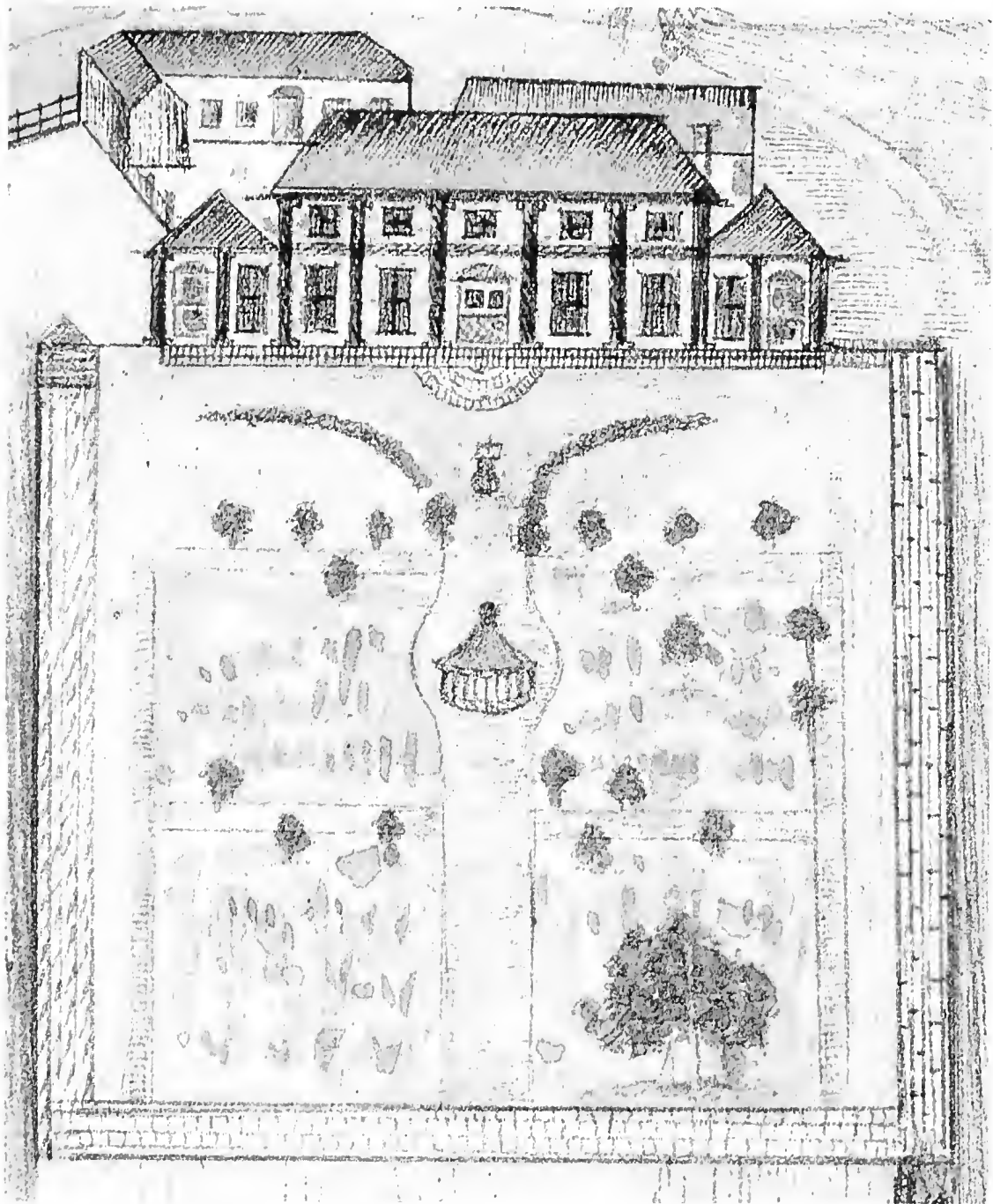


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# Australian Garden HISTORY



*Journal of the Australian Garden History Society*

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#### FRONT COVER

Cobham,  
Solomon Wiseman's  
property at Wiseman's Ferry,  
c. 1830. Artist unknown.  
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(see article pages 9 – 20)



The history of cultivating food plants in Australia is one of increasing diversity and origins. The first Anglo-Celtic settlers in 1788 brought a limited range of seeds and plants including peas, beans, potatoes, turnips, apples, pears, strawberries, oranges and lemons, grapes, wheat, barley and maize. The native plants which had sustained the Aborigines for tens of thousands of years were almost totally ignored by the white immigrants, except in times of famine or hardship, although Sir Joseph Banks introduced Warrigal Greens ('a sort of spinach') to England and France in 1772. The plants grown here in the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries were the cool temperate staples used in English cooking, which in Australia was dull and unimaginative to say the least.

However, the European immigrants of the 1950s and 1960s, and more recently peoples from Asia and elsewhere, have popularised a vast array of fruits, vegetables and herbs, which most Anglo-Celts had never heard of, let alone eaten: globe artichokes, zucchini, garlic, capsicum, aubergine, chillies, ginger, Oriental brassicas, galangal, lemon grass, rambutans, soursops, jakfruit, durian, mangosteen, lychees, to name but a few. It has been estimated that a 'new' vegetable, herb or fruit arrives in the main city wholesale markets at least once a month.

The proliferation of so-called 'ethnic' restaurants across the country, of chefs looking for novelty and 'new' flavours, and a more travelled cosmopolitan population, have done much to popularise the use of many of the recently introduced plant foods.

This is encouraging an ever-increasing band of small specialist growers, dedicated to quality and excellence. After 200 years of neglect, there is a growing bush tucker industry, growing and processing indigenous edible plants, and selecting improved varieties of many plants.

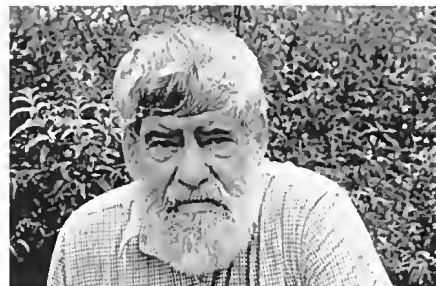
New ventures which show promise are dates in central Australia, truffles and saffron in Tasmania, buckwheat, wasabi, water chestnuts, pine nuts, tropical fruits, and everywhere olives and vineyards. And there will no doubt be more.

Mexico and South America which have already given the world potatoes, tomatoes, capsicums, tamarillos, avocados, beans and maize still have many crops which should be better known and more widely grown. Oca, ulluco, mashua, ahupa, arracacha, quinoa, kaniwa, kiwicha are just some of the root vegetables and grains. There is also an amazing variety of fruits. There is an opening here for enterprising collectors and growers.

We've had years of 'factory farming'. Growing modern hybrids, which give heavy yields, are picked green, transport well and look good on a supermarket's shelf for weeks (tomatoes and some stone fruits), or keep in a coolroom for months and months but have little or no flavour (apples and pears). What we need now are varieties with flavour, which are picked ripe and sold within days. One approach is to reintroduce the very old, so called 'heritage' varieties, and to sell the produce through local Growers Markets. Nineteenth century Australian nursery catalogues listed far more cultivars, particularly fruit such as apples, pears and gooseberries, than were listed in the twentieth century. Many of these 'heritage' plants are being kept alive by seed-saving networks and enthusiastic collectors.

We are very lucky. Australia has a range of climates, which permits plants from all over the world to be grown, from cool-temperate and semi-desert to sub-tropical and tropical. Although, sadly, I doubt we can grow the delicious golden cloudberry – which thrives in the Arctic Circle. Australia has a bright future as a producer of fresh, clean food, which can help to feed not just us but also an increasingly hungry world. We need to ensure that our foods are grown without excessive use of pesticides, and that we don't use genetically modified seeds and plants.

Some years ago I asked an orchardist whether he grew the old white fleshed and very aromatic nectarine Goldmine. His reply was that he used to, but pulled the trees out because the fruit was too soft and didn't transport well. 'The only thing they had going for them was flavour.' Flavour, hopefully, will be an attribute growers will be looking for during this century.



## GUEST EDITORIAL

by Howard Nicholson

Howard Nicholson has been a farmer, a literary agent and a professional cook. He is co-owner with Trisha Arbib of Bundanoon Village Nursery in the Southern Highlands of NSW. The nursery specialises in perennials, rugosa roses, culinary herbs and unusual food plants. They love growing and eating good food and are always looking for new tastes and textures. He re-introduced the Chinese Artichoke to Australia from China in 1992.

# Australian Garden History Society

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March 5, 2000

Dear Victorian Member,

What a lovely day many of us had at Buda in late January. There were 16 working in the garden and it was exciting to see how much such a group could achieve in a day. Several more joined with us for afternoon tea to launch the Buda garden booklet which was the feature article in the last journal. It was a day that all Victorian members could be very proud of.

Congratulations to Nina Crone, our hard working Victorian committee secretary and to Bill Thomson, who each received honours in the Australia Day Honours list.

The joint lecture series with our closely related organisation the Ornamental Plant Conservation Association of Australia (OPCAA) commences on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> March with Perry Lethlean introducing us to the Forest Gallery at the New Melbourne Museum due to open mid year. Perry will also tell us about other projects he has been involved in recently. Perry heads up the Melbourne office of Taylor and Cullity who are carrying out cutting edge landscape design work in Australia which is certainly garden history of the future in the making. On Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> April, Dr Sophie Ducker will share with us some of her extensive knowledge of the early botanical exploration of Australia. Sophie, a foundation member of the AGHS and known to many of you pioneered the study of marine botany at the University of Melbourne. The third lecture of the series will be on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> May (please note date change from May 16<sup>th</sup>) when we will hear from Stephen Ryan about his recent trip to South America. Stephen as most of you know is a passionate plantsman and I know we will all leave this lecture with smiles on our faces and a wealth of newly learned information on South America and its plants. We are indeed very fortunate to have speakers of the calibre of these three and I urge you all to take advantage of a saving by booking for the three lectures. You can do this by contacting the office on 9650 5043 or at the door on the first night. These lectures will all commence at 7.30 pm at Mueller Hall. Supper will be served following the lectures.

The March working bee will be on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> March at Belmont, near Beaufort. Please ring me if you can come and if you would like transport. On Saturday April 29<sup>th</sup> we will take on a new working bee property, Churchill Island at Phillip Island. Nina Crone is organising this working bee and would like to hear from many of you on 5663 2381 or email [ncrone@compcom.com.au](mailto:ncrone@compcom.com.au)

We are delighted with the response to the Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> March weekend that has been organised to visit a range of gardens in Gippsland. As this is a self-drive activity we would be happy to accept more bookings. If you have mislaid the booking form which was in the last journal contact the office on 9650 5043. Nina can be contacted on 5663 2381 or email [ncrone@compcom.com.au](mailto:ncrone@compcom.com.au)

Nina Crone has been pleased to hear from several of you offering to take part in our display at the International Garden Festival to be held at the Carlton Gardens from Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> April. We hope to hear from more of you so the load can be spread. Don't forget it is a great opportunity to see the show and to help AGHS. If you have any queries on the weekend contact Nina Crone.

*Australian Garden History Society Incorporated*  
(Incorporated in New South Wales)

*Branches in A.C.T., New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, Western Australia*

Many of you will be aware that most local municipalities conduct Heritage studies. These studies are generally carried under the direction of Steering and Reference groups comprised of local residents. It is desirable that the Society's interests are taken into account in these studies and so would like to hear from members who would be prepared to have their names put forward if and when these studies are carried out. Many of you may already be taking part in some way and we would like to receive feedback from you. It is important that the AGHS is seen to be speaking up for gardens in the community.

In my last letter I asked if anyone had surplus slides of garden visits, AGHS conferences and other AGHS activities that could be spared to go into a general collection which we can draw on for talks we give to a range of groups such as garden clubs, Rotary and Probus. I was disappointed that I had no response to this request but on thinking about it, it has been too hot recently to be sifting through slides, so please keep it in mind for cooler days.

Another request for help. We are hoping to update our display stand which has served us well for many years, I seem to remember we launched it at the Adelaide conference in 1992. It is looking a wee bit tired and it is very cumbersome to move around. I would love to hear from any of you who may be a graphic artist or a design specialist who could steer us in the right direction to bring this our Victorian branch 'shop front' up to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. My contact details are at the foot of this letter.

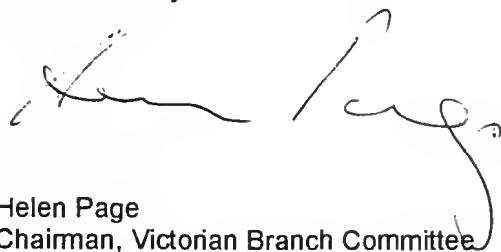
The 2001 conference committee has had its first meeting so planning in earnest has now commenced. Remember this is our opportunity to put Melbourne on the map again for the AGHS, so watch this space for developments.

In my next letter I will give details of our Winter Lecture programme. Three excellent speakers have been engaged and the final details are now being confirmed. The 2<sup>nd</sup> lecture which appears on the Programme card as Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> July has been altered to Monday 26<sup>th</sup> June. Could you please change the date on your card. Mueller Hall is booked for July for an exhibition of Celia Rosser Banksia paintings.

On Saturday May 20<sup>th</sup> the Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Cranbourne are holding their Annual Dinner in the Public Hall, Cranbourne. Mary White, the author of *The Greening of Gondwana* and many other books is to be the guest speaker. Several of us have attended this dinner for the last couple of years and have thoroughly enjoyed it. Do think about attending, make up your own table of 8 or 10 or mention when booking that you would like to be seated with other AGHS members. Bookings are through Anita Hennekam on 5990 2200 and the cost will be \$34 per person.

I hope you have marked in your diaries either Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> or Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> March to visit Williamstown where four private gardens will be open between 10 am and 4 pm on each day. Cost will be \$10 for all four gardens and tickets will be available all day at each garden. I suggest you start off at 54 Osborne Street (Melways ref 56 11D). All proceeds to the Holy Trinity Restoration Fund, a National Trust project.

Yours sincerely



Helen Page  
Chairman, Victorian Branch Committee  
phone/fax 03 9397 2260, mobile 0418 546 979, email [helenpage@bigpond.com](mailto:helenpage@bigpond.com)



*Australian Garden History Society Victorian Branch and the  
National Trust (Victoria) proudly present*



# THE LOST GARDENS OF HELIGAN

## FROM THE PAST TO THE FUTURE

A PRESENTATION BY JOHN NELSON

Overlooking the fishing village of Mevagissey and extending some 60 acres, John Nelson and business partner, Tim Smit came upon and set out to restore what have become the internationally renowned 'Lost Gardens of Heligan' in Cornwall, England. Now attracting some 350 000 visitors a year, their ensuing battle against 70 years of rampant growth has achieved what most people thought was an impossible feat - to turn Heligan into a world famous garden.

Classed as one of the 12 Great Gardens of Europe 1998 by the European Cultural Intineraire Institute, Heligan is the finest example of a 'living museum' of nineteenth century horticulture. An exhibition entitled 'Spirit of Heligan' involving the recreation of the way Heligan looked before it was restored and the way it looks now, won it the coveted Gold Medal at Hampton Court Flower Show in 1998.

With abounding energy and passion Tim Smit, along with John Nelson, have launched the Eden Project, one of the 12 Millennium Projects chosen by the Millennium Commission for funding in the UK. At £74 million, this project aims to create two giant climate-controlled greenhouses, called Biomes. Here spectacular displays of plants from all over the world will be exhibited, demonstrating the relationship between plants and humans.

John Nelson is an inspiring speaker. Audiences in Canada were enthralled by him and his New Zealand lecture series was a journey of discovery. Now, in Melbourne for one night, John Nelson will walk with us, from the past to the future, showing the progress at Heligan and looking to horticulture in the year 2000 and beyond.

**Date:** Thursday 13th April 2000  
**Venue:** Como Historic House and Gardens  
 Corner of Williams Road and Lechlade Avenue  
 South Yarra 3141  
**Time:** 7.30pm (finishing approx 9.00pm)  
**Cost:** \$30.00 for AGHS & National Trust members  
 \$35.00 for non-members  
 (includes refreshments)



### BOOKING FORM

Send to: Simone Ferlazzo  
 c/- National Trust  
 Tasma Terrace, 4 Parliament Place  
 East Melbourne, 3002

Ph (03) 9654 4711 Ext 228  
 Fx (03) 9654 8143  
 Email: ferlazzo.simone.s@nattrust.com.au

Please send me .....tickets at \$30.00 and/or .....tickets at \$35.00

### METHOD OF PAYMENT

Cheque/Money Order       Mastercard       Visa       Bankcard

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**PLEASE BE SURE TO ENCLOSE A STAMPED SELF-ADDRESSED ENVELOPE FOR RETURN OF TICKETS**



# Introducing Architrellis.

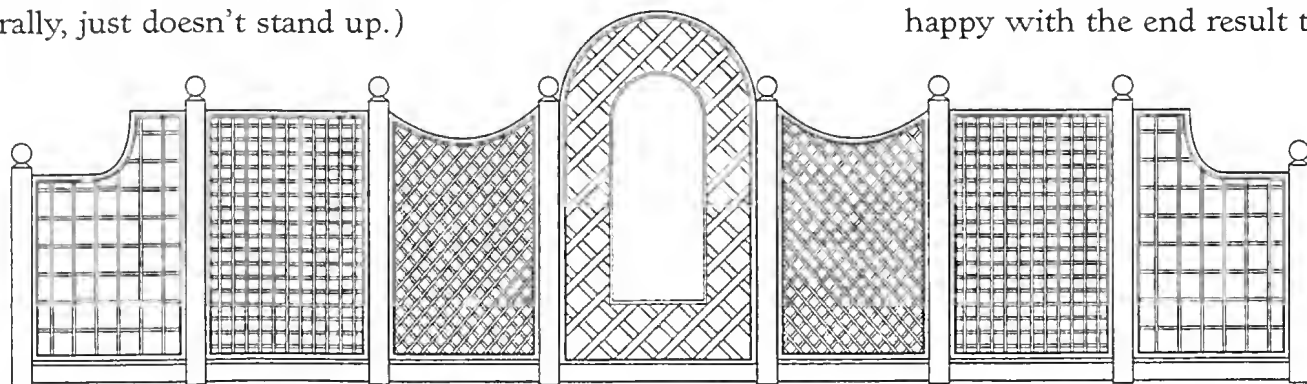
## Now your garden can seem more cultivated.

In fact, Architrellis will give an air of refinement to your whole property: not only the garden.

What actually makes Architrellis different from other trellis can be summed up in one word: quality. (Something sadly lacking in the flimsy hardware shop variety which quite literally, just doesn't stand up.)

Architrellis can bring charm and character to even the most dull, featureless area. (In fact, it's quite likely you'll rethink those expensive renovations once you see the effect it has.)

Finally, to ensure you're completely happy with Architrellis we prefer to supervise the installation. (This means we'll be entirely happy with the end result too.)



Architrellis, however, is crafted from timber chosen for being both strong and durable.

The timber is also carefully selected for the appearance of its grain when the intention is to stain or varnish it.

We also take pride in the overall finish of Architrellis. Its surface isn't 'furry' or splintery because we sand each piece to perfection before priming. Only then do we custom paint, if required, or leave it to weather to a natural silvery grey.

Because Architrellis can be created in many shapes and sizes its possibilities are seemingly endless. When installed, you'll discover

Incidentally, because of its strength and quality, Architrellis is premium priced. However, if you view it as a long-term investment, it could pay dividends when you come to sell your property.

To find out more or arrange for a consultation, please call us (03) 5941 3211



## Architrellis

Not Just Your Common or Garden Trellis.





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# NO TIME FOR *Pleasure* GARDENS

by Suzanna Plowman



## IN THE EARLIEST DAYS of white settlement in Australia, food production was a serious challenge.

Orchards were once given pride of place in front of the house. Three of Robert and Ellen Evans nine daughters pose for the camera in the Kiah Lodge orchard in the Monaro region of New South Wales circa 1880.

Just as the saws and chisels brought from England were not designed to cut and shape Australian hardwood, the settlers were surprised that their expectations of easily growing food crops were not fulfilled in their new home land. The climate, soils, graft and corruption served to frustrate plans for prompt self sufficiency.

Sir Stephen Roberts describes in his book *History of Australian Land Settlement* the difficulties encountered when landing at Sydney. The officers were quarrelsome, the convicts useless, the land disappointing; for, instead of the long grassy stretches of which Banks had spoken, there was a thin strip of 'very indifferent' country hemmed in by an impassable mountain barrier.

Knowing that they could not rely on outside sources to supply enough food for the small but growing population of Sydney, Governor Phillip established a farm at Rose Hill. For years the farm returned hardly any more grain than was sown. The convicts were found to be food stealers, not food producers. There was a period when the population faced imminent starvation.

When Governor King arrived in Sydney in 1798, the colony was simultaneously suffering the effects of drought, bush fires and floods.

The erratic food supply was the main reason that the governors of the day encouraged people to leave the little settlement and seek to make their life in the 'bush'. This started off in a regulated way with land being granted to suitable people in specified areas but the planned legal settlement procedure was soon swamped by a tidal wave of deportees.

At first men travelled alone or in small groups, setting off into the unknown to seek their fortune. Shepherds with flocks of sheep and herds of cattle were sent to find rich pastures by prosperous landholders. Dr John Lhotsky wrote in *A Journey From Sydney to the Australian Alps* that when he came across Mr Bath, overseer for Cooper and Levy, on the Kuma (Cooma) run in February 1834, he found him living in an orderly two room hut constructed of bark for both walls and roof. He goes on to record that:

*As such huts are commonly near water-holes, where a quantity of the best humus and alluvial soil abounds, spots are cultivated as kitchen-gardens, and the reader will be astonished to see in the course of this work, that I found at Mutong (Matong) (the last out-station in that direction of the Alps), the finest sort of water-melons, cabbages, and other vegetables.*

By the late 1830s a few women began accompanying their husbands to distant districts, weeks or months of travel away from Sydney. These were often newly married girls in their late

teens or early twenties, with little worldly experience and high expectations of 'a life in the colonies'.

While travelling, and for the first weeks and months of squatting, they lived in tents, usually desperately trying to keep up appearances of a civilised life. The next stage for most settlers was a small single or two room hut or house, located near a water source and often somewhere which had a protected area for sheep at night. Locations weren't considered for views and vistas, their houses sat in the foreign bush, surrounded by eucalyptus trees, native grasses and shrubs.

Annie Baxter's journal allows an insight into the squatting life. When, in 1840, Annie moved with her husband to Yesabba, near Port Macquarie, their first accommodation was a tent. This was followed by a two room slab hut with a bark roof, 'on a pretty flat, close to a nice creek of fresh water'. As the couple didn't want to borrow money and hadn't started to produce their own food, they decided to eat cornmeal, the cheapest nourishment available. Annie remarks:

*Now this is a most excellent food for young chickens, but unfortunately we are not of this denomination; therefore we all began to look uncommonly thin.*

Within a few months Annie had established a kitchen garden, a dairy and a poultry yard. She writes that she planted apple seeds from Tasmania and some 'native raspberries'.

Established squatters' houses had an orchard, vegetable garden and wheat field. The tending of the orchard and vegetable garden were usually the responsibility of the women, as were the dairy and the poultry yard.

Old photographs and evidence of remnant plantings reveal that fruit trees and vegetable gardens were usually planted close to the house. This would have been primarily for practical reasons but orchards were often given pride of place in front of the house. These were traditionally planted in rows and probably served as the 'pleasure garden', while often the only truly ornamental plants were a few hardy exotic trees and some pot plants which decorated verandahs. Neat brush and sapling fences were erected around gardens to keep out hungry and destructive wildlife.

Life was incredibly hard for these women, a never ending routine of household tasks dominated by achieving food on the table three times a day. In the kitchen garden and orchard, apart from planting, weeding, and fertilising their crops, they had to be vigilant against insects and other predators, protect plants from frosts

and, in dry areas, carefully apportion water from often meagre sources. The precious vegetables and fruit then had to be preserved, bottled or pickled for winter. In remote areas settlers' survival depended on the success of their own produce. There would have been few hours to devote to more amusing past times, considering the large size of most families.

During the 1840s John Claudius Loudon published many texts to assist people through their domestic life. One of his most popular, the *Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm & Villa Architecture* was used as a reference for building design by settlers in Australia. Quite probably other Loudon books were available here and one which many Australian settlers would have found very useful *The Suburban Horticulturist*, subtitled *An attempt to teach the science and practice of the culture and management of the kitchen, fruit and forcing garden to those who have had no previous knowledge or practice in these departments of gardening* was published in 1842.

This is a most practical publication with instructions for every facet of vegetable gardening including chapters on soils, manures, insects, garden implements, layout of the kitchen garden, specific instructions for a wide range of vegetables, herbs, fruit trees and vines, as well as information about medicinal and toxic plants. With some variations, this advice would have been invaluable to the squatter's wife.

However, gardening, as a suitable pastime for women, was not considered acceptable and consequently diary entries referring to vegetable gardening are scarce. Even recording the type of vegetables eaten with a meal, seems to be rare. Writers might comment on a piece of roasted beef, or some fish caught during a fishing expedition, but fruit and vegetables appeared to rate little interest.

This attitude was slowly changed by the publication of magazines and books by JC Loudon's wife, Jane, who took over the publishing business after the premature death of her husband. Mrs Loudon produced numerous books on gardening, directed towards 'educated ladies', one of the most influential being *The Ladies Companion to Flower Gardening*, published in 1850.

Fortunately at Maffra, Dalgety, NSW, the papers and diaries of the original settler, John Ryrie, have survived. When Mr Ryrie completed his new stone house at Maffra he wrote to Messrs Anderson & Co. in Sydney on 14 August 1886 ordering seeds for pumpkins, watermelons, rock melons, cucumbers, marrows, celery, salsify, turnips, lettuce,

*Now this  
is a most  
excellent food  
for young  
chickens. But  
unfortunately  
we are not  
of this  
denomination;  
therefore we  
all began  
to look  
uncommonly  
thin.*

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3 Ibid. p 90.

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## LA AVENTURA DE ARGENTINA

*The land of the Pampas, the Gaucho and the Tango*

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THE GARDENS  
& ESTANCIAS  
of ARGENTINA  
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Isolated rural properties needed to be self-supporting. This vast kitchen at Bumima, Bombala, NSW had to grow enough produce to feed the entire work force.

parsnips, brussel sprouts, spinach, broccoli, thyme and majoram for his vast vegetable garden.

About the same time he sent off an order for orchard trees.

Two weeks later he wrote again for more seeds, this time flowers - anemones, bellis perennis, carnations, gladiolus, lantana, penstemons, convolvulus, marigolds, nasturtiums and phlox were on his list.

Pleasure gardening had begun in earnest. Ryrie's letters explain his concerns with the cold climate and hard frosts, and his hopes that the dry season had broken. Nothing has changed. The following year he wrote ordering more gladioli and anemones as well as ranunculas, narcissus and tiger lilies. For the Maffra orchard he ordered plums and apricots, and for the kitchen garden 150 asparagus plants from Shepherd & Co in Sydney and 400 strawberry plants from Brunnings in Melbourne.

Seeds arrived via the post but Ryrie worried about delivery problems of larger plants. Dray delivery was considered unreliable, although this was often the only option. Prior to the railway extending into rural areas, parcels were frequently sent by sea, which could take a long time or be delayed and vital connections between ship docking and dray departure were often missed, which meant that delicate plants died en route.

As the century progressed some landholders became wealthy on their pastoral proceeds. They were able to employ small armies of domestic servants and farm labourers. These people lived

on the stations and properties, and as part of their remuneration meat and vegetables were supplied. Some places developed enormous vegetable gardens which could have produce enough food for a small town.

Until some twenty years ago supplies of fruit and vegetables to many rural areas were erratic and the quality poor. Consequently small scale vegetable and orchard production remained important to country families. Even today, with improved accessibility to fresh produce and the increased demands on available time for gardening, many people prefer to grow their own. The reasons are varied, sometimes for superior flavours or concerns about chemicals, for variety or just for the satisfaction of home production.

The stalwarts of the English kitchen garden, peas and beans, potatoes and carrots, broccoli and brussel sprouts, grown in Australia since first settlement, are still popular. Today, many growers are seeking old and rare varieties of fruit and vegetables, bored with the dull taste of modern produce, bred more for longevity and resistance to damage than for flavour.

Amongst these traditional vegetables in kitchen gardens can now be found Asian herbs and vegetables, choy sum, daikon, bok choy, lemon grass, Vietnamese mint. What is grown in our kitchen gardens reflects the changing tastes and culture of our community. Notwithstanding the apparent sumptuous array of vegetables in supermarkets, the tradition of the kitchen garden is still strong in rural Australia.

**Suzannah Plowman**, a science master in architectural conservation, is a heritage advisor for four rural shires and undertakes private commissions covering all facets of building conservation, extensions and alterations to heritage buildings as well as cultural assessments and conservation management plans. During the course of her work she has been privileged to visit an enormous number of heritage sites, many which have remnants of early plantings. Her particular interest is rural buildings and their environs, especially those which are now disused and most at risk.

*A history of the*  
**NOBELIUS NURSERIES**  
 1886 TO 1921  
*Emerald, Victoria*

**EMERALD TODAY** is a bustling, thriving hills town in the Dandenong Ranges east of Melbourne.

young trees standing out against the weed-free red soil. Any trees showing signs of pest or disease

by Jo Jenkinson

There is little to suggest that a century ago its existence depended almost entirely on an enterprise that was the vision of one man. The Nobelius Nurseries, known officially as the Gembrook Nurseries because of their location in the Parish of Gembrook, once spread over a large part of Emerald and were renowned in many parts of the world for their exports of fruit and ornamental trees.

Carl Axel Nobelius was born in 1851 in Finland of Swedish parents, and migrated to Melbourne in 1872. He had trained as a gardener and his first employment in Melbourne was as a nursery assistant with the well-known landscaping firm, Taylor and Sangster, of Toorak. Later he worked for Joseph Harris, of South Yarra, who provided him with many contacts in the nursery trade.

Determined to have his own business, Nobelius set about seeking land where he might in due course establish a nursery. In 1886 his explorations led him to the small settlement of Emerald, where the rich soil favoured the growth of strong, fibrous roots needed for transplanting young trees. Here, with his savings and a loan from Taylor and Sangster, Nobelius purchased 63 acres of hilly, heavily timbered land. At first confined to working at weekends while he maintained his job and young family in South Yarra, by 1892 he was sufficiently established to move permanently to Emerald.

Local settlers were employed to clear the land. Undergrowth was burned off and trees felled in early summer, with stumps removed by charring. A large trench was dug around the base of each stump and filled with dry wood which was then set alight. Once the fire was reduced to glowing coals it was covered with clods of earth and left to burn, but had to be checked regularly - dangerous work because there was always a risk of the trench collapsing. Later a hand-operated winch was used instead to remove the stumps.

Once the land was cleared the soil was ploughed with a single furrow mould-board plough; later it was harrowed with a horse-drawn plough, then left to fallow over winter. By late winter or early spring the fallowed land was ready for cultivation by hand, using spades and chop hoes.

Stocks were planted by teams of five men working in rows three feet apart. First a line was strung in place along a row; then one man using a spade would cut a vertical trench along the line, another would spread blood and bone, a third would place the stocks upright against the vertical wall of the trench, and the man who had made the first cut would fill the trench while the rest would start again with the next.

From the time of planting the soil was kept tilled. The huge areas under cultivation must have been an impressive sight, with row after row of evenly growing

were removed and burned rather than spraying or washing with chemicals. Articles published in horticultural journals of the time praised the high standard of the enterprise, and a writer in the *Australasian* described the nursery as 'a model of order and cleanliness'.

Most trees were grown on rootstocks using either grafting or budding. A favourite rootstock for apples was 'Northern Spy' because of its resistance to blight. Parent stocks and cuttings were supplied by Taylor and Sangster and other nurserymen including Brunnings and Cheesmans. Local growers also supplied apple stocks grown along the nearby Woori Yallock Creek, and stock for dwarf apples came from an experimental station at East Maling, England.

Both budding and grafting required highly skilled, intensive labour - the magnitude of the task was described by the horticultural reporter of the *Leader* following a visit to the nursery in April 1909, where he observed a team of twelve skilled workmen in the process of budding 250,000 apple and 80,000 plum trees. Apples were easiest to work with: one man could bud 2,000 apples in a nine hour day, although one of Nobelius's sons set a record by budding 1,600 apples in five hours.

To establish a variety of plants, Nobelius collected seed from parks and orchards as well as making regular purchases from seed suppliers Felton Grimwade, Law Somner, and Swallow and Ariel. Canning factories in the fruit growing areas of central Victoria supplied fruit stones: in one season an order included two tons of peach and one ton of apricot stones, a sack of cherry stones, and half a hundred weight of pear pips. A sack of plum stones was imported from France. Nobelius experimented with new plants that would be suitable for different climates, and as the business expanded varieties were imported from all over the world.

The first sales were to nurserymen and landscapers known to Nobelius through his employment in Melbourne. Nobelius also encouraged local settlers to develop their own orchards, thus providing a ready market within the district, and persuaded local councils and government departments to purchase ornamental trees to provide shade for streets and parks.

The business expanded rapidly. By 1903 Nobelius was advertising one million trees for sale. Between 1903 and 1906, as the original land became worked out, new land was acquired. The nursery now extended over 100 acres, with more than one and a half million trees in various stages of growth; by 1909 this had grown to 200 acres and two and a half million trees. At its peak more than 80 workers were employed.

The range of stock advertised in 1909 included 200 apple, 41 apricot, 73 cherry, 24 nectarine,



Nobelius overseeing budding operations.

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125 peach, 82 pear, 73 plum and 40 Japanese plum varieties. Mediterranean fruits included numerous varieties of almonds, figs, olives, oranges and lemons. Other stock included persimmons, quinces, gooseberries, several varieties of raspberries, blackberries, mulberries and currants, chestnuts, walnuts, filberts (cultivated hazel), artichokes, eight varieties of rhubarb, and medlars.

*Acer* (maple), ash, beech, birch and liriiodendron were sold as ornamental trees for cool climates, and cedars for warmer climates. The Canadian elm was recommended as a rapidly growing street tree, English elms being slower but ultimately growing larger than other varieties. The oriental plane was offered for street planting in any climate. Other deciduous trees included flowering cherries, *Ginkgo biloba* (maidenhair tree), oaks, liquidambar, poplars, robinia — recommended to farmers for timber as well as summer shade, and *populus alba* (silver poplar).

Trees were packed bare-rooted in bundles, wrapped in hessian and secured with twine, and labelled for identification with embossed metal labels. Letters from satisfied customers reproduced in subsequent catalogues testified to the care taken in packing, the excellent condition in which trees arrived, and the fact that they were always true to label.

By the early twentieth century Nobelius was venturing into overseas markets, including the United States, New Zealand, South America, Europe, parts of Asia, and South Africa, where trees were needed to replace large areas of orchard destroyed during the Boer War. On a visit to Japan to buy inapples, Nobelius had seen plantations of Chinese gooseberries, and supplied the original kiwi fruit to New Zealand from plants he had imported for propagation.

From the beginning transport was a problem. Trees were lifted and packed during the dormant winter months when roads were virtually impassable. They were hauled on bullock drays over rough tracks to the nearest station sixteen miles distant, and repacked on to railway wagons for transport to the city. Delays were often caused by bad weather.

Not surprisingly, then, Nobelius played an important role in convincing the Victorian Government to construct the narrow gauge track which extended the railway from Fern Tree Gully through Emerald to Gembrook. Construction began in 1898 and in December 1900 the first train reached Gembrook. In 1904 the Victorian Railways gave Nobelius permission to build a packing shed and construct a siding alongside the line adjacent to land acquired for expansion of the nursery.

Although fruit trees, and to a lesser extent ornamental trees, remained the heart of Nobelius's enterprise, he also ventured into other areas. To meet his own need for rope and twine for packing, he established a 100 acre plantation of New Zealand flax. A steam driven mill processed the flax to produce fibre, which was then sent to Melbourne for manufacture. Nobelius was a director of the Monbulk Cooperative Fruitgrowers Association which produced jams for export, and grew berries for fruit harvesting as well as for nursery stock. A rosemary plantation for the production of cosmetic oil was less successful in competing with overseas products.

Nobelius was tireless in promoting his business and advertised extensively. The catalogues, beautifully produced, were circulated widely, and were informative as well as attractive. In a statement in each catalogue Nobelius introduced his range of stock for the season and described any new developments. Each plant listed was accompanied by a vivid description of its appearance, flavour, time of ripening, keeping quality, abundance of fruit, size, and marketability. As this entry for Wickson Plum in the 1911 Catalogue shows, these descriptions often took on a poetic quality, no doubt designed to tempt the prospective buyer:

*The fruit from the time it is half-grown until a few days before ripening is of a pearly white colour, but all at once a soft pink shading creeps over it, and in a few days it has changed to a glowing carmine, with a heavy white bloom; the stone is very small, and the flesh is of a fine texture, firm, sugary, and delicious; one of the best.*

In the world of business and society, Nobelius had a reputation for traditional virtues of hard work, thrift and honesty. On a visit to the nursery reported in *The Age* of 18 November 1905, the Governor of Victoria described Nobelius as a man of 'energy, enterprise, perseverance, courage, and, above all, integrity'. Local historian Gus Ryberg, whose father worked for Nobelius, sees him as a complex character who had a negative as well as a positive side. He recalls Nobelius as a tall, bearded and kindly man, who could nevertheless be 'devious and dominating' in his business pursuits. In a depressed economy he kept wages to a minimum, paying piecework rates for skilled tasks that were essential to nursery operations. But he contributed in no small way to the social and sporting life of the Emerald community which provided his labour.

In the end, Nobelius was powerless to control outside events that had a devastating and lasting impact on his business. The outbreak of World War I led to disruptions to shipping and the loss of overseas markets from which the nursery never recovered. On his death in 1921, the nursery was sold in accordance with his will, but later bought back by two of his sons. It continued to operate on a much smaller scale until 1955, when it was purchased by S. and L. Linton & Son of Clayton.

Some of the land occupied by the nursery eventually became residential; other areas were taken up for farming. Much of it was purchased by syndicates: one to form the Emerald Country Club, and another an estate that later became Emerald Lake Park. In the park, beech, oaks, chestnuts and maples ploughed into the ground during the market collapse of World War I have mingled with tree ferns and native shrubs to create a deciduous forest that is a sure reminder of the once flourishing nursery. In 1983 the last remnant of the former nursery - twelve acres adjoining Emerald Lake Park and the Puffing Billy Railway - was purchased by the former Sherbrooke Shire Council with assistance from the State Government. The area is known as the Nobelius Heritage Park. Here, plantations and specimen plants typical of the Nobelius era have been established to make it a fitting memorial to this once great enterprise.

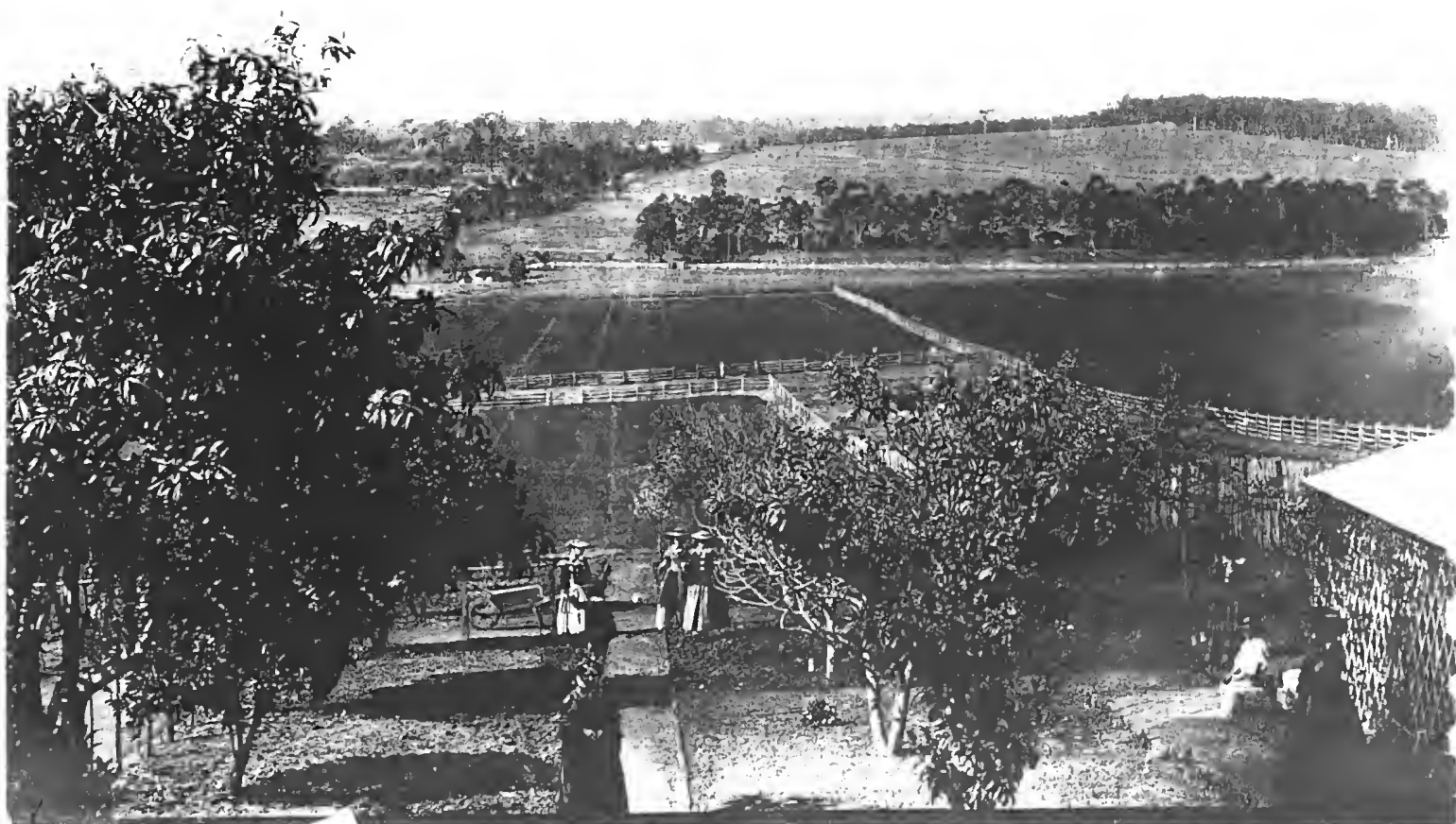
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- Dr Jo Jenkinson is a former academic at Deakin University, Burwood, Victoria, and lives at Emerald. Local history and gardening are favourite hobbies, and she is secretary of the committee of Management of the Nobelius Heritage Park and Emerald Museum. She has published extensively in academic journals and books, but this is her first venture into local history writing.



# THE KITCHEN GARDEN at Vaucluse house





# Fruit & Vegetables

IN COLONIAL NEW SOUTH WALES

Governor Arthur Phillip included hundreds of bushels of vegetable seeds, plant cuttings and some grafted fruit trees in the cargo of the First Fleet. HMS *Sirius* carried 274 bushels of vegetable seeds, which included Dwarf marrow Peas, Field pease, fine Colewort, fine early York and Green Savoy cabbages, Long Orange carrot, Best Onion Seed, Spinage, Speckled Kidney Beans, Asparagus Seed, Red and White Beet, Early cauliflower, Cabbage Lettuce, Green Cos and Selesia [Silesian] lettuce, Curled Parsley, Cress and Sweet and pot herbs, whilst those on HMS *Supply* and storeships *Golden Grove* and

*Borrowdale* included Swelling parsnip, Kidney Beans, London Leek, Onion Sorts, Best Turnip Sorts, Radish Seed, Large Windsor Beans and Horse Beans.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the botanist Sir Joseph Banks's plant collection from England, there were bananas, oranges and lemons collected at Rio de Janeiro, and figs, sugar cane, apples, quinces and pears from the Cape of Good Hope, which were planted at the first Government House (right). By 1791, adjacent to the ornamental garden and enclosed by brush fencing, was a vegetable garden, 350 by 100 feet 'growing excellent cauliflowers and melons, very fine of their kind'.<sup>2</sup> Further east was an orchard 700 by 240 feet. It was in this garden that Australia's first grapes were grown. Potatoes, Indian Corn and English Wheat were planted in neat, carefully cultivated rows in the garden at the Government Farm,

1 Alan Frost, *Sir Joseph Banks and the Transfer of Plants to and from the South Pacific 1786-1798*, Melbourne, Colony Press, 1993, pp. 7-11.

2 David Collins, Letter October 1791, quoted in Howard Tanner and Jane Begg, *The Great Gardens of Australia*, South Melbourne, 1983, p. 18.



Farm Cove, Sydney. Under Governor Phillip's orders, Philip Gidley King established a parallel convict settlement at Norfolk Island in 1788, where potatoes, yams, turnips, onions, lettuce, 'spinage', parsley and cabbage, were planted but failed to flourish.

Phillip soon realised that the poor soil around Port Jackson was unsuitable for productive farming and, in November 1788, he led an exploratory party upriver in search of good, friable land. By 1790 the Government Farm at Parramatta was established where he oversaw experiments in growing plants with a commercial potential such as flax, tea, cotton and sugar.

Fruit trees such as pomegranates and apples, and nearly all the European culinary vegetables, thrived at Parramatta in the Government House gardens. In 1791 Watkin Tench, a captain in the Marines assigned to the First Fleet and a naturalist, commented on the advances in gardening made at Rose Hill (Parramatta): 'Vines of every sort seem to flourish; melons, cucumbers, and pumpkins, run with unbounded luxuriance ... apples, and the fruits of other climes, also promise to gratify expectation'.<sup>3</sup>

Nearby, at Experiment Farm, Parramatta, the convict James Ruse had cultivated 'an acre and

a half in bearded wheat, half an acre in maize and a small kitchen garden'<sup>4</sup> preparing the land with ashes from fallen burnt timber and digging in the grass and weeds, and in 1794, Elizabeth Macarthur wrote that Elizabeth Farm house was 'surrounded by a Vineyard & Garden of about three acres the former full of Vines & Fruit trees, & the latter abounding with most excellent vegetables'.<sup>5</sup> Elizabeth Macarthur wrote again, in March 1816, to her god-daughter, Eliza Kingdon the following account: 'In our garden, which is large we have Oranges, Lemons, Olives, Almonds, Grapes, Peaches, Apricots, Nectarines, Meddlars, Pears, Apples, Raspberries, Strawberries, Walnuts, Cherries, Plums. These fruits you know. Then we have the Loquat ... the Citron, the Shaddock and the Pomegranate ... the Cherry and Guava ... the Fig, of which we have many varieties and an abundance'.<sup>6</sup>

By the 1820s prosperous colonists had created their own substantial kitchen gardens. That at Rouse Hill house is the earliest known surviving layout (left). The flower garden, the kitchen garden and the orchard were planned in a straightforward and uncomplicated manner. This took the form of a typical squared layout of beds and paths, the garden plots varying in size with their purpose, topography and the size of

(cover) Turk's head squash

(opposite page) Rouse Hill: the fruit-tree lined paths of the kitchen garden with cultivated fields beyond. Photograph by Thomas Wingate, Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW

(below) William Bradley, *Governor's House at Sydney, Port Jackson, 1791*. Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW

3 Watkin Tench, *A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson in New South Wales*, London, 1793, p. 165.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 80.

5 Elizabeth Macarthur, letter from Elizabeth Farm, Parramatta, to England, 22 August 1794, Macarthur Papers, ML A2908, Mitchell Library, SLNSW.

6 Elizabeth Macarthur to Eliza Kingdon, March 1816, *ibid.*

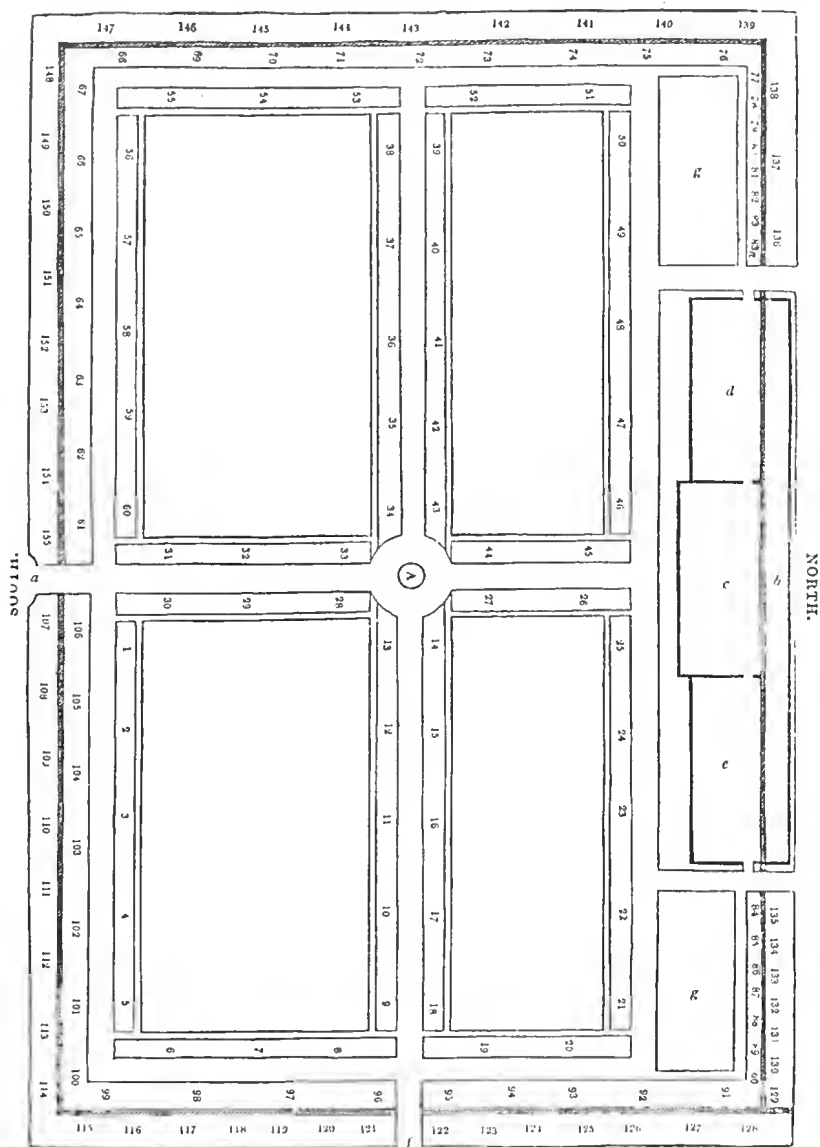


the establishment. The beds were separated by straight gravelled walks.

The design of Australian gardens and the choice of plants was strongly influenced by British practice. Thomas Shepherd was an important advocate of the British-inspired landscape garden in New South Wales, but of more practical benefit to the colony was his experience as a nurseryman. He had trained as a landscape architect under Thomas White, a contemporary of 'Capability' Brown, but had been a nurseryman at Hackney for twenty years before migrating to Australia in the 1820s. Although originally intending to prosper by growing oranges in the deep rich Hawkesbury River flats he reverted to his old profession of nurseryman. With Governor Darling's assistance, Shepherd established the Darling Nursery, on the edge of the town, near the present corner of Parramatta and City Roads.

George Suttor who had charge of plants shipped to Sydney in 1800<sup>7</sup> was probably the first nurseryman to arrive in New South Wales, and grew plants which he advertised for sale in the *Sydney Gazette* on 20 May 1804, including apples, pears, peaches, figs, apricots and Chily [sic] strawberries. Thomas Shepherd, however, was the first gardener to set up a fully commercial nursery garden in Sydney but had trouble making a profit selling trees while colonists could obtain yearly supplies of fruit trees and other species free from the thriving Government Gardens. He also experimented using grafts of fruit trees from William Macarthur at Camden Park and Alexander Macleay at Elizabeth Bay.

Shepherd delivered a series of lectures on horticulture at the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts in 1834 and, in 1835 published them as a guide to kitchen gardens in the colony. Shepherd's *Lectures on the Horticulture of New South Wales* was followed in 1843 by *The South Australian Vigneron and Gardeners' Manual* written by George McEwin in Adelaide. Both give advice on siting, planting and maintaining kitchen gardens in Australian conditions.



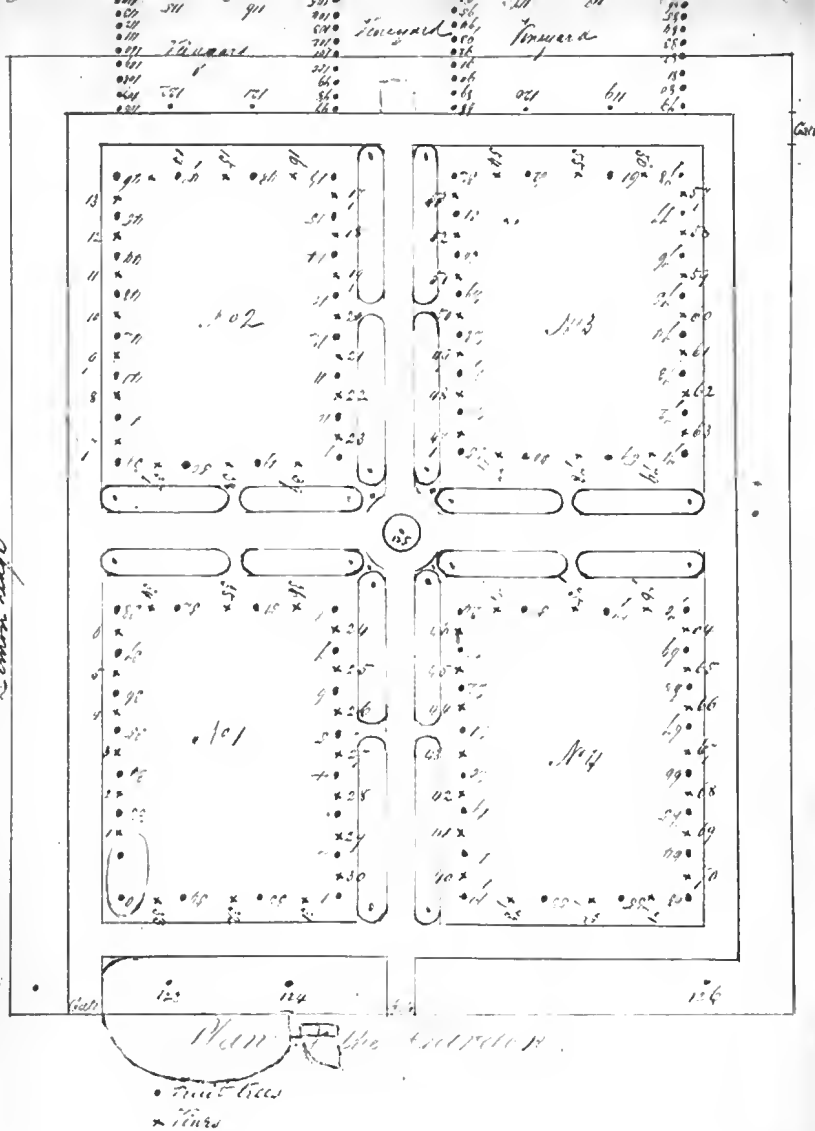
Colonists had previously relied on English handbooks such as Philip Miller's *The Gardeners Kalendar*. From the 1820s John Claudius Loudon's (1783-1843) influential works on gardening and domestic architecture were available in New South Wales and Tasmania. Loudon and his wife, Jane, were the most influential British writers on gardening in the early century. Loudon stated that whilst the pleasure (or flower) garden was a luxury, the kitchen garden, like the farm, plantation and orchard, was an economic necessity.

Loudon recommended that a kitchen garden be placed 'as near the mansion and the stable-offices, as is consistent with beauty, convenience, and other arrangements',<sup>8</sup> and 'that the walls be screened by shrubbery from the immediate view of the public rooms ... and placed at no great distance from the house. In stepping from the shrubbery to the flower-garden, thence to the orchard, and lastly to the culinary garden, there is a gradation both natural and pleasant'.<sup>9</sup> Loudon also provided a wealth of advice on the exposure, aspect, extent, shelter and shade, soil, water, walls, and form of the plot. 'In regard to form ... a square, or oblong ... A geometrical square ... to procure a more equal distribution of

J. C. Loudon, *The Suburban Gardener and Villa Companion*, London, 1838

7 Suttor to Sir Joseph Banks, 28 December 1800, Banks Papers, ML A79/3, p.272, Mitchell Library, SLNSW.

8 John Claudius Loudon, *An Encyclopaedia of Gardening ...* London, 1835, p. 719 (1982 reprint).



the great wealth of fruits grown. By 1836 he had 'a Garden, producing Oranges, Apples, Loquats, Pears, Plums, Cherries, Figs, Mulberries, Medlars, Raspberries, Strawberries, and Gooseberries' - a range of fruit unattainable in an English garden without extensive glasshouses.<sup>12</sup>

Typically an early nineteenth century English gentleman's kitchen garden would be square or rectangular; if rectangular, the longer sides faced north and south. The ground was enclosed by a high wall often to create better conditions in the borders beside them for delicate plants such as lettuce, or herbs in western borders and provide northern, cool shade for seedlings. Inside these borders the garden was divided into four to six plots, roughly equal in size, separated by gravel paths.

sun and shade'.<sup>10</sup> 'The area, or space enclosed by the garden walls is usually formed into compartments, very commonly called quarters and borders, or narrow slips running parallel to the walls and walks ... Rectangular figures are almost universally preferred for both ... In the garden of an acre ... the walks are never less than six feet broad ... and the marginal borders from seven to eight feet wide'.<sup>11</sup> There is advice on the type and positioning of fruit trees, and also the orchard and vineyard subsidiary to the kitchen garden. This superseded the attitude of the eighteenth century Landscape style when the kitchen garden was dismissed as unsightly and placed at an impractical distance from the house.

Climate and lack of facilities forced many prosperous colonists to have less elaborate gardens than those proprietors of equivalent wealth in England. In the adverse conditions of regular heat and irregular rainfall, the clumps and thickets of the English garden were difficult to reproduce. Whilst drought was a recurring problem, the amount of sun allowed for a range of fruit to grow easily. There were great advantages as well as disadvantages in the temperature and climate of Australia. Alexander Macleay's garden at Brownlow Hill demonstrated

Most of the produce came from the central beds, where strict crop rotation was practised. All plots except one, were cultivated. This was a space for frames and hot-beds. Proper use of the various parts was most important.

There are many variations on this plan to suit conditions or whims - Loudon's *Encyclopaedia of Gardening* and *The Suburban Gardener* ... illustrate oval, circular and irregular forms - but all conform to the principle of a distinct walled garden divided into easily managed areas, with fruit trees forming the inside borders and defining the squares, in which vegetables were grown (above left). This is the form of kitchen garden that was translated, with various adaptations or modifications as necessary, to early colonial New South Wales (above).

Walls were rarely required in the mild climate of New South Wales although hedges were necessary for protection from stock and wind. Prickly pear, quince, lemon, hawthorn and box thorn were all used depending on the site and climate. Such kitchen gardens, both suburban and in the country, are recorded in numerous contemporary descriptions and plans. (following page, below left and right) For example, in the mid 1830s, Lyndhurst at Glebe, the residence of

Plan of a garden and vineyard, Hunter Valley, NSW. Mitchell Library. State Library of NSW

9 Ibid. p. 720.

10 Ibid. p. 727.

11 Ibid. p. 735.

12 James Backhouse, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Australian Colonies*, London, 1843.

(right) Toxteth Park, Glebe.  
Mitchell Library,  
State Library of NSW

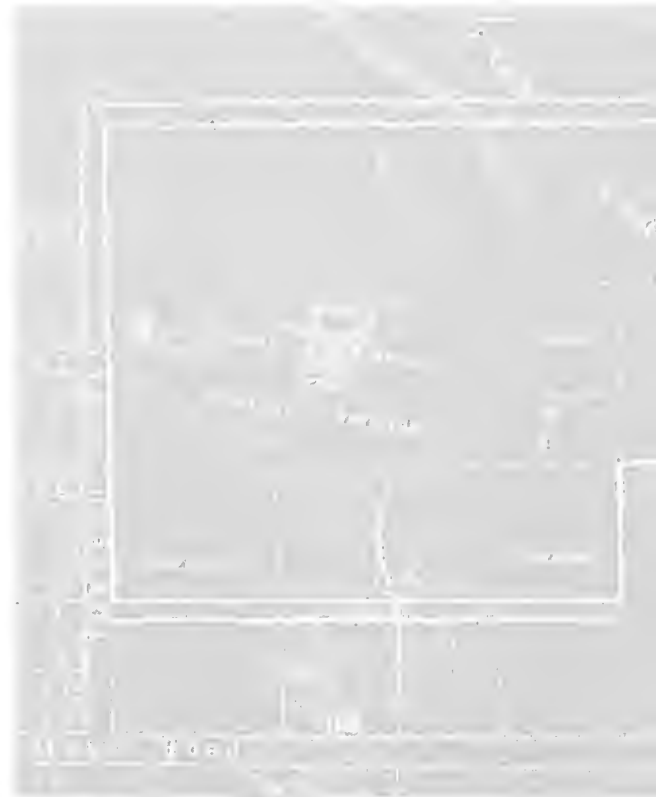
(middle, below)  
Artists unknown, Solomon  
Wiseman's house and garden  
Wiseman's Ferry,  
S.H Erwin Gallery  
National Trust of Australia  
(NSW)

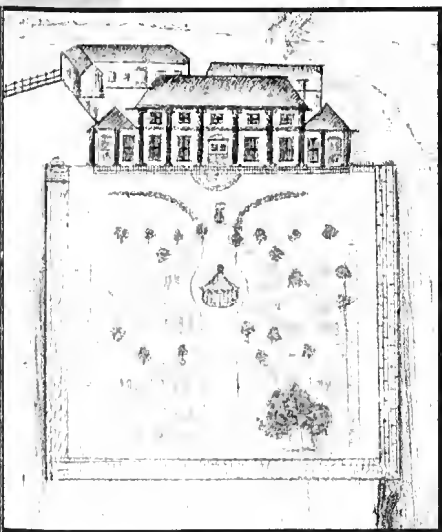
(far right) Bello Retiro,  
Newtown, 1842.  
Mitchell Library,  
State Library of NSW

13 Plan of a garden and  
vineyard 1832-1849,  
ML A714,  
Mitchell Library, SLNSW.

Dr James Bowman, had a rectangular grid kitchen garden situated behind, and at a distance from, the main house as did Bello Retiro at Newtown (far right). At James Squire's estate at Kissing Point in 1842, the orchard and garden were situated adjacent to each other behind the house and formed into a grid by a bisecting road. At Captain John Piper's sophisticated Henrietta Villa, constructed on Point Piper between 1816-20 and overlooking Sydney Harbour, the kitchen garden, which supplied 'an abundance of the choicest fruits', was sited on the hill behind the house and of cruciform shape presumably determined by the topography.

The quintessential layout of a colonial kitchen garden is recorded in the plan and lists of fruit trees and vines, dating from 1832 to 1849, of a garden, unidentified but possibly at St Aubins or Invermein, in the Hunter Valley (previous page).<sup>13</sup> This unusually detailed account has been of particular use in the reconstruction of the kitchen garden at Vacluse House.





# THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE KITCHEN GARDEN at vaocluse house



Conrad Martens,  
*Vaocluse from the Road*  
Oct. 30/10, 1840.  
Dixson Galleries,  
State Library of NSW

The Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales aims to conserve and interpret Vaocluse House as the Sydney home of William Charles and Sarah Wentworth and their family. Its presentation focuses on the mid-nineteenth century, but reflects its continued occupation by the Wentworth family until its acquisition by the state government early this century.

As part of this interpretation, the Trust has undertaken a partial reconstruction of the kitchen garden carefully based on physical and documentary research. This research has included reviewing lists of seeds and plants available in the period, matching these with seeds and plants now available in England and Australia, studying visual evidence such as drawings, paintings, survey maps, aerial and other site photographs and newspaper articles, family papers and references, researching comparable estates for details of layout and construction of kitchen gardens, determining contemporary horticultural practice and its influence, and a physical examination of the site through archaeology and pollen analysis.

The gently sloping site is near to, but across the stream from, the service courtyard of the house,

and adjacent to the wash house, in the south-western section of the remaining ten hectare estate. There is a clear view from the kitchen to the kitchen garden. The reconstructed site is approximately 1580 square metres, and only a small part of the original grid of orchards, vegetable plots and vineyard.

Whilst there is no detailed image of Vaocluse House's kitchen garden, Conrad Martens's pencil sketch 'Vaocluse from the Road' in October 1840 shows the overall cultivated area divided by paths, but shrubbery unfortunately obscures the section chosen for reconstruction (above).

More recent and important evidence of cultivation in this area is a 1930s' aerial survey photograph (above right) which clearly shows the rectangular grid pattern of paths which conforms to the configuration of the wire fenced enclosure recorded in the Metropolitan Water Board survey of the site in 1887. (below) By this time, with William Charles and Sarah Wentworth dead and the house occupied by family members, it is likely that the extensive kitchen garden of the 1840s had been greatly reduced in size.

There is continuing but irregular documentary evidence of growing vegetables and fruit at



(left) Aerial view of Vaucluse House, 1930s. Historic Houses Trust of NSW

(below) Vaucluse Estate. Survey of Parish of Alexandria, 1887. Sydney Water (detail) Reconstructed area circled

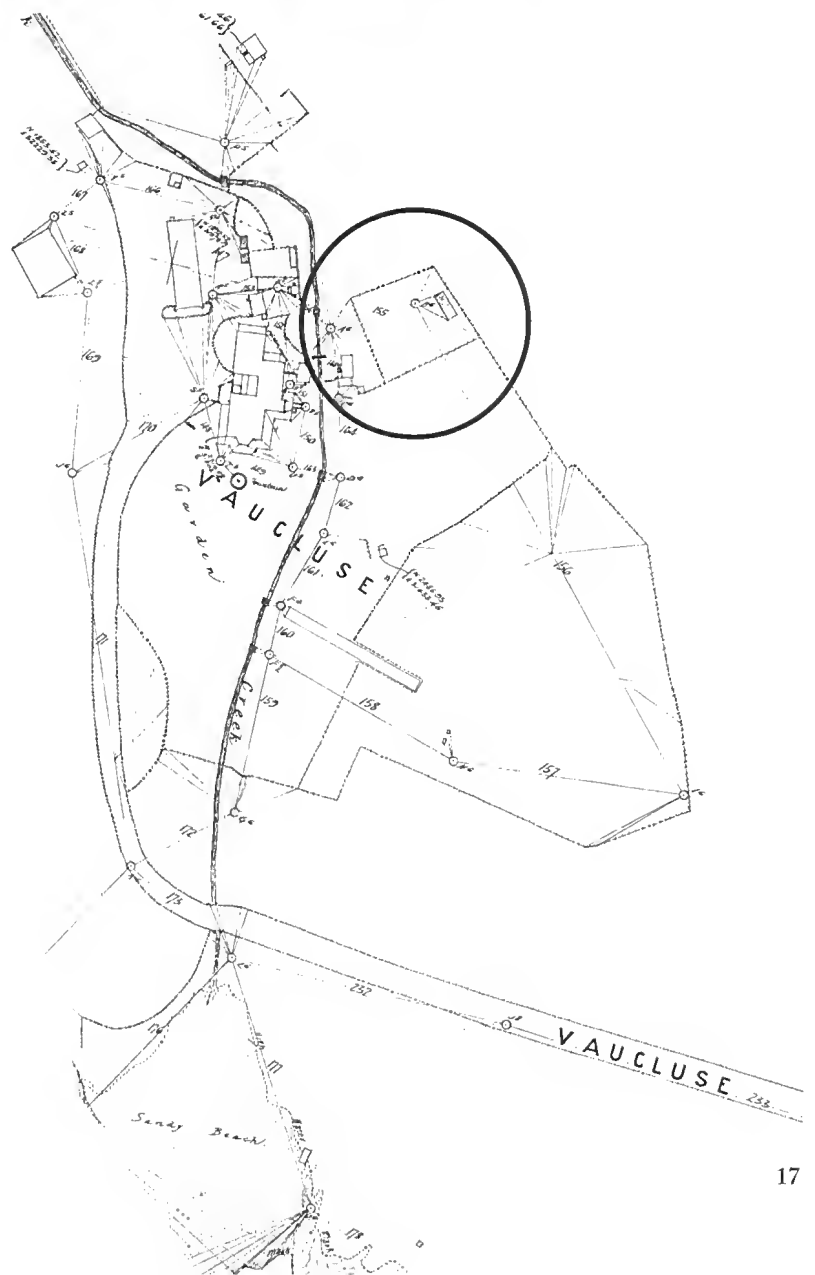
14 Samuel Breakwell Papers, ML MSS 1720, p. 2, Mitchell Library, SLNSW.

Vaucluse. The earliest, dated 24 November 1801, is 'A List of Garden Flowers & Pot Herbs Seeds for Sir Henry B. Hayes Bt.' compiled by his estate manager, Samuel Breakwell. This list includes

- '8 Pottles Early Beans
- 8 Pottles Early Peas
- 8 Pottles Glory England Peas
- 1 lb Early York Cabbage
- 1/2 lb London Collyflower
- 1 lb Early Dch Turnip
- 1 lb Yellow Turnip
- 1 lb Mustard
- 1 lb Leek
- 1 lb Strasg Onion,
- 1/2 lb Mixed Lettice
- 1/2 lb Prickly Spinnage
- 1/2 lb Radish
- 2 lb Carrot
- 2 lb Parsnip
- 2 Pottles Scarlet Runner Beans
- 2 lb Asparagus seed
- Salsify, Scorzonera, Thyme, Fennell,
- Melon seeds and 2 oz Globe Thistle'.

Although this list predates Browne Hayes's purchase of Vaucluse it indicates what vegetables were available in the colony and what was likely to have grown at Vaucluse when he acquired the estate in 1803.<sup>14</sup>

From 1803-1812 the garden expenses of Vaucluse House included 'a Number of Trees and Assparagus Beds for the Garden from Mrs Bloodsworth £150.0.0 ... Clearing 50 Acres of



Stages of the reconstruction  
of the kitchen garden,  
Vaucluse House,  
photographed by  
Patrick Grant,  
Historic Houses Trust of NSW

1<sup>st</sup> April 1999



3<sup>rd</sup> June 1999



5<sup>th</sup> June 1999



January 2000



Land @ £5 pr Acre from a Woody State &c for Agricultural and other purposes ... Planting several Thousands Fruit Trees, Trenching the Garden ground of (2 Acres) 3 Feet deep all over, and Enclosing the same with a Ditch & Bank 6 foot deep & 5 foot wide £300.0.0'.<sup>15</sup> (Trenching is the practice of 'double digging' to loosen the soil and to add nutrient such as manure.)

Vaucluse was advertised for lease in the *Sydney Gazette* of 10 June 1815, as 'well cropped with choice Fruit and ornamental Trees'. Among the fruit trees was possibly the loquat, an unfamiliar tree to European eyes and admired at Vaucluse in 1825 by Baron Hyacinthe de Bougainville.<sup>16</sup> On William Charles Wentworth's purchasing the estate in 1827 there were 'two large Gardens, (situate near the House) well stocked with Fruit Trees and containing a choice Collection of Plants'.<sup>17</sup>

Wentworth's interest in matters agricultural, demonstrated in his *Statistical, Historical, and Political Description of the Colony of New South Wales* in 1819, was put into practice at Vaucluse. On 13 January 1830, the *Australian* recorded a 'Peach grown ... at Vaucluse ... measuring nine inches in circumference. In this garden there grows the most delicious fruit in the colony'. Wentworth won prizes in the Floral and Horticultural Shows of September 1841 and September 1842 for pineapples and in March 1843 exhibited 'a yellow pine black apple, rock melon, sugar cane, potherbs, and commercial plants'.<sup>18</sup>

On 1 July 1846, Wentworth purchased fruit trees and vines from William Macarthur's Camden Park Nursery. They included

- '1 Camden pale superb Apricot ...
- 1 Maria Louisa Pear,
- 1 Chaumontelle [pear],
- 1 Golden Buerre [pear],
- 1 Cape Pear ...
- 1 Merch[an]t Campbells peach ...
- 1 Cattleys purple guava ...
- 24 rooted plants Corinth grape ...
- 50 Raisin Monstreux ...
- 25 Parsley broad Chasselas'.<sup>19</sup>

On 1 October 1847, Wentworth sent a bearer to William Sharp Macleay of nearby Elizabeth Bay House 'for the custard apple and other things you were good enough to promise me'.<sup>20</sup>

By December 1853, when Wentworth prepared to join his family overseas, the garden was well established. The lease drawn up with John Hosking (lessee 1854-56) reflected the importance of his horticultural



interests at Vacluse. Hosking was charged to keep the park, gardens, orangeries, vineyard and the buildings, fencing, hedges, ditches, gates, stiles, rails, poles, posts and drains in good order, and to keep the gardens, orangeries, vineyards, orchards and greenhouses properly stocked. Unfortunately the layout of the garden is not described in the lease nor is there an accompanying plan.

In a letter to her daughter Thomasine Fisher, written on 20 December 1861 after her return to Vacluse, Sarah Wentworth referred to 'a great many vines of different mellons in hope of a good feast for Papa enjoys a good mellon'.<sup>21</sup> The following year Sarah wrote to Thomasine that they 'have not had a good peach season the heat ... has made them very small, the pears, apples and grapes are in abundance and also the Water Melon the rest of the first crop failed for the want of rain'.<sup>22</sup> On 24 September 1867 Sarah, living again in England, advised Thomasine's husband Thomas Fisher to 'only grow enough vegetables for your own table and use' and to sow lucerne in some of the beds.<sup>23</sup> This heralded the decline of the kitchen garden at Vacluse House.

In reconstructing the Kitchen Garden, this primary evidence has been supplemented by contemporary nursery catalogues and horticultural instructions, including Thomas Shepherd's *Lectures on the Horticulture of New South Wales* (1835), the catalogues of Camden Park Nursery (for fruit and vines) of 1843, 1845, 1850 and 1857, Thomas Shepherd's Darling Nursery (1851), John Baptist (Sydney, 1861), George Smith (Ballarat, 1862) (for fruit and vegetables culture, calendar, suggestions for layout, hedges and edgings) and M. Guilfoyle and Son, Exotic Nursery, Double Bay (1866). Information from these catalogues was correlated with references in the Wentworth papers, and the resulting plants and seeds sourced from overseas and Australian nurseries and seed companies.

George McEwin's *The South Australian Vignerons and Gardeners' Manual* (1843) contains 'plain practical directions for the cultivation of the vine, the propagation of fruit-trees, with catalogue and directions for cultivation, and the management of the kitchen garden, with catalogue of culinary herbs, etc'. McEwin suggested that 'The best form for a garden is an oblong square ... A square is preferable to any other form ... the operations of culture, as planting and sowing, are more easily and speedily done than if the form was an irregular outline ... calculations can be made with the greatest exactness, as, how much of this or that it will take to plant or sow a square ... and dig'.<sup>24</sup> Post and rail with palings are suggested as an

interim measure while a hedge 'with strong prickles' is established. McEwin recommends a species of Acacia, native of Kangaroo Island, a rapid grower with sharp spines or Prickly Pear.<sup>25</sup> George Smith in his Ballarat text *The Cottage Gardener* (1862) recommends 'Cape Broom, Acacia Armata, or White Thorn',<sup>26</sup> and suggests edgings of walks of thyme, thryft, strawberry, camomile, parsley, marjoram or sage.

The 1884 fieldbook of the survey of Vacluse describes, behind the wash-house and privy, a 'Rough Wire Net fence' with an outbuilding on its higher side. Although the use of this area is not specified it has been partitioned off from the early, larger garden enclosure and it is likely that by this date the kitchen garden had contracted to this smaller plot. Although there is no evidence that the wired enclosure was hedged, it was thought that a traditional rough lemon hedge should surround the garden as an example of common practice in the Sydney and Hunter Valley areas, and appropriate plants were sourced.

After documentary research was completed, focus shifted to the site itself. Only one fruiting olive tree (*Olea europaea*) survives in the northern part of the original larger layout but, owing to the constraints of later developments in this area, together with the constraint of upkeep, it was decided that the wired enclosure shown was the most feasible area for reconstruction.

Using the surveyor's field notes, the wire net enclosure square was resurveyed. An archaeological investigation began in June 1999 to discern any physical evidence below ground, searching specifically for elements mentioned on the survey plan, as well as generally for evidence of previous cultivation or change. A fifteen tonne excavator trenched north south across the site. This one-day dig uncovered evidence of fenceposts, the road bisecting the site east west, sandstone flooring to the timber shed described at the southern edge of the site, and cultivation lines - evidence of cutting into subsoil clay - where the whole soil profile has been redistributed top to bottom i.e. trenching or double digging. Whilst this is mentioned in the Breakwell papers, it is not necessarily this trenching, which was a popular gardening practice. It is possible that all the fertile area of ground at Vacluse has been cultivated at some time. Several pits of black soil, the remains of tree planting, were located parallel to the evidence of fence posts on the northern side of the site. This seemed to confirm the pattern of planting in traditional, nineteenth century kitchen gardens. The configuration of tree holes and fence post holes was recorded and incorporated into the final garden reconstruction.

- 14 Samuel Breakwell Papers, ML MSS 1720, p. 2, Mitchell Library, SLNSW.
- 15 Ibid., pp. 3-3a.
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#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge the assistance and advice of my colleagues James Broadbent, Joy Hughes, Megan Martin and Dave Gray.

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Pollen analysis proved inconclusive because of subsequent disturbances to the site and flooding.

The paucity of nutrient in the soil, the site having been used as a demolition area, car park and general thoroughfare, meant the need to incorporate over 100 tonnes of soil conditioner and humus into the ground. A few young scrubby trees were removed from the perimeter on the higher side of the site and the Hills fig (a mature, but modern ornamental tree impinging on the area) was pruned to enable more light to enter the garden.

The garden has now been laid out and planted. A split post and wire-netted fence, with three double, timber railed gates and one pedestrian gate, was reinstated according to the archaeological and documentary evidence, and earthen paths divide the areas into a regular grid. In the manner of evidence from the Breakwell papers, one flood-prone area was trenched for heavy feeders such as cabbages and broccoli. Six tonnes of horse manure have added nutrient to the soil. Companion planting is being used to deter insects and minimise the need for invasive chemical treatments. The view from the kitchen to the kitchen garden has been opened up by the removal of overgrown wisteria and other vines from the stone wall of the service yard. Timber gates in the wall and a rough timber bridge have been reconstructed according to the 1880s survey so that once again the kitchen yard is connected with vegetable garden.

Fruit trees are planted in a grid surrounding the vegetables according to contemporary practice and spaced according to the evidence of the few tree holes found. The choice of trees and vegetables has been determined by the availability of nineteenth century varieties, with seeds from the United Kingdom and Australia and trees from throughout the state. 'King of the Pippins' apples, loquats, pomegranates, quinces, Moor Park apricots and greengage plums border seasonal plantings of vegetables such as artichoke, cardoons, tomatoes, jam melons, kale, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbages and radishes.

Almost three dozen vegetables have been selected so far to grow in the garden. These have been cross-referenced between the nineteenth century lists and seeds and plants available now. The success of some of these plants may only be realised by trial and error, but it is hoped that, by using historically documented cultivars, the essence of the nineteenth century kitchen garden can be recaptured. As the trees mature this area will become as cohesive a part of the Vaucluse estate as its shrubbery garden, and will add substantially to the interpretation and understanding of the place.

Suzanne Bravery, Curator, Vaucluse House

The Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales is a leading organisation of its kind in Australia, focusing on the conservation and management of the key historic buildings of New South Wales.

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on the site of first Government House

Rose Seidler House (1950)

Rouse Hill estate (1818)

Susannah Place (1844)

Vaucluse House (1827)

The Kitchen Garden Festival of Vaucluse House is presented by the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales and sponsored by Wedgwood.

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**HISTORIC HOUSES TRUST OF NEW SOUTH WALES**

*Alfred Bennett is an important early figure in the history of Burnley College, being one of the first students to have received a Diploma of Horticulture.*

# *The lost student*

ALFRED EARNEST BENNETT  
(1870 - 1945)

by Sandra Pullman

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ALFRED BENNETT IS AN IMPORTANT EARLY FIGURE in the history of Burnley College, being one of the first students to have received a Diploma of Horticulture.

**A**fter leaving Burnley, Alfred became one of the most successful orchardists of his day, commanding top London prices for his fruit. He was very keen on promoting exporting fruit by his involvement in the local agricultural/horticulture shows by encouraging more competitive competition between growers. He was one of the many first orchardists to help Australia establish its orchard industry.

The Horticultural School Burnley began in 1891 after the colonial government began passing acts to establish agricultural and horticultural colleges. They acquired the land of the Royal Horticultural Society, Richmond after the society had financial difficulties. Alfred Earnest Bennett is important to the history of the Institute of Land and Food Resources - Burnley College because he is one of the first students to

have received the Diploma of Horticulture from the Horticultural School at Burnley, Department of Agriculture - Victoria. After completing the first two years of study students were awarded the Certificate of Proficiency and after three years, the Diploma. Students were required to do practical work accompanied by lectures and complete a satisfactory pass in both. In 1897 Charles Bogue Luffman became principal and by the end of 1898 it seems that the diploma no longer existed. As records are scarce for this period, it would appear that not many students passed the Diploma, so Alfred E. Bennett is of particular interest because he is one of the few that we know did pass.

Alfred E. Bennett and his twin brother Henry Perry Bennett were born in 1870 in Melbourne to William Brazier Bennett and



Alfred Bennett

Margaret Sarah Weatherhead. His older brother William Walter Bennett was born in 1850 in Warrenbyn, north west of Melbourne. His parents moved to Melbourne between 1850 and 1851 for reasons unknown. William Brazier Bennett is registered on the Victorian Electoral Roll of 1856 as a Bookseller/Householder at 123 Little Collins Street East, Eastern Hill Division, Melbourne.

Where Alfred and Henry went to school is unknown but it is known that Alfred was at the Royal Horticultural School Burnley between 1892-1894.

The college Prospectus of 1892-1893 gives some interesting insights into the life as a student. The maximum number of students was 25 and instruction was free.

Male students had to be over the age of fourteen and they had to pay a five pound fee as a guarantee for good behaviour. This money could be used to pay fines.

The Prospectus mentions that the students had to produce a State school certificate or equivalent as proof they went to school and a certificate of moral character from a person of good repute such as a clergyman or justice of the peace.

It explained what subjects they would study botany, vegetable pathology and agricultural science as applied to horticulture.

It also explained that students had to sit for examinations at least once a year and that the examiners would be appointed by the board. After students successfully completed their second year study they were granted a Certificate of Proficiency and after the third year the Diploma.

What Alfred Bennett did between 1894 – 1896 is a mystery.

The first mention of Alfred after leaving Burnley is in the local *Council Rate Book of Dromana of 1896-1897 Red Hill*. Alfred owned/leased 250 acres; Lot 79a which was land originally granted to James Davey (who was an early founder of Frankston). It is difficult to say whether he owned the land in 1896-97.

In 1897-98 Alfred Bennett and George Knowles Parker paid the rates on Lot 79a Balnarring and the next door Lot 14a. (Lot 14a was also originally granted to James Davey) In the owners column of the rate book is perhaps the name J.H. Oswin but it is very faint and difficult to read. By 1898-99 J.H. Oswin definitely owned the land and Alfred and George paid the rates. The Oswin's were very influential family in the Red Hill district and next door neighbours of Alfred Bennett.

At the same time Alfred was running an orchard on this land (1898-99), he purchased (or at least paid the rates) on Lot 29a Wannanue (near Rosebud) and 10a Kangernong which total 260 hectares (642 acres).

This accounts for the articles in *The Mornington Standard* (May 5, 1898) claiming that he had '1000 acres'.

In 1900 he built Seven Oaks named after George Knowles Parker's property, Seven Oaks in England. From Mary Karney's book *No Rugged Landscape* it appears he also bought or rented some of Forest Lodge which was on both sides of the Red Hill Road and on the corner of McIlroy's Road.

In 1902 Alfred married Isobel May Cooke and in 1902-03 built a cottage. Their son Knowles Alfred Bennett was born in 1903 at Snapper Point (Mornington) and was named after his father's friend and 'guardian' George Knowles Parker, Seven Oaks, England to whom he dedicated his book *Prize Essays* written during his time at the Horticultural School Burnley. There is one copy in the Victorian State Library and another at the Institute of Land and Food Resources - Burnley College Library. The first part of the book is an essay about plum trees, followed by the second essay about looking after fruit trees month by month. A third essay is about his field trip on November 23, 1893 with the students from the Royal Horticultural College to the Government Farm - Dunolly Scent Farm at Dunolly. In this essay he describes how they caught the train to Castlemaine and met some of the local dignitaries. Mr. Max Pincus the local chemist, received them in the kindest manner. He showed them around the interesting sites of the town, of which one was the monument of the Burke and Wills expedition built by the citizens to commemorate Mr. Burke who had lived in Castlemaine. They then caught another train that night to Maryborough where they stayed overnight and awoke early to a fine day. They caught the train again to Dunolly and were met by the Mayor J. Desmond Esq. In the Burnley Library's

copy, Alfred signed his name for his brother William and thanked his other brother Henry for the photographs and mentions that Henry received his Certificate appointing him photographer to His Excellency the Earl of Hopetoun the Governor of Victoria and the first Governor General of Australia.

Alfred's book is unusual in that the first page is headed 'Appendix' and the page numbers start at 101. The puzzle has been solved. Originally it was part of a book called the *Department of Agriculture Victoria, Monthly Lectures* delivered at School of Horticulture by various specialists during 1892-93, such as George Neilson,

In 1904-05 Lot 79a Balnarring (115 acres) became William Oswin's. It is not known whether the 7 acres (changed from 10 in the Dromana Rate Book) containing the cottage was still owned by Alfred, but he was paying the rates for both.

From 1905-1913 Alfred still rented Lot 79a but in 1906-07 he had moved to the Esplanade, Mornington, where it is recorded in the Local Council Electoral Rolls that he and Isobel were of 'Independent Means'.

Alfred was a very active member of the agricultural and horticultural Shows of the district. On May 14, 1896 *The Mornington Standard* reports that there was a special Exhibits category and that Alfred exhibited '24 Varieties of Apples'. The next year *The Mornington Standard* (March 18, 1897) reporting on the 3rd Annual Somerville Horticultural Show stated that Alfred won the prize for the 'Best Case of Apples Fit and Packed for Export ('to be opened anywhere that the judge may decide')'.

Alfred went on to win a prize for the 'Best Collection of Fruits' at the 1897 Dromana Show.

His collection consisted of 60 varieties made up of 50 apples, 6 pears, one variety of each persimmons, limes and quinces.

He was also very generous in donating prize money. In *The Mornington Standard* March 2, 1899 it is reported that Alfred donated to the Kangerong Agricultural and Horticultural Society a gold medal for the 'Best 8 Varieties of Export Apples' to be grown by the exhibitor. The gold medal was so impressive that *The Mornington Standard* reported that it was on display at the Somerville Show Grounds by permission of the Somerville Society. The medal was valued at 5 pounds 5 shillings, a lot of money at that time. He also suggested that a competition in export packing be held between the competitors.

There were further prizes donated, prizes won and reports of Alfred officiating as judge in

*The Mornington Standard*, 1899 as well a mention of a lecture given by Alfred to the Kangernong Agricultural Horticultural Society on Fruit Exportation. He previously had given this same lecture to the 'Working Mens College' now RMIT University.

A lengthy article on May 5, 1898 in *The Mornington Standard* titled 'The Fruit Grower' features Alfred Bennett's orchard at Red Hill. It describes Red Hill as an ideal area for growing apples because of the cool climate, the abundant annual rainfall and the easterly aspect of his orchard. Bennett liked the easterly aspect because his orchard was at the head of the valley and the wind came off Western Port Bay. He claimed that kept his orchard clean by dettracting insects. Bennett also stated the he planted his trees '22 feet each way', that he cultivated regularly to remove weeds and the he used Kainit (a potassium fertiliser) as a top dressing which he accredited to keeping the pests down and weeds in check. He also noted that in the newly planted orchard where the soil had been treated with superphosphate the trees that had maize growing in between the rows progressed better than the one that had oats growing between them.

Bennett grew mainly apples and received top prices on the London market according to *The Mornington Standard* May 5, 1898. He also grew pears and cherries. Some of the apple cultivars Bennett grew were 'Esopus Spitzenberg', 'Rome Beauty' 'Jonathan', 'Pippin', 'Bismark' and many more. The article also mentions that he was exporting apples to London and how he stored them - by pitting. Pitting of apples was a way of storing apples. The apples were picked from the tree and put into padded baskets and transferred into two lined boxes and then carried by sleigh to the pit. The pit was a long narrow trough about one metre wide made of timber slabs with a bed of rushes on the bottom. The apples were stacked in a pyramid. The hole was then weighed down or covered up with planks and the apples were kept like this through winter to October if necessary.

In 1913-14 Alfred and his family left the Red Hill district and moved to 93 Claremont Street, Malvern. In 1915 he was mentioned in the Victorian Electoral Roll at 113 Claremont Avenue, Malvern. In 1919 they moved to 396 Station Street, Box Hill and in 1924 finally settled at 17 Wolseley Street, Mont Albert (which is now a block of flats). He stayed there until his death on the 1st June 1945 aged 74. On the Victorian Electoral Rolls his occupations was listed as Independent Means. His wife Isobel lived at 17 Wolseley Street, Mont Albert until her

death in 1961 aged 89. She died in a private hospital in Balwyn. It is thought that Alfred was well off as he had a telephone as early as 1918.

From the Victorian Electoral Roll it has been found that their only son Knowles still lived at Mont Albert in 1939. He married a lass name Ivy (maiden name unknown) known as Maisy. The marriage date is unobtainable due to the Registry of Marriages being released only up until 1930. Knowles started work as a shipping clerk and rose to General Manager.

Knowles died suddenly on January 20, 1970 and at that time was General Manager to Shiptaco Sea Transport Services Pty Ltd. Unfortunately, Knowles and Ivy had no children and so here the Bennett line sadly stops. When Ivy died is also unknown because the information from the Registry of Deaths is unavailable after 1985.

Why Alfred left Red Hill in 1913-14 is unkown and what he did afterwards is also unkown. Did he become involved in the local community? What did he do to earn a living? Unfortunately no contact has been possible with any of his descendants to allow us to answer these questions. However we do know more about Alfred E. Bennett's life than we did before, what he did after he graduated, how the School of Horticulture influenced his orcharding practices and how highly he valued them.

## A D D E N D U M

The Institute of Land and Food Resources - Burnley College was known last century as The School of Horticulture or The School of Horticulture - Burnley or The Royal Horticultural School Burnley.

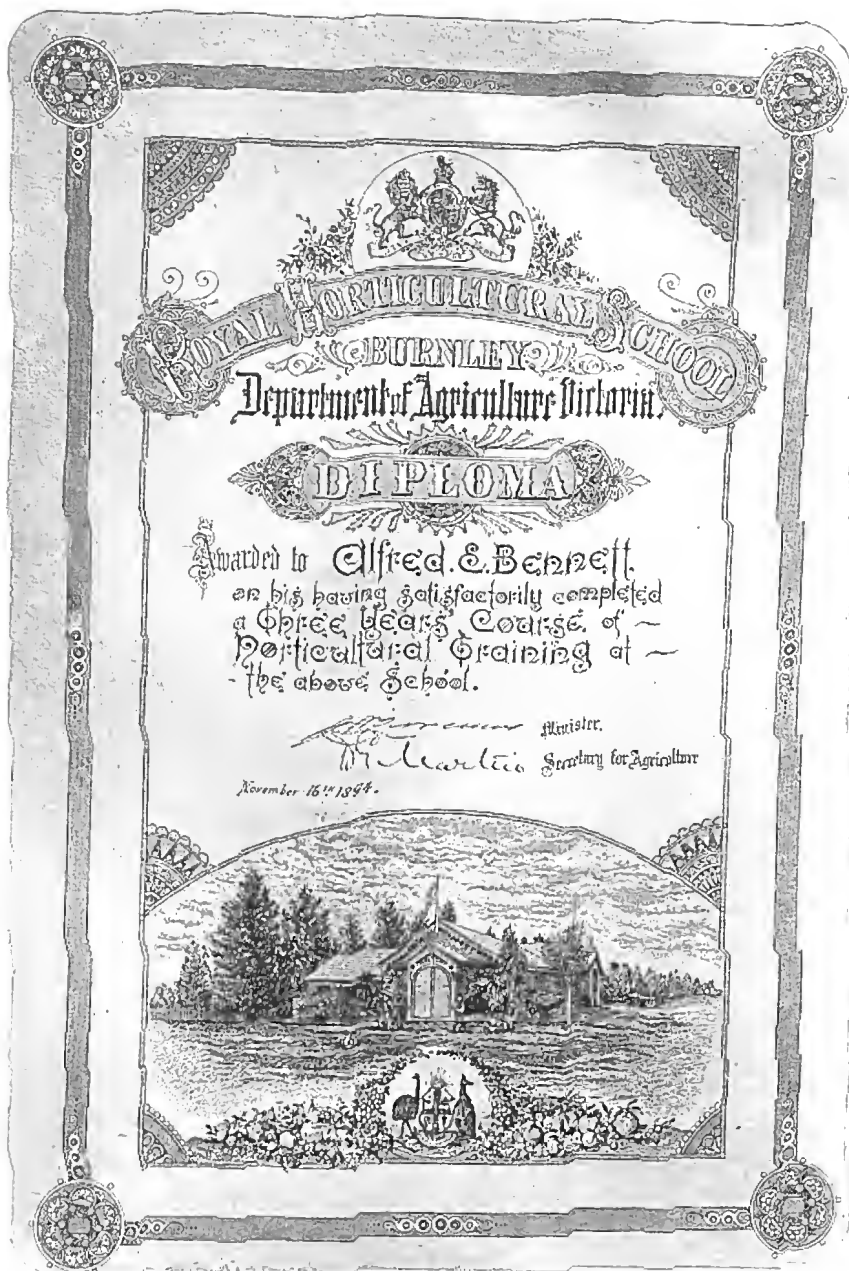
Jack Shand is also known as John Shand and Peter Shand.

Alfred's orchard was at Red Hill in the County of Mornington, Parish of Balnarring.

Alfred E. Bennett was referred to in articles by *The Mornington Standard* as Alfred E. Bennett from Kent Orchards. It is unclear whether he owned, rented or farmed Kent Orchards which is Lot 79b originally granted to G. Sherwood. Originally Lots 79a and 79b were one piece of land and then divided and this seem to have caused much confusion. They are now separate lots. Lot 79a is also confusing because it is unclear how many acres it consisted of. In 1896-97 it may have been 100 hectares. He then purchased or rented another 100 ha, but it is not known whether this is 79a or another piece of land. In 1903-04 there is a note in the Dromana Council Rate Book of 'Alfred E. Bennett'. Whether Alfred owned or rented is unclear. Alfred's house at 17 Wolsley Street was named 'Firenze' which is Italian for Florence.

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## APPENDIX

A tracing of Alfred's brother's family has been carried out to see if any contact could be made with the family. Unfortunately no relatives have been found.

Alfred's brother's William and Henry both married and had children.

William Walter Bennett was born in 1850 at Benella and married Emma Doubleday in 1880. They had three children Walter Joseph 1882, Herbert Weatherhead 1884 registered in Melbourne and Ada Eliza in 1888 registered in South Yarra. Ada Bennett is registered in the 1918 Telephone Book as Miss Ada Doubleday, Windsor, South Yarra and in 1926 she is listed as a Vocalist at 434 Punt Road, South Yarra. It seems she has taken her mother's middle name and used it as a stage name. Emma died in 1920 in Brighton aged 74 and William died in 1932 aged 83 in South Yarra.

Henry Perry Bennett, Alfred's twin brother was born in 1870 in Melbourne and married Margaret Emily Pollard in 1900. Margaret died on the May 4, 1962 aged 89 at Camberwell. In 1901

their daughter Emily Margaret Bennett was born in South Yarra and she married Jos Taylor in 1923 and she died on the February 18, 1939. As the Registry of Births stop at 1920, no children of Emily and Jos have been found.

William's first son Walter Joseph married Mabel Elizabeth Lewis in 1917 and she died on the June 19, 1948. They had four children Vernon Walter Brazier Bennett born 1919 in Prahran, Walter Bennett, Robert Leslie Lewis Bennett born 1922, died August 1, 1980 and Lorna Bennett who was born in 1929 and died in 1972 aged 43.

Noted in Mabel Bennett's Funeral Notice in *The Age* June 3, 1948 is the fact that Mabel was the grandmother of Lindsay, Rosslyn, Raymond and Robert. But it does not mention who their parent's were.

Robert Leslie Bennett married Margaret (maiden name unknown) marriage date unknown. They had two children Garth and Wayne. Robert died on the 1st of August, 1980, at Brighton Community Hospital.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Keith Holmes  
Bev Launssen  
Thelma Littlejohn  
Dromana Historical Society  
Richmond Historical Society  
Peter Shepherd

Sandra Pullman finished her Diploma of Applied Science (Horticulture) in 1977 and started a friends group for the Burnley Gardens with the aim of raising money and awareness of the historic grounds at Burnley as well as run working bees to assist in maintenance. Sandra is presently undertaking research on Olive Mellor, another Burnley graduate and early Australian woman landscape designer. If anyone has any information please contact Sandra on (03) 96902714 or email on sandrapullman@hotmail.com.

O B I T U A R Y

CLAUDE COLQUHOUN CROWE
OAM (1914 -1999)
Plantsman, Garden Designer,
Nurseryman and Gardener

Claude Crowe, one of Australia's great nurserymen, died on October 31, 1999. With his wife Isobel, and more recently their son Noel, he'd owned and run Berrima Bridge Nurseries in the Southern Highlands of NSW for 56 years.

His lasting influence extends beyond the nursery, to the gardens he designed and planted throughout NSW.

He was a foundation member of the Australian Nursery Association, and a life member of the International Dendrological Society. As a young man he'd taken part in a World War II project to grow vegetable seeds to produce food for Australian and American troops.

Claude also advised local Shire Councils on tree plantings, worked with Sir Cecil Hoskins on the Remembrance Driveway between Sydney and Canberra, and was a judge at local shows for most of his life.

In the Queen's Birthday Honours List for 1999, Claude was awarded an OAM for his services to the nursery industry and to the scouting movement.

Above all he was a quiet, generous and kind man with a wonderful sense of humour and an extraordinary knowledge of the plants which he grew and loved. He is survived by his wife Isobel and children Florence, Merrilyn and Noel.

- Howard Nicholson

NATIONAL conference

The Southern Highlands of New South Wales have long been held in high esteem with gardeners. The District was discovered early by nurserymen and was selected as the country retreat for State Governors in the 1880s.

Because of the altitude, cool climate and diverse geology, appealing diverse landscapes have developed. By good fortune, significant areas have been protected in National Parks and Reserves. On the richer soils, agricultural and horticultural pursuits have flourished and significant gardens created, but the richness of this district is largely because of its diversity. In this, all locals rejoice and visitors delight. Gardeners play a potentially valuable role in conservatin of the natural resources and observed landscapes.

The region's appeal and the demands of new settlers as well as the area's strategic position in Sydney's Water Cathment Area require that gardens of the future respect natural ecosystems. Our Conference will look at the existing richness in diversity and how, as gardeners, we can contribute to the maintenance and perhaps enhancement of this diversity.

There will be plenty of garden visits, talks from passionate gardeners and a special opportunity to experience natural areas.

- John Stowar

ASSISTANCE WITH JOURNAL PACKING

Thanks to Cate McKern, Mike and Kaye Stokes, Helen Page, Di Ellerton, John Joyce, Laura Lewis, Beryl Black, Jane Bunney Nina Crone and Jackie Courmadias for packing the last issue of the Journal.

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Membership benefits: subscription to the Society's official journal, Australian Garden History, six times a year; garden related seminars, lectures, garden visits and specialist tours; opportunity to attend annual conference and conference tour; contributing to the preservation of historic gardens for prosperity.

AGHS Office, Royal Botanic Gardens, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra, Vic. 3141

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THIS FORM CAN BE PHOTOCOPIED SO THAT THE JOURNAL CAN BE RETAINED INTACT



# CALENDAR of EVENTS

## MARCH

SUNDAY 12

*NSW Monaro* — Visit to Sue Edmondsons productive garden  
*Enquiries* 02 6295 2330

SATURDAY 18

*Vic Beaufort* — Working bee at Belmont. *Enquiries* 03 9397 2260

TUESDAY 21

*Vic Melbourne* AGHS/OPCAA Autumn Lecture Series: Perry Lethlean - The Forest Gallery at the New Melbourne Museum and other recent projects. *Venue* Mueller Hall, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra *Time* 7.30pm *Cost* \$10 (\$12 non-members)

SATURDAY 25 – SUNDAY 26

*NSW Sydney* — The Kitchen Garden, Vaucluse House, Wentworth Road, Vaucluse. Volunteers to help on our stall for either day welcome, contact Colleen Morris 02 9660 0573

*Vic Gippsland* — Self drive tour of the garden history of this area. Interstate members welcome.  
*Enquiries* 03 5663 2381

## APRIL

TUESDAY 18

*Vic Melbourne* — AGHS/OPCAA Autumn Lecture Series: Dr Sophie Ducker AM - Early Botanical Exploration of Australia  
*Venue* Mueller Hall, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra *Time* 7.30pm *Cost* \$10 (\$12 non-members)

FRIDAY 28

*ACT* — Talk by Helen Hewson at the Botanic Gardens  
*Enquiries* 02 6295 2330

SATURDAY 29

*Vic Phillip Island* — Working bee Churchill Island  
*Enquiries* 03 5663 2381

## MAY

TUESDAY 16

*Vic Melbourne* — AGHS/OPCAA Autumn Lecture Series: Stephen Ryan - Ambles in the Andes

SATURDAY 27

*Vic Birregurra* — Working bee  
Turkeith *Enquiries* (03)9397 2260

## JULY

SATURDAY 15 – SUNDAY 16

*NSW Wagga Wagga* — Weekend Winter Seminar

SATURDAY 22 – SUNDAY 23

*Vic Melbourne* — Weekend Winter Seminar 'The Influence of Immigration on our Gardens'.

## NOVEMBER

THURSDAY 2

*NSW Southern Highlands* — 21st Annual National Conference Registration

FRIDAY 3 - SUNDAY 5

*NSW Southern Highlands* — 21st Annual National Conference: Richness in Diversity

MONDAY 6

*NSW Southern Highlands* — Optional Conference Day

TUESDAY 7 – THURSDAY 9

*NSW Southern Highlands* — Post Conference Tour: Off the Beaten Track. *Enquiries* 02 6453 5578

## THE BURNLEY MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

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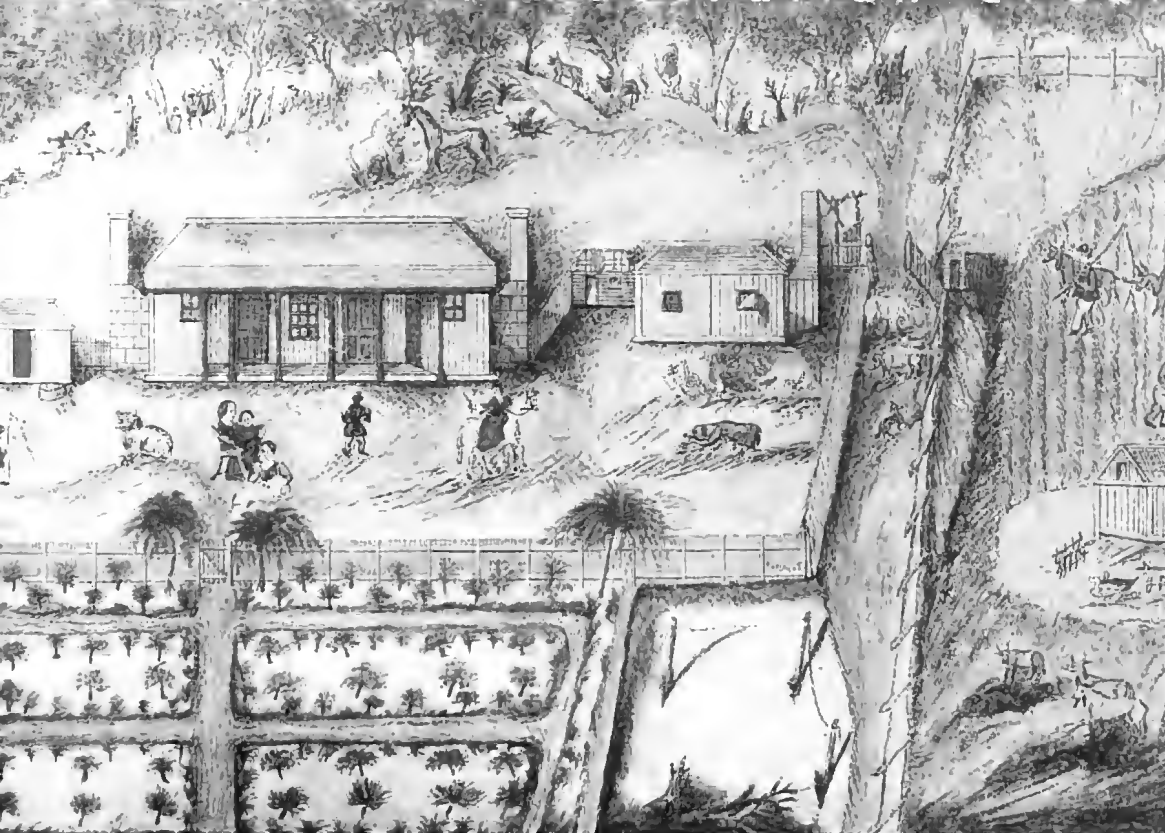
For further information, please telephone Mena on 03 9250 6800. Classes begin in March and July of each year.

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MELBOURNE  
Australia

# MELBOURNE



The couple settled in the Bombala district at Crankies Plain, at a place called Mother Moore's Plains. Predictably, Crankies Plain was named after an undesirable character known as Cranky Harry. They called their 40 acre farm Happe Valle and William operated a carrier business between Bombala, Eden and Merimbula.

This picture of Happe Valle is a valuable record of nineteenth century agricultural life, farm buildings and farm practices. Notwithstanding the ingenious nature of the painting, it reveals fascinating details of early squatters' lives. The Elliotts have followed traditional

(top) Happe Valle, at Crankies Plain, Monaro the demesne of William Elliott circa 1860. Is this a very early example of that perverse Australian sense of humour which is instilled in our national character? Courtesy: Christopher Day Galleries, Paddington, NSW

(below) Sunnyside, formerly Happe Valle, in 1916. The trees in the foreground are *Robinia pseudo acacia*, planted all over the Monaro by early settlers. Courtesy: Bette Platts



Some twelve years ago while researching the evolution of rural buildings in the Monaro district of NSW, by chance I came across this small drawing of Happe Valle in an art dealer's catalogue. At the time the buildings, that is their layout, architecture and materials, were what interested me and as the work progressed a pattern emerged, not only for the buildings but also the immediate environs. The necessity of providing virtually all their own food meant that each settler had to establish an orchard, kitchen garden and wheat field as well as a dairy and poultry yard. Happe Valle could have been a prototype for the hundreds of squatters who came to the Monaro and settlements like this were repeated all over Australia.

William Elliott, the squatter at Happe Valle, came to Australia from England in 1839 with his mother, stepfather, two brothers and a sister. The family sailed from London in November 1838 on the 'Orient', William was sixteen years old. They were Bounty immigrants brought out by John Marshall, Colonial Secretary

In 1844, much to the dismay of his family, William married Mary Jane Fitzgerald, an ex convict sent to Australia for stealing clothes, sentenced to 7 years. Mary came from Limerick, Ireland and was convicted when only 15 years old. She was transported to Australia aboard 'Minerva 6' with 119 other female convicts. William was ostracized by his family after the marriage.

practice with a detached kitchen, separate outhouse, their wheatfield at the side of the house and orchard in front.

Around the house no garden is to be seen and Mary Elliott is depicted sitting in a rocking chair, cradling one of the children, surrounded by dry native grass and bare earth. The place is orderly, the orchard has been planted in rows, exotic trees mark each corner, and the house yard is enclosed by a picket fence. Even a primitive clothes line has been included in the drawing.

There is a lot of activity, while the wheat field is being ploughed and cattle herded, children play in the front yard where an outsize cat surveys the scene. Each person has been allotted a role, unlike photographs of the era where groups posed for the camera resulting in a static image.

This watercolour is a rare example of naive colonial art. The perspective of colonial farming life is distorted, figuratively and literally. Such a happy idyll probably was partly created by someone's fertile imagination. However it possibly was a dream come true for Mary, after a life of poverty, transportation and imprisonment.

By 1916 Happe Valle had been sold to another family and renamed, again optimistically, Sunnyside. The little slab cottage was lived in until the late 1960s when it was accidentally burnt down. A gnarled old apple tree and relics of the brick chimneys and footings still remain in some distant paddock, a tangible reminder of a pioneering era.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT  
Thanks to Robyn Roberts, direct descendant of William Elliott, for allowing the use of her research material.