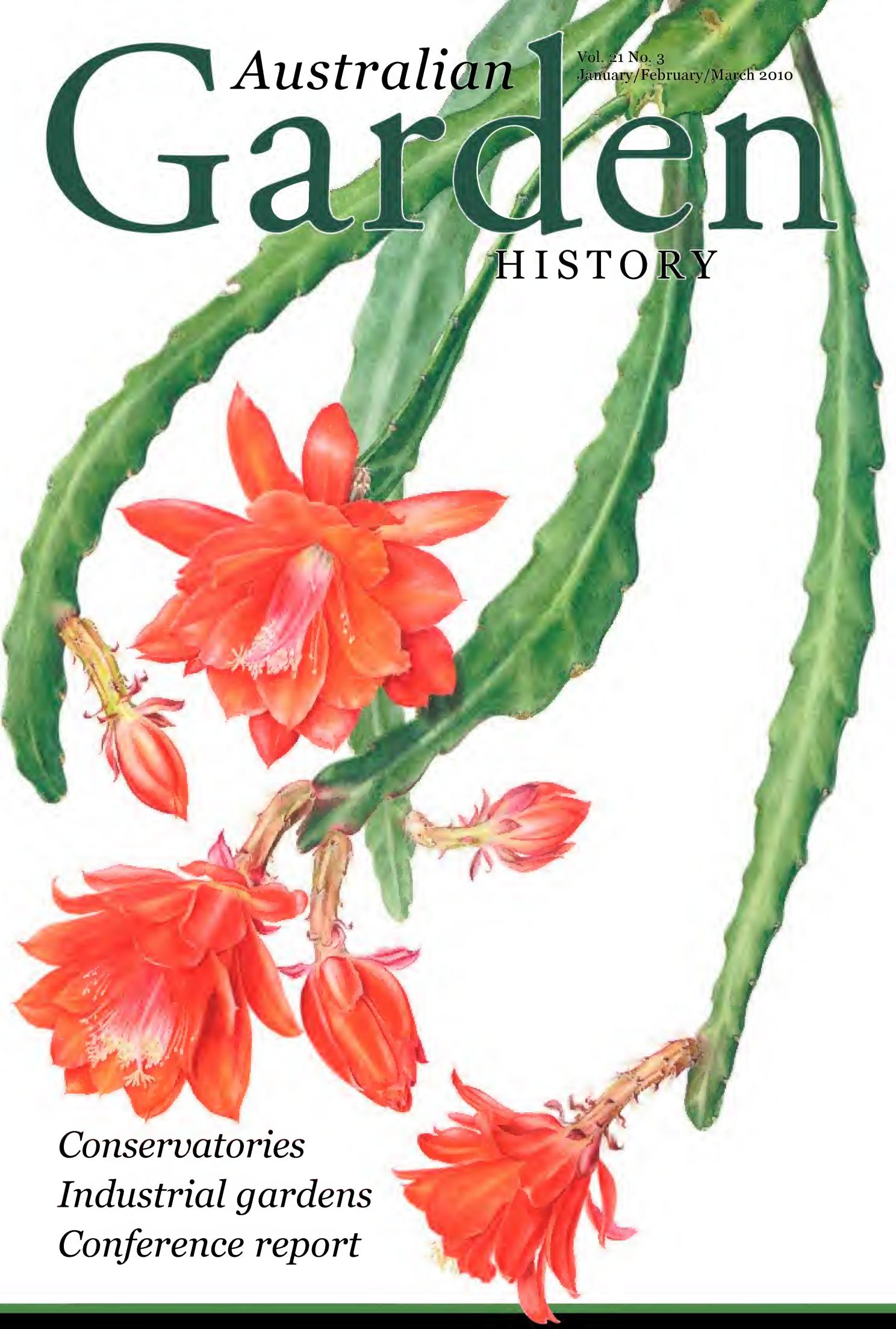


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*Conservatories
Industrial gardens
Conference report*

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Photo: Anne Vale

National Management Committee and Editorial Advisory Committee members on the steps at Meningoort, visited during the 2009 AGHS Annual National Conference, Geelong (see conference report on page 22).

Cover: Detail of watercolour painting of *Disocactus ackermannii* (syn *Epiphyllum ackermannii*) by Sydney-based botanical artist and RHS Gold Medallist Beverly Allen. This painting was presented by the Australian Garden History Society to Colleen Morris to mark her retirement from the National Management Committee following her six-year period chairing the Society (see story page 34). The AGHS is extremely grateful to Beverly Allen for her generous assistance in helping make this gift available. The epiphyllums have special significance to both Beverly and Colleen, for which readers should consult our story 'Painting colonial plants: epiphyllum species and hybrids' in *AGH*, 18 (5), 2007.

From the chair

John Dwyer

As the incoming chair of the Australian Garden History Society I wish to pay tribute to Colleen Morris, who has now retired from this role after chairing the National Management Committee for six years. Colleen has given outstanding leadership to the Society, ensuring that it is in a sound financial position and advancing its intellectual standing, particularly through her editorship of *Studies in Australian Garden History*. I hope to build on what she has done.

The Society has a vital role in developing knowledge and understanding of cultural landscapes and historic gardens as part of Australia's heritage. Our journal provides an outstanding forum for the publication of papers and discussion which implement this role. I will support the editors in maintaining and developing the intellectual content of the journal while ensuring that it continues to meet the expectations of our diverse readership. The Society must continue to support scholarship in garden history, especially through the journal and the Kindred Spirits Fund.

The restoration and conservation of historic gardens are core elements of the Society's work. The AGHS National Restoration Fund for Conservation Works in Historic Gardens was established in 2008, and has recently funded tree conservation works at Purrumbete in the Western District of Victoria. It was pleasing that delegates attending the very successful 30th Annual National Conference of the Society at Geelong were able to see the conservation works in progress on a garden visit. I hope to encourage greater use of this Fund, and will urge branches to bring forward applications.

Our Society is affiliated with the Australian Council of National Trusts. The strength of our ties with the National Trusts in the different states has varied over time. I will work to strengthen our ties with kindred bodies and supporters, such as the National Trusts, the Historic Houses Trust of NSW, and the Johnston Collection, having regard to the interests shared by our members and the members of such organisations, and the mutual benefits to be obtained.

The strength of the Society as an organisation lies in the branches. The enthusiasm and hard work of branch committees, in particular in organising and running the annual conferences of the Society, are essential to the well-being of the Society. The outstanding program and smooth running of the Society's recent conference were the result of months of planning and preparation by a dedicated committee, to whom we are all indebted. The programs of activities and lectures developed on a regular basis by all the branches are most impressive. I will do all that I can to support the branch chairs and their committees.

In my time so far on the National Management Committee I have been struck by the spirit of cheerful co-operation which the elected members and branch representatives bring to the conduct of the Society. With their support, I hope to maintain the Society as the vibrant and healthy body which Colleen Morris has handed to my care.

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Cultivating the maidenhair and the maiden fair

Timothy Hubbard

Building on his paper delivered at the 2009 AGHS Annual National Conference in Geelong, Timothy Hubbard explores the social role of the late nineteenth-century conservatory.

Introduction

When Soames Forsyte—in John Galsworthy’s novel *The Man of Property* (1906)—first realised the potential of Irene Heron as a wife, they were standing in her step-mother’s conservatory. The nineteenth-century conservatory offered a respectable separation from the formality of a drawing room with the supervision of young people still possible but at a discreet distance. An outer door to the grounds might even provide a means of escape—as Irene needed when Soames later proposed to her in the conservatory.

As Jessie Serle has noted in her article on conservatories in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Gardens*, the daughter of the house could be displayed as well as birds, statuary, fountains, ornamental furniture, and ferns.¹ Government House, Melbourne, had a small conservatory off the drawing room. Well-known conservatories survive in Melbourne at Rippon Lea, Mandeville Hall, Villa Alba, and Labassa, but they also graced homesteads in Victoria’s Western District. Cororooke, Glenfine, Kongbool, Murndal, Narrapumelap, Purrumbete, and Trawalla have (or once had) conservatories which were directly accessed from their drawing rooms. The conservatory at Werribee Park is accessed from the billiard room. Perhaps the best example of a smaller suburban conservatory is at Barwon Grange in Geelong, which is modest and rather charmingly makeshift.

There were three types of conservatories—stand alone conservatories, usually taking the form of a glasshouse or hothouse; attached conservatories, usually a prefabricated standard design in iron; and enclosed verandahs, which ranged from the simplest to the most elaborate glazing arrangements. Some properties possessed more than one type. The types covered different scales and a range of social status.

If one could not afford an imported conservatory, hardware merchants such as Castner’s of Sydney offered a simple local design.²

When young Lady Agatha—in Oscar Wilde’s play *Lady Windermere’s Fan* (first performed in 1893)—accepted Mr Hopper’s proposal of marriage and life in Australia, she did so in the conservatory, while in the drawing room an older generation discussed the decline in London’s Society. Well might a maiden fair linger longer amongst the maidenhair.

A regrettable incident

But some maidens came to grief. As British historian Sue Bennett writes in *Five Centuries of Women and Gardens*:

In 1847, at the age of twenty-one, the witty, vivacious and beautiful Dorothy Walpole was compromised in a Hampshire summer-house by George Smythe, an experienced rake and Tory politician. He suffered no long term effects from the incident but Dorothy’s reputation was ruined. Queen Victoria refused to receive her at Court, and with her marriage prospects damaged beyond repair, Dorothy was hastily married off to her cousin Reginald Nevill, who was twenty years her senior.³

All was not lost, as we shall see. Cousin Reginald happened to be rich, very rich indeed. They went to live at Dangstein in West Sussex, where Dorothy consoled herself with gardening, lots of gardening of the smartest kind. We do not know if she cultivated maidenhair ferns but she certainly cultivated a great deal. Her plant collection ended up as reputedly the best private collection outside Kew Gardens. She also continued her interest in conservatories. ‘In total’ writes garden historian W.R. Trotter, ‘Dorothy built thirteen greenhouses, together with

peach and orchid houses, and melon and cucumber pits. ... The plant collection at Dangstein became famous, and new specimens were sent from all over the world.'⁴

Some practical advice

The architecture—and presumably the social role—of the conservatory in colonial Victoria, including the Western District, was derived from British sources. Although American texts were available, perhaps the most pervasive ‘how-to’ book was John Claudius Loudon’s very well-known text *An Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm, and Villa Architecture, and Furniture* (1833). Loudon was a Scot but lived most of his life in London. There was a copy of his Encyclopaedia at Warrock Homestead in the far west of the Western District (where a simple detached glass house survives at the rear of the main house). British architect Robert Kerr—also Scottish born but London based—broached the subject of conservatories in his comprehensive book *The Gentleman’s House ... from the parsonage to the palace* (1864). He started simply enough: ‘The conservatory ... is merely such a structure as may be attached to the House by way of an adjunct to the Family-rooms, to accommodate potted plants, and perhaps a few creepers to cover a wall or run up a pillar.’⁵ There should, Kerr recommended, be plenty of light and steps or stages to house the plants. Writing for a British public, he mentioned the need for heating by hot water piped from the boiler house. He also advised that aspect was important, that winter sunlight should be maximised, and, preferably, that morning sun should strike the conservatory.

Kerr also cautioned against the problem of humidity. This is a serious problem faced today in the authentic presentation of the conservatories in historic houses. The conservatory at Rippon Lea has just been restored, including plants watered under a strict protocol, but the conservatory at Mandeville, located on the north side of the house, cannot have plants. Even the windows and door dividing the conservatory from the drawing room are heavily draped to protect the precious silk wall hangings (as warm humid air smells and spoils furnishings). But let us return to Kerr.

It must never be lost sight of that for a Conservatory to be too directly attached to a Dwelling-room is unadvisable. The warm moist air, impregnated with vegetable matter and deteriorated by the organic action of the plants, is both unfit to breathe and destructive



Photo: Timothy Hubbard

Rippon Lea, Elsternwick, from the northeast (recently restored).

of the fabrics of furniture and decoration. On a small scale, however, and when used only for comparatively hardy plants, it may be a very pleasant adjunct, provided it be never overheated and always well ventilated. It need scarcely be remarked that the sashes, of whatever kind, ought almost all to open, so that in summer weather there may be no difficulty in the admission of air precisely as required.

Kerr reinforced the social role of the conservatory as an adjunct to the family’s living rooms as he continued:

The intercommunication most usual for a Conservatory is with either the Drawing-room, Boudoir, or Morning-room; or, what is probably better than all, with a Saloon, Vestibule, Gallery, or Corridor, immediately adjoining any of those apartments.

And he also mentioned the importance of an ‘escape hatch’ for the maiden fair: ‘An outer door to the grounds is of course indispensable; indeed a small Conservatory is probably best of all when constituted to form a floral porch.’ This is just the route that Irene took when she fled from Soames. And the floral porch sounds just like the classic Australian closed-in verandah.

We know that Kerr’s book was available in colonial Victoria. There are now several copies in the State Library. There was a copy in the library of Wooriwyrite, near Camperdown, the home of the Shaw family.⁶ Almost certainly William Wardell, Inspector-General of Public Works owned a copy personally or there was a copy in the professional library of the Public Works Department. In any case, the Minister for Public Works reputedly took a copy of the book, pointed to the vignette on the title page and directed Wardell to design a new Government House for Melbourne ‘Something like that, on a scale slightly reduced’.⁷ The conservatory off the drawing



Lady Wrixon and Miss Wrixon in the fernery at Raheen, Kew, Victoria.

Victoria's Representative Men at Home, p.11.

room at Government House—again now used for its intended purpose after a period of infilling—was surprisingly small.

Marvellous Melbourne

Many of the mansions of Marvellous Melbourne had conservatories. The well-known conservatories at Government House, Rippon Lea, Mandeville Hall, and Labassa have been mentioned. When ‘Lauderdale’, an Edwardian-era journalist from the *Melbourne Punch*, visited Sir Henry Wrixon, President of the Legislative Council, at his home, Raheen, Kew, Sir Henry was photographed in his library.⁸ Lady Wrixon allowed herself to be photographed with their daughter in the conservatory. The Hon. T. H. Payne MLC, also interviewed by ‘Lauderdale’, at Leura, Toorak, with not much prompting, was able to boast of his conservatory that:

Yes, I think it is the largest one in Melbourne, public or private. You know one of my hobbies is the collection of different varieties of palms, ferns, etc., and I am always on the lookout for fresh specimens, and wherever I go I manage to add something fresh to my collection.⁹

There were many other conservatories, both of the purpose-built type and the enclosed verandah. Bundalohn, in Tennyson Street, St Kilda, the home of Henry Gyles Turner, had an elaborate enclosed verandah. Iona and Southdean in Toorak, two Italianate villas designed by the architect, F. M. White, had very similar house plans.¹⁰ They appear to have had identical purpose-built conservatories. The front and rear conservatories at Rippon Lea were identical and used a prefabricated modular cast-iron system—the rear conservatory was all but demolished for construction of the new ballroom in the late 1930s. It seems reasonable to assume those at Iona and Southdean were also standard designs. Another pair of identical conservatories can be found at Burswood, the Portland home of Edward Henty, and his Melbourne home, Offington, 499 St Kilda Road. Comparing an early photograph of Burswood with William Tibbits’ well-known watercolour of Offington (painted in 1878), their conservatories appear identical. Edward Henty left his wife and daughter in Portland to tend to the maidenhair ferns when he went up to Melbourne in his capacity as parliamentarian. Both conservatories are gone now

but Burswood still retains its splendid enclosed verandah.

Conservatories allowed ladies, including the daughters of the house, to participate in the hobby of gardening. ‘Lauderdale’ found Mrs Sachse watering her plants outside the glasshouse, when he interviewed the Hon. Arthur Sachse, Minister for Education.¹¹ And you can easily imagine that the three generations of fair ladies in the household of the Hon. Walter Manifold MP, photographed on their verandah at Woolaston, Warrnambool, were interested in the health of the hydrangeas around them.¹² This verandah was not enclosed but formed a ‘floral porch’.

the fernery ‘was a very good place in which to enjoy the society of your special friend’

The Victorian novelist, Ada Cambridge (1844–1926), placed much of her more intimate action in conservatories and ferneries. The maiden characters in her novel *The Three Miss Kings* (1891) foil seduction but find romance in the conservatory.

In another of Cambridge’s novels, *A Woman’s Friendship*, serialised in the *Age* newspaper during 1889, she remarks how, at even such a public resort as Melbourne’s great Centennial Exhibition, the fernery ‘was a very good place in which to enjoy the society of your special friend ... few private premises licensed by [the famous chaperone to an Empire] Mrs Grundy could furnish such nooks and corners, such opportunities for comfortable retirement’.¹³ Later in the same novel, at Yarrock, the fine squatting residence of the tall, handsome, and very rich widower, Mr Seaton McDonald, the invitation was clear: ‘Then come into the conservatory and look at my ferns ...?’¹⁴

Fern collections

A young lady could become seriously preoccupied collecting maidenhair ferns. There are more than 200 species of maidenhair and many more cultivars of the genus *Adiantum* in the family Pteridaceae (though some researchers place it in its own family, Adiantaceae).¹⁵ The ferns are so called from the ancient Greek word *adiantos*, which means ‘not wetted’, referring to the way maidenhair fern fronds repel water. One of the most widely grown maidenhairs in Australia, and one of the easiest to grow, is the *Adiantum raddianum* ‘Fragrans’. The wild Australian species, *Adiantum aethiopicum*, is



Photo: Timothy Hubbard

Conservatory at Mandeville Hall, Toorak, from the north-east (with shadecloth).

a tough plant that grows well outdoors in moist, shaded locations. The rough maidenhair, *Adiantum hispidulum*, found in Australia and New Zealand also prefers being outdoors. There is also a rich *Adiantum* flora in New Zealand with three endemic species (*A. cunninghamii*, *A. viridescens*, and *A. fukum*). Many of these are common especially in the west and south of the islands. Species native to North America include *Adiantum pedatum* (five-fingered fern) and the closely related *A. aleuticum*, which are distinctive in having a bifurcating frond that radiates pinnae on one side only; *A. jordanii* (California maidenhair) is native to the west coast; and one, named after the goddess of love, *A. capillus-veneris* (Venus-hair fern), which has a native distribution that extends into the eastern continent. Enough to make a Botticelli Beauty blush.

The collection of plants in one woman’s Western District garden has recently come to light. The widow, Mary Moriarty (1820–1912), helped her brother Henry ‘to design and furnish a rather splendid two-storey house on the ridge above Inverleigh’.¹⁶ She lived with him at Lullote from 1856 and developed a garden retreat on the bank of the Leigh River below the house, which became famous as ‘Mrs Moriarty’s Garden’. Her brother died in 1884 and her niece, Isobel Maud Willis

became her live-in companion in later years. When Mary Moriarty died in 1912 her executors sold up everything. The inventory of the clearing sale gives a snapshot of her rural lifestyle.¹⁷ Most of the items appear routine but, perhaps to protect Isobel's honour, she did have two double-barrelled guns and pea rifle in the sitting room. One of the most detailed parts of the inventory is the list of 56 plants, all apparently potted. The list includes typical plants such as begonias, cyclamen, fuchsia, geranium, gloxinia, and hydrangea. More or less topping the list are ten maidenhair ferns, two of which are noted as 'very fine'. The location of these within the household is not certain. An historic photograph, probably with Mrs Moriarty in the foreground, shows a small glazed enclosure at the western end of the verandah but only one pot plant is mentioned on the verandah in the inventory and the enclosure would have been too small to accommodate such a long list. There was a timber stove-house at the rear of the house which may have been a more substantial conservatory. There was also a fernery to the east of the house which is visible in early photos. Otherwise, the pot plants

and hanging baskets may have been distributed around the house—there was a jardinière in the drawing room, for example. In any case, the long list indicates an interest and perhaps success in gardening even if the types of plants—with its emphasis on ferns, palms, and brightly coloured plants—was thoroughly conventional for the time. We can only guess what young Isobel's life was like at Lullote and only wonder if she was allowed gentleman callers.

Young couples were hard pressed to find some privacy anywhere. The French lithographer, Garvani, summed up their plight in a caricature, a copy of which is held by the National Gallery of Victoria. He shows a young couple bending over, pretending to be interested in a goldfish in a pond. One says to the other 'I love you' and the other, the maiden, replies in automatic agreement while a servant, or spy, in a fez looks on.

Meanwhile, back at Dangstein, West Sussex, Cousin Reginald had died and, worse for the garden, the conservatories and Lady Dorothy Nevill's plant collection, the money was running out. 'In 1879 she was forced to sell the house and plant collection,



The Hon. Walter and Mrs Manifold, Mrs Manifold Snr and the Misses Smith, young lady visitors from the Wangaratta district.



Lithograph by French artist Paul Garvani (1804–1866), *Si je t'aime! Et moi donc!* (*Yes, I love you! And I love you!*), 1839, from the *Nuances du sentiment* (*Nuances of feeling*) series published by Aubert, Paris.

now the finest outside Kew. The prices were disappointing, though the great and the good came to buy.¹⁸ There was a happy ending—of sorts—to the story of Lady Dorothy Nevill. Queen Victoria finally died and, on Edward VII's accession in 1901, Dorothy was finally forgiven her early indiscretion. But, as Sue Bennett asks: 'was acceptance at court any compensation for the loss of her plant collection'?

Dr Timothy Hubbard is a heritage architect and planner. His research interests include the the Itanlianate villa and its garden in the colonial landscape, and Tasmanian architects, William Archer and James Blackburn.

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H.V. McKay Gardens, Sunshine: an industrial garden 100 years on

Bill Bampton

Established from 1909 as a community garden for workers and residents of Sunshine, the suburb created to service McKay's harvester works, the H.V. McKay Memorial Gardens are currently being conserved following years of neglect.

At first sight the H.V. McKay Memorial Gardens in Sunshine look slightly incongruous in the industrial landscape of Melbourne's west. These Edwardian gardens—with one remaining carved basalt gatepost, substantial oaks, and a Gothic church spire—contrast with nearby cream brick flats, a vast car park, and a shopping mall. Rather than an anomaly, these gardens in fact evolved as an integral part of the industry of the west. With the Fletcher Jones Gardens in Warrnambool, they are an early and rare Australian example of an industrial garden and as such were listed in 1993 on the Register of the National Estate.

McKay's Sunshine estate

Established in 1909 by inventor and industrialist Hugh Victor McKay (1865–1926) as a garden for the workers at his Sunshine Harvester Works, the gardens' centenary is currently being celebrated. McKay sited the gardens alongside his factory,

central to his vision of a garden suburb to house a contented and respectable workforce whose life would revolve around work, church, sport, and horticulture. These gardens are a remnant of this ordered, controlled world dominated by McKay and his factory. The dramatic discord between the current environmental, social, economic, and technological contexts of the gardens and those of the past raises issues for the conservation of their cultural significance, issues that are shared with many other historic public gardens.

When in 1904, seeking easier access to export markets, McKay moved his Sunshine Harvester Works from Ballarat to Braybrook Junction his vision was to create a 'Birmingham of Australia'.¹ As seen by the new arrivals, the grasslands site was initially a dramatic contrast to this vision. H.V. McKay's daughter Hilda graphically portrayed the sense of homesickness such a landscape evoked:



This aerial view, taken by Don McKay in October 1919, looks towards Hampshire Road and the soldier settlement area built by McKay for his workers. The area was located in Albion, bounded by Adelaide, Kamarooka, Coolamon, Gunnedah, Hamel, Ballentine and Sydney Streets. The Darling Flournmill, railway substation, Stoney Creek and the McKay properties in Talmage Street can be seen in the background.



H.V. McKay Sunshine Harvester Works, Sunshine, c.1925, by photographer Charles Pratt, showing the garden's central position between the housing estate and the factory, connected by a footbridge (top right of image).

The day we moved down from Ballarat was hot and windy and the trip was tiring. We left a beautiful home with all modern comforts to settle in this desolate, unnamed place. The first day, as I sat on the back steps of our new home and looked for miles around at nothing but wind-swept plains, I broke down and cried. My father came out and sat with me—he kissed me and said gently, ‘Don’t cry, Hilda, one day you will be proud of this place’.²

Sunshine Gardens—as they were originally known—would play a key part in the establishment of this sense of pride. As a contemporary land booster, McKay promoted his new estate through an evocative name, Sunshine, and through its landscaping. A promotional article in the April 1925 issue of *Australian Home Builder* explained that ‘Tree-planting was realised to be the first essential, and the streets were accordingly planted with thick-foliaged sugar gums.’ The integral role that McKay’s privately funded garden played is clear:

If a cluster of outer suburbs could be ringed around Melbourne, all planned and developed with the prescience and system that has been exercised in Sunshine, there would be no grounds for fearing the growth of new slums that now haunt many once-promising districts. Sunshine today illustrates how pleasant and secure life can be made when a powerful industrial concern undertakes the housing of its employes [sic]. Ranks of neat cottages, set in trim lawns and flower plots, line streets closely planted with well-grown and shady gum trees, and all the main thoroughfares converge on one of the prettiest public parks and playing grounds to be seen anywhere.³

Sunshine Gardens

The gardens were laid out following establishment in 1909 by head gardener S.G. Thomson following plans drawn by a Mr Horsfall of Ballarat (presumably F.A. Horsfall, assistant city engineer at Ballarat).⁴ In form it was a typical gardenesque municipal garden with early inclusions such as tennis courts and pavilion, a bandstand, a bowling green, a substantial house for the head gardener, a conservatory, and associated works area, all set on a tight eight acres. More unusually, reflecting its private origin and the fervent Presbyterian faith of McKay, it included a church and hall (1928). It is an important feature of these gardens that these inclusions were early, integrated elements of the design and not subsequent accretions. The garden acted as a community hub, where church services were held during the influenza epidemic of 1918, where most sporting tournaments were held, and where bands like the Sunshine District Band, the Harvester Works Pipe Band, and Australian Ladies World Scottish Pipe Band would play in the rotunda.⁵

While originally designed by the engineer Horsfall, the gardeners themselves forged the character and ultimate form of the garden. This represented a craft process where designer and maker were one, the garden being formed by a series of maintenance decisions over time. During the McKay era the garden was maintained by a staff of four. Successive head gardeners were Mr S.G. Thompson (1909–27), James Willan (1930–39), Harold Gray (1939–50), F. Young (1950–53), and (under council management) Ernie Jordan (1954–81), and parks superintendent Tony Menhennitt.



The Sunshine Bowling Green c. 1950–60: the bowling green was located within the H.V. McKay Memorial Gardens.



'Well known identities at work': Sunshine Gardens curator Harold Gray (right) and Charlie Clarke paused for this photograph when at work preparing for their autumn display.

The qualities of these gardeners can be seen in *Sunshine Advocate* editor C.G. Carlton's praise of Willan: 'He is no mere hewer of wood or drawer of water. He is a man who is master of his work, a true craftsman, with all the joy there is in successful achievement. Under his able control, the Sunshine Gardens will lack nothing in originality and expression.'⁶ Harold Gray, who had previously worked at Footscray Park, was equally skilled in floriculture, renowned for displays of chrysanthemums and dahlias. He won numerous prizes for chrysanthemums at the Royal Horticultural Society flower shows. The skills, labour, and passion of these gardeners were essential to producing the elaborate floral displays that were highlights of the gardens—tiered rows of chrysanthemums, an elaborate floral arch, and conservatory exhibits. As George Seddon commented with reference to the Fletcher Jones garden, this style of gardening 'satisfies the most important aesthetic criteria for most Australians:

neatness, and clear evidence of hard labour. If you don't put your back into things then they can't be very valuable'.⁷

Thompson began the hard work of establishing the gardens, sited on windy plains receiving a mere 550 mm of annual rainfall. Water sourced from the factory dam and windbreaks were an essential starting point.⁸ So too was the use of a suite of hardy plants. At the opening of the tennis pavilion in August 1909, the gardens were described as 'a plantation of wattle and sugar gums ... the golden bloom of the wattle lending the necessary brightness to the scene'.⁹ Early photos highlight the use of *Phoenix canariensis*, *Cordyline australis*, and various cypress species. Under head gardeners Willan and Gray the focus on floral display and exotics increased, no doubt helped by the modified micro-climate. The gardens conjured colourful images of 'fairyland'.

In 1953 Cecil McKay donated the gardens to the Sunshine City Council and the Sunshine Gardens were renamed the H.V. McKay Memorial Gardens. Under the council the bedding plantings continued. However, the nineteen-sixties saw annexation of some of the garden for an extension to the bowling club, and the erection of a Presbyterian manse. The seventies brought a gradual rationalisation of garden beds, paths, and maintenance techniques, with a consequent increase in open turf areas, the planting of Australian species rather than bedding plants, and the demolition of the gardener's cottage. In the eighties, rose gardens were established at the northern end.

Revaluing the gardens

The nineties saw the awakening of an awareness of the gardens' heritage value with listings by the National Trust and the Register of the National Estate and the commissioning of a heritage survey. Momentum in implementing the recommendations of this survey was lost with the demise of the Sunshine City Council and its partial incorporation within the vast new Brimbank City Council. Vandals burnt the conservatory and it was demolished. Under Brimbank City Council the gardens lost their pivotal community role, becoming almost a peripheral park. It was not until 2007 that a new era for the garden began with a serious attempt to renovate the gardens with some reference to their heritage elements.



The hothouse located in the H.V. McKay Memorial Gardens on Anderson Road, Sunshine, 1919. The gardens were famous for their chrysanthemums, especially when Harold Gray was the head gardener.

Rather than any intrinsic design or planting factor, the significance of these gardens is linked to their context as an integral part of an industrial complex of national importance in the history of Australian manufacturing as well as to links with the surrounding garden suburb. The wholesale demolition of the factory in the early nineties permanently transformed this context. While the gardens are now one of the few vestiges of the old harvester works, their significance had been tied to the structure of the old factory, its massive bulk framing the entire northern boundary of the gardens. Without this physical association they read simply as any other municipal park, an issue that has implications for other industrial gardens, such as the Fletcher Jones Garden in Warrnambool. Likewise, the surrounding suburb has lost much of the quality of a garden suburb. The Federation-era houses and large gardens on lots subdivided by McKay became attractive prey to developers. The uniform street plantings undertaken by McKay have likewise disappeared. The value of the gardens lies in their contrast with, not connections to the surrounding landscape. Yet to survive into the future the gardens needs to reconnect with their contemporary context.

Conservation challenges

Unlike built heritage, gardens rely on crucial on-going management techniques and skills. Current horticultural management techniques sit in stark contrast to those of the past. H.V. McKay Memorial Gardens no longer have on-site gardeners but are maintained through fortnightly visits by a gardening team based at Keilor. These gardeners perform limited tasks of sanitation, mowing, and weed control. Tasks of the past like the disbudding of chrysanthemums would certainly not fit their time allowance or skill set. Increasingly the gardeners are removed from all design decisions, now made by landscape architects and focused on short-term capital works projects, rather than long-term maintenance. Such rationalisation is a global trend, its effect on heritage gardens—with their specialised requirements—is often detrimental. Such effects can, however, be mitigated by providing specialised training, creating specific maintenance plans, and encouraging a sense of ownership.¹⁰ The role of Friends groups, such as the Friends of McKay Gardens (formed in 2007), can also assist with labour-intensive tasks. How to incorporate volunteer labour into the hands-on maintenance of the gardens is an ongoing learning experience for both Friends and council staff.

Issues of public safety and property damage compound the challenges of such gardens. There cannot be many private gardens that have to contend with newly restored garden beds being routinely set alight. Although it is easy to be nostalgic about the past, as early as 1910 the *Footscray Advertiser* had reported that ‘Residents at Sunshine are highly indignant at the action, presumably of boys, in rooting up a number of the trees recently planted in the new reserve.’¹¹

The gardens still function as a main thoroughfare and public safety is an on-going concern. To this end council set about clearing lines of sight to improve public safety. This new concept of a safe environment being visually open, contrasts with Hilda McKay’s fear of the open ‘wind-swept plains’. Original hedgings of cypress, pittosporum, and mixed hawthorn and pomegranate have largely disappeared. With the loss of the strong boundary, the major roads and railway all impinge on the experience of the garden, as does the wind noted by Hilda.

Hedging was an early cultural response to the environmental extremes of the garden site. Contemporary responses to the environmental

challenge of drought have harsher needs. In the recent drought, water restrictions saw the cessation of all irrigation until exemptions as a ‘garden of significance’ were granted in 2008. This gap of several years caused severe water stress to the mature tree canopy and resulted in the loss of almost twenty trees. This is indicative of the damage done by even a small break in the continuity of watering regimes, especially to mature specimens.

The continuation of some past cultural practices surely has deeper resonance than any amount of interpretative signage

These challenges—loss of context, reduced maintenance levels, water restrictions, and public safety concerns—have all influenced the renovation of the gardens begun in 2007. Landscape architect Roslyn Savio has used drought hardy species *Gaura* cv., *Euphorbia characias* subsp. *wulfenii*, *Pelargonium* spp., *Iris unguicularis*, and *Rhaphiolepis umbellata* to reflect rather than slavishly reconstruct the plantings

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H.V. McKay Sunshine Gardens with tennis court in rear left hand side of photo, April 1935.

of the past. To maintain visibility, new plantings are low, but future reinstatement of hedging is planned for the northern and western borders. While this pragmatic approach is understandable, it is hoped that eventually a small place might be set aside for reconstruction of former bedding display in

honour of Harold Gray and his contemporaries. The continuation of some past cultural practices surely has deeper resonance than any amount of interpretative signage. Conservation of the gardens also relies on re-establishing the link between their heritage and the contemporary community of Sunshine.

Desperately seeking lions



An early feature of Sunshine Gardens was a pair of large recumbent lions in cast iron at the northern entrance. These were removed sometime in the 1940s and local rumour suggests they were lent to Lord Casey of Berwick. Any information of the current whereabouts of these lions would be greatly appreciated.



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Explorations in landscape design theory

Jeannie Sim

This essay is the second in a series of explorations of landscape design theory. The first part (*AGH* 20 (4), 2009) investigated the term ‘landscape’ and in this second part it is the garden that forms the focus.

Part Two: defining the term ‘garden’

What is the difference between landscapes and gardens? It may merely be a matter of scale—gardens are small and landscapes are large; garden designers design gardens and landscape architects design landscapes. This may be so, except when these roles are reversed, or when planners, farmers, foresters, or others are also involved in designing landscapes, suggesting that generalities are frequently incorrect. Landscapes are often seen as the setting for modern technology, services, modern building types, and combinations of land uses in broad scale urban and rural areas, rather than the settings for domestic residences. Gardens conjure up associational memories that are pleasant, familiar, secure, often of home and the family nest. Turning to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a garden is described as:

An enclosed piece of ground devoted to the cultivation of flowers, fruit, or vegetables; often preceded by some defining word, as flower-, fruit-, kitchen-, market-, strawberry-garden, etc. ... pl. Ornamental grounds, used as a place of public resort, usually with some defining word, as Botanical, Zoological Gardens, etc.¹

Perhaps these generalist definitions provide the most tangible clue to the relative usage of the terms garden(s) and landscape(s). The word garden has the long entry in the *OED*, with some six columns of citations. Although extensively used as a qualifier in a descriptive phrase (for example, Covent-garden, garden-pea, ‘common or garden’, garden village), it usually alludes to an essential meaning, something familiar and common. Landscape, comparatively, still has vestiges of the elitist classes that popularised the pictorial concept back in the eighteenth century, and beyond into the professionalism espoused by modern landscape architects. One other comment about the *OED* definition of garden concerns the

reference to enclosure. This conjures up all sorts of memory associations evoking refuge in times of strife, oases in the desert, and the domestication of plants separated from animals. In contrast to gardens, landscapes usually have no boundaries, except perhaps their visual catchment area or an artificial pictorial frame.

The important observation here is that the ‘garden in the landscape’ is frequently the way of things, be it within dense urbanity or rural fields. Indeed, the practice of including distant landscape within a garden design scheme spans many continents, from traditional Chinese and Japanese gardens to the Italian Renaissance and thence to English landscape gardening school of the eighteenth century, and up to the present-day. The present-day term ‘borrowing from the landscape’ can be traced back to China (*Jie jing*: ‘borrowing views’) and to Japan (*shakkei*: ‘borrowed landscape’).² Both oriental terms explain the use of external views (of landscape or another part of the same garden) as an integral part of garden (or courtyard) design.

A comprehensive and multi-lingual etymological essay on the term ‘garden’ by Dutch garden historian Anne van Erp-Houtepen reveals the two key aspects related to this word: enclosure and cultivation.³ This sort of definition of the term garden is also proposed by American landscape architectural historian William A. Mann, whose basic reference text for landscape architectural students states: ‘GARDEN—A place where plants are cultivated for pleasure or domestic use. In gardens, the plants are arranged in an orderly or planned fashion.’⁴ Such treatments and intentions can also be true of designed landscapes. In comparison, late eighteenth-century garden and landscape designer Humphry Repton had devised an allegorical frontispiece for his book *Designs for*



Humphrey Repton's allegorical frontispiece (1808).

the Pavillon at Brighton (1808) with more creativity in mind. Repton inscribed on a plinth his opinion that 'Gardens are works of art rather than of nature', then quoted from Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1756):

*Designs that are vast only by their dimensions, are always the sign of a common and low imagination. No work of art can be great but as it deceives; to be otherwise is the prerogative of nature only.*⁵

These sentiments were long held in European culture. The early seventeenth-century English philosopher Francis Bacon also wrote on the subject in his essay 'Of Gardens' (1625):

*GOD Almighty first Planted a Garden. And indeed, it is the Purest of Humane pleasures. It is the Greatest Refreshment to the Spirits of Man; Without which, Buildings and Pallaces are but Grosse Handy-works: And a Man shall ever see, that when Ages grow to Civility and Elegancie, Men come to Build Stately, sooner then to Garden Finely: As if Gardening were the Greater Perfection.*⁶

Here too the art of gardening is treated as a noble pursuit, the greatest of them all. Perhaps it is this activity called gardening (involving continuous management) that is the key. The prestige and

ennobling nature of creating and maintaining gardens was present in many societies, from ancient Rome and Asia up to the present.

One last historical definition of garden comes from *Lexique des termes d'art*, the renowned work of the French artist and writer Jules Adeline, translated into English in 1891 and reissued with a 'Supplement of new terms' in 1966, from which this extract is drawn:

*GARDEN—The proper arrangement and dispositions of gardens is closely allied to architecture, and therefore a few words must be said with regard to it here. One of two contrary methods may be followed in this art. In the one method rigid symmetry and dignified regularity are aimed at. In the other method of garden architecture an attempt is made to conceal design by giving a studied air of naturalness to the whole, so that it may resemble a landscape as much as possible.*⁷

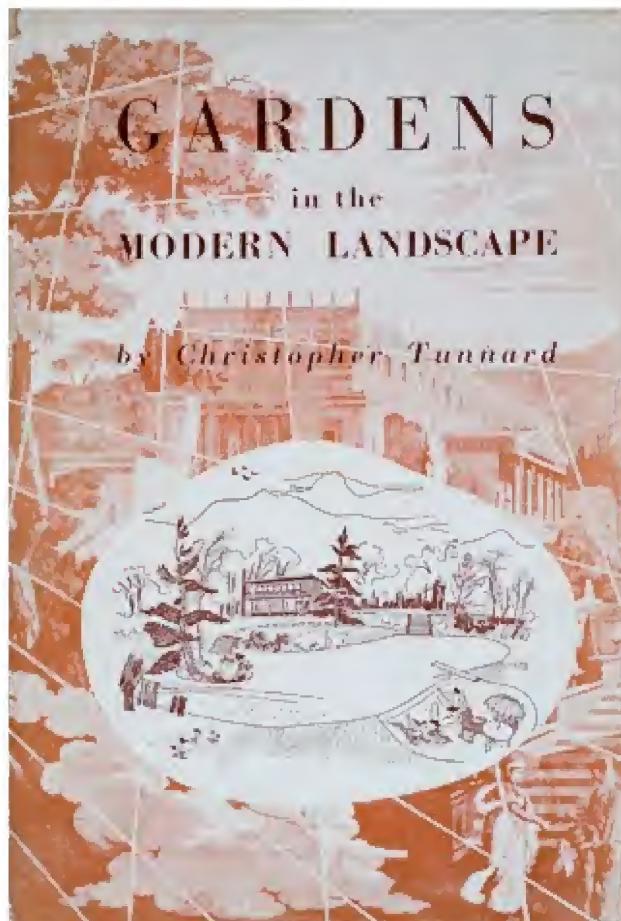
This definition of garden stresses the importance in a garden of artistry and architectural design. It also introduces the notion of only two basic ways of designing—formal or informal (to use an often confusing couplet). The combined term 'landscape garden' is given a similar treatment by William Mann, who denote it as a distinct historical style and not something happening today:

*LANDSCAPE GARDEN—A naturalistic garden style popular in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It came about as reaction against the grand formal styles common in England and Europe during and after the Renaissance. The landscape garden style had perhaps its finest development in England under 'Capability' Brown and Humphry Repton, and later in America under Andrew Jackson Downing, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jens Jensen, and others.*⁸

He attributes the merging of the words landscape and garden, to describe a design style, as an invention of poet and garden critic William Shenstone in about 1759. The rationale for this naming is the allusion of creating a landscape view, which Mann explains: 'It was meant [in the sense used by Shenstone] that the appearance of the residential site, both at a distance and near the house, had the pictorial qualities of the paintings. Thus it looked like a landscape picture.'⁹ Another general name in current usage for this design movement is the English landscape school.

The distinction between garden and landscape is sometimes blurred, along similar lines as the terms natural and cultural landscapes

The overlays of meaning and significance that can be laid on gardens may be different from those associated with landscapes. In recent times two works have been published which explore the theoretical gap concerning gardens and their creation, meaning, and use—*The Poetics of Gardens* (1989) by Moore, Mitchell, & Turnbull Jnr, and *The Meaning of Gardens: idea, place, and action* (1990) edited by Francis and Hester Jnr. When reading these two works, the focus is as equally on landscapes as on gardens. The distinction between garden and landscape is sometimes blurred, along similar lines as the terms natural and cultural landscapes. However, one would assume that the choice of the term garden in their respective titles must reflect some perceived importance in distinction. Or perhaps this is merely the use of jargon by differing professions (architects compared to landscape architects) to explain the same or similar concepts. One thing is certain—we have still not heard the last word on the interchangeable meaning and use of the terms landscape and gardens.



Christopher Tunnard's book *Gardens in the Modern Landscape* (1938) attempted a modernist reconciliation between gardens and the landscapes in which they were sited.

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Jeannie Sim is a Brisbane-based landscape architect and garden historian, and a senior lecturer at Queensland University of Technology.

Profile

Sue Ebury, now Lady Wilton, has a very long connection with the Australian Garden History Society, from its foundation and now as its new patron. As well, through her work as an editor and publisher, she has contributed to Australia's gardening history.



In 1980, as Sue Ebury, you attended the conference at Illawarra, the National Trust of Australia property in the Melbourne suburb of Toorak, which resolved to form the Australian Garden History Society. On the mood of that initial conference, a fellow attendee recalls: 'a very disparate but stimulated group, excited to have found a linking point, or commonality, for a subject area that could be approached from many different ways'. Would you agree with that description?

Yes, there was a deep interest. It was a distinguished group of now well-known figures whose interests intersected in their concern about the conservation of Australia's gardening and landscape heritage and the wider environment. They included David Yenken, Ted Fawcett from the English National Trust, George Seddon, and James Broadbent, Peter Watts, Oline Richards, and Phyl Simons (the four people surveying historic gardens for the Australian Heritage Commission in NSW, Victoria, Western Australia, and Tasmania). Trevor Nottle, Miles Lewis, and Dr Norman Wettenhall, a great 'mover and shaker', were also present. Groups represented included the National Trust and the Royal Australian Ornithologists Union. Mrs Weatherly from Victoria's Western District represented garden owners. At the end of the conference, the Society was formed and a committee appointed under Dame Elisabeth

Murdoch's chairmanship. I volunteered to edit the proceedings, becoming first honorary editor of the Society. This first publication for the AGHS, with Peter Watts' and Howard Tanner's recent publications, marked a turning point in Australian gardening literature that reflected a new spirit of research and inquiry—as opposed to aiming solely for popular appeal (although many shared popularity with scholarly rigour).

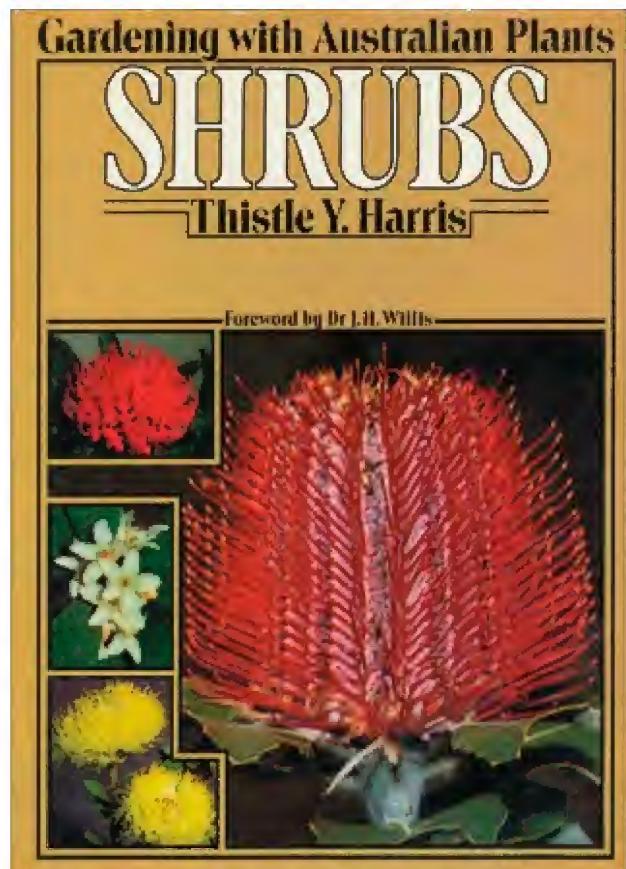
Moving to another dimension of garden history, can we explore your work publishing books about Australian plants?

I worked in publishing for 19 years, from 1968, before moving to Asia. The use of Australian plants in gardens was obviously the area to be in if you were going to publish books on plants in this era. As commissioning editor then publisher with Thomas Nelson, I was directly involved in several of Nelson's successful titles in this genre. I realised early on that in building any publishing list one or two books representing a particular field are no good. You need a range: once certain books are on your list, they attract other authors. After upheavals at Angus & Robertson, Thistle Harris came to us and hence we published her *Gardening with Australian Plants* series, edited by Margaret Barrett, and featuring shrubs (1978), small plants and climbers (1979), and trees (1980).

*Botanist J.H. (Jim) Willis, in his foreword to Harris's *Gardening with Australian Plants: Shrubs* (1978) captures the spirit of the nursery and publishing industries specialising in Australian plants at this time: 'Nurserymen now attempt to satisfy an ever-increasing demand for native shrubs, trees and ferns, and some firms trade only in these Australian plants. Hand in hand with nursery sales has also grown the demand for literature, especially pictorial publications, on the culture of our native flora.' Thomas Nelson was one of the significant players in this wave of illustrated and informative publications on Australian plants, with many successes. As commissioning editor and publisher, how did you come*

to publish some of their notable titles, in particular, Grow What Where?

The Australian Plants Study Group, who included Ross and Gwenda Macdonald and Natalie Peate, had put together something they called *Grow What Where* (1978). They contacted me, knowing I was a publisher and because I was going to Society for Growing Australian Plants meetings. I was very interested in Edna Walling (particularly the time when she'd 'gone native'), and the work of Graeme Gunn and Ellis Stones for Merchant Builders' developments. Not having grown up in Australia I found the landscape and its flora fascinating and I loved Walling's book *The Australian Roadside* (1952—see story on pages 26–27)—although it was not especially popular then, being somewhat ahead of its time. When I arrived in Australia, many people were interested in retaining as many trees and as much of the understorey as possible on their land, but they also wanted to introduce more variety in the planting, because [indigenous] species found within a particular area can be quite limited. SGAP and *Grow What Where* reflected this interest and I put it to my publishing committee (I was at this stage a commissioning editor). While enthusiastic about the idea, they didn't like the title. I argued: 'I think the title is catchy, and I don't think people will forget it!' Anyway, I won that battle. And we published it. So that's how *Grow What Where* happened.



Grow What Where was clearly a successful publication, with a number of editions—published by Thomas Nelson (1980, 1986), then Viking O'Neill (1990), Lothian (1997), and Bloomings Books (2006).

There were also four spin-off publications—*Grow What Wet* (1982), *Grow What Basic* (1983), *Grow What Tree* (1985), and *Grow What Small Plant* (1987). Interestingly, some considered *Grow What Where* not a 'proper' book as it consisted of a series of lists: grasses, bulbs, for instance, and it calendarises things. You can have an acacia in flower, for instance, every month of the year. It gives lists of blue flowers, yellow, pink, lists of everything you can think of. You look up a particular plant in the index, which identifies the lists that plant figures in.

Was this a novel layout for its time?

Absolutely. Others followed with quick-pick lists, but as far as I'm aware *Grow What Where* was the first to adopt this structure.

What were some of the other noteworthy publications assembled on the Thomas Nelson book list?

Bill Molyneux and Ross Macdonald's *Native Gardens: how to create an Australian landscape* (1983) was one, and I published John Patrick's first book—*The Australian Garden: designs and plants for today* (1985 and 1986). One that was really frustrating was *Australian Native Plants: a manual for their propagation, cultivation and use in landscaping*, by Wrigley and Fagg (Collins, Sydney, 1979)—since reissued in many editions. I was not allowed to chase them and would never have been given the budget that the managing director of William Collins could commit on the spot when he heard them lecture. What I did do was approach CSIRO about publishing the new edition they were preparing of *Forest Trees of Australia*—the first three editions were published in 1957, 1962, and 1970. And they agreed. This fourth edition, co-published by Thomas Nelson and CSIRO, was much updated, and departed from the old-fashioned style of the previous editions traditionally published by the CSIRO, thus reaching a wider audience. But my brief was not to be exciting. I published a wonderful book on *Australian Terrestrial Orchids*, for Nelson had published W.H. Nicholl's *Orchids of Australia*, and I worked on the first volume of Stan Kelly's *Eucalypts*—and by the time Stan's second volume came along I was responsible for it. And there were many more.

You've also observed the conservation of a significant eighteenth-century landscape, at



View of Heaton House, 1824, engraved by Thomas Jeavons after John Preston Neale. This view shows Heaton Hall (then called Heaton House) before the addition of the Orangery and one of the pair of Lewis Wyatt's chimney stacks.

Heaton Park, the ancestral seat of the Earls of Wilton, outside Manchester. Could you describe the conservation approach adopted there?

The whole landscape surrounding Heaton Hall, now in public ownership, has been restored to its late eighteenth-century plan, thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund. In 1770 William Emes was commissioned by Sir Thomas Egerton (later the 1st Earl of Wilton) to reshape the landscape to offset the neo-classical house (totally remodelled by architect James Wyatt). Emes worked in the style of Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown. It was a restrained style of landscaping and the restoration, also admirably restrained, aimed to resemble Emes’ plans. The recent works removed *Rhododendron ponticum* thickets and much of the bedding surrounding the house and orangery. The Cherry Walk was restored and a lot of work was done on the trees scattered throughout the park. The landscape slopes away from the garden front most handsomely, with great rows of trees left and right plus groups of trees judiciously dotted in the landscape.

Are there other people, or places, or plants that have shaped your ideas about gardens?

I grew up near Sir Heaton Rhodes’ garden at Otahuna and spent much time there (he married

Alister Clark’s sister); it was very much an Arts and Crafts garden—a secret garden containing a dipping well *a la* Gertrude Jekyll, a primrose wood, hillsides of narcissus, a walled kitchen garden, and espaliered fruit trees. At home we had a huge orchard with cherries, cherry plums, damsons, and gooseberry bushes in all different varieties, and red, black, and white currants, peaches, apples, plums, nectarines, wonderful vegetables, so I became a gardener very early. This was in New Zealand. My grandfather planted it in the 1890s with varieties you don’t often see these days. But I have none of that here—too much work and too many predators.

Living in the country I am very conscious of water, and the hazards of garden escapes into surrounding bushland. In my own garden I am strongly influenced by the philosophy that underpinned the work of Beth Chatto—finding the right plant for the right place—so I always seek a plant’s country of origin, soils, and climate.

Sue Ebury is the author of *Weary: the life of Sir Edward Dunlop* (Viking, 1994) and *The Many Lives of Kenneth Myer* (Miegunyah, 2008)—and promises to write a story for a forthcoming issue of AGH on Ken Myer and his interests in Australian plants. She has also recently been appointed to the Development Council of the National Library of Australia.

'Cultivating Australia Felix': Geelong conference report, 16–18 October 2009

Pamela Bell

In opening the conference, AGHS National Chair Colleen Morris, welcomed some 400 delegates to the Geelong Conference Centre, acknowledging also the Indigenous owners of the site. Colleen thanked the outgoing patrons John and Lynne Landy for their outstanding contribution to the Society and welcomed our new patron, author and editor Sue Ebury (now Lady Wilton), who was a founding member of the Society.

A brief outline of the theme of the conference included reference to European pioneers of the Geelong district, and their hopes and expectations of the 'sylvan pastoral glories' which they dubbed Australia Felix. Not only colonial pastoralists were captivated by this rich volcanic plain—artists of the day also helped to shape public recognition of the area. In particular the artist Eugene von Guérard recognised the geological structure of the country and this became an important facet of his artistic interpretation.

The chair of the conference committee, Pamela Jellie, introduced an impressive list of speakers, including historians, academics, curators, horticulturists, and property owners, who spoke on art history, geology, heritage architecture, and garden history.

Terence Lane discussed images by nineteenth-century artists who documented the houses and gardens of Western District squatters much in the topographical style of English painters of the country house. Details found in these works, particularly the miniaturist tendencies of von Guérard, showed the evolution of gardens—ranging from utilitarian to ornamental—set in the rich volcanic landscape. Dr Bill Birch then presented a short history of the geology of the area, explaining the importance of volcanic activity in forming the landscape and creating habitats for the indigenous flora and fauna, and the consequent excitement of European explorers in their discovery of this fertile plain. Dr Harriet Edquist discussed the painted and text-based history of the Stony Rises, its geology, and evolution into a strategic place of Aboriginal refuge as local Indigenous peoples became dispossessed by encroaching European settlement. The Rises, Edquist argued, were characterised by writers and artists as a sublime landscape, places of awe and terror, part places of Aboriginal refuge and part tourist trail. Dr Timothy Hubbard discussed the social role of the conservatory—not only for the display of rare plants, but also for the daughter of the house—the conservatory's surprising translation



Substantial outbuildings at Warrambeen homestead.

Photo: Anne Vale

from the English country house to dwellings of outback squatters, and the consequences as it morphed into the enclosed verandah (see story on page 4).

Three short papers on landscape images were given by Daniel McOwan, Dr Ruth Pullin, and Alistair Hope. Thomas Clark's oil painting *Mutham* (c.1860) was commissioned by Edward Henty and owned by the Henty family until its subsequent donation to Hamilton Art Gallery. Clark was a topographical artist who taught with von Guérard at the Melbourne National Gallery. Eugene von Guérard's *Purrumbete from across the lake* (1858) was worked up from on-site drawings in his sketchbooks (now held by Sydney's Mitchell Library). Von Guérard had observed volcanic landscapes near Dusseldorf and understood the volcanic nature of Victoria's western plains before any volcanic survey was undertaken. William Tibbits' watercolour *Darriwill vineyard* (c.1875) was commissioned by Alistair Hope's ancestor. The painting depicts family members as well as the circular drive and original layout of the vineyards (which were destroyed by government order following a phylloxera outbreak).

Donna Ellis discussed sustainability methods of maintaining old established gardens and the value of preserving garden history. Gardens such as the Hamilton Botanic Garden and those surrounding Glenormiston homestead present a valuable aesthetic and community resource and, it was argued, can be sustained.

Following the annual general meeting (see page 33), speaker Allan Willingham's presentation was a tour de force on the architecture of the basalt plains, ranging from shepherds' huts and slab buildings to the secure homesteads and gardens which evolved at the time of land tenure, eventually culminating

in the stately mansions of the western plains. The importance of pattern books, the work of Scottish stonemasons, and early survey plans all assist in gaining an overall view of these developments. Accounts of property gardens were given by Val Lang (Titanga), Helen Page—on behalf of Janet Gordon (Turkeith), and Catharine Winter-Cooke (Murndal), while Jayne Salmon introduced the Geelong Botanic Gardens. A preview of the forthcoming 2010 Tasmanian Conference (more details in our next issue) completed the speaking program.

The conference dinner was held at the impressively restored wool store, now part of Deakin University's Waterfront Campus. The previous evening, delegates had been entertained at the Geelong Gallery, where works by some of the artists discussed at the conference were on display.

Properties and gardens visited during the conference included the Geelong Botanic Gardens, Darriwill, Purrumbete, Wuurong, Meningoort, Banongill, Warrambeen, and Moranghurk. The opportunity to view these properties and their gardens reinforced the lecture program, as delegates identified various garden styles and plantings set in the rich volcanic plains landscape. On a personal note, as this is the first AGHS conference I have attended, I was most impressed by the way the visual and theoretical aspects of the theme 'Cultivating Australia Felix' were supported by speakers' topics and by the garden visits. All this combined to contribute to a most stimulating and enjoyable conference.

Dr Pamela Bell OAM is an art historian and was foundation curator of the University of Sydney Art Collection and Gallery.



Warrambeen homestead.

Photo: Anne Vale

Post-conference tour report

Cecelia Clarke

It has rained in the Western District of Victoria and it is spring. Pasturelands have been restocked with sheep and cattle; canola crops are spiky yellow; birdlife thrives. The land is refreshed.

The pastoral legacy of the distinctive lean-treed, basaltic plains was the focus of the Geelong Conference. Our lecturers profiled the geology/geomorphology of this volcanic landscape. They spoke of the customs of the country and of the Presbyterian legacy—in this part of the world genealogy matters. We heard about blue stone country houses recorded and mythologised by Eugene von Guérard, William Tibbits, and Louis Buvelot.

On our post-conference visits to diverse properties during 20–22 October with tour leader Trisha Dixon, ably assisted by Anna Affleck, we had ample opportunity to apply what we had learnt. As well, participants Stuart Read and Craig Burton delivered mini-lectures between properties, while John Viska's commentary on the use of Western Australian plants highlighted changing garden trends.

Von Guérard painted the volcanic, salty, Lake Gnotuk from the vantage point of the **Gnotuk** homestead gardens. This many-layered garden dating from the 1860s retains the botanical influences of Daniel Bunce and William Guilfoyle. The Illawarra flame tree and the funeral cypress harmonise with plants that followed the steamer routes—*Quercus ilex*, Cape chestnut, and the Madagascar buddleja. More recently, inspired by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Cranbourne, the Morris family have created an arid garden space, using drought-tolerant species such as Sturt's desert pea and succulents.

Simplification is one objective of the many garden owners. Water is precious. The era of multiple hands in the homestead gardens has well and truly passed—regrettable or not. The challenge of retaining a simplified beauty of the cottage garden has been neatly met by Annie Abbott at **Mount William Station**—a stunning hedge and enclosed garden are significant features. At **Langulac**, Suzie Mann's policy is that 'what looks healthy and survives, stays'. She has achieved success with plantings from the Rosea family.



Conference delegates approaching Darriwill on foot.

Photo: Sarah Wood



Photo: Bill Clarke

The woolshed at Mount William Station showing the wider landscape.

The gardens of Gnotuk, Mount William, and Langulac contrast markedly to the twenty-first century garden of the Vernieux family, **Red Gums**, at Drysdale. Following the philosophy of his mentor Gordon Ford, designer Sam Cox has augmented a stand of remnant gums and planted species indigenous to the Bellarine Peninsula but also incorporating Western Australian plants such as the kangaroo paw.

We visited three parkland gardens. At **Titanga** the whole parkland is ‘the front garden’ with a stunning panorama to Mount Elephant. The Whitehead family at **Goodwood** have opened up the garden ‘so that the situation of the house can be appreciated’—it can be and it is. My photographs show views of the creek to tussock grasses and distant mountain ranges. At **The Gums**, Roderick Agar keeps to the philosophy that the garden is dictated by the architecture and the landscape. A 1966 photo compared to the present park shows that all conifers, other than the cedars, have been removed as has the associated shrubbery from in front of the Italianate house. The result is a sweeping view across the park. We were taken across the paddocks to look back at the house shrouded in distant mist. We could have been in Italy.

The wise use of land and water resources and the difficult issue of fire management came up repeatedly as topics for discussion. Clive Jamieson of **Stony Point** outlined his program for controlling grass fires. He creates fire breaks by spraying grasses. In the Grampians at **Mirranawarra**, artist and naturalist Richard Weatherly spoke of the effects of fragmentation on ecosystems, and how fire, including controlled burning, can be a cause. He also suggested that use of fire may increase bush fire risk, as it removes leaf-mould from the forest floor, increasing run-off and evaporation. The consequent desiccation is compounded by higher transpiration by regrowth and opens the forest’s crown, exposing the forest floor to weeds. Loss of hollow logs and branches removes habitat for many species. Is the end result the creation of ‘junk eco-systems feared for their fire potential’? As a lay observer, I have no answer. However, I never again want to see the wasteland from the Black Saturday inferno.

The 30th Conference brought together participants with a wealth of knowledge shared freely while the post-conference tour stimulated thought, discussion, and created new opportunities for further research. It was time well spent.

Sydney-based **Cecelia Clarke** has a long-standing interest in garden and architectural history. This is her third visit to the Western District.

Documents on Australia's garden history

Walling published in the UK (1953)

With the prospect of another Edna Walling tour by author and photographer Trisha Dixon (see story page 35) it seems timely to place a hitherto unpublished Walling document under the microscope. In it Walling writes to an unidentified well-wisher, Pamela, following receipt of congratulations on the publication of *The Australian Roadside*.

'Dear Pamela' Walling wrote in her characteristic scrawl, 'It was very nice indeed to receive a letter card in appreciation of the *Roadside* book from England.' This letter, dated the second of February 1953 and written on Walling's professional letterhead from her property Good-a-Meavy, Mooroolbark, had been carefully pasted to the front endpaper of a copy of *The Australian Roadside*. Pamela's identity was not further disclosed, but the polite, informative tone suggested a touch of deference—perhaps a former client?

Good-a-Meavy—later known as The Barn—was one of the properties making up the estate at Bickleigh Vale, developed by Walling from the 1920s. Although The Barn is now a sizeable residence, in the 1950s Good-a-Meavy was a modest property retaining the original residence (constructed in the late 1920s) with associated outbuildings, all sited on a generous allotment. On her letterhead, Walling clearly identified herself as a 'Landscape Designer' and it was Bickleigh Vale that formed her experimental landscape canvas.

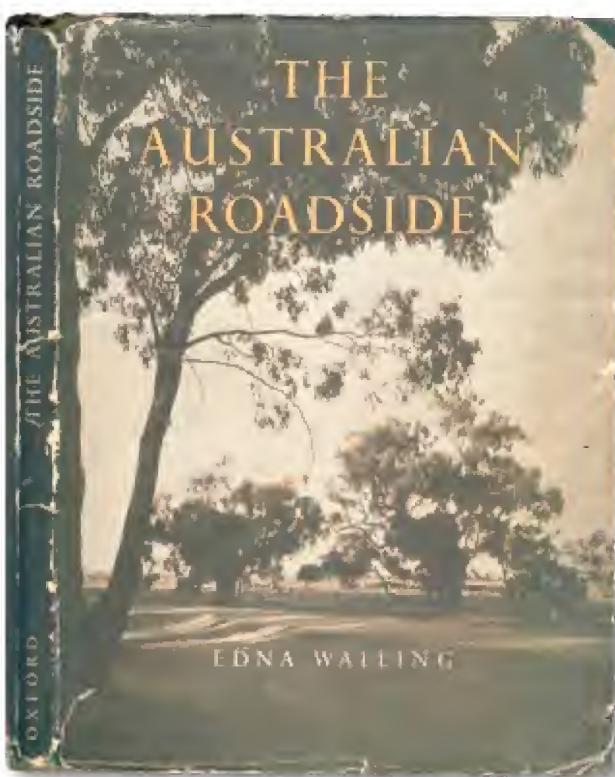
Writing in *Australian Home Beautiful* in November 1930, Walling described her 'Adventure in landscape gardening':

those rolling acres that I coveted so long came into my possession ... [and are] available to those who long to build themselves a quaint little English cottage surrounded by sturdy young trees and shrubs of their own planting ... In one corner a nursery has been formed, roughly, an acre in extent. Here the trees and shrubs are being raised for making landscape pictures. Here plants selected from other nurseries as being suitable for this adventure are brought to be grown into larger specimens ... As much of the land as it was possible to plough has been cultivated and sown down with oats to open up the ground

'The remaining land has grey or woolly tea-tree and white swamp gums scattered about in picturesque groups', Walling continued, and 'It should be emphasised that these blocks are only for those interested in English cottage design, the planting of trees and shrubs and the preservation of the existing landscape.'

Here we see at once a conundrum in Walling's early philosophy—a desire to recapture an English cottage design and its associated plantings as well as preservation of the existing landscape. If the early photographs of Bickleigh Vale in Walling's first book, *Gardens in Australia* (1943), are our guide, it is clear that a substantial part of the estate comprised cleared farmland rather than forested glades. And Walling devoted just two pages of this 148-page book to the specific subject of Australian plants (although elsewhere these were sprinkled through her recommended planting schemes). Her cottage look was, it seems, largely achieved through European and North American species.

And yet if *Gardens in Australia* largely reflected her pre-war outlook, Walling's opinions sharpened during World War Two and publication of



4.2.53.

Ree Pamela

It was very nice indeed to receive ^{your} letter & appreciation of the roadside work from England.

I have just had word from the Oxford U. Press that it is being published in London on Feb 7th & that is gratifying. There is one to follow in the Flowers by the Wayside but it is not yet accepted by any publisher!

Thank you so much for writing

Yours sincerely
Edna Walling.

The Australian Roadside (1952) marked a significant change of focus and emphasis. Whereas *Gardens* was all soft sell, *Roadside* stood as a more urgent manifesto. By now, Walling had become a vocal proponent not just for the preservation of the Australian bush, but in conserving its characteristic species through garden cultivation. Perhaps it was this imperative that so pleased Walling when she wrote to Pamela of *The Australian Roadside*: 'I have just had word from the Oxford U. Press that it is being published in London on Feb 7th [1953] which is gratifying.'

Other books were in the pipeline, their manuscripts awaiting a sympathetic publisher and editor. 'There is

one to follow on the Flowers by the Wayside', Walling warbled to Pamela, 'but it is not yet accepted by any publisher!' And, sadly, it was not to be accepted in Walling's lifetime. This was possibly the manuscript published by Mulini Press as *On the Trail of Australian Wildflowers* (1984). Had it been published in 1953, 'Flowers by the Wayside' might have formed a significant complement to *The Australian Garden*. Instead it was through her prolific journalism and her professional designs that Walling continued to advance the cause of Australian-plant gardens.

'Thank you so much for writing'—we might now say this to Walling instead of her to us.

Richard Aitken

For the bookshelf

Leonie Norton, *Women of Flowers: botanical art in Australia from the 1830s to the 1960s*, National Library of Australia, Canberra, ACT, 2009 (ISBN 9780642276834): paperback RRP \$34.95

In recent years the history and aesthetic power of botanical art has offered occasion for numerous lavish publications. Both its rich history and its various contemporary guises position botanical and natural history illustration as a central thread uniting the arts and sciences in national and international cultural histories. The value of Leonie Norton's *Women of Flowers* is its argument against the invisibility of colonial women botanical illustrators from the history of Australian art and science, and the recognition that any boundary perceived between amateur and professional artists in a colonial context is unstable and at times unsustainable. The volume is substantially illustrated, and offers broad biographical sketches of eight women illustrator's whose work resides in the National Library of Australia's collections, and two whose work is in the Allport Library in Tasmania and the Mitchell Library in Sydney respectively. The sensibilities and style of the artists represented is clearly grounded within the ambit of nineteenth-century women's ornamental education, which belies somewhat the suggestion that the book surveys the 1830s to 1960s. However, the energy of the author and the integrity of work represented makes this a pleasing addition to a growing field.

Amelia Scurry

The University of Melbourne

Rahoul B. Singh, *Gardens of Delight: Indian gardens through the ages*, Pavilion, London, 2008 (ISBN 978 18 6205 836 1): hardback RRP £25/Rs 1295

Many readers will have been introduced to the delights of India's gardens and designed landscapes by the episode of Monty Don's recent television series or through the excellent BBC series *The Story of India* narrated by Michael Wood. For those seeking greater garden history detail the scene is rather bleak. Mughal gardens have been amply treated, in monographs and through chapter-length treatment in general garden histories, but other periods—such as British occupation of the eighteenth to mid-twentieth century or the post-1947 era—have received comparatively less coverage.

Singh's book will provide a taster, but not much more. The arrangement is idiosyncratic and makes no claim to original scholarship, instead providing an overview based on the works of Villiers-Stuart (rather alarmingly rendered in the endnotes as Stuart Villiers), Ruggles, and others. Many of the photographs are enlarged well beyond their inherent pixelage, giving an unfortunate visual inconsistency to an otherwise well-produced book replete with numerous colour illustrations. I wanted more—more historical depth, more about the distinctive plants to be found in India's gardens, more historical illustrations, and above all, a more rigorous approach. But perhaps I'm being greedy, for this remains an enticing overview of a fascinating subject.

Richard Aitken

John Bonehill & Stephen Daniels (eds), *Paul Sandby: picturing Britain*, Royal Academy of Arts, London, 2009 (ISBN 9781905711499): hardback RRP £35

The British geographer and historian Stephen Daniels will be known to many readers for his excellent book *Humphry Repton: landscape gardening and the geography of Georgian England* (1999) and for his numerous contributions to journals and exhibition catalogues. Now Daniels and exhibition curator John Bonehill examine another quintessential figure of Georgian Britain, painter and engraver Paul Sandby (1731–1809). The interest of Daniels in journey, place, and context shines through this outstanding publication, published to accompany a major retrospective exhibition. Some Australian enthusiasts will know that Hamilton Art Gallery holds a major collection of Sandby's works, collected by Western District grazier C.C.L. Gaussen and Lady Mary Gaussen of Gringegalgonga, but how many of us knew that Sandby accompanied Cook's botanist Daniel Solander on travels to Scotland or of the military traditions behind much eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century painting and sketching (such as that of Sandby). Sandby was a pioneer of watercolour painting and here his key works are vividly reproduced alongside many less well known images. For those travelling to London, the Sandby exhibition is on at the Royal Academy from March–June 2010 following showings in Nottingham and Edinburgh.

Richard Aitken

Recently released

Ann Curthoys & Ann McGrath, *How to Write History that People Want to Read*, UNSW Press, Sydney, 2009 (ISBN 9781742230863): paperback RRP \$34.95

This book will appeal to historians and students of all abilities, but most particularly to those embarking on postgraduate study or writing for publication (whether articles or book-length works). The authors—both enjoying wide publishing and teaching experience—write in a highly accessible and engaging manner, drawing our attention to common pitfalls while also offering advice and encouragement on everything from research etiquette to footnote fetishism. Highly recommended for all aspiring contributors to *Australian Garden History*.

Jenny Gregory & Jan Gothard (eds), *Historical Encyclopedia of Western Australia*, University of Western Australia Press, Crawley, WA, 2009 (ISBN 9781921401152): hardback RRP \$89.95

The fact that this monumental publication from the University of Western Australia Press—which has recently morphed into UWA Publishing—has been reprinted within months of its launch says much about its need and impact. Although covering a wide spectrum of Western Australian history, gardens receive due coverage. John Viska contributes a long entry on domestic gardens, Oline Richards on parks and gardens, and Andrea Gaynor on domestic food production. Other authors, whose works in the fields of garden, environmental, and cultural history will perhaps be familiar, include David Dolan, Dorothy Erickson, Alex George, Elery Hamilton-Smith, Stephen Hopper, Greg Keighery, J.M. Powell, Duncan Richards, and George Seddon. Navigation through this alphabetically arranged volume comes via numerous cross references, a brief index (with a fuller on-line index at www.cwah.uwa.edu.au), and carefully compiled appendices. This *Encyclopaedia* compares favourably with similar companions to Australian History (OUP), South Australian History (Wakefield), Tasmanian History (UTas), and Melbourne (CUP) and manages to avoid any self-conscious eagerness often perceptible only to interstate readers of such works.

Judith Magee, *Art of Nature: three centuries of natural history art from around the world*, Hardie Grant Books, Prahran, Vic., 2009 (ISBN 9781740668569): hardback RRP \$55

Drawn from the outstanding collections held by the library of London's Natural History Museum, this profusely illustrated book devotes one of its five main sections to Australia. Many exquisite early botanical illustrations are reproduced although surely it is rather old-fashioned in outlook to include images of Australia's Aboriginal peoples alongside plants and animals as if the three formed some kind of sub-human 'natural history' continuum. Unwittingly this highlights the need for continuing dialogue and reconciliation between unreconstructed curators still lurking within museums and traditional Indigenous custodians.

Peter Timms, *In Search of Hobart*, New South, Sydney, 2009 (ISBN 9781921410543): hardback RRP \$29.95

Peter Timms will be well known to many of our readers for his garden and landscape writing in *The Nature of Gardens* (1999), *Making Nature* (2001), and *Australia's Quarter Acre* (2006). Here he takes the same gently probing approach to a city close to his heart, revealing—through narrative, history, and anecdote—the many charms of Tasmania's capital.

Kyleigh Simpson & Michael Simpson, *Over the Fence and Overlooked: traditional plants in Queensland's gardening heritage*, CopyRight Publishing, [Brisbane], 2009 (ISBN 978 1876344 66 5): hardback RRP \$49.50 (available from shambles@bigpond.net.au or 85 Western Avenue, Montville, Queensland 4560: price includes postage)

This book is an enthusiastic if unstructured look at traditional Queensland gardens and especially their plants. The sectional heading 'Trees we have enjoyed, which blessed us with shade, and lent maturity to our garden' perfectly captures the book's tone. Practical rather than theoretical, anecdotal rather than scholarly—these factors define its approach and probable readership. The images include some evocative family photographs, directing our attention to the use of such sources in tracing the history of Australia's garden heritage.



Adrian Feint, *Hibiscus*, 1945

Richard Heathcote (ed.), *Adrian Feint: cornucopia*, Wakefield Press, Kent Town, SA, 2009 (ISBN 9781862548602): paperback RRP \$39.95

This attractively written and illustrated book has been produced to accompany an exhibition, originating at Carrick Hill, of Feint's flower paintings and landscapes. Adrian Feint (1894–1971) was a talented though now somewhat neglected figure on the periphery of Australian art. His many works here illustrated and analysed—imbued with an ‘air of restrained melancholy’ (to quote Craig Judd’s essay)—provide a window into Antipodean modernism. Judd is joined by librarian and scholar Megan Martin, print historian Roger Butler, bookplate expert Richard King, and Carrick Hill director Richard Heathcote to fill a gap in our knowledge of Australian flower painting and Feint’s contribution to this and cognate fields. You can still catch the exhibition—at Geelong Art Gallery—until 14 February.

Jottanda

Upgrade in journal status

We were gratified to learn that *Australian Garden History* has recently been ranked for inclusion on the Australian Research Council’s list of journals under its Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) initiative. The Council, which is a statutory authority within the Australian Government’s Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (DIISR), has instituted the ERA initiative as a means of evaluating the nation’s research quality and activity.

Although *Australian Garden History* is not formally peer-reviewed, it is now ranked amongst scholarly journals internationally and can qualify under DIISR evaluation. This evaluation now acknowledges that original creative works (including ‘textual work’, such as articles or reviews in *AGH*) can form a contribution to new knowledge, a recognition that in the creative arts such knowledge might be manifest in ways and forms that differ from more traditional research outputs.

The revised journal list was generated after consultation and rigorous review by leading researchers working in the relevant research sector. *Australian Garden History* falls within the Humanities and Creative Arts (HCA) cluster and has been assigned the identification number 30541.

Of the four tiers used to rank the comparative quality of journals, *AGH* was accorded a ‘B’ ranking. An ‘A’ ranked journal denotes ‘real engagement with the global research community and that they [i.e. such journals] have something to say about problems of some significance’. An ‘A*’ ranking represents the cream on the top—where ‘researchers boast about getting [their papers] accepted’—while ‘C’ ranking indicates the journal ‘did not meet the criteria of the higher tiers’. So we feel contented with our ‘B’ ranking, betokening a ‘solid, though not outstanding, reputation’.

www.arc.gov.au/era/default.htm

Funding for tree surgery at Purrumbete

As mentioned in Chairman John Dwyer’s editorial (see page 3), funding from the AGHS has been made available to assist with tree surgery at Purrumbete, one of the significant gardens visited on the recent Geelong conference. This is the first allocation of funding from the AGHS National Restoration Fund for Conservation Works in Historic Gardens, through which branch funding is matched by a contribution from the National Management Committee. Applications to the NMC from branch committees are welcomed for this important conservation initiative.

Heritage Volunteers Award

AGH warmly congratulates members Professor Richard Clough and Colleen Morris, recent recipients of the 2009 NSW Government Heritage Volunteers Award, in the Landscape and Garden Heritage category. Richard Clough received his award for his long commitment to landscape and garden history education and awareness through research, systematic collection, and donation of major collections to institutions such as the State Library of New South Wales and the Caroline Simpson Memorial Library and Research Collection of the Historic Houses Trust of NSW. Colleen received her award for her long commitment to raising awareness, protection, and conservation of garden history through work with the National Trust, AGHS, and Historic Houses Trust of NSW, including publications, interviews, and the *Lost Garden of Sydney* exhibition and book. The awards were formally presented in mid-November 2009, with Colleen Morris responding collectively on behalf of all 26 award recipients—allowing her an opportunity to raise awareness of garden history as well as of the AGHS and its work.

www.heritage.nsw.gov.au/09_subnav_05.htm

Rural fencing heritage

An *Illustrated Glossary of Australian Rural Fence Terms* (2009), prepared by doyen of Australia's rural fence historians, John Pickard, has now been posted on the web. Through the work of John and his colleagues (whose works are listed in a comprehensive bibliography) this undervalued aspect of our designed landscape heritage now has a substantial research and analytical tool. Surprise your neighbours with new-found nomenclatural precision.

www.heritage.nsw.gov.au/09_subnav_03.htm

Gremlins attack proper nouns

Thanks to those observant readers who have discreetly pointed out some inexcusable spelling errors in our issue of *AGH*, 21 (1), 2009. On page 15 please note the correct spelling of the kangaroo paw should be *Anigozanthos* sp. On page 22 the name of the property developed by Thistle Harris and her husband David Stead should read Wirrimbirra and note that it was established to preserve 'Bargo Brush'.

Macquarie 2010

Publication of this *AGH* issue coincides with the two-hundredth anniversary of the installation—on New Years Day, 1810—of Lachlan Macquarie as fifth governor of the colony of New South Wales. Lachlan and his wife Elizabeth Macquarie propelled the transformation of the colony from penal outpost to civil settlement, and several organisations are planning anniversary celebrations. The current issue of *Insites* (Summer 09), published by the Historic Houses Trust of NSW, provides a useful overview of the Macquaries and their achievements as well as special events (including an eagerly anticipated lecture by Grace Karskens: 'Lachlan and Elizabeth: power couple of the 1810s').

www.macquarie2010.nsw.gov.au/
www.hht.net.au/whats_on/events

Vale Rica Erickson and Betty Conabere

Botanical art has lost two of its most prominent Australian exponents with the recent deaths of Rica Erickson and Betty Conabere. Frederica Lucy Erickson (*nee* Sandilands) (1908–2009) told her life story in *A Naturalist's Life* (University of Western Australian Press, 2005) while a dedicated page on the State Library of Western Australia website chronicles the achievements of this remarkable centenarian. Elizabeth Vivienne Conabere (1929–2009) was a prolific contributor to the literature of south-eastern Australian botany and shared her views on the natural world in *An Australian Country Woman's Diary* (Collins, 1986). An obituary by Janet McKenzie appeared in the *Melbourne Age* on 20 November 2009.

www.slwa.wa.gov.au/erickson/erickson/

Nina Crone Award 2009

The Nina Crone award commemorates the contribution of Nina Crone (1934–2007) to the Australian Garden History Society. The award aims to encourage new and emerging scholars in the writing of Australian garden history. No prize was awarded in 2009.

Our next issue

Australian Garden History, volume 21 (4), April/May/June 2010, will be published on 1 April 2010. Deadline for copy is 12 February 2010.

Diary dates

FEBRUARY 2010

Maranoa Gardens

Victoria

Wednesday 10

Maranoa Gardens escorted walk and talk session through these famed Australian-plant gardens, to be followed by a BYO picnic tea. Meet at the Kireep Road entrance, Maranoa Gardens, Balwyn (*Melway Ref. 46 G7*). 6pm for 6.30pm start. Enquiries to Anthony Menhennitt on 0414 699 457

Tiger Balm gardens

Sydney and Northern NSW

Wednesday 17

Talk by Jill Matthews. 6.30pm for 7–8.30pm, Annie Wyatt Room, National Trust Centre, Observatory Hill. Cost: \$15 members, \$25 non-members, includes light refreshments. Bookings essential. For bookings and enquiries contact Jeanne Villani on (02) 9997 5995 or jeanne@villani.com

Moora Park, Shorncliffe walk

Queensland

Saturday 20

Guided tour of Moora Park, Shorncliffe. Before popular ownership of cars made it possible for Brisbane people to go to the surf at the Gold or Sunshine Coasts, one took the steamer, and later the train, to Shorncliffe, and swam, picnicked, dined, and danced in Moreton Bay and Moora Park. 10am start, from the Rotunda, concluding with lunch at Café on the Park in Park Parade. Cost: \$10 members, \$15 non-members. Register with Keith Jorgensen on (07) 3341 3933 or at jorgenkg@picknowl.com.au

Gardens in the Goulburn area

Southern Highlands

Sunday 28

This will be a self-drive tour to several historic gardens in the Goulburn area. Additional details will be advised on the AGHS website, as updates to the Southern Highlands Branch calendar, and by direct notice to Branch members, once confirmed. Booking enquiries to Sue Trudeau on (02) 4872 3887

MARCH 2010

Historic gardens of the Oatlands area

Tasmania

Saturday 20

Guided bus tour of different historic properties in the Oatlands area, with a local historian. Property owners will also talk about the special features and history of their gardens. 11am start, meet at Jericho. Cost: \$45 members, \$55 non-members, includes morning tea and lunch. Enquiries to Ken Wright on (03) 6227 9363 or Robyn Hawkins (03) 6363 6131. For bookings, contact Rex Bean on (03) 6260 4418 or rex.bean@bigpond.com

Canberra Arboretum and Government House gardens, Yarralumla

Southern Highlands

Thursday 25

Tour of the Canberra Arboretum and Gardens followed by a visit to the Governor-General's garden and residence at Yarralumla. Transport will be by bus. Additional details will be advised on the AGHS website, as updates to the Southern Highlands Branch calendar, and by direct notice to Branch members, once confirmed. Booking enquiries to Sue Trudeau on (02) 4872 3887

Waverton and Berry's Bay walk

Sydney and Northern NSW

Date and time t.b.a.

Waverton and Berry's Bay parkland walk (former BP site) with landscape architect David Bradbury. Meeting point to be confirmed on booking. Cost: \$15 members, \$25 non-members, includes light refreshments. Bookings essential. For bookings and enquiries contact Jeanne Villani on (02) 9997 5995 or jeanne@villani.com

APRIL 2010

Brush Farm Estate

Sydney and Northern NSW

Date and time t.b.a.

Walk and talk through the Brush Farm Estate, Eastwood, observing the pleasure garden re-instatement. Meeting point to be confirmed on

booking. Cost: \$15 members, \$25 non-members, includes light refreshments. Bookings essential. For bookings and enquiries contact Jeanne Villani on (02) 9997 5995 or jeanne@villani.com

Autumn tour of Mount Wilson gardens

Southern Highlands

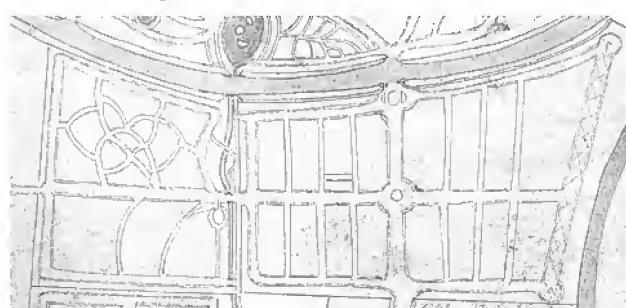
Over three days, late April

Following the success of a similar three-day event in October 2009, this tour will revisit the Mount Wilson area in autumn, to take advantage of the season's colours and to further explore the area's historic gardens. Additional details will be advised on the AGHS website, as updates to the Southern Highlands Branch calendar, and by direct notice to Branch members, once confirmed. Booking enquiries to Sue Trudeau on (02) 4872 3887

MAY 2010

Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney

Southern Highlands



Sunday 23

A guided tour of Sydney's Royal Botanic Gardens and its treasures. Travel will be by bus, returning the same day. Additional details will be advised on the AGHS website, as updates to the Southern Highlands Branch calendar, and by direct notice to Branch members, once confirmed. Booking enquiries to Sue Trudeau on (02) 4872 3887

Botany and Sir Josephs Banks Park

Sydney and Northern NSW

Date and time t.b.a.

Botany and Sir Josephs Banks Park walk. Meeting point to be confirmed on booking. Cost: Members \$15 Guests \$25, includes light refreshments. Bookings essential. For bookings and enquiries contact Jeanne Villani on (02) 9997 5995 or jeanne@villani.com

JUNE 2010

Vaucluse garden visits

Sydney and Northern NSW

Date and time t.b.a.

Vaucluse walk and garden visits. Meeting point to be confirmed on booking. Cost: \$15 members, \$25 non-members, includes light refreshments. Bookings essential. For bookings and enquiries contact Jeanne Villani on (02) 9997 5995 or jeanne@villani.com

NOVEMBER 2010

Annual National Conference, Launceston

Tasmania

Friday 5–Sunday 7

Optional Day Monday 8

The Tasmania Branch looks forward to welcoming you to Launceston in November 2010 to the Australian Garden History Society's 31st Annual National Conference. The cultural landscape and garden history of the north of the island will be explored in a range of papers and fieldtrips, from the fire-farmed Aboriginal landscape created over a period of more than 10,000 years, to a landscape described by the end of the nineteenth century as 'the vision splendid'.

No events are scheduled for the West Australian Branch over the summer months. For information about future events and WA Branch activities contact Sue Monger on (08) 9384 1575 or susanmonger@yahoo.com.au

Notes for members

Annual General Meeting

The 29th Annual General Meeting of the Australian Garden History Society Inc. was held on Saturday, 17 October 2009 at 8.30am at the Geelong Conference Centre, Adams Court, Eastern Park, Geelong, Victoria. At this meeting Dr Jan Schapper and Stuart Read were elected members to the National Management Committee. Jan and Stuart replace elected members Colleen Morris who retired and Christine Reid who stood down. Changes to the state representatives were announced, with Nancy Clarke (ACT) and John Taylor (Qld) replacing Jill Scheetz and Keith Jorgensen.

The resolutions to change the Australian Garden History Society Objects and Rules (see *AGH*, 21 (1), 2009, pp.33–34) were formally adopted. Our new patron, the Countess of Wilton, was announced, and our out-going patrons, John and Lynne Landy were thanked for their support. At the meeting of the National Management Committee held following the AGM, Dr John Dwyer QC was elected unopposed as chairman (replacing outgoing NMC member and chair Colleen Morris).

Thanks from our out-going Chair

I was overwhelmed at the presentation of the Society's gift—one of Beverly Allen's exquisite botanical paintings—on my recent retirement as Chair and for Richard Aitken's affectionate speech at the Geelong conference dinner. Such was my astonishment that I'm afraid erudition escaped me when I responded to thank members.

The painting is imbued with meanings embracing both personal pleasure and my professional life. *Disocactus ackermannii* grows in the colonial gardens of Sydney, for which I have a deep love and have researched over many years (how could Hardy Wilson have failed to mention its messy magnificence!). The plant is listed in several of the nineteenth-century nursery catalogues used by botanist Tony Rodd and myself in the compilation of the Colonial Plants Database for Historic Houses Trust of NSW, and I grow it in my own garden (patiently hoping that it will flower). I also have a great admiration for botanical art and, as a member of The Florilegium at the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney, I appreciate the painstaking skill required to produce such a beautiful work.



Artist Beverly Allen (left) with Colleen Morris displaying the painting presented by the AGHS to Colleen to mark her retirement after six years chairing the Society.

Serving the Society has been a very satisfying experience. During my years in the position of Chair, our Executive Officer Jackie Courmadias has given me enormous support. She has been a wise sounding board and above all a wonderful garden history friend. The Society is truly fortunate to have such a dedicated Executive Officer who shares our passion. I thank all members for this beautiful gift but above all, I thank Jackie. **CM**

Lost Gardens Diary 2010

This attractive 2010 diary includes many historic botanical and garden images from the book *Lost Gardens of Sydney*, written by our outgoing chair Colleen Morris to accompany the exhibition of the same title recently held at the Museum of Sydney. The diary comprises 120 pages, each page measures 195 x 155mm, and the book is flexibound with an attached marker ribbon. AGHS members can purchase this diary through the Historic Houses Trust of NSW.

www.hht.net.au/research/publications

Trees of History and Romance

Trees have inspired writers, naturalists, and poets for thousands of years. Virgil, Wordsworth, and Thoreau were all moved by them. They are the oldest living organisms on earth and have been worshiped by some as expressions spiritual or national pride. In this book, subtitled *Essays from a Mount Wilson Garden*, author Michael Pembroke provides fascinating insights into trees drawn from history, literature, poetry, mythology, botany, and folklore. AGHS members can purchase this book

at the special price of \$25 (plus postage). See AGHS website for order form.

www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au

Journal packers

Thank you to the dedicated group of AGHS members who volunteer their time packaging the journals ready for posting. For the previous issue we specifically acknowledge the assistance of Diana Ellerton, Anna Howe, Jane Johnson, John and Beverley Joyce, Rosemary Kiellerup, Ann Miller, Ann Rayment, Susan Reidy, Sandra Torpey, Elizabeth Wright, and Kathy Wright.

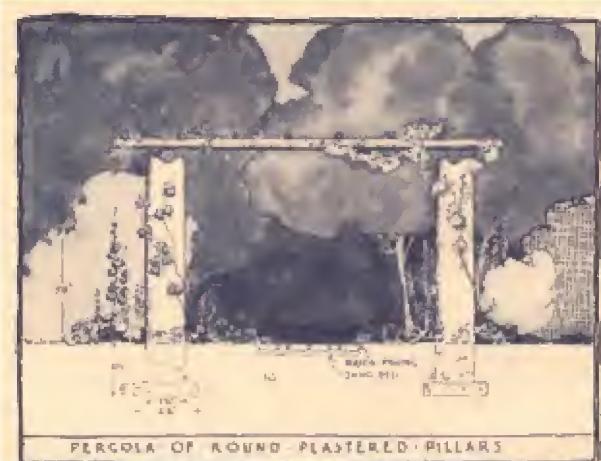
Edna Walling tour

Trisha Dixon has been researching Edna Walling for 25 years and has written extensively on her gardens, having visited, photographed, and documented hundreds of sites.

Sixteen years ago, Jackie Courmadias and I were asked by the Australian Garden History Society to conduct a tour of Edna Walling gardens in Victoria. Neither of us had previously led a tour but everyone survived and we miraculously arrived back at Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens with the same number! Our guinea pigs were wonderfully enthusiastic and this inaugural tour remains an enduring happy memory.

So keen were AGHS members to see these wonderful gardens that we had enough people to take another tour in the autumn. This was a totally different experience to visiting the gardens in spring. I am writing this mid-spring after wonderful October rains, surrounded by more blooms than I would have ever thought Bobundara garden capable of producing. Blooms are immensely beguiling but a garden they do not make!

It was design in which we were really interested—in locating Edna Walling's distinctive style. For this reason the autumn tour, without spring's



Characteristic illustrations from Walling's seminal publication *Gardens in Australia* (1943).

floriferousness, was when we could really take in her brilliant concepts. Those signature low—always sitting height—sweeping stone walls, her generously proportioned low pergolas, her understatement in tree selection, and other characteristic design features were more apparent without pretty roses

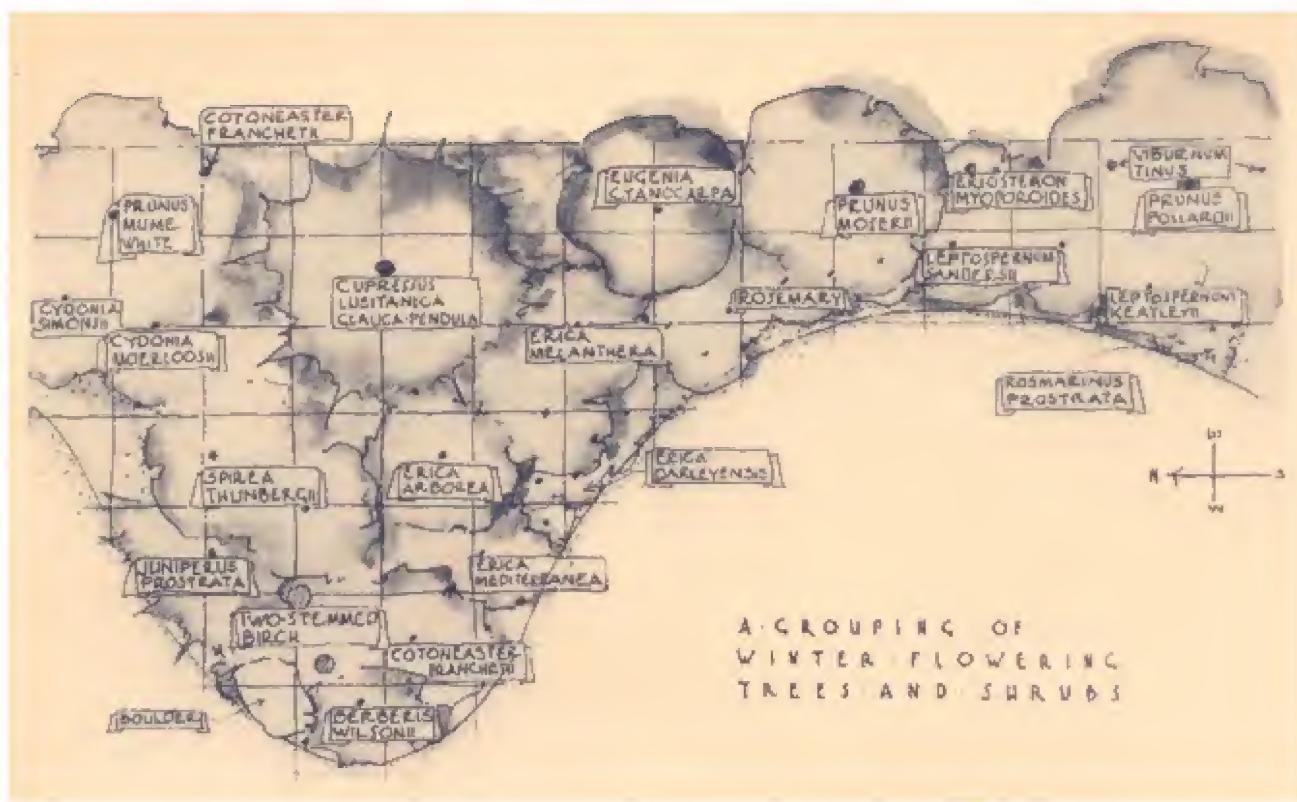




Photo: Tinska Dixon

The Walling pergola at Boortkoi.

and fragrances to distract. We looked up into wonderful oaks and madly collected and traded acorns—I wonder how many have grown into trees in those years? We trawled through piles of leaves and saw Edna Walling's walls, paths, steps, pergolas, and plantings in a whole new light.

Leaving Melbourne on 26 April we set a rattling pace, staying one night in Melbourne, another at Delgany's at Sorrento, then across the bay to Queenscliff for an hilarious night at Craig's in Ballarat, and back to Melbourne. We visited Edna Walling's key gardens and we learnt, discussed, photographed, laughed, and chatted incessantly.

Now Jackie and I are doing another Edna Walling tour—possibly two if we are as inundated as last time. We will be leaving on exactly the same date—Monday, 26 April 2010, but will be kinder this time, with two nights at the Royal Mail Hotel at Dunkeld and two nights in Melbourne, finishing

there on Friday 30 April. If this tour fills quickly, we will take another starting Monday, 3 May 2010, returning Friday, 7 May. We will be visiting the same wonderful gardens and who knows—we may even be able to talk our journal editor, Richard Aitken, into another Edna Walling lecture along the way!

Edna Walling's designs, with their hardy choice of unpretentious plants, are as relevant today as when they were commissioned

Edna Walling's designs, with their hardy choice of unpretentious plants, are as relevant today as when they were commissioned, and to study the design principles of one designer is to learn much about space, structure, and of course, about Edna Walling herself. A booking form is enclosed with this journal.



Mission Statement

The Australian Garden History Society is the leader in concern for and conservation of significant cultural landscapes and historic gardens through committed, relevant and sustainable action.