have in Adelaide, of other light tram things that can move differently and not have such a huge concrete base with rail lines. But they've got it now, they've got this one: it goes from the centre of Canberra out to Gungahlin and the idea is to get it across the lake. And a lot of people don't like it.

Do they have any voice and influence?

No, there was … one of the ministers and I think it was … can't remember his name - he was in the Liberal government … and he wasn't too keen on this coming in. And he had a workshop meeting, and we all put in views about where the light rail could go, and Lake Burley Griffin Guardians - I went with another fellow to represent the Guardians and we were able to put our views. A lot of people wanted to go along Parkes Way or parallel to Parkes Way, and go out towards the airport and then go across Kings Avenue Bridge which I still think is a much better idea, because people … tourists can then travel along there, look

across the lake at the Parliament House, and it's a shorter bridge and by putting another bridge there, somehow, wouldn't be so disruptive.

This one's going to be a huge … cause a huge amount of traffic chaos when they get that light rail in where they want it, but that's where they want it. And when we argued about this, and it wasn't the minister at the time, he was in favour of it going out there too, you could tell he was, and you could link it out to the airport very easily. But no, it had to go on this route, which was what the Labor/Greens government wanted. And yes, and as far as I know, they're still planning to do it. They haven't started the apartment estate because they have to wait for the ground to settle that had been in-filled. There's a little bit of a park going on there, but the park that was there was taken away.

I can't imagine how much that must grieve you.

Well, indeed, it does and many people have been very grieved by it. But I think there's this attitude that, oh, all these wonderful apartments are all glass and etc, are just fantastic, and they're putting them up all over Canberra. And the National Capital Authority which is supposed to manage the Commonwealth and all development of that inner Canberra, they're supposed to have opinions, they are just like Pontius Pilate - sitting on the fence and wiping their hands of anything that requires a positive and sensible input.

They have been coming up with ideas to make money for recreation use, and now we've got sea-planes going to land on Canberra. The Lake is being used … it's going to be used as a runway; that's all been approved. And these saunas in the lake. Mind you, the saunas is not so critical because they all can always take them away and throw them out if they're not popular. Well, they can always take away the sea-planes too for that matter.

But it's just the whole attitude that this was a lovely, tranquil lake that now has platypus in it and water rats and other things; interesting wildlife -- I don't know how they're going to like having sea-planes roaring out. Mind you, we've got sea-planes at Moruya on the river, and there are seals now on the rocks of the river and they don't seem to mind the sea-planes.

1 hr 16 min - End of Audio file 1

Audio File 2

So Juliet, we've just had a small break. But just to finish up … the your association with this well, your writing with the Society in 2019 continuing your interests in Lake Burley Griffin, with Anne Claoue-Long you wrote *Public Parklands Traded for Apartments*, which is what you've just been talking about. What prompted you at that time to write that in 2019?

I think Lake Burley Griffin and its lakeshore parklands as a unit is one of the best designed landscapes in Australia, and could even be ... hold its own in the world as well. But I think seeing the way it's just people ... the management of it has been so erratic, and it's very distressing. People trying to get bites out of the lakeshore landscape to put what they think

is great there is just one little bit after another. So all of these are combining to spoil, I think, spoil the lake.

And it's part of a very big cultural landscape and you wrote about that again in 2020, with Anne Claoue-Long.

Well, it is a big cultural landscape, but cultural landscapes, some of them are quite big, but it's still a clearly defined unit, Lake Burley Griffin. It's the Lake with its lakeshore parklands. And there's another one in China, West Lake in Hangzhou, which I know quite well. And it's an urban lake and it has parklands around it, gardens, it has temples too close to it, but it's now on the World Heritage List. When I first saw it wasn't on any heritage list, but now it's gone to World Heritage as an urban designed landscape, and I think, and I did a paper on that at an early ICOMOS conference,[22] comparing these two urban landscapes just a couple of thousand years in between them in terms of age. But yes, they're an interesting comparison, those two lakes.

Did you invite ... advise at all on the Chinese lake?

No, I didn't advise, but I did write that paper, and I think I surprised people, the Chinese people, by writing about their lake. And a lot of people had written about the lake Chinese people, in fact, I've got a lovely book in there that was given to me by one of the Chinese scholars, and they went into the history of the lake, which I wrote about it, but only what I could gather by seeing it and knowing it and walking it. I lived there, close to it when I was teaching English, so I went around the lake frequently. And it was interesting, beautiful, it was lovely, it was beautiful. It had lovely gardens and all sorts of nice aspects, a special poetry written about it, and other little statues. And there was old, ancient stories associated with it. And, yeah, there's a lot about it, but I can't talk about it all.

Are there … is there poetry written about Lake Burley Griffin?

There was something actually. There was something that was ... I don't particularly (think it referenced) the Lake, but there was a poem written that was ... the Garden History Society had something to do with that. And it was, there was a talk and I think there was a bit of a statue made of it. And I'm sorry, but I've just forgotten who wrote it.

That's a lovely clue to follow up. I'd momentarily forgotten about you spending time in China, when was that? In your 50s?

Later ...

Later?

Yes, I decided to go ... take my long service leave (part pay) and go there and do English, teach English, and I really enjoyed it. My students were doctors, so weren't little kids in the

[22] *City Lakes as Heritage Setting: West Lake, Hangzhou and Lake Burley Griffin*, Canberra, ICOMOS 15th General Assembly Symposium Vol.1 Xi'an, China, 2005

school and it was a very interesting experience. And being in Hangzhou and being near the lake was wonderful. So I went back again and that coincided with an international ICOMOS conference in Xi'an, so I was able to go there and that's where I presented that paper on the two lakes.

And so how long did you spend living in … ?

Oh, it was only three months stints.

And why? Why did you choose to teach English and not spend your time on the banks of the Seine for example?

I don't know. I've just always been fascinated by China and I just wanted to go there. It's a fascinating country.

You were going to say something …

No, I was just going to say that the landscaping work in China is pretty fantastic. Watching them build new pathways around the lake and seeing the way they'd construct them. Very, very well done indeed, and lovely plantings. There was a bit of a move there to re-introduce local native plants too. So Chinese native plants, like the Dawn Cyprus I think it is,[23] that they've planted a lot of that around the lake.

Did you have an opportunity to travel around yourself when you were there?

I did. I did go on a trip down to down south, to one of the river places where there's those limestone mountains, and went on a bit of a tour of that. But, yeah, they paid for me to go on that trip and they put me in a Chinese hotel, I couldn't speak one word to anybody, and I had to just try and point at food I liked to eat. I had some pretty interesting experiences with food.

I can imagine. So, so coming to ICOMOS, and your, what was your first encounter with ICOMOS?

Well I went on ... Brian was a member, and I was interested in cultural landscapes and historic gardens. And there was this cultural ... there was not a cultural landscape group, but a historic gardens group, and I became a member of that and I was the first Australian to join that committee. And then when the conference was held in Xi'an,[24] they were moving over to cultural landscapes then, changed the name from historic gardens to cultural landscapes. People in the group, some of the Europeans, weren't happy with this cultural landscape thing. They loved the historic gardens; they'd done wonderful studies of historic gardens in the world and they had done a very nice publication on historic gardens. I used to have a copy of that, in fact, I had two copies, but I don't have any now. But yes, so that's when I really became an official member before that Xi'an conference.

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23 *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*

24 15th ICOMOS General Assembly at Xi'an, 2015

And you also presented in Mexico.

Yes, I did, but I wasn't a member of that. I was sort of linked member but not an official member of the committee at that stage ... I but I gave a paper then on the work we've been doing in the forest on cultural landscapes and how we had studied them.[25]

And how did you convince the other members of ICOMOS to go with the cultural landscapes title.

Well ICOMOS has ... International ICOMOS has lots of specialist areas, sort of adobe buildings, different architecture, stained glass, archeology, they've all got subcommittees on those topics, and they write ... International ICOMOS had written, I think, to various national organizations to encourage people to go on the various committees and it seemed to be that I was one of the few that nominated to go on the historic gardens one that became the cultural landscape committee.

But was that your idea, that push for change for cultural landscapes?

No, I mean, cultural landscapes was moving ... International ICOMOS was looking at cultural landscapes - *they* wanted to change, and they did. And the historic gardens people, as I said, weren't quite happy about it at first.

But they came around.

Yes, yes. And it got a different membership too once it became cultural landscapes,[26] there were other people coming into the group that weren't sort of from landscape architecture background or historic, sorry, landscape background.

10.00

And where did you meet?

Well, we met ... we met at these international conferences and so that was that Xi'an one, and I'm just trying to think where else we've been. We went to Turkey, we had a meeting in Turkey, and there were, there were always issues to discuss with the committee. So the committee would have a little symposium before the main conference and talk about our particular work and what we were trying to push. The other thing that these committees did, members of these committees did, they were asked to do reviews of World Heritage nominations on those particular topics. So ... one of the areas of interest for the ... Are we going on to ICOMOS now?

Yes.

One of the areas of interest for ICOMOS, well I thought it was an area of concern, was everything had to be assessed for World Heritage according to World Heritage criteria. And

25 'Cultural Values of Australia's Forests', 1999

26 The committee became the ICOMOS-IFLA Scientific Committee on Cultural Landscapes

they had something like eight criteria. And there was a natural group that weren't ICOMOS, IUCN group, who assessed natural areas for World Heritage, forests and things of that nature, and then there was the cultural group which was ICOMOS, it assessed cultural places.

But the criteria were divided so that the cultural people couldn't use the aesthetic assessment … aesthetic criterion - that was owned by the natural-people. And it was, to me, a bone of contention that we couldn't use that criterion for cultural places, whereas in Australia, we had been using the aesthetic criterion for cultural places. And we really had formulated a process of doing this when for the forest assessments that I was involved with, I spent almost four years working on forest taskforce work - which I loved, and we had a process of dealing with aesthetics.

And it was so common, people would come to ... we had community meetings, people would come to the meeting and say, 'Well, I *love* that place because it's beautiful.' And so you had to turn around and try to make an evaluation of these comments and try to get them to be something that can stand the test of time which was more or less a sort of almost a legal evaluation of values for heritage lists, both for the nation here, Australia, but also also for World Heritage, they had to be evaluated properly.

So I spent a bit of time firstly in the forest work with other members of staff: I remember Sue Feary and Sandy Blair was involved too, and we worked out a process for assessing the aesthetic value which ... there's been an enormous amount of literature about aesthetics. It's unbelievable. All these philosophers have written about aesthetics and trying to get a process that works. But unfortunately the standard way that Europeans have looked at aesthetics, probably in the last 150 years, has been according to a philosopher, Baumgarten I think his name is, and he it was ... became like taste, whether it was the taste of the assessor. But that's not good enough.

The criteria that Australia used, the criterion for aesthetic was — valued by a community or cultural group, which put it into a different level. We had to establish how that value was appreciated through … by a community group or community groups or different people. So we developed a method for doing that, but it was also looking at aesthetics itself, and how you can analyse this concept of beauty and to make it more structured and to put it into a way that you can assess it. And I think with ICOMOS, I think we sort of did it for the forest, but with ICOMOS we had people from all parts of the world in that committee.

And I think one of the ... we had a workshop in Turkey on aesthetics, and it was really good. I mean people responded wonderfully. And there were people who had ... architects who had to assess impacts of architecture on cityscapes and so forth, and we got told how they did it. But it was also getting the Islamic-type understanding of aesthetics from people in Turkey and people from Iran, because we had members in our committee, and we had members from India and Indonesia, Japan, China, all with their views on aesthetics. So it was pulling together all this information for a report which they didn't all gel: they were different, but then to try to come up with a way people can look at trying to assess this.

So we, we did a report from the committee[27], did a report, and we did ... ended up with a kind of, well, I don't know whether anyone uses it, but I thought it was quite useful: a chart on just looking at aesthetics and the emotional reaction of aesthetics that people have, people say the 'wow factor', but what the evocations of first impressions, then how, what, why people have felt that way? Is it something in their background? Is it something in their religion or whatever? And then leading to what are the features that actually express the aesthetics of that place? Because it's only the features that you'll be protecting, you can't, sort of protect the emotional value. And soundscapes is another part of it - to listen to the sounds and the colours and the patterns and all those things as well. So it was quite complicated, I mean, but I thought it was, I thought it was quite a worthwhile thing.

Quite a worthwhile thing: that sounds like a very modest response.

Well I don't think it's gone very far. I did get it put on the website for our local ICOMOS group, National Scientific Committee on Cultural Landscapes, but I'm not sure that people have looked at it or bothered to read it or even use it.

Is that because of the complexity?

Well, I think everybody comes to cultural landscape with their own background, and it could be indigenous archeology that's got them into cultural landscapes or something else. So, yeah, it's different. I think people probably doing World Heritage assessments may look at it and may look at how to assess the aesthetic value. But then again it's only ... they have to put it against, not the aesthetics criterion, but one of the others, they have to kind of distort it to go against one of the other criterion. Yeah.

So the aesthetics take in so much beyond the fabric, as you say, the sounds and the emotion and did you involve any people in the fine arts world?

Well fine arts definitely comes in. I didn't involve them in the conversations, but a lot of the assessment methods have looked at Fine Arts, and they and one of ... when we did the forest, there's a Canadian scholar who's written about it, and it says the natural environment should be assessed like an object of art, and it should be experts in ... like experts in art assess art and experts in forests. So in a way, we used that. We used experts in the forest assessment, plus the community, plus other things like tourism guides and all sorts of things to come up with a package of why that place had aesthetic importance. But we did use the forest experts, and they were very good. They would map out areas on their maps which they thought had high aesthetic appeal and interest.

Very exciting work it must have been.

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[27] *The Aesthetic Value of Landscapes Background and Assessment Guide*, ICOMOS IFLA, ISC on Cultural Landscapes. 2015 (https://culturallandscapesandroutesnsc.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/aes-value-of-landscape-guide-10-aug-2017.pdf)

Yes! And early foresters used to actually cut off branches of trees so they could get better views and things through it.

In one of your writings (and I just can't remember for the moment which article it was) but you talked about how the presentation at a seminar series … you had a presentation by an Indigenous man was the most thrilling in one of the forest meetings that you had, and the way Indigenous people look at ... maybe it was Tracks?

It could have been Tracks, yes. I did that paper with Marilyn Truscott.[28]

Yes, and how we look at … how Indigenous people look at the landscape from ... from a drone ...

I was going to say, almost like a bird's eye view.

Yes … and big areas of land.

20.00

That's right. Well, the way the Heritage Commission dealt with it in those early years, when Betty Meehan was Director of the Indigenous Section, they did a series of very good studies using anthropologists, and they did … sort of areas that were linked, so they'd have a special area, probably around a water hole, and then 10 kms or further, there'd be another spot where people walked, and they became their songlines. So they're all linked to these songline stories - fascinating work. And again, I don't know what's happened to it. You can't get it on web, on the web anywhere, because they took it all out, because it was someone thought ... someone thought it was infringing on Indigenous values, but it was incredibly valuable work they did. And I'm sorry that's happened, and I don't know where those old studies have gone, what's happened to them?

So do people continue to consult you about aesthetics?

No.

That's a very definite - do you wish they did?

Not really?

Do you feel it's made a difference along the way?

I think it did. I think I've seen people using our methodology. So it's out there, and some people have been using it, yeah.

Are they using it for Lake Burley Griffin?

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[28] Juliet Ramsay and Marilyn C. Truscott, Tracking through Australian forests, *Historic Environment,* Vol 15, No 2, 2002. https://www.aicomos.com/wp-content/uploads/Tracking-Through-Australian-Forests.pdf

No.

So it's just, just some of the names that might prompt some thoughts, and we don't, we don't have to comment about all of these, but, but you've worked with that landscape and cultural routes in the twenty-first century that you ... issues and opportunities you wrote about in the Landscape Review, and then co edited with Ken Taylor – I can't get a copy.

Oh, oh, that was yes, yes. We ... that was in 2013. We had one of the ICOMOS Cultural Landscape Symposiums in Canberra, and so we organized a series of speakers, and people put in ideas for papers, and we had lots of presentations, and Ken was on the board of Routledge, I think he was somehow involved with the journal that does cultural landscapes.

So we got a publication of all the papers that we presented. We got two publications, one through Routledge, the one cultural landscapes,[29] and then we had another one through ICOMOS itself, on ... which was more the architectural[30] ... more those aspects of the symposium. And so it was good; we had two publications from that one symposium. And it was interesting for … because some of the people, you know, their English is not all that great, the people that come from overseas, so had to do a lot of editing of the English to make the papers work. But there was a lovely one of tea plantations in Sri Lanka and I'm just trying to remember them all now, but there was quite a good collection.

We can put that in later ... I'm putting you on the spot here. So did you enjoy that collaboration?

Well, I think it worked well for that one, it worked well. I mean, it's difficult doing something that suits everybody, and people are not happy with some aspects, and might get their feathers ruffled about a few things, but we did end up with two publications. I think Kirsty was co-editor of one of them.

Kirsty - I don't know that name?

Kirsty Altenburg ... the one that was done by Australia ICOMOS.

Right. Then there was in 2018 you did, again on the aesthetics: perhaps this is the guide you're speaking of with Nancy Pollock-Ellwand and others.[31] You were co-chair of the Cultural Landscapes and Cultural Routes.

With Sandy Blair, she and I both started that subcommittee for ICOMOS.

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29. *21st Century Challenges Facing Cultural Landscapes,* Juliet Ramsay and Ken Taylor (editors) 2018
30. *Imagined Cities and Urban Spaces* HE, vol 27 no 1, 2015, Kirsty Altenburg and Juliet Ramsay (editors)
31. *Aesthetic Values of Landscapes Background and Assessment Guide* (prepared 2015, published 2018), Juliet Ramsay was lead author and there were several text contributors: Aygül Ağır, Aedeen Cremin, Jill Cowley, Han Feng, Hal Moggridge, Eeva Ruoff, Homa Irani Behbehani and Nupur Prothi Khanna.

Right.

Because the Tracks ... Routes people didn't have very many members, we were beginning to get quite a lot in cultural landscapes, and so we combined them both and made the subcommittee. So it still exists now, the Cultural Landscapes and Routes Subcommittee of Australia ICOMOS.

So unlike the aesthetics, it's got a definite base.

Yes, the aesthetics is just one aspect for assessment.

Yes, yes, but the cultural landscapes are not threatened or thwarted in any way. It's a definite part of the work.

Oh, yes, yes. So there have been some big challenges for the group. They were trying at one stage to get Adelaide Parklands. There was a move there to have a World Heritage nomination, and so I think our group ... but it would have only been the cultural landscape people, not the routes people were involved in helping out a bit with that one and giving some guidance. But I don't think it's gone anywhere. It's a very tricky one to get World Heritage nomination for.

Is that including all the vineyards in that area?

A collection of the vineyards and yeah, and some of them, and some of the towns, too some of the townscapes that were involved, old historic towns as well.

I think the Garden History Society was looking at that in the teens, at one of the conferences there as well.

Yes, they probably were.

Then in 2017 there was the Delhi conference, and you chaired the working group on advocacy.

Yes.

Well, it didn't go anywhere. I've chaired aesthetics for the group and also we did a methodology for ... for reviewing World Heritage nominations, myself and Patricia O'Donnell did that together. And I think that's been quite useful for many people who are suddenly doing ~~a~~ review, that they can follow various steps to see that they've covered everything but the advocacy I thought would be useful, because I've been doing so much for Lake Burley Griffin Guardians, but I couldn't get a team that would work on it. They ... people expressed interest when we were in New Delhi but afterwards it was just ... it didn't work. So we stopped it.

Do you have any thoughts about why it didn't work?

Well, I think people are just so overwhelmed with everything in work and daily life that something else, probably something that they didn't think they needed. Also, I think, I do

think advocacy has to be kind of grassroots and trying to do things at a higher level ... there are guides on advocacy around already, and ICOMOS itself has something, and it has a risk management group as well, so there are various other things ... and I just think people just couldn't be bothered with it.

It doesn't also look terribly good on your CV, always if you're part of a ... if you're at that point in your career, to have advocacy, it's ... you become a troublemaker or whistleblower.

Maybe ... this was all post-work, so it didn't matter.

Whereas grassroots ... it's not that's, that's not such a danger or a risk.

No ... it's not when you've finished work / retirement.

Yes.

That's why people who retire get involved in these things when they probably normally wouldn't.

As you have done.

Yes.

So, just coming back to ICOMOS, well continuing with ICOMOS, you were given Honorary Membership of ICOMOS in 2018 and with with some lovely comments about your willingness to lead initiatives, your transfer of knowledge, your in-depth work on the aesthetic values and associated publications, and your persistent advocacy for Canberra's landscape heritage. How did you feel about that award?

I got a shock when I got that award, actually, I was quite surprised. I hadn't expected it. I didn't know it was happening, and suddenly they announced it. I think there are people that are much more hard-working in ICOMOS than I am, too, and so I feel a bit guilty now because I have ... aren't doing it ... I'm not doing much in terms of ICOMOS work, though I did write a little report the other day for the next meeting, but of the NSC,[32] but no, I do almost nothing for them now. It's an age thing I think you know.

But is the award about future work or about work you've done?

Well probably not, probably not, but there are other people that do high powered work for ICOMOS and are on the committees and do a lot of international work as well. So yeah.

Do you enjoy your involvement with ICOMOS?

30.00

[32] Australia ICOMOS National Scientific Committee on Cultural Landscapes and Cultural Routes established in 2008

I have enjoyed it in the past enormously. I've certainly enjoyed that committee, the cultural landscapes committee, and going to those ... having those ... attending those wonderful symposiums in different parts of the world, in North Korea and Japan and Xi'an and Turkey, there was a meeting in Bath in England. So I managed to go there for a very quick meeting.

And it must take up a have taken up a fair chunk of your time.

Oh, it took a bit of time, yes, and took a bit of money too, because you don't get anyone to pay for you. The work ... the Heritage Commission would give me time, so I'd get paid time while I was attending some of those things.

So your involvement with ICOMOS when you were still working as well, and support from ICOMOS as well. Not that just the financial support, but support for your giving time to ICOMOS.

Well, ICOMOS is a pretty amazing organization, and they do a lot of advocacy, and they do it very well. They're very crystal clear on what they write, and getting - yes them to write an advocacy document is very worthwhile, if you can.

Did you have any involvement in ... the Society has now done an advocacy toolkit? Did you have any input to that?

No, I didn't really that ... Anne (Claoue-Long) was involved in that. Yes, no, I haven't been really involved in it. I wonder if it'll be ... I'll be interested to see feedback from people who use it, I think.

And speaking of feedback, and just darting back to the Society, there's part of a conversation with the Society members, it's about changing the name to) how do you feel about changing the name?

I didn't know that was happening, so I really can't say.

Do you think there's any purpose in changing the name from the Australian Garden? Could it be better, improved with a different name?

I don't know. I quite like the Garden History Society as a name, and I think if you go cultural landscapes, then you're in competition with ICOMOS ...

And yet there's room to include that ...

Well, if there's room to include it, perhaps Historic Gardens and Landscapes or something.

I mean, in the work.

Yes, oh yes, yes.

By changing the name, does it change your work?

No, I don't know. No, I don't know what I think about it. I think there was a long time for a while we were called Garden Cuttings. Do you remember that?

Oh yes, that was a contentious time. I think with Tim North. Yes, it's a long time ago.

Well, I think that sort of soon after I joined it became the journal, became *Garden Cuttings*, and I didn't like that at all, and I don't think it suited a lot of people, but I think the Garden History Society is quite a good —old established name, actually, and it's held it ... it's held its own for a long time now.

Indeed. So, so just speaking of Stuart Read, as we were, you worked with Stuart for a time?

Yes, he came to work in the Heritage Commission and so I worked with him there. It's always lovely working with Stuart. He's good fun, bright, cheery, irreverent when it needs to be.

And now he's been chair, co-chair of the ... Society ... that's a tricky …

Yes, he's done such a fantastic job. And those are such hard ... that's hard work. And the same for ICOMOS - the executive do enormous amount of work and difficult work. So yeah, I think the Garden History Society works well for what it does. I mean, it's a national organization. It has national conferences. I was thinking it wouldn't work if it had to link with something international either it's just good as it is. That's my opinion anyhow.

Yes, there are many that's perhaps another topic for a whole interview in itself, that functions and works.

But cultural landscape could be linked in, if possible. But yes …

So some of the members and contributing advisory, honorary expert. This is, this is perhaps the Bath conference time in 2016, Steve Brown, Jane Lennon, you worked with Rachel Jackson, Stuart Read, Neil Draper, Caroline Grant, who's now popped up again - I think Caroline's on the NMC.

Oh good, because she's in Perth. That's good.

Did you work with her?

A bit, well, yes, she's been very generous to me, and she invited me to talk at one of their symposiums they had in Perth and she gave me hospitality there. And yes, she's a terrific person.

How do you feel the Society that that next younger group is coming through?

That's the difficulty. I don't know whether it's coming through. And I suppose if the Garden History Society is doing anything, would be to try and do something to attract the younger generation.

How do you do that?

I don't know. I really don't. And what are they interested in? They? Are they? They don't seem to be terribly interested in garden history. In terms of landscape well, they all want to do their smart, new modern designs. I wondered, sort of Gardening Australia's got a huge

following, but we don't have much garden history since John Patrick left, and he was very good at talking about historic gardens on the Gardening Australia.

On the television show?

Yes, on the television show. So whether they can get ... do that a bit more productively.

Sometimes it seems a bit giddy.

Yeah, it is. You're jumping from one thing to another, one person to another, one idea to another. And they could have a little bit more on historic gardens, I think, which they don't have, they don't have any now, come to think of it.

Is that your next advocacy role?

Get Costa and give him an earful. And I think people enjoyed it. I'm sure they did. John Patrick was very good, but he would talk about places in Victoria which has wonderful gardens, and occasionally they do go to some of those old gardens, but yeah, I don't think people realize how wonderful they are. And they don't have to be really historic; they can be fairly modern gardens too, but they deserve to be heritage gardens. So I wonder if the "historic" might be putting people off. I don't know.

But on one of the garden history conferences, we went to the Mornington Peninsula, and saw these beautiful native gardens, which were just grasses, she talked about grasses, but just wonderful grasslands and native bushes and shrubs, perfect. And we also went to Elisabeth Murdoch's place. So it was a fantastic conference.

And was she in residence at the time?

She came and met everybody at the bus. She came out in her little golf buggy thing that she drives around. She stood there and she shook everyone's hand as they got off the bus, and there were about a couple of buses. She was amazing.

We're just talking about ICOMOS and the Society Juliet, and there were some lovely comments.

Well, I think heritage, because ICOMOS is the organization that covers heritage in Australia, mostly, and that there are, there's lots of work in heritage, various facets of heritage, guides in museums, guides in art galleries, working for the governments, doing heritage restoration work in terms of architecture or landscape architecture, or whatever.

So I think younger people feel that they ... if they are looking for work in that area, and also, there's big government departments that cover heritage. So people, even people who are lawyers, might want to do heritage and might want to work in a Heritage Department, so they will try to get a bit involved and learn about it.

And I think tourism, too, utilizes heritage all the time, and it needs better management probably to get the heritage correct. And when you start talking about heritage, you have to

acknowledge history, because it's there and it's very important. So it brings together all those aspects of history and design and people and work and everything.

So yes, heritage is important, and I've sort of just waffled along, sort of working on the gardens and working in the Department, working for forests (and that was a regional forest agreement that ran for a number of years).

40.00

I worked for four years on it, but it ran for longer, and it was started by an international agreement called the Montreal Agreement that set the criteria for keeping forests in countries and to stop them all being logged so identifying key places and protecting those that are in forests. So we worked alongside our natural ... our natural environment people who looked at things like powerful owl habitats and long footed potoroos and we were looking at people sites, the cultural heritage sites … the forests are *full* of everything, apart from Indigenous heritage, but there's gold mining sites and old settlement sites and whatever - water works, everything that's sort of hidden away in forests, defense sites, even some of them, so they're all there.

And it was fascinating working when, when we did that work, we also did a lot of community workshops. So we went out. And I forget how many I did. I can't remember there were so many for every area there were three or four. I did lots and lots of them with Indigenous people and with communities and with other professionals too, helping us do them. And so we got opinions of people and why they … why they liked them. Did they like special places? We tried to tease out aesthetic value, whether it was history, whether it was their great uncles have been there and built that fence or whatever. So it was all really wonderful in a way.

Did they understand what you were doing?

Yes, they did. I think eventually - they didn't at first and one, one meeting we held in Bonang, which was very early on when we started the work, and people were late, they weren't coming. I thought 'oh, this is terrible, they're not going to come'. And then they came in, a whole group of them, they were smelling of horses and looking like they just stepped off horses, and we started to show slides of things that might be important, like chock and log fences and old huts and, oh yes - my uncle built a hut like that out there. Oh yeah, we got a fence like that on our property, and they got really interested. In fact, I saw some of the members later, years later, down in Bairnsdale, going to a ... going to one of the local council heritage meetings. And they had a church in Bonang that was multi-denominational that was used by other religions. It was a delightful church, but the fact that it had been going for years, that was its heritage importance, the fact that was multi-denominational.

Anyhow, I remember writing the statement of significance for that, and this woman wrote back and said, 'Thank you for saying such lovely words about our little church.'

So, yeah, it was ... people don't realize what they've got. Lots of people - or they think heritage, they have a view of heritage, and they are quite amazed that some of these special people places are important.

Sometimes I think people know more than they think they know.

You're right, yes.

And sometimes community is seen as a great nuisance by the great and experts. Did you enjoy those community interactions?

I did. I enjoyed them all, and some of them were tough. I think we had one area in Victoria where oh it was a special meeting, and they sent me out to run it, which I thought was unfair because there was a group of people who were pro-forest and not happy with the logging activity that had been going on, and they weren't happy with the Victorian State Forest Department. And that was the other group we were working with. And so they said, 'Oh, well, you can run a special meeting in the evening for these people and see how you go.' So I had do that.

Do you feel you were being dropped in at the deep end.

I did and but I said, just write down places that you think should be saved and they spent all evening doing that, thank goodness. You're talking about the nimbys, yes, they come out, they came out at a lot of those meetings.

So when you talk about the aesthetic value of forests, is that respected today?

I think people are using the methodology, to a degree. We had a few good consultants working for us too, Robyn Crocker and another guy, but yeah, they did some good work, and they worked also for the Department later. We did some aesthetic assessments of other key places, and they did a good job on those as well.

We started at the beginning of our interview, Juliet talking about your guide. And I'd really like to just talk about those two guides, your *Parks, Gardens and Special Trees*, your classification and assessment, which is still in use and still valued. How do you feel about that, and what was, what was it like at the time writing that - you spoke about ...

Oh it was fun. I was just sort of pulling the bits together and sort of seeing the connections with places and seeing how the styles were being manifested in these gardens, and so I just sort of wrote it up, and yeah and Sandy said, 'Oh, that's good for a little technical publication.' So that's what we did. I'm not sure everybody appreciated it, but we did it anyhow, and later I did ... I wrote about garden styles for ICOMOS Historic Gardens people, they were asking for them they wanted every country to write about garden styles. I don't know whether they all did, but I did for ... based really on the work I'd done for the Commission.

So we had to do, we had to, I wanted to include parks but also landscape areas in towns. You know, you go especially some rural towns that have a lovely area beside ...it's like a park

beside the river that they're important to keep those as well. They're really heritage components of a town. And we're getting to the spaces, these spaces in town that are all part of that heritage ... was part of the heritage landscape of the town.

And that same year, in 91 you also wrote how to record the national estate values of gardens - you were busy in 91.

Was that, oh, did I write ... must have been one of the papers based on, on that guide. Yes.

They're both in the State Library of New South Wales.

Oh, good.

In, in the *Special Trees, Parks and Gardens, Special Trees*, you acknowledged a number of people who are all still significant in the Garden History Society ... so, Oline Richards, Howard Tanner, Peter Watts, Richard Aitken and Sandy Blair. So there's a long trajectory of the ... of your life interwoven with this Society, or Society members, at least.

Yes, they were important, and especially the people that did those books. Oline Richards did the one in Western Australia. And just checking, I think, was Beames and Whitehill[33] did the one in South Australia. And of course, they'd been all ... already been the books by Beatrice Bligh and Howard Tanner for reference, Helen Armstrong, who was a lecturer in landscape at (University of) New South Wales and then Queensland. She'd done a lot of work too, so I looked at her work. Yeah. And James Broadbent, of course.

There was the ... again, perhaps this is part of your forest work ... in 2002 it was the UN International Year of Mountains and there was an ICOMOS conference in Jindabyne.

That happened because I just happened to be on (through work) on an Alps committee, and it was a year of mountains and so I said we should have a conference on that at Jindabyne and then all the other groups got in to … the natural people and others. So it was a big conference, and we ran the cultural aspect. I think the Indigenous was kept separate if I remember rightly, they did their own bit, but - or did they go with us? Anyhow, it was a good conference. We brought out an Indigenous person, an Inuit person, and she was fantastic - she gave ... and she also gave the Commission a special presentation of what was happening then, and she was talking about climate change back then, how all the ice is melting and how things are changing for the animals that live there as well, and the things they were finding under the ice too, old hats and all sorts of things. Yes.

The ... some of the people involved in that conference with you, you're the leader.

Marilyn was involved.

Yes. Marilyn Truscott, Eva Logan, Alistair Grinberg, Aedeen Cremin again, yes. Sarah Jane Brassil.

[33] Beames and Whitelaw

That's right, yes. They were all involved in helping to get that going.

Has there been a mountains conference since ... an alps conference?

50.00

Another one? Not that I'm aware of. It was because it was the Year of the Mountains. We just grabbed that opportunity.

Juliet, you've been incredibly generous today, is there anything about your work, and these committees, and your involvement with ICOMOS that I have not asked you about that you want to ensure is part of this?

Not really, except I'd just like to thank all those people that have done such excellent work running these organizations, Garden History Society and ICOMOS, because they work very hard, and, yes, it'd be really good if the Garden History could somehow draw young people into it, because I think it's missing out there, and they're missing out too. They're missing out on seeing all the beautiful gardens and getting inspired by them. I remember just going into a garden like Lanyon and seeing the old Bunya pine, you know, it's just wonderful. It's a sense of time and that you ... we're losing that in our streetscapes. I just went along the road yesterday and this huge, big eucalypt had been cut down ... it just sort of breaks my heart when I see those things, but they're such markers of time, the old trees that are in those towns and yes.

And since your retirement, speaking of trees, you've taken up painting, or has that always been an interest.

Oh, it's always been an interest, but I didn't have much time for it when I was working, and so I'm now devoting a lot more time to it, which is good.

And you've exhibited in local ...

Yes, I did ... yes, I curated an exhibition here in Moruya with my new art group and me. And it was good.

And what was the title of that?

Cherish Nature.

And then there was one about trees?

Oh, no, that was me. My trees are in that ... were in that exhibition.

And your … most recently ... you showed me your snow gums that you painted.

Well, I'd like, I've got a whole lot of things whooshing around in my head that I'd like to get out and paint.

Well, I think ... I think that's a lovely note to end on - so thank you very much for your contribution.

Thank you very much, Ros, and thank the Garden History Society for actually trying to get me on their ... their oral history record.

After the recorder was switched off the conversation turned to space. This conversation was recorded as an important postscript to the interview

In talking about historic gardens and parks and trees, we've got to remember about spaces and how important they are in all urban areas just the verges, things by the rivers, where people can walk and where they can recreate. And I did write a paper with Feng Hang, Hang Feng, rather - sorry, from China and we did a paper called, *Space is Not Nothing*. It's really important. It's important to have space like water, to appreciate the landscape beyond and ... or even just squares of space in cities are important, the places where you can view mountains beyond and those sorts of things. So, yes, when we did the *Space is Not Nothing* paper we based it on the aesthetics work that the ICOMOS cultural landscape group had done.

End of Interview: 53 minutes, 20 seconds audio file 2