Snippets

This issue of the journal will reach you soon after the 40th anniversary of the death of Olive Pink (born in Hobart in 1884), who died in Alice Springs on 6 July 1975. Pink established the Alice Springs gardens now named the Olive Pink Botanic Garden in 1956. She spent the next 20 years as unpaid curator of the gardens, which have more than 600 species of central Australian plants.

Pink was an artist, Aboriginal-rights activist, anthropologist, and gardener. It’s worth reading the potted biography in the Australian dictionary of biography to find out more about her extraordinary and eccentric life (see http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/pink-olive-muriel-11428). Back in volume 10 of Australian Garden History we published an article on Olive Pink by Julie Marcus, who also wrote the entry in the dictionary and later published The indomitable Miss Pink.

[Above] Watercolour on card, sketched by Olive Pink (date and location unknown).

Special and Rare Materials Collections, University of Tasmania Library
Editorial

My first editorial gives me the chance to thank the former editors of *Australian Garden History* Richard Aitken and Christina Dyson for the skill and dedication they brought to this journal during their editorship. The Australian Garden History Society has been fortunate to have two people with such a breadth of understanding and experience of garden history and landscape issues. Richard and Christina’s eight years as editors testify to their stamina as well as to their success.

I am delighted with the opportunity to succeed them. My own background is as a science editor and dictionary maker, with a strong historical bent. My research interests involve plants, public landscapes and environmental history, the latter in cold polar environments which might not seem immediately relevant to the temperate world of flowering plants!

The *Australian Garden History* journal is a mechanism for engagement of members, and an instrument for advocacy on issues involving historic gardens and cultural landscapes — part of the Australian Garden History Society’s mission.

Thinking about the society’s aims brings up basic questions, of the sort that you might have answered to your own satisfaction long ago. What constitutes a historic garden? Exactly what is a cultural landscape? I suspect that these questions, very much in my mind as I begin this role, will continue to preoccupy me beyond my time as editor, and that answers will prove elusive.

You may not know that the editor of *Australian Garden History* has a skilled group of editorial advisers to draw on for support and advice. Members of the Editorial Advisory Committee are listed on the opposite page, together with the names of many others who work for the Australian Garden History Society as highly committed committee, state and branch members. Production of the journal also depends heavily on our extremely hard-working executive officer Phoebe and her assistant Georgina, on those who give up their time to pack the journal for postage, and on the work of our talented graphic designer Mariana.

The support of readers and members of AGHS for the journal is also vital, if it is to remain a journal we are proud of. What you would like to read in it? The coming AGHS national conference in Adelaide in October will be my first chance to talk to you in person about the journal’s contents. I look forward to hearing what you have to say.

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Richard Heathcote

‘Endless pleasure’ – an exhibition on how Australians have enjoyed gardens and gardening

In 1985 the Adelaide Hills property of Carrick Hill was completing preparations for its official opening by Queen Elizabeth II to the public.

The Haywards’ gift

Carrick Hill, left by Sir Edward and Lady Hayward to the people of South Australia, consisted of 40 hectares of woodlands, grounds and formal gardens, the house and its contents of antique furniture and art collection. The garden and all its pleasures had been particularly enjoyed by Ursula Hayward who had grown up at Birksgate, a hillside property a little further east in the foothills of the Mount Lofty ranges at Glen Osmond. For 35 years she enjoyed the garden she had created at Carrick Hill.

Lady Hayward grew cut flowers and was passionate about them, collecting them from her picking garden and arranging them in the wide array of vessels collected for the purpose. Artist and close friend Nora Heysen remembers the heady floral scents that hit guests as they entered the great hall for parties, especially that of the strongly scented tuberoses (Polianthes tuberosa). Outdoor parties on the terrace, with its panoramic views to Gulf St Vincent, would have been spectacular experiences. Cliff Jacob, head gardener at Carrick Hill for 47 years, clipped the hedges and kept the plantings in accordance with Lady Hayward’s wishes, coping with the arrival of overseas orders of bulbs for the flower gardens and terraces. The layout, influenced by the Edwardian arts and crafts movement, offered intimacy and...
repose within the three-metre high hedge enclosing the formal gardens, or in its garden rooms.

On Lady Hayward's bookcases were titles on European and North American garden history and design, including the writings of 1930s English garden maker Vita Sackville West and her husband Harold Nicolson. Floral subjects dominate the paintings and ceramics she collected, from the paintings of British modernist Stanley Spencer to her enigmatic collection of ceramic tulip vases.

Thirty years after the gift of this romantic place, how better to commence the program of the newly established Australian Museum of Gardening than with an exhibition about how Australians have enjoyed gardens and gardening, as depicted by artists, illustrators, designers and artisans.

‘Endless pleasure’

Curators Caroline Berlyn and Richard Heathcote deliberately chose a polymathic interpretation of ‘enjoyment’ of gardens and gardening. Berlyn’s extensive research led her to images that told stories of all kinds of gardeners, gardens and garden activities over nearly two and half centuries. With her strong background in the decorative and book arts, she collected a remarkable selection of illustrations of plants and floral decoration, children’s gardening and garden design from the rare book collection of the Barr Smith Library, University of Adelaide.

In the heavily structured society of colonial Australia, there was no more highly prized achievement than an invitation to the Governor's garden party in the manicured grounds of Government House. CFJ Crampton's painting ‘Garden party, Adelaide’ (1889), on loan from the Governor of South Australia, tells the story.

Adelaide’s agreeable climate has encouraged the social use of private and public gardens for outdoor dining, promenading and lawn sports in all their manifestations. Book illustrations and prints tell the tale of our tradition of outdoor entertaining and amusements that had their origin in the London pleasure gardens such as Vauxhall and Ranelagh. Melbourne and Sydney each had a Cremorne Gardens established and operated by George Coppin, an Englishman who had gone broke running the eponymous gardens in London.

A selection of the more quirky tools and implements, seed catalogues and other ephemera drawn from the Australia Museum of Gardening collection displays the earthy business of sowing and growing, fertilising and irrigating, pruning, raking, mowing and clipping. The exhibition includes a Victorian gentleman’s walking stick with built-in pruning and pollinating functions, a combination now sadly passed from fashion. Hand-forged mistletoe hooks show a specialisation no longer evident in the range of commonly available garden tools.
Since its introduction to Australia in the mid-19th century, photography has often featured gardens. Sara Huffen uses highly sophisticated camera technology for long-exposure shots of garden subjects at dusk, adding light painting with torches.

‘Tools of trade’. Sara Huffen 2015
Carrick Hill Trust

Garden and plant clubs still thrive today. The medals, trophies and certificates from past eras are a reminder of just how competitive these community activities have always been. Lady Hayward was both a patron of various societies and a competitor. This exhibition includes a Lilium trophy she won three years in a row, a testament to Carrick Hill’s reputation in the horticultural community. Such rewards also depended on the professional team available to care for the garden’s collection of 1400 roses and the cymbidium orchids. The exhibition looks at the activities both of professional gardeners such as these, and those for whom it was just a pastime.

Two other groups feature strongly in the exhibits. Children and gardens are presented through the toys and tools specially designed and manufactured to get them interested and active in their own plots. The notion that schools should be involved in encouraging children into growing plants and harvesting crops has a long practical history in Australia, as photographs from the 1890s tell us.

Finally there are the armchair or mental gardeners whose interests have always been catered for through garden literature and a vast range of publications both fiction and non-fiction. They read their gardening, and visualise results through the use of lusciously illustrated magazines and beautifully designed books on gardens and plants.

Garden writer Trevor Nottle has edited a book entitled Endless pleasure to accompany the exhibition. He persuaded more than a dozen other contributors to write about their favourite garden produce recipes, tools, experiences and the collecting of garden-related objects — including the ubiquitous tyre swan, baskets and lead figures! It is a stylish accompaniment to this first project of the Australian Museum of Gardening, and captures some of the endless pleasures that gardens and gardening have provided for Australians.

‘Endless Pleasure: the art of gardens and gardening’ will be on exhibition at Carrick Hill, Adelaide, from 6 August to 29 November 2015. The exhibition coincides with the annual conference of the AGHS.

The book Endless Pleasure is edited by Trevor Nottle and will be published by Wakefield Press.

Footnote
1 See Australian Garden History 26(4) April 2015.

Richard Heathcote is the director of Carrick Hill, where he pursues his interest in the social history and interpretation of gardens and gardeners. He has spent the past three years establishing the Australian Museum of Gardening at Carrick Hill.
Most people know that the city of Canberra was designed by the American partnership of Walter Burley Griffin and Marion Mahony Griffin. Fewer know of the Griffins’ design work on Ranelagh Estate.

Making history
Ranelagh Estate, an early subdivision 60 kilometres south of Melbourne on the Mornington Peninsula, was designed in 1924 by Walter Burley Griffin in collaboration with Marion Mahony Griffin and Saxil Tuxen. The Griffins had established their reputation in Australia by winning the design for Australia’s capital city. Tuxen, a surveyor and planner, was an exponent of garden city planning principles and a founding member of the Victorian Town Planning Association. The subdivision was envisaged as a distinctly individual destination where city professional people could build their holiday houses. Its seaside location on the eastern shore of Port Phillip Bay, the sympathetic response to topography, and the many generous reserves designed to preserve remnant indigenous vegetation demonstrate concepts already developed by the Griffins in their better known layouts of Canberra in the Australian Capital Territory and Castlecrag near Sydney in New South Wales.

The Griffins’ architectural philosophy was based on the idea of modern design free from stylistic precedents, with modest unassuming houses in natural landscapes. This philosophy was exhibited in the Griffins’ own small house ‘Pholiota’ at Eaglemont, Victoria, and it was hoped that houses on the Ranelagh Estate would follow the same philosophy.

An early modernist house on the Ranelagh Estate that adhered to these principles is at 35 Rannoch Avenue, an elevated level site near the east boundary of the estate. Designed in 1933 by an innovative young architect, Roy Grounds, for his own young family, it is known as ‘The Ship’ and was an early example of modular construction.
It used prefabricated steel components bolted together on site that could be arranged in a number of configurations to produce a range of house designs.

When a few years later Mrs Betty Ramsay bought a waterfront block on the cliff overlooking Ranelagh Beach, she engaged Roy Grounds to design a modern, simple, inexpensive cottage where her two sons could enjoy carefree seaside holidays. This house shares the same principles of modern compact design in a natural landscape setting, but is unlike ‘The Ship’ in most other respects.

Roy Grounds’ habit was to spend long periods on site before developing his ideas. The formidably steep block was covered with dense coastal tea-tree (Leptospermum laevigatum) down to the low sand dunes of Ranelagh Beach, with occasional stands of weeping sheoak (Allocasuarina verticillata), all of which Betty Ramsay was intent on preserving.

Grounds sited the tiny house at the far corner of the block as far away from the road as possible, thus leaving most of the site unaltered and preserving the native coastal vegetation. It was a simple tri-level two-storey rectangular house just one room deep, built into the cliff so that each of its three levels opened out onto natural ground and native tea-trees. The house walls were clad in cedar weatherboards and the roof in cedar shingles, allowed to weather to a natural silver grey, the colour of the tea-tree trunks amongst which the building nestled.

Twenty years later found the architect married to his client, and the house sold to a colleague. A further 50 years on, Ranelagh Estate had become absorbed into the suburb of Mount Eliza, now a commuter suburb on the fringe of metropolitan Melbourne. As land values increased, most of the simple weatherboard holiday houses were replaced by much larger houses, typically built to the site boundaries behind high solid walls. Any open ground around houses was generally planted with conventional lawn and introduced dryland plants promoted as water-saving.

Remarkably, the second owner of 29 Rendlesham Avenue made few changes to the property, and for 50 years the house and its surroundings were retained in near-original condition, although affected by bushfires and the passage of time. A fire which apparently started on the beach swept up the cliff, wiping out most of the tea-trees and sheoaks. Once the canopy was broken, the strong winds that sweep across Port Phillip Bay from Bass Strait flattened the few surviving tea-trees. Bare ground was soon covered by invasive weed species such as boxthorn, mirror bush, blackberry and kikuyu.

Equally remarkably, the author (a descendant of the original owner) was alerted to the impending sale of the property and was able to return it to the family, some 75 years after Betty Ramsay first bought the Rendlesham Avenue block of land.

Restoring history

The current custodian of the property is restoring the property to its original condition and re-establishing native vegetation on the burnt-out weed-infested cliff. Like most houses in Mount Eliza this property is no longer just a holiday destination. As a permanent residence in the

Original tea-tree forested cliffs.
Collection of the author
21st century, it cannot be preserved as a museum piece, but the philosophy has been to make minimal interventions and to reflect the original owner's intent. Interventions comprise a vegetable garden edged with espaliered fruit trees at the far top corner of the block, a hen house, a garden toolshed and a rainwater tank.

The steep cliff-edge of the block .... was covered with dense coastal tea-tree

Major repairs, structural stabilisation and waterproofing have been necessary to preserve the cottage. Restoration work outside the cottage includes stabilising the cliff with timber pole and sleeper retaining walls before replanting with coastal tea-tree, moonah (*Melaleuca lanceolata*) and weeping sheoak, using seed collected on site. The original brick retaining wall and timber bench protecting the brick-paved terrace had collapsed; they have been replaced with a timber retaining structure capped with a single 10-metre long slab rescued from a demolition site. After removing kikuyu grass and boxthorn from the property over several summers, new tea-trees have been planted across the garden between the few remaining ancient fallen tea-trees. The fence along Rendlesham Avenue has been replaced as originally built. The brick-paved terrace (which faced the bay) had sunk half a metre at one end. It has been rebuilt and the surroundings planted with coastal tea-tree in the hope of recreating the original tea-tree forest.

Ranelagh Estate, The Ship (35 Rannoch Avenue) and Ramsay House (29 Rendlesham Avenue) are all listed on the Victorian Heritage Register.

References


Victoria Grounds has lived in three Griffin-designed areas: Ranelagh Estate, Castlecrag and the city of Canberra. She was born in the Betty Ramsay house and is now living there again while undertaking its restoration.
It’s all change in Scotland and England this summer. Both the Scottish Group of the Garden History Society and the Garden History Society itself are becoming new organisations. Scotland’s Garden and Landscape Heritage came into existence on 16 May 2015 at its first AGM in Stirling, Scotland. (Members of the Garden History Society in Scotland voted at an extraordinary general meeting in November 2014 to become a new Scottish Charity rather than continue as the Scottish Group of the Garden History Society.) It is an exciting time for us, as we set out on a fresh path to champion our garden and landscape heritage and attract new members.

The Garden History Society is 100% behind this change, and has supported and encouraged us along the way. Whilst we are apolitical we are conscious that in Scotland there is a changing political scene and popular desire for stronger Scottish identity and autonomy. This underscores the need for us to change, not only to survive but in order to effectively champion and protect our historic gardens and landscapes. As a charity in our own right, we are now free in Scotland to raise our own money for our work.

In England, the Garden History Society change strengthens its work through its amalgamation with the Association of Garden Trusts (which are non-existent in Scotland) to become the Garden Trust. With these changes, our relationship with the trust should be able to become even more effective. To strengthen the links, both Scotland’s Garden and Landscape Heritage and the trust hope to have an ex officio chair on each other’s board. Our change is slightly ahead of that of our Garden History Society colleagues, and the final decision by the Garden History Society / Association of Garden Trusts cum the Garden Trust will be made later this northern summer.

What exactly is the new Scotland’s Garden and Landscape Heritage organisation? And what do we do? Our work involves:

- conservation
- training volunteers to research and record designed landscapes and gardens
- advising councils on planning applications
- campaigning to save historic landscapes
- publishing our newsletter The Pleasaunce three times a year (see http://www.gardenhistorysociety.org/publications/the-pleasaunce/), as well as its annual scholarly edition
- organising stimulating lectures, study days and garden visits for members.

We have done all this as part of the Garden History Society for the past 50 years. In a sense, then, not a lot is new, but the reorganisation brings fresh energy to help us gain human, financial and political support for Scotland’s gardens and landscape heritage.

Our work and goal has much in common with that of the Australian Garden History Society. Our aim is to promote and protect the historic gardens and designed landscapes of Scotland. To find out more about these changes and about Scotland’s Garden and Landscape Heritage, follow us at www.sglh.org. Join us there as ‘A Friend’!
Sydney University’s early landscape: ET Blacket’s brush with Cambridge?

Within Victoria Park (near City Road) and along part of the eastern approach to Sydney University are the vestiges of a bold campus landscape concept with its origins in the 1850s.

Today, a few majestic Moreton Bay fig trees continue to define the line of approach extending from City Road to the central entry tower of Edmund Thomas Blacket’s famous ‘university range’ (1854—1862). The fig trees once framed the central spine of a monumental avenue almost half a kilometre long that included Roman pines (also known as stone pines, Pinus pinea) along the outer sides and an elegant bridge over a picturesque ornamental lake. The avenue was the subject of numerous scenic postcard images in the early 20th century. Its eastern end had two fine sandstone gate lodges (one, the gardener’s lodge, survives intact). Together with the main building’s articulated terraced esplanade, all of these features formed an integral sequential landscape with Blacket’s main range. But by the mid-20th century the same landscape was disconnected from the university, neglected and ruinous in parts, bereft of its bridge and, in the 1950s, finally assailed by unsympathetic structures and other modifications. There was an awkward pretence that the grand avenue never existed — despite clear evidence on site to the contrary.

Since the 2000s much of the original approach route to the university has been reconstructed, to the credit of the City of Sydney and advocates like architect John Tropman and town planner University of Sydney, November 1870. The Great Hall is squarely in view at the end of the original approach road. Note the bridge crossing in the middle ground. Courtesy of University of Sydney Archives (image 0943).
Hand-coloured plan of the University of Sydney campus (attributed to ET Blacket) on the former 'Grose Farm' site for presentation to the University Senate, 1857. Courtesy of University of Sydney Archives (image G74_1_03)

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Helen Proudfoot (and in cooperation with the University of Sydney). While the reconstruction successfully conveys something of the impressive grandeur of the original scheme, it is still visually hampered by 1950s impositions — an intrusive Modernist swimming pool complex and the ill-fitting Lake Northam. These intrusions demonstrate a disregard for the historic university approach layout as well as for the substantial mid-1880s landscape design for Victoria Park.

But what of the origins of the original university approach design? This is rightly the subject of more exhaustive research though there are some tantalising clues from readily available resources that are the tentative concern of this article.

In the 1983 ET Blacket exhibition monograph entry for the University of Sydney main building, conservation consultant James Kerr wrote that Blacket ‘apparently played an active role in the choice of the [Grose Farm] site’ while he was still Colonial Architect. With his appointment as the architect for the new university in 1854, there began an iterative relationship with the University Senate and its appointed committees to resolve a suitable design for the new buildings. This process apparently also extended to the planning of a substantial and integral processional access linking the city approach in the east up to (and through) the university’s main building.

Among the many valuable records held by the University of Sydney Archives is a hand-coloured site plan showing the original main building range along the principal north—south ridge along with an extended axial avenue from ‘New Town Road’ (now City Road) framed by L-shaped structures (gate piers?). A handwritten note states that the plan was ‘laid before the Senate and approved according to the alterations marked by the blue lines — 2nd September, 1857 Hugh Kennedy, Registrar’. These blue lines relate to ‘proposed alterations of water’ to enlarge the earlier intermittent creek line into a form enabling a convincing crossing width by a generous bridge. The eastern end of the approach road is shown to terminate in an arc and an enclosed plantation — a design refinement that was never executed.

In 1855, 126 acres of the former Grose Farm were granted for the university and the original plan (also in the archives) is instructive as it shows the large site divided up into six discrete areas: A (the university), B, C, D and E (affiliated college sites) and F (a large drainage reserve to the west). On the eastern side is another drainage reserve which was intended as a park and, as such presumably, a key part of the university’s setting. No approach route is shown on this plan. The 1857 scheme shows that thinking had by then turned formally to the way in which the university was to be
approached from the city and by 1863, 8 acres of the eastern park, along Parramatta Road were dedicated as an ‘Approach Reserve’ specifically to provide for such an access.\(^{5}\)

As part of those formative interactions with the Senate in the 1850s, Blacket is known to have been instructed by key Senators at various times. For example, they requested that Blacket extend the main range, enlarge the Great Hall and replace the door to the central tower with an arched passageway.\(^{6}\) EWT Hamilton (first Chancellor at Sydney — or Provost, as it was then), the mercurial WC Wentworth (an early advocate for a university) and FLS Merewether (later Chancellor) formed the relevant subcommittee of Senate for these deliberations.\(^{7}\) It is also known that the university campus character was envisaged along Oxbridge lines.\(^{8}\) The early Senate played a crucial role in guiding the organisation and planning of the new institution. Given the underlying desire to establish the new university with such a pedigree, it is interesting to explore whether there are any clear physical planning parallels with either English campus.

The quadrangle planning concept of many of the Sydney campus buildings is, of course, an obvious link with both British campuses, but are there any distinct typological links associated with a grand landscape design as an approach to any of the colleges or squares? Oxford appears not to offer much in this regard but Cambridge does provide some insight — notably the Backs area along the River Cam. In particular, the axial approach to Trinity College from Queen’s Road via ‘The Avenue’ shows some interesting parallels with the 1850s Sydney scheme. In the context of the landscape’s importance within the Cambridge campus, Coulson et al. maintain that the Backs is ‘Cambridge’s most iconic landscape’ and that its scenic qualities have ‘graced countless postcards and chocolate boxes and form some of the most marketable images of the university and city’.\(^{9}\)

The Cambridge approach could be further extended across Queen’s Road by using Fellow’s Walk from Burrell’s Field (also part of Trinity College) to more closely approximate the total length of the Sydney approach, though it is probably not so much the length of the approach as the calculated serial experience of the landscape being traversed that is of interest between the two examples. At the Cambridge location there are impressive enclosing avenues (from the 1700s), an elegant iron-gated entry, a brook crossing and the River Cam crossing over a stone bridge before arriving at a gated tower within a Gothic Revival range by William Wilkins (early 1820s and built next to Christopher Wren’s famous library of 1676).

As it happens, many of the key players of the early Sydney University Senate had Cambridge connexions. Influential Senator and later Chancellor, Sir Charles Nicholson, though educated at Edinburgh, had an honorary LLD conferred on him by Cambridge University.

(Nicholson was also instrumental in the selection of Blacket as the university’s architect because of his demonstrated Mediaeval Revival competence.\(^{10}\)) Wentworth was at Peterhouse in the early 1820s when the new additions to nearby Trinity College were being planned and implemented and Wilkins was also busy with other Cambridge commissions such as his brilliant completion of King’s Great Court — separated from Trinity College only by Clare College. Hamilton and Merewether were Cambridge graduates (both at Trinity College, 1830s). Senators Edward Broadhurst and John Bayley Darvall were also educated at Cambridge in the 1830s (Magdalene and Trinity Colleges respectively) as was Secretary and Treasurer, (Nicholson was also instrumental in the selection of Blacket as the university’s architect because of his demonstrated Mediaeval Revival competence.\(^{10}\)) Wentworth was at Peterhouse in the early 1820s when the new additions to nearby Trinity College were being planned and implemented and Wilkins was also busy with other Cambridge commissions such as his brilliant completion of King’s Great Court — separated from Trinity College only by Clare College. Hamilton and Merewether were Cambridge graduates (both at Trinity College, 1830s). Senators Edward Broadhurst and John Bayley Darvall were also educated at Cambridge in the 1830s (Magdalene and Trinity Colleges respectively) as was Secretary and Treasurer,

(Above left) The University of Sydney in its intended landscape setting, looking across Victoria Park, 1887. Courtesy of University of Sydney Archives (image 0212)

(Above right) A wider view of the university’s surrounds, circa 1890, with the Great Hall in the distance at right, and the Anderson Stuart Medical School building at left. Courtesy of University of Sydney Archives (image 0026)
Dr Richard Greenup (Queens’ College and also in the 1830s).

Many questions remain, such as the extent to which the idea for the Sydney design was a product of the Senators with memories of their Cambridge experiences. Was Blacket skilfully interpreting vague instructions? Does his design reflect (perhaps with a hint of obsequiousness) the trendsetting work of the Cambridge architects), or were both of these forces at work? It is reasonable to assume that some direction, at least, would have been provided by the Senate for this key planning concept — especially given their direct hand in the evolution of, and aspirations for, the main building's planning and design - with Blacket left to ‘flesh it out’ on a raw site. It is probable too that Colonial Botanist Charles Moore was involved with the implementation of the avenue though, again, research could confirm the nature and extent of his involvement as well as any presumed collaboration with Blacket.

Ultimately, the University of Sydney’s approach landscape was conceived and implemented as a noticeably grander and elevationally more pronounced concept than its presumed Cambridge inspiration. In this, the former Grose Farm site has been ‘read’ well and its inherent potential exploited with skill. The carefully judged scale and extent of the avenue and its purposefully enlarged pond and creek line crossing to enhance its picturesque ‘capabilities’ undoubtedly achieved an impressive approach to the university. They created a landscape setting commensurate with the status of the university and its aspirational mid-19th century city. With Blacket’s Gothic Revival building, this was surely a bold design ensemble to engender an appropriate gravitas and instil a calculated respect for the new institution.

Footnotes
1 The Victoria Park design was possibly the work of Botanic Gardens director Charles Moore or head gardener James Jones (in whose diary there is evidence of his direct involvement with the park in the 1880s), or both.
2 Joan Kerr, Our great Victorian architect Edmund T Blacket (1817–1883), National Trust of Australia (NSW), Sydney, 1983, p 105 (brackets mine).
3 Peter Chippendale, The ‘futurity’ legend, FLS Merewether and the University of Sydney, University of Sydney Archives, Record, 2000, p 9.
4 The plan appears to be from Blacket’s office and, until further evidence suggests otherwise, the design of this landscape scheme could be attributed to him.
5 Helen Proudfoot, Victoria Park, Chippendale, history and conservation plan, Unpublished report for the Council of the City of South Sydney, September; 1990.
7 Chippendale, 2000, p 9.
9 Jonathon Coulson, Paul Roberts and Isabelle Taylor, University planning and architecture: the search for perfection, Routledge, New York, 2011, p 147.

Geoffrey Britton is a Sydney-based environmental design and heritage consultant with international project experience and a special interest in cultural landscapes.
The fungal garden

This photographic essay examines a little known and often misunderstood component of gardens and other landscapes, fungi.

Alison Pouliot
Lichens (above right) are among the earliest examples of organisms using terrestrial symbiosis. They first appeared in the Early Devonian, about 400 million years ago. Together with this jelly fungus *Ascocoryne sarcoides*, lichens work to break down the log.

Australians have historically had an uneasy relationship with these confounding organisms. Those of us with British Isles ancestry tend to take a fungus-fearing (‘mycophobic’) approach to the fungal kingdom as a whole. Unlike many continental Europeans, we mostly lack the extended histories of cultural association with fungi. By contrast, the European appreciation of the nutritive properties of fungi is often accompanied by an understanding of their ecological importance. The availability of a diverse European literature on fungi from field guides to culinary companions to mycological texts suggests their greater significance in European society.

Fungi also got off to rather an unsteady start in our attempts to catalogue life. For all the revelations and advancements of Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus’s work in his hierarchical categorising of life, fungi did not fare well. They were assigned a low place, and the relationships between fungi, plants and animals were poorly understood. Fungi are still among the least known and least studied of organisms. In regarding plants as discrete and independent entities, we often fail to perceive the importance and prevalence of the partnerships they form with fungi, without which neither partner would thrive.

The history of any land is therefore also a history not just of its plant species, but of its fungal ones. Although the health and resilience of plants reflect the unseen workings of subterranean relationships with the fungal kingdom, perceptions — even in horticulture — have focused on undesirable rather than desirable qualities. The fungi mentioned in gardening columns of newspapers have tended to be the pathogenic fungi — fungal spots on roses, for example, or rusts and smuts on grain crops — with suggestions for their eradication. Far fewer accounts elaborate on the beneficial relationships and roles of fungi.

‘How to destroy insects and fungi on plants’
*Western Mail* 1 September 1888 [headline]

‘Stinker Fungus — A Troublesome Growth’
*Sunday Times* 4 May 1924 [headline]
Pathogenic fungi can certainly be highly destructive, but almost all of the fungi in gardens are saprophytic (recyclers). The ‘stinker fungus’ and many others contribute to garden health by breaking down recalcitrant compounds such as lignin and cellulose, making nutrients available to plants and creating soil in the process. Other fungi, known as mycorrhizal fungi, form mutually beneficial relationships with plants. In these relationships, the fungal partner benefits the plant in multiple ways, extending its root system and offering greater access to water and nutrients, as well as providing protection from soil pathogens. Networks of fungal mycelia — the weblike vegetative part of a fungus — provide structural scaffolds in soils, enhancing water filtration and aeration. Protecting this subterranean fungal matrix from stresses such as chemicals, synthetic fertilisers, compaction, physical disturbance and overwatering, contributes to soil and plant health and a thriving garden.

The beauty and mystery of fungi in both landscape and garden are remarkable. Fungi delight the imagination, with their unpredictable and ephemeral appearance, myriad forms and colours. Appreciating their aesthetics and symbolic potency prompts creative responses. They have long been a subject of artistic endeavour, creating rich cultural histories and mythologies across the globe.

Understanding fungal ecology helps us comprehend their ecological significance. By considering fungi as conduits of connectivity and interaction, this allows us to rethink concepts of nature, biodiversity, and gardens. Being able to identify a fungus imbues it with meaning, but contemplation of the mycelial matrix and fungal—plant symbioses presents a chance to look again at relationships and contexts, rather than understanding biodiversity only through the naming and cataloguing of life. For me, these curious and compelling organisms are also a source of sensuous enchantment.

Alison Pouliot is an ecologist and environmental photographer. She is doing a PhD on human perceptions of fungi at the Australian National University (alison.pouliot@anu.edu.au).

(Above right) The emperor cortinar (Cortinarius archeri) forms mutually beneficial relationships with Eucalyptus species.
Thomas Pickett’s gardens

When Jane Delaney recently described one of her favourite places, Central Gardens in Glenferrie, Melbourne, in her column ‘My Place’,¹ she probably had little idea that she was describing something which began as the work of English-born designer Thomas William Pickett.

Many Melburnians will be familiar with the names if not the garden design work of the likes of William Guilfoyle and Carlo Catani. Thomas Pickett has largely been forgotten, in spite of his modest but significant opus of executed designs of municipal gardens in the eastern and southeastern suburbs of Melbourne.

Pickett was born in 1857 at ‘Up Hatherley’ near Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. He started gardening at the age of 10 at Ireton House, a relatively modest house in Cheltenham, and did farming and market gardening work for his father, a market gardener. While young, he may also have worked at ‘Arlé Court’,² a substantial house with a formal garden on the outskirts of Cheltenham. At the age of 16 he took a position at Parker’s Nursery in Tooting (London) and at 18 was appointed plantsman at Lord Falmouth’s Mereworth Castle. At 19 he became foreman in the gardens of JH Elwes at Colesbourne Park,³ a large estate a few miles southeast of Cheltenham where he spent two years. Today Colesbourne Park is known for its arboretum, said to date from the 1880s, a recreated formal garden, and for the production of snowdrops. Pickett’s time here may well have broadened his knowledge of trees and informed his skill in tree selection, given the property’s connection with Henry John Elwes, co-author of The trees of Great Britain and Ireland (1906–1913).
Thomas and Louisa Pockett emigrated as newlyweds to Australia in 1878, apparently after an uncle suggested that there were good prospects for gardeners in Victoria. Their first two years in Victoria were financially difficult, with a paucity of private positions as gardeners and fluctuating markets and conditions for market gardening. Pockett worked in Hawthorn in the early 1880s, and later at ‘Kenley’, a property in Kooyong Road, Toorak.

While engaged at ‘Kenley’ two achievements brought him to the notice of the general public. In 1884 after the Victorian Horticultural Improvement Society’s autumn show, The Leader of 10 May 1884 wrote, ‘As regards the (chrysanthemum) flowers individually no improvement can be desired on some of those shown, and we question if finer flowers than those staged by Mr. Pockett could be seen anywhere’. (This show is also believed to be the first chrysanthemum show held in Victoria.) He also won the society’s first prize for the ‘best arranged and kept gentleman’s garden within 5 miles of the Melbourne GPO’.

In about 1886 the family was able to buy land and build a house in Malvern Road, Malvern, intending to use the land in particular for the growing and production of new chrysanthemum cultivars. It was only five minutes from the gardens he was to create a couple of years later.

**Malvern Gardens**

After Pockett relinquished his position at ‘Kenley’ in 1888 he was invited to prepare a plan for ‘improvements’ to the recreation reserve to the rear of the Malvern Shire Hall. The Malvern Evening Standard of 16 June 1888 reported the deliberations of the Council committee.

> The reserve ... bids fair under the attention of the committee having the improvements in hand, to come as near being a thing of beauty and joy forever as any earthly garden can be ... Plans of the proposed improvements ... and arrangements of flower beds, grass plots pathways etc. drawn by Mr. T. Packett, of Malvern, [were] adopted as those to be carried into effect. The decorative effects of a fountain are not to be forgotten ... The [total] cost thereof is to be about £490.

Pockett was appointed curator, and the Malvern Gardens (as they are now known) in High Street were officially opened in December 1890. He designed these, Malvern’s first public gardens, with serpentine paths and without straight lines or formal angular beds. A row of English oaks was planted on each side of the drive, and there were plantings of palms, elms and flowerbeds. The lawns and plantings were arranged so that long views could be obtained through the gardens. His design included a lily pond with artistic grotto work and a handsome fountain located around an existing natural spring.

By 1909 The Leader was reporting:

> Outside of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens there is no public reserve within the metropolitan areas more beautiful than the Malvern public gardens ... [Mr. Pockett] has been identified with the gardens ... since the reserve was a rough, sandy patch (20 years ago) ... The arrangement of plants and trees is a most pleasing feature of Mr. Pockett’s management.

The design used traditional 18th century English landscaping principles of light, shade and perspective, with sweeping curves, masses of shrubbery, large trees dominating the skyline and vistas of expansive lawn.
Special trees
Although Malvern Gardens and a number of Pockett’s other designs still maintain herbaceous borders, the floral displays have largely disappeared. The enduring and notable aspect of his designs is the general layout of the parks and his tree selection, including both exotic trees and Australian natives where appropriate.

Pockett also seems to have had some signature trees, including particular cedars and pines. Among early plantings at Malvern were the kurrajong, peppermint tree (Agonis flexuosa), acacias including A. baileyana and the flame tree (Brachychiton acerifolium). Other trees included the English oaks mentioned above, elms, pines, oriental plane and cedar, with surviving specimen trees of Chinese elm, scrub bloodwood (Baloghia inopkylla), the South African yellowwood (Afrocarpus falcatus, formerly Podocarpus falcatus) and New Zealand totara (P. totara).

Thomas Pockett’s designs for another eight public gardens are referred to in various publications, although no copies of the plans have yet been found. In the Malvern area he did the original designs for Central Park (1906) and Ardrie Park (1918). He was lent to Caulfield Council to prepare plans for the renovation of Caulfield Park (1903) and the development of the Hopetoun Gardens in Elsternwick (1908), to Richmond Council for Barkly Gardens (1896), to Hawthorn Council for Central Gardens in Glenferrie (1896) and St James’ Park in Hawthorn (1896), and to Kew Council for the Alexandra Gardens in Kew (1905—06). His brother George became first curator of the Alexandra Gardens in 1905.

There have been suggestions that he may have prepared plans for the Burnley Gardens. Through his involvement with the Royal Horticultural Society of Victoria, Pockett may have laid out some of the early tree planting but Charles Luffman, the first principal of Burnley College, is credited with the existing design.

Another garden with which his name has been associated is Hedgeley Dene. Malvern Council bought land for this garden in 1911 and some tree planting and fencing work was done under Pockett’s supervision, but the present gardens were developed from 1924 in accordance with curator Francis L. Reeves’ plans. (The author recollects a conversation with TW Pockett’s son John B Pockett on a visit to Hedgeley Dene in about 1977, when John indicated that the design was not his father’s.)

Pockett’s gardens today
Although floral beds are long gone from most of the gardens Pockett designed, they generally (but not always) retain his layout. Central Park was originally laid out in a traditional town square arrangement — the paths were remade...
with curves and a conservatory and fountain constructed during Reeves’ curatorship of the park. Barkly Gardens were dug up for slit trenches during World War II and ‘were never restored to their original state’¹: there has been a modern extension with bedding and the path layout appears to be original, but there is a relatively small range of tree species. St James’ Park retains avenues of elms and a number of specimen trees. Ardrie Park, Central Gardens, the Alexandra Gardens and Hopetoun Gardens are well developed and maintained, to the credit of the responsible parks officers, and retain the diversity of their original tree plantings and avenues of trees. Caulfield Park has evolved over time. Its origins precede Pockett’s input, but the heritage area around the pond to the south of the western end reflects Pockett’s style.

At the age of 88, he was awarded an OBE in 1945 for services to horticulture, said to have been the first awarded for horticulture in Australia. From this distance, the acknowledgement of Pockett’s achievements seems well overdue. He had an international reputation for work on chrysanthemums and, as this article shows, his garden design and development had been locally recognised before World War I.

William Orange is a Melbourne science and mathematics teacher with a keen historical and practical interest in the work of his great-grandfather Thomas William Pockett.

Sources


Pockett family scrap book

Footnotes

1 Sunday Age 20 March 2015, p. 2.
2 According to his niece Gwen Lafford, 1981.
3 Garden Gazette December 1902.
4 Garden Gazette December 1902.
5 The Leader 16 January 1909 ‘Mr. Pockett’s work at Malvern’.
6 Stonnington pamphlets.
7 PR. Murray and JC Wells From sand, swamp and heath, City of Caulfield, 1980 p 33, and Caulfield Council minutes July 1903 and December 1907.
8 Richmond Guardian 9 March 1896.
9 The Age 30 January 1896.
10 Herald 11 May 1928.
11 Stonnington pamphlets.

Ardrie Park, 2011
Photo: William Orange
Our rich Australian botanic garden heritage

Without plants our world is nothing — they are essential to life. Since the flowering of the European Renaissance the botanic garden has played a unique role by combining plant science and horticulture. By the 19th century there was a worldwide network of scientific gardens, whose roles were already diverse.

Today, as well as functioning as scientific institutions for the study of botany through living plants (including endangered species) and herbarium specimens, both of which serve as a basis for conservation and education, botanic gardens have artistic and social purposes. Their ornamental gardens welcome visitors and introduce them to myriad forms of the plant world.

From 1700 a flood of new plants was introduced to Europe from across the world, fed by the huge increase in maritime trade and colonisation. Many dedicated collectors contributed, including Joseph Banks whose South Pacific collections include the now eponymous Banksia, Joseph Hooker of Kew (especially notable for Himalayan collections), and Scottish botanist David Douglas (after whom Douglas fir was named), with his North American collections.

For two centuries colonial economics drove the founding of botanic gardens worldwide. Gardens were set up by European governments or trading companies such as the (British) East India Company. They served to help in enlarging empires, particularly those of Britain, France, Spain and the Netherlands, who searched for economic and medical crops to grow in their colonies for the home country's industrial and economical benefit. Crops included spices, tea, coffee, breadfruit, hemp, rubber, chocolate, cotton, and vanilla.
From their early days botanic gardens were also prime sites of scientific inquiry, where live and preserved collections were identified, and with vigorous programs for seed exchange.

Joseph Banks was instrumental in establishing key botanic gardens in the British colonies, with the dual roles of scientific research and economic benefit from the transferring and acclimatising of plants. British-run botanic gardens, sometimes with satellite gardens, were founded in Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore, Egypt, South Africa, Niger, Sri Lanka, India, the West Indies and elsewhere.

At the time of Banks' death in 1820 only two Australian botanic gardens had begun: in Sydney (1816) and Hobart (1818), but strong links developed with the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew. By 1890 there were 30 botanic gardens in India, ten in Australia, at least three in New Zealand and four in Africa. Their mother ship was the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, the government's botanical clearing house for the British Empire. Of the 380 or so botanic gardens established by 1900 worldwide, over half were in Europe, 30% were in British colonies, and 30 were in Australia. Botanic Gardens Conservation International lists 20 botanic gardens in Australia among its members today, and a total of 117 Australian gardens.

Like public parks, the main colonial botanic gardens had complex ornamental landscapes as well as botanical plant collections and systematic display beds, and they themselves became valued public gardens. They were not linked officially to each other or to Kew, but were part of local colonial governments, with a strong degree of independence. Under the guidance of father and son directors William and Joseph Hooker from 1841 to 1885, Kew consolidated its role as the hub for research and the exchange of information and plant material, served as a training ground for superintendents and gardeners, and developed a plant quarantine role.

Of the Australian and New Zealand botanic gardens, about 30 belonging to Botanic Gardens Conservation International today fulfil scientific, educational, and plant conservation roles. Although early on European species were imported for experimentation as crops and ornamentals, native flora have become the focus of activities in many Australian botanic gardens, particularly the identification and conservation of threatened species. Some including Mount Annan, Canberra, Cranbourne (Victoria) and King's Park (Western Australia), have a particularly strong focus on the conservation of native flora.
Mount Tomah. At 416 ha Mount Annan is the largest botanic garden in Australia today. It was involved in the now well known discovery of the relict Wollemi pine (*Wollemia nobilis*), a relative of the monkey puzzle tree. After the pine’s discovery in 1994 in a remote canyon, it was propagated at Mount Annan and widely distributed. The garden also houses the Australian PlantBank, a scientific research facility opened in 2013.

Hobart’s Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens of 14 ha was initially a government garden used to acclimatise fruit and vegetables for the colony. By the late 1820s the Lieutenant Governor had it earmarked for a botanic garden for the Domain, specialising in the flora of the colony. Twenty-four year old William Davidson was appointed as the superintendent. Davidson, who had already had considerable success in horticulture in England, developed the garden so quickly that by 1830 he had 12 gardeners and 12 convicts, and had cleared and enclosed 13 acres. By the following year it contained over 130 species of native plants and he was sending seed to England. It now has over 600 species of Tasmanian plants on display, and a subantarctic plant house which features *Stilbocarpa polaris* and other plants from Macquarie Island in the Southern Ocean, 930 miles south of Hobart. The cool-climate garden’s extensive collection of conifers now boasts 60 of the 69 extant genera.

The Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne were established in 1846 on swampy and rocky land; the herbarium was founded in 1853. By contrast with his impressions of Sydney’s botanic garden, Trollope — who visited the gardens before William Guilfoyle’s appointment as director in 1873 — was not impressed by botanist Ferdinand von Mueller’s scientific layout. He wrote:

> In Melbourne the gardens are more scientific, but the world at large cares but little for science ... The gardens at Melbourne are as a long sermon by a great divine,— whose theology is unanswerable, but his language tedious.  

The layout was improved in appearance by William Guilfoyle over some 36 years, and more recently the garden has been called the most beautiful of its kind in the southern hemisphere, and perhaps in the world.

The 41 ha Adelaide Botanic Garden (founded in 1855) specialises in native Australian plants from arid, subtropical, and warm temperate regions. Forty per cent of the collection is Australian flora. The gardens house the recently restored Santos Museum of Economic Botany. Other botanic gardens associated with Adelaide are the Mount Lofty Botanic Garden with its cool-climate plantings, and Wittunga Botanic Garden, which features drought-tolerant Australian and South African plants.

The George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens (now 42 ha), set up on the present site (which was level although swampy) in 1886 when the town was 16 years old, were established to trial tropical plants of economic importance. They were named in honour of George Brown, who was curator during the 1970s and 1980s. Damage from tropical storms is one of the challenges of the gardens — 89 per cent of the garden’s plants were lost during Cyclone Tracy in December 1974, for example.

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**Footnotes**

1. See [https://www.bgci.org/](https://www.bgci.org/)

Sarah Rutherford is a Kew-trained gardener who began her career at Oxford Botanic Garden, and has an MA in the conservation of historic parks and gardens. She worked for English Heritage assessing sites for the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens, becoming Head of Register. Now a freelance conservation consultant, she has written six books including Botanic gardens (Shire Publications, Oxford 2015) and The world of Capability Brown (National Trust [UK], to be published 2016).
‘Trees — Natural and Cultural Values’ forum

A very successful AGHS forum was held in Melbourne on Friday 29 May 2015.

The Historic Urban Landscape

During this forum, speakers presented a range of tools, techniques and approaches to valuing trees, and established that no single approach is sufficient in itself. The extensive and well documented benefits of trees need to be articulated again and again like drip irrigation so that they seep into wider public awareness and acceptance. There seems to be a disconnection between the formal processes required of tree managers and community involvement in tree matters. Probably the least effective time to try to protect a tree is when it is being cut down, yet this is when many people enter the fray.

Local governments play a huge role in relation to trees, through street tree and park planning, planting, managing and protecting trees, and (perhaps most importantly) urban planning.

Planning schemes should, ideally, protect values identified by the community. Yet it has been many people’s bitter experience that councils have failed to identify significant trees for protection in local planning schemes. Without such protection, it is virtually impossible to save a tree no matter how deeply it is valued in a community.

Lyndal Plant’s research finds that while street trees are not the primary driver of housing choice in a suburb of Brisbane, the presence of ‘leafy streets’ is a positive factor (though not the tree immediately outside the house!). The modest but positive return to councils through increasing property values over time is another argument in favour of investment in street trees. Tools such as i-tree are now readily available to tree managers, enabling valuation of a council’s tree assets.

With the vital role trees play in urban cooling, investment in street trees will become a potentially lifesaving contribution to public health. According to Greg Moore, 30—35% tree canopy cover is needed to be effective.

Tony Hall appeared perplexed by some Australian town planning practices. A lone walker in car-dependent suburbs throughout Australia, with measuring device in hand, he has established that shrinking backyards are not so much the result of smaller lot sizes as growing house sizes. While a 60:40 house-to-land ratio seems acceptable on the face of it, the placement of the house on...
the lot leaves a border of unusable open space, certainly not big enough to sustain a shade-giving tree. He showed persuasively with reference to garden cities in England that with smaller houses and skilful estate design, a generously treed environment can readily be achieved.

The backyard shaped the culture of postwar Australians. Shrinking backyards and the move to apartment living mean that present and future generations will increasingly encounter trees and nature in the public realm. Speakers stressed that authorities should be encouraged to manage, rather than avoid, the risk associated with trees.

**The vexing matter of community engagement**

Tim Entwisle spoke of his experience as Director of Sydney’s Royal Botanic Gardens when park planning required the removal of large old trees. Though the gardens used formal notification on site when tree removals were imminent, the public reaction came, as it so often does, only when the tree removal started. Even though the right of the Royal Botanic Gardens to exercise their expertise in managing these significant gardens was upheld by the courts, the role of the expert is increasingly challenged by members of the public.

The City of Melbourne has used both novel and familiar community engagement approaches in developing its urban forest strategy. When a tree was poisoned outside a development site in central Melbourne, the city council turned to the arts rather than the law. The tree was tenderly bandaged. Expressions of public mourning for the tree followed in the form of letters and tributes. The council has shared stark facts about the likely extent of future tree loss across Melbourne. This prospect has been offset to an extent by the city’s attention to localised urban forest precinct planning and a goal of achieving 40% tree canopy cover by 2040.

Roadsides are currently in the front line of tree battles. The early engagement of the community by road managers in Braidwood NSW was given as a positive example. Meanwhile in Victoria, tree removals associated with improvements to the Western Highway and in Rushworth are being passionately resisted in those communities.

**Telling tree stories**

Several speakers spoke of social and cultural approaches to valuing trees — building a sense of stewardship and relationship with trees through tree stories, photographs, plaques and web-based tools. In Melbourne’s urban forest, every tree in the City of Melbourne has been mapped with interactive mapping. The website [http://melbourneurbanforestvisual.com.au/](http://melbourneurbanforestvisual.com.au/) invites users to ‘email this tree’, and there is even a tree poetry form, I learned in the break. The power of the World War I centenary in motivating care and connection with avenues of honour is a major topic to be explored at a future date.

Lilian Pearce reminded us that trees assert their presence in our lives in countless ways, appearing in family stories and neighbour disputes. In the course of her research in the inner Melbourne suburb of Fairfield, ‘people poured out their tree stories’ to her.

**Eternal vigilance**

Tree protection battles may need to be fought and fought again, said Greg Moore, citing Bacchus Marsh’s avenue of honour. That highlights the need for succession planning not only in tree planting but in tree advocacy. Ways of giving voice to tree advocacy will keep changing. As a campaigner on Rushworth Action Group on the Environment (RAGE) commented recently, ‘I’ve always thought Facebook was a waste of time ... Last night, I have spent more time on Facebook than I have in years. Every minute has been worth it. It has revealed to me the modern power of mass communication for a wonderful cause.’

What is valued changes over time. As climate change effects intensify there may be a heightened appreciation of the value of trees. Perhaps there will be a new willingness to privilege the retention of trees on Victoria’s roadsides over vehicle speed. Formal processes will continue to be used to fulfil legal obligations but more imaginative and creative ways of giving voice to tree advocacy will keep changing. As a campaigner on Rushworth Action Group on the Environment (RAGE) commented recently, ‘I’ve always thought Facebook was a waste of time ... Last night, I have spent more time on Facebook than I have in years. Every minute has been worth it. It has revealed to me the modern power of mass communication for a wonderful cause.’

During a break Anna Foley, National Trust of Australia (Victoria), whisked participants across La Trobe Street to view the latest addition to the National Trust Significant Tree Register, a Port Jackson fig (Ficus rubiginosa) growing on the stone wall of the Old Melbourne Gaol. This tree seemed to sum up the themes of the day — a tenacious tree in a tight urban environment clinging on through changing times, now receiving due recognition if not the full protection of the law.

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**Janet Bolitho** has a strong interest in history and urban planning. From a strong involvement in several community organisations, she became a councillor for Port Melbourne (2004–2012) and twice served as mayor of the City of Port Phillip. Local government led to an even stronger interest in place making, urban environments and planning.
On the evening of Monday 8 June 2015, the Stirling Urban Tree Forum was held at the Mount Lawley Bowling Club, hosted by the club and the Mount Lawley Society (a community organisation). The forum was organised by the newly formed Stirling Urban Tree Network, an initiative of Leisha Jack. The leafy inner city suburb of Mount Lawley is part of the City of Stirling, which has a population of approximately 220,000 people.

Dr Paul Hardisty, Director of the CSIRO Land and Water Flagship, painted a scary picture of Perth’s future under IPCC climate change forecasts if we do nothing, especially the prospect of longer, hotter heatwaves. The urban forest and remnant bushland will become more precious for its biodiversity, and there is increasing evidence that biodiversity is essential for human health.

Dr Helen Brown, Director of Health, Safety and Environment in the School of Public Health at Curtin University, spoke about the importance of trees for our physical and mental health. She emphasised the role that trees have in cooling the city and filtering pollution, especially particulates and ozone. Excess heat can cause civil unrest including riots. Perth has experienced an increase in deaths during heatwaves, and the increase is forecast to rise. There is medical evidence for the benefits to mental health of ‘getting out’. Helen stressed the importance of education. Trees are needed at the design phase of new housing developments.

Peter Ciemitis, Senior Associate Planner at the planning firm Roberts Day, gave five reasons for tree loss:

- **Homebuyers favouring cheaper construction** Before the 1990s, siteworks on residential blocks were undertaken individually by builders, which often left natural slope and trees, but at a greater cost to homebuyers. However, in an attempt to reduce construction costs, homebuilders since the 1990s have favoured those developers who ‘bulk-earthworked’ entire estates, where trees became a collateral loss. A generation later, industry experience in building on slope has been lost.

- **Our desire for larger homes means less space for trees** We have shrinking household sizes but — curiously — the largest houses in the world. The open space around houses has therefore shrunk and, in the diminishing space left, homebuyers today appear to favour a roofed al fresco area to a garden.

- **Clumsy design provisions** House design in Western Australia is controlled by the residential design codes, which operate reductively by specifying building standards irrespective of the kind of dwelling, with many standards being progressively reduced. Is it time for more sophisticated design controls such as form-based codes, based on type of dwelling? More imaginative
Form-based building codes can encourage developments with mixtures of housing types and well designed, treed outdoor spaces. Diagram courtesy Peter Ciemitis.

planning provisions would allow for mixtures of different kinds of housing, such as villas, maisonettes, terraces and townhouses with moderate sized gardens and space for trees, and apartment blocks of varying sizes and dimensions containing or surrounded by well designed outdoor spaces including trees. Form-based codes could allow different housing forms within a single street, creating opportunities for planting trees of varying sizes to suit the buildings, and enabling old trees to be retained in situations where housing can be designed to accommodate them.

■ Well-intentioned policies Whether it be bushfire control, drainage design or even driveway design, many standards have cascading unintended consequences for landform and tree retention. For example, the requirements of water sensitive urban design have seen the demise of the drainage sump (or ‘drainage pit’), which has been replaced by very wide expansive swallow swales. These require earthworking on natural grades, and by implication, tree loss.

■ Liability — the invisible hand of urban design Councils are urged by residents to cut down trees because of the possibility of falling branches. The risk of harm caused by a falling branch is much lower (by many orders of magnitude) than the risk of harm by a passing car, but statistics are not benchmarked evenly.

The forum also summarised the benefits of trees, including reduction of urban heat, reduction of household energy costs, and reduction of residential traffic speed (trees on verges have an effect called ‘side friction’, slowing drivers down and making streets safer). The life of asphalt is doubled if it is shaded, a saving for local government facing crippling road maintenance costs. Leafy areas increase real estate values, the subject of Lyndal Plant’s presentation at the AGHS presentation at the AGHS WA Tree Forum in Melbourne.

Dr Paul Barber, Adjunct Associate Professor at Murdoch University and founder of ArborCarbon, expressed his astonishment at the funds councils allocate to chop down trees compared with the small amount allocated to inspect trees and treat them for disease. He has successfully treated hundreds of trees affected by herbicides, and believes that improvements in nursery practices for growing trees, and for planting them, could improve survival a great deal.

Barber is also conducting research on canopy height and the effects of impervious surfaces on heat island effect in Perth, and his illustrations of this effect were very clear.

The forum ended with a note of optimism: Dr Gabriela Eiris, Community Tree Officer at the City of Stirling, described the City of Stirling’s ‘million trees’ initiative, increasing planting in road reserves, on median strips, replacing dying or dead trees and responding to requests for street trees. There is a community tree planting scheme to which people have responded well. Eiris’s enthusiasm for tree planting should prove irresistible.

There are signs that trees are coming back into favour: the new ‘Naturescape’ playground at Kings Park has proved very popular. At the City of Stirling forum, it was encouraging to see new scientific evidence which will bolster arguments for investment in the urban forest, ideas for planning which will more easily accommodate new and existing trees, and tree-planting action on the part of a local council which participated wholeheartedly in the AGHS WA Tree Forum in 2013.

Caroline Grant is a landscape architect with a Masters degree in Landscape Conservation and Change from the Architectural Association in London. She is currently writing a PhD at the University of Western Australia on the cultural landscape of the Albany region.
Tony Kanellos (editor) *Out of the past: views of the Adelaide Botanic Garden*, Board of the Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium [Adelaide], 2014, 661 pages, RRP $50

**Yesterday’s ‘Snapchat’**

*Deltiologist: a person who collects postcards as a hobby.*

This book takes the postcard as a collection beyond that of hobby status. It was produced to accompany the exhibition ‘Postcards from the Edge of the City’, which was held in the Santos Museum of Economic Botany in the Adelaide Botanic Garden in 2014–15. As the exhibition’s editor and curator Tony Kanellos says in his introduction, the book acts as both a portable archive of a collection and a souvenir of the Adelaide Botanic Garden.

It begins with five short, bite-sized reflections on the status of the postcard, appropriate given the brevity and directness of communication demanded by the postcard. The respondents (from botanist to curator to academic) draw together key concepts for the postcard, including the time of their production and their communicative value.

A key theme here is the alignment of the postcard to social media, a link so fantastically obvious when once you arrive at the body of the book: 600 pages handsomely reproducing 300 postcards to scale. The design of the book significantly refers to the format of the postcards and their collective value — it is landscape format and beautifully housed within a box. Each side of the postcard is given equal status in its reproduction, with the postcard’s image on the left-hand side and the reverse side’s written component on the right.

One might question this strategy as being counter to traditional book-binding techniques of image reproduction. However, I found that it drew me into the correspondence, into the gorgeous typography, and the idiosyncrasies of handwriting and of perceptions of the Adelaide Botanic Garden. Such a format questions any tendency we as viewers have to privilege the image side of these picture-postcards. Rather this book produces direct correspondences between the image and text components. And this is the success of the book — it provides a rendezvous where our own view of these gardens and their enduring reception in the past can meet.

Jessica Hood
Photographer and art historian

Roger Smith’s ecologically informed book tells the story of a plantation of coast redwoods (*Sequoia sempervirens*) at Aire Valley in the Otway Ranges, the wettest part of Victoria. Smith, a forest scientist, spent the first 14 years of his life at Beech Forest in the Otways. The redwoods were planted on abandoned farmland during the Great Depression of the 1930s, alongside forests of mountain ash (*Eucalyptus regnans*) — two of the tallest tree species in the world.

The book combines the human history of the area after European settlement with that of the region’s natural history and the imported redwoods. It is a remarkable story of a biologically and culturally significant plantation which is now more than 75 years old. It is also the only Australian example of a national park which has been extended to include a planting of non-native conifers. Among the many fine illustrations is one of a forest of redwood trunks among tree ferns in the late afternoon sunlight, an eloquent summary in one photograph of the entwined human history of our northern and southern hemisphere plants.

Carolyn Landon (2015) *Banksia lady: Celia Rosser, botanical artist* Monash University Publishing, Melbourne, paperback RRP $39.95, also available as an electronic publication

This is biographer Carolyn Landon’s fourth book, but the first for which she has chosen a botanical subject. Celia Rosser became well known through her watercolours of banksias which formed a substantial part of Monash University’s 25-year long banksia project. Rosser became the university’s botanical artist in 1974, and painted every known banksia species in the magnificent three volume work *The banksias*, with text by Alex George.

Landon places Rosser’s achievements in the context of the history of botanical illustration.


In *A garden forever*, AGHS members Kyleigh and Michael Simpson have documented the 22 year history and development of a domestic garden, ‘The Shambles’, recently featured on ABC TV’s ‘Gardening Australia’ (see http://www.abc.net.au/gardening/stories/s4248133.htm). The book, a labour of love like so many in these pages, has an inventory of plants in their garden at Montville on the Blackall Range in southeastern Queensland. There are detailed notes on many plants and plant groups in the garden — for example, ‘The Shambles’ collection of perennial salvias.


The Colac Botanic Gardens were laid out in 1868 by English-born botanist and gardener Daniel Bunce, curator of the Geelong Botanic Gardens.

In 1910 William Guilfoyle was invited to submit a plan for remodelling the gardens. The plan was accepted but not completely implemented. However, his signature is evident in the long views and short vistas which are still a feature of the gardens.

Paatsch presents a chronology of the gardens, beginning with the land’s gazettal ‘for botanical and recreative purposes’ in 1865. Among other topics, the book has chapters on the plant collection (including trees on the Heritage Register) and the Friends group. In her lively style, Paatsch also writes on the contentious issue of cars in the gardens, and on why someone blew up the original gazebo. It is the author’s aim that, just as the gardens have brought pleasure to so many, the book will do the same.
Harvesting gardening ephemera
In late 2016 the State Library of New South Wales will be hosting a major gardens exhibition for which the Australian Garden History Society is to be a sponsor. The library has a rich collection of gardening items spanning a range of formats, including books, journals, paintings and manuscripts and is committed to maintaining and developing this collection.

In anticipation of this wonderful exhibition, the library is holding a collecting drive to boost its collection of gardening and garden-themed ephemera. Through this drive the library is aiming to harvest a representative selection of contemporary material including catalogues, brochures, flyers, postcards, posters and point of sale advertising. Preferred items are printed, NSW-related material with an emphasis on topicality, graphic design and items featuring gardening and botanical imagery.

Please support the library and join in the harvest! Send items to Kathryn Barwick, Collection Strategy & Development, State Library of NSW, Macquarie St, Sydney NSW 2000.

Heritage Perth talk on Perth’s public gardens 22 July 2015
As part of the 2015 Walk & Talk Series, Heritage Perth presents a talk by Alan Dolphin of Perth’s Parks and Gardens service. Alan has been involved with Perth’s city gardens for more than 40 years. During his time as Curator of Queens Gardens, he had the unique privilege of living in the Curators Cottage in the gardens. His talk, ‘A history of our secret gardens’, will also cover the value of green space, and the City of Perth’s inspirational Urban Forest Plan. It will be held at Northbridge Piazza Community Building on 22 July at 12.30 pm. For bookings (essential as places are limited) see heritageperth.com

Open Gardens Canberra
Thanks to the initiative of founding president Shirley Pipitone, Open Gardens Canberra has been established to take the place of the now closed national scheme. Shirley aims to create a community of garden lovers in the Canberra region. Open Gardens Canberra will open at least nine gardens in Canberra and the surrounding region in 2015, and more are planned for 2016.
Profile: Elizabeth Kerry

In 1985 Elizabeth Kerry saw an advertisement for an AGHS garden history conference in Launceston. This was the first time she’d heard of the society — she has been a member ever since, and is on the Tasmanian branch committee.

I’ve always loved plants and gardens, starting with my family garden in Melbourne. It was designed in the mid-1930s by the then Government Horticulturist Linacre. It was traditional in layout, but quite ahead of its time in including Australian and South African plants well before they were common in suburban gardens. Perhaps this interest of mine was in the blood. My mother studied botany at the Melbourne University in the 1920s and I followed to do agricultural science in 1957. The degree gave me a broad range of skills which were all very applicable to gardens as well as agriculture — not only through botany but also through subjects such as plant pathology, entomology and soil science.

Later I returned to Melbourne University to do a PhD on microfungi in the decomposition of plants on subantarctic Macquarie Island. Eventually, this led to work on the Antarctic Continent, where I looked for ways of increasing the breakdown of petroleum in soils. Because there was no initial policy for waste removal, large amounts of petroleum had seeped into the soil around the stations. I showed that adding NPK fertilisers (‘bioremediation’) could help. It was the first time this process had been shown to be effective in Antarctica.

It was a great privilege to be able to work in these places (Editorial note: Elizabeth was the first woman scientist to work in Antarctica as a member of an Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition.) During one summer of ice and snow at Davis Station in 1990, I remember the contrast of opening a Christmas present of Trisha Dixon’s book on Edna Walling, with lush green images of gardens.

I became interested in historic gardens when my husband Knowles and I moved to Hobart in the 1980s and bought a Victorian house in the Glebe. There was a retaining wall at the back and a dividing path to the front door. Though there had been very little grown in the garden for years, rich soil had accumulated behind the retaining wall. It was a perfect situation for creating a cottage garden.

In Tasmania many early properties still retain aspects of their early gardens and landscapes. Others, such as John Glover’s property at Deddington, can be appreciated for their historic significance although little remains of the garden of his famous painting. As a member of the Tasmanian branch of AGHS, I have explored many of these gardens, including some considered as historic gardens of the future, like those at MONA.

Now we live on a farm in Richmond on a beautiful site beside a lake, with views down the Coal River valley to Mount Wellington. Thanks to garden designer Lindsay Campbell we have an Italian-inspired courtyard and trees, stone walls and lawn surrounding the house. I thought that the size of this area would prevent us from becoming slaves to the garden, but we keep extending into new garden areas.

Attending the 1985 AGHS conference was a real turning point in my life. My botanical interests broadened to include historic, aesthetic and cultural aspects of gardens and landscapes, and we began travelling the world’s gardens after talks like George Seddon’s one on Italian gardens at the 1985 Launceston conference. When I was one of the organising committee for the 2010 national conference, which was again held in Launceston, I felt as though I had come full circle.

With our relatively small membership and small committee, in Tasmania we are nevertheless helping to maintain our garden and landscape heritage by recording significant gardens and involvement in conservation projects. I think the journal (with its high academic standard and wide range of disciplines) forms an important record of the society’s activities and interests. For me, the national conferences are also very important. Their local flavour leads to a better understanding of the past and present of the host city. I’ve found this invaluable.
AGHS News

AGHS Annual General Meeting
The 35th Annual General Meeting of the Australian Garden History Society will be held on Saturday 17 October 2015 at 8.30 am at the National Wine Centre, Adelaide. Items for the agenda should be emailed to the AGHS office (info@gardenhistorysociety.org.au). Branches are asked to nominate their representative to the National Management Committee and to inform the Secretary (c/- AGHS office) by 28 August 2015.

Honours for AGHS projects
At the Annual NSW National Trust Heritage Awards for 2015, the reinstatement of the kitchen garden on Montague Island (Colleen Morris and ACT, Monaro and Riverina Branch) won the Conservation Landscape Award, and the Berrima Bridge Nurseries conservation management plan won the Research and Investigation — Community and Individuals award for the Southern Highlands Branch. Colleen Morris has written about the Montague Island project in Australian Garden History vol 26 no 2, October 2014.

The Southern Highlands Branch commissioned landscape heritage consultants Chris and Charlotte Webb to prepare the Berrima Bridge Nurseries conservation management plan. The plan has also recently been awarded a Certificate of Recognition from Wingecarribee Shire Council for ‘Best Contribution to an Understanding of Heritage in the Wingecarribee Shire’. This work has enabled the significance of the nursery and its two owners Claude and Isobel Crowe to the landscape of the Southern Highlands and to the horticulture industry to be recognised. Cuttings have been taken from camellias and other plants growing on the nursery site. These included plants that are considered to be of exceptional significance because of their rarity and historical connections. We hope to publish a fuller account of progress in the Berrima Bridge Nurseries project in a coming issue.
Diary dates

JULY 2015

Sunday 12 | Clayfield walk | QUEENSLAND

Maurice Wilson and Margaret Kirkwood will lead a Clayfield walk, beginning at 9.30 am. See the Branch webpage for further details.

Thursday 16 | Australian garden publications and writers | ACT/MONARO/RIVERINA

Greg Johnson will speak about Australian garden-related publications and writers. The talk will cover writers and writing during the Federation, Edwardian, WWI and Depression periods. 6 pm, Wesley Hall, National Circuit, Forrest. Cost: AGHS members $10, non-members $15 (includes refreshments). Bookings essential, contact Helen Elliot on (02) 6284 4749 or ellioth@bigpond.net.au

Saturday 18 | Beaufort working bee | VICTORIA

Working bee at ‘Belmont’, Beaufort. Contact Fran Faul on (03) 9853 1369 or franfaul@gmail.com

Sunday 26 | AGM and lecture | TASMANIA

See Branch webpage for further details.

Thursday 30 | War grave gardens | SYDNEY

Andrew Prowse and Kim Morris will give an illustrated talk, ‘War grave gardens in perpetuity’. 6 pm for 7-8.30 pm, Annie Wyatt Room, National Trust Centre, Observatory Hill, Sydney. Cost: AGHS members $20, guests $30 (includes light refreshments). Bookings essential, to Jeanne Villani at Jeanne@Villani.com

AUGUST 2015

Sunday 9 | Seminar | SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS

Claudia Hyles will speak on ‘Paradise Gardens’, and Dr Peter Donaldson on ‘Joseph Hooker: the story continues’. 10.30 am–2.30 pm, East Bowral Community Centre.

Tuesday 11 | AGM and lecture | VICTORIA

After the AGM, photographer and horticulturist Sarah Wood will speak on her photographic project on avenues of honour. 6 pm Mueller Hall, The Herbarium, Birdwood Avenue, Royal Botanic Gardens. Cost: AGHS members $20, non-members $25, students $10. Contact Lisa Tuck on 0418 590 891 or lisatuckl@bigpond.com
Thursday 13 | AGM and annual lecture ‘A preference for informality’  
SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS
After the Branch AGM, landscape architect, horticulturalist and heritage consultant Craig Burton will speak on the life and significant works of Richard Clough (1921–2014). 6.15 pm, National Archives of Australia, Queen Victoria Terrace, Parkes.  
Cost: AGHS members free, non-members $15 (includes refreshments). Bookings essential, contact Helen Elliot on (02) 6284 4749 or ellioth@bigpond.net.au

Saturday 15 | Buninyong working bee  
VICTORIA
Working bee at ‘Mt Boninyong’, Buninyong. Contact Fran Faul on (03) 9853 1369 or franfaul@gmail.com

Sunday 16 | AGM and book sale  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA
After the Branch AGM there will be a book sale at which members may sell or donate their personal garden-related books.  
Grove Community Centre, Peppermint Grove (venue and time to be confirmed).

Wednesday 19 | AGM and talk on Richard Clough  
SYDNEY
After the Branch AGM Colleen Morris will speak on ‘A love of landscape and libraries — Richard Clough (1921–2014), collector and historian’, a very personal view of the contribution of Richard Clough to Australian garden history through his love of books and history. 6pm for 7–8.30pm, Annie Wyatt Room, National Trust Centre, Observatory Hill, Sydney.  
Cost: AGHS members $20, guests $30 (includes light refreshments). Bookings essential, to Jeanne Villani at Jeanne@Villani.com

Sunday 30 | Lecture on Californian gardens  
TASMANIA
Dr Anne Vale will speak on ‘California Dreaming: Gardens from Los Angeles to San Francisco, heritage botanical delights to mid-century modernism’. 2 pm, Runnymede, 61 Bay Road, New Town; afternoon tea 3–3.30 pm. Cost: AGHS members $20, non-members $25.

SEPTEMBER 2015

Wednesday 9 | Marianne Collinson Campbell  
SYDNEY
Leonie Norton will present an illustrated talk on botanical artist and settler Marianne Collinson Campbell of Duntroon.  
6 pm for 7–8.30 pm, Annie Wyatt Room, National Trust Centre, Observatory Hill, Sydney. Cost: AGHS members $20, guests $30 (includes light refreshments). Bookings essential, to Jeanne Villani at Jeanne@Villani.com

Saturday 12 | Birregurra working bee  
VICTORIA
Working bee at ‘Turkeith’, Birregurra. Contact Fran Faul on (03) 9853 1369 or franfaul@gmail.com

OCTOBER 2015

AGHS Annual National Conference, Adelaide, SA
The Australian Garden History Society’s 36th Annual National Conference will be held in Adelaide, 16–18 October 2015.  
See insert for conference brochure and registration. There will be a pre-conference symposium on 15 October also in Adelaide, sharing the conference theme ‘Garden to table’. Expressions of interest for presenting a refereed paper at the Symposium are invited. Enquiries and proposals for papers should be sent to Ray Choate info@gardenhistorysociety.org.au
An exhibition now on, *Painting Paradise: the Art of the Garden*, will be of interest to readers, including many who may not have the chance to visit London to see it in person.

The exhibition has been brought together by the Royal Collection Trust. It explores the ways in which the garden inspired artists and craftsmen during the period from 1500 to 1900. Through the use of paintings, botanical studies, drawings, books, manuscripts and decorative arts from the Royal Collection, it shows the changing character of the garden during this time, and the many uses people make of them — from sanctuaries to places for scientific study, havens for the solitary thinker, and spaces for pure enjoyment and delight.

Artists whose work is on display include Leonardo da Vinci, Maria Sibylla Merian and Carl Fabergé. Some of the earliest and rarest surviving depictions of gardens and plants are on display.

The exhibition has nine main sections: Paradise, the sacred garden, the Renaissance garden, the Baroque garden, the botanic garden, the landscape garden (England's greatest cultural export of the 18th century, says the website), the horticultural garden, the garden inside, and the language of flowers. Illustrations of objects displayed are available on the website.

‘The garden inside’, for example, includes a set of Rockingham porcelain dessert stands, one of which is an elaborate and delightful pineapple comport. The decorative imagery of these stands not only makes use of national floral symbols — gilded roses, thistles and shamrocks, oak leaves and acorns — but of motifs such as the pineapple, sugarcane, exotic fruits and shells, reflecting the British Empire’s colonial history.

The structure provided by the exhibition’s nine themes simplifies presentation of historical detail. In talking about the rise of botanic gardens, the website says that during the 16th and early 17th centuries 20 times more plants came under cultivation in Europe than in the 2000 years before then.

The book *Painting Paradise: the art of the garden*, by the Trust’s senior curator of paintings Vanessa Remington, has been published to accompany the exhibition (details are on the website).