

ACT Monaro Riverina Branch

Newsletter June 2024 No 3



Australian Garden History Society
www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au

ACT Monaro Riverina Branch, PO Box 5008, LYNEHAM ACT 2602
For an e-copy of the newsletter email judy.pearce@netspeed.com.au

BRANCH DIARY

JUNE 24, 6PM
*Webinar, Big Hearted
Gardens: Community &
Care (see page 7)*

5 JULY, 12-4PM
Annual Film Day, Gundaroo

25 JULY, 6PM
*Lecture: Museums &
Australia's Garden History*

22 AUGUST
5.30 pm – AGM
6.00 pm – Annual Lecture,
speaker Greg Johnson

18 SEPTEMBER, 6PM
*Joint lecture with Friends of
NLA, speaker Margo Neale*

2 & 3 NOVEMBER
*Cootamundra and District
Gardens*

44TH AGHS ANNUAL
CONFERENCE
BUNBURY, WA
18 – 20 OCTOBER
2024

THEME: *HESPERIA:
LOOKING WEST*

Optional Day, 21 October

Bookings opened – go to
<https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/events-conferences/category/conference-information/>

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

CRIMS AND CORNISH CREAM TEA A FILM DAY IN GUNDAROO

FRIDAY 5 JULY, 12 NOON – 4 PM

This year the AGHS winter film is **Saving Grace**. Grace, “the best gardener in the world”, lives with her husband in a comfortable house in a Cornish village, growing wonderful orchids in her greenhouse. When her feckless husband dies, she faces financial ruin, but creatively turns her gardening skills to advantage. A British comedy with familiar faces, not all in familiar roles – Brenda Blethyn, Craig Ferguson, Martin Clunes, Bill Bailey.

Once again, the film will be in the historic and warm Gundaroo Soldiers’ Memorial Hall in the main street of Gundaroo, and a delicious country lunch and afternoon tea (a cream tea of course, with a nod to the Cornish setting of the film) will be served.

We will be also conducting a sale of garden related books – inexpensively priced, and a golden opportunity for you to pick up some excellent reading for the remainder of cold July. Proceeds of the book sale go to the Nina Crone Writing Fund.

We encourage you to arrive at 12 to browse and buy. Lunch will be at 12.30, and the film screening will follow. We will ensure we finish in good time for you to be home before dark.

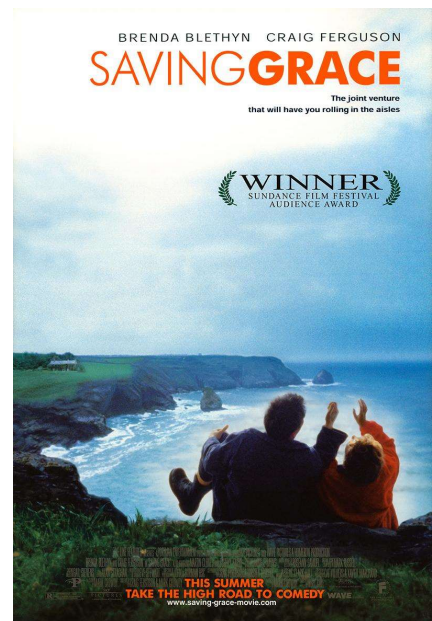
Bookings are essential and close on Sunday 30 June. Do book promptly – it will as always be a great day.

Venue Gundaroo Soldiers’ Memorial Hall, 52 Cork Street, Gundaroo

Cost AGHS Members \$35, non-members \$40

Bookings Are essential at: <https://www.trybooking.com/CSBAQ>
Bookings close on Sunday 30 June - no refunds after that date

Inquiries Nancy Clarke clarkenancy624@gmail.com



**BRANCH
COMMITTEE**

Robyn Oates, Chair
Sue Cassidy, Treasurer
Anne Claoue-Long, State
 NMC Representative
Nancy Clarke, Secretary

Louise Gaudry
Rosanna Horn
Paul Mackay



**LECTURE: MUSEUMS AND
 AUSTRALIA'S
 GARDEN HISTORY
 SPEAKER: LUKE KEOGH
 THURSDAY 25 JULY, 6.00 PM**

Garden objects, ephemera and stories are well-represented in Australian museum collections, though their significance and connections are not always fully recognised or interpreted. It is time for museum curators and garden historians to have a closer dialogue, so they can better tell the 'garden' stories in their collections.

In his talk curator and historian **Luke Keogh** will showcase some of the objects and stories he has uncovered in his work with museums, focussing in particular on his recent work with the National Museum of Australia. He will also talk about some of the collaborations with museums around the world that have connected garden histories, museum collections and garden spaces.



Apothecary's Box made from Huon Pine, NMA Collection

Luke's book *The Wardian Case: How a Simple Box Moved Plants and Changed the World* (2020) was Garden Media Guild's Garden Book of the Year and won the NSW Premier's General History Prize.

In this presentation Luke will draw on the work he has completed as White Family Senior Fellow in Australian Garden History at the National Museum of Australia.

After the talk we will enjoy refreshments and you will have an opportunity to talk with Luke as well as other AGHS members and friends.

Venue The Pavilion, Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture,
 Blackall St, Barton

Cost AGHS Members \$15, non-members \$20

Bookings Are essential at: <https://www.trybooking.com/CSFPY>

Inquiries Nancy Clarke clarkenancy624@gmail.com

SAVE THE DATES FOR THE NEXT 3 EVENTS

**AGHS ACT MONARO RIVERINA BRANCH
 AGM & ANNUAL LECTURE**

THURSDAY 22 AUGUST, 5.30 PM

The AGM of the ACT Monaro Riverina Branch of the Australian Garden History Society will be held on Thursday 22 August 2024, at 5.30 pm, in the Pavilion, in the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, Parkes.

Immediately after the meeting (at 6 pm) Dr Greg Johnson will be presenting the Branch's Annual Lecture. Greg has contributed hugely to AGHS (you may recall the series of 4 lectures he presented on the history of garden books in Australia) and an amazing oral history with him has recently been added to the AGHS website. To listen to this go to



<https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/publications/dr-greg-i-johnson/>

This will be a truly enjoyable and interesting talk. And of course, we will follow the lecture with excellent refreshments and good conversation.

More details on both these events, including an AGM agenda and booking details will be provided later, but in the meantime, do pencil in this date and time

Inquiries Nancy Clarke clarkenancy624@gmail.com

**JOINT EVENT WITH FRIENDS
OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY
INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES ON LANDSCAPE
WITH MARGO NEALE**

WEDNESDAY 18 SEPTEMBER, 6 PM

Information to follow in the next newsletter.

**COOTAMUNDRA AND DISTRICT GARDENS
SATURDAY 2 & SUNDAY 3 NOVEMBER**

We are working with owners of country gardens and local garden clubs to create an exciting spring excursion to the Cootamundra region on the first weekend in November.

This will be a self-drive, book-your-own accommodation weekend, but in addition to the actual garden visits there will be plenty of opportunities for great garden talk and discoveries.

More information will be included in our next newsletter but in the meantime keep this weekend free for some wonderful country garden visits.

RECENT EVENTS

**MODERNISM AND RED BRICK: UNDER THE
TREES IN SUBURBAN GRIFFITH
28 APRIL AND 26 MAY**

AGHS again teamed up with the ACT National Trust to deliver a walk during the Canberra and District Heritage Festival. Due to enthusiastic bookings the event was held twice, on April 28 and May 26. The route and content of the event was similar to the *Exploring Green Griffith* event held on 4 April specifically for AGHS members, but included a new twist to the story in how Modernist ideas and housing styles were becoming evident in the suburban landscape at the same time as the more traditional red brick cottages in their garden setting. While the weather was certainly crisper and the autumn leaves on the ground rather than on the trees the two groups enjoyed their

walk in Modernist and Red Brick Griffith. The event again ended with a visit to Louise Gaudry's near original 1940s red brick cottage and her beautifully cared for garden. Thank you to Louise for opening up her home for people to experience authentic Griffith garden history and heritage.

AGHS was pleased to make such a popular contribution to the Heritage Festival in demonstration of our positive partnership with the ACT National Trust. It shows a growing recognition of the way that AGHS walks are bringing garden history and changing landscape styles to life as part of understanding the heritage of Canberra's suburbs.

As you may remember last year Hackett was the focus of an AGHS Heritage Festival walk which was repeated due to its popularity. A walk around the Kingston Foreshore offered the 2023 Festival was another joint AGHS National Trust event. Perhaps each year we will pick a new suburb?

Please contact the committee if you feel your Canberra suburb could host an interesting history and garden walk during the 2025 Heritage Festival.

Anne Claoue-Long

VISIT TO RETFORD PARK WEDNESDAY 15 MAY

On 15 May your AGHS ACT Monaro Riverina Branch Committee organised an extremely successful visit to the National Trust property Retford Park, Bowral. This was a private tour, with the property opened especially for our AGHS Branch.

An enthusiastic group of 30 people arrived at Retford Park on a glorious late autumn morning. We were greeted by the National Trust's Jackie Pennock, who made us feel most welcome. As Retford Park comprises a magnificent house and park-like gardens, our visit was split into a tour of the house in the morning and the gardens in the afternoon. The tours were conducted by volunteer guides: Lynne and Jan in the house and John and Tim in the gardens. The guides really made the property come alive with their depth of knowledge on the provenance and contents of the house and gardens and entertained us with many anecdotes and facts, ensuring that the day passed very quickly.

Prior to the tour of the house, Lynne provided us with an overview of the property's history, commencing with the earliest custodians, the Gundungurra people. Its European heritage commenced with a grant of land by Governor Macquarie in 1821 to Edward Riley. This was followed by a sale in the early 1880s to Samuel Horden, a son of Anthony Horden, who built the house between 1883-1887, naming it Retford Park, in recognition of the family's links to the town of Retford in England. Designed by the architect Albert Bond in a rendered brick Victorian/Italianate style, the house occupies a commanding raised position overlooking the expansive gardens. Albert Bond also designed the Anthony Horden department store in Sydney, as well as Sydney Town Hall.

The house and garden that we see today are largely the result of ownership by James Fairfax, commencing with his purchase of the property in 1964 for the sum of £15,000. Over a period of more than 50 years, James Fairfax improved the house and developed the gardens, which feature many huge oaks, including some planted by Samuel Horden and his sons. In 2011, Fairfax commissioned a photographer to record the way the home was to be preserved when he gifted it to the National Trust. These photographs are displayed in various rooms and reflect the manner in which the National Trust has worked to maintain the property.

James Fairfax's great loves are evident everywhere. Many valuable works of art and antique furnishings are displayed throughout the house, some dating from the 1500s. In the garden, his beloved dogs are all buried with marked plaques and Fairfax himself is

remembered here with a headstone marking where his ashes were buried following his death in 2017. His love of birds can be seen in the various enclosures in the garden, now repurposed as vegetable beds.

While much of the presentation of the house and garden highlight the past, some more modern influences can be seen in the paintings of James Gleeson and in the marvellous symmetry of the swimming pool and pavilion, designed by architect Guilford Bell in 1968. We were fortunate to receive an interesting overview of the latter by another volunteer, John Biffen.

In 2016, James Fairfax gifted his Retford Park house and gardens to the National Trust, along with a \$10 million endowment for the upkeep of the property. This gift remains the largest in the National Trust's history. More information is available from: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/places/retford-park/>

Paul Mackey



View from the House, Retford Park, photo Gerri Mackey

BRANCH NEWS

WELCOME TO A NEW MEMBER

The committee would like to welcome the following new member who has joined since the last Newsletter.

- Klaus Czoban, Canberra

OUR BRANCH COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS!

At the coming AGM (22 August) we elect a new Branch Committee. The present Committee has 7 members, and at this meeting we will be losing two whose terms of office have finished – Anne Claoue-Long and Nancy Clarke.

We need new Committee members. There is some work associated with Committee membership but the work is both enjoyable and there are lots of rewards. The work includes putting together and running Branch events, managing Branch matters,

contributing to the work of the Society both through its National Management Committee and participation in projects, and advocacy for our invaluable gardens and landscapes. The main reward is the satisfaction of working to a common, successful goal, but there is also that straight out pleasure of learning new things – and passing on that knowledge. We have a lot of good times together.

Committee members do not need special knowledge or expertise though that is always welcome, and it is surprising how much we learn as we go along. We meet monthly, working as a team (we have different skills and interests), and we have long lists of contacts, places of interest etc. that will all be passed on to incoming Committee members. No-one operates in a vacuum.

Do please consider nominating. Without an active Committee, the Branch will shrivel or die. The term of office is three years, renewable once.

Nominations for 2025-2028 close on Thursday 15 August. Nancy Clarke has copies of the nomination form, and if you don't know someone who will nominate you, we can help. Please contact Nancy for any further information.
0423 690 626 or clarkenancy624@gmail.com

AGHS NAME BADGES FOR BRANCH MEMBERS

It's a great idea to have a members badge to wear to events – but the AGHS no longer provides a printed badge for members. They are available for members through the AGHS website login page, and we can print them off and put them in a pin on plastic sleeve or lanyard to wear at events.

You may have seen the magnetic badges many Southern Highlands Branch members wear to events, and we checked with them about access. We have now arranged for badges to be made for our members if they wish to purchase them. They are plastic, on a bright white background and have the AGHS logo on them as well as the name (with the first name in a larger font). They have a magnetic backing so they can be used safely on clothing easily damaged by a pin. See the sample below.

They will cost \$15 each (plus a 50 cent TryBooking fee) and you can place an order with us and we will follow through.

We would like to place a batch order, so if you are interested, it would be helpful if you made an order by Monday 1 July. We will of course place orders after that – the ordering site will remain open – but it would be nice to have a group of us all wearing new badges at a coming event.

Order through <https://www.trybooking.com/CSBHL>



For any further information contact Nancy Clarke, clarkenancy624@gmail.com

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS BRANCH

Members of our Branch are welcome to join events in the Southern Highlands. The next event is Upcoming events include:

WINTER SOLSTICE SEMINAR *SUNDAY 23 JUNE, 11AM – 3PM*

One of the newest Botanic Gardens in Australia is being created in the Southern Highland. Come and learn about the ups and downs over the past 26 years since the idea of a Botanic Garden was conceived!

We have an opportunity to witness the creation of this Botanic Gardens, one that is devoted to showcasing the four seasons. In time, it will become a notable Botanic Garden under the stewardship of Charlotte and Chris Webb, the Board of Directors and the SHBG Friends Committee.

Gardens are being created which reflect town, country and natural landscapes with the various plantings so Charlotte will undoubtedly share why certain plants and trees have been selected. Many are associated with the history of this area and the current plantings are evolving to reflect our natural environment.

Program

11:00am	<i>The making of a botanic garden - the impossible becomes possible</i> , Charlotte Webb
12:00 noon	<i>Lunch</i>
1:30pm	Small group guided tours of the garden with volunteers
3.00pm	Depart

Location	Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens
Cost	\$50 including lunch
Bookings	Go to https://events.humanitix.com/winter-solstice-seminar

NATIONAL NEWS

AGHS WEBINAR **BIG HEARTED GARDENS: COMMUNITY & CARE**

MONDAY 24 JUNE, 6 – 7PM

Visitors to the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show (MIFGS) come to see the latest in garden design, new plants and landscaping materials, a wide array of gardening products, amazing floristry and, of course, incredible show gardens. Behind the scenes there is a hive of activity, as complex landscapes are built within a week and then, after another few days, disappear forever, as if a garden fairy had simply waved her magic wand!



Yet, show gardens also have much potential to inform and educate the thousands of visitors who see them, and to contribute to community initiatives long after the show closes its gates. Join landscape architect Emma Sheppard-Simms in this webinar as she tells the story of how she created two beautiful and socially-conscious show gardens at MIFGS in 2023 and 2024. From the first spark of an idea, through the planning, construction and their award-winning legacy; this presentation shows that small show gardens can still have a big impact!

Emma Sheppard-Simms is a landscape architect who lives and works on Wadawarrung Country (Ballarat). She has experience working on a wide variety of commercial and residential landscape design projects across Australia. In 2020 she launched her business, *Plantery Landscape Architecture*, which specialises in biodiverse and climate-resilient design for suburban gardens. Emma enjoys expanding her design practice with teaching, writing and research, and in 2024 she was the recipient of the Nina Crone Writing Award for her article, 'Goodbye Ramsay St: Chasing the suburban Dream in Vermont.'

Money raised will be contributed to the AGHS Nina Crone Writing Fund
<https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/funding/nina-crone-writing-fund/>.

Cost AGHS members \$10, non-members \$15, students \$5

Bookings Are essential at: <https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1228330>
 A Zoom link will be sent after booking

FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR THE AGHS

An e-news was sent to all members on 13 May 2024 asking for views on future directions and a possible name change for the society. To guide thoughts on these matters two discussion papers were made available by link from the e-news notification: one by our patron Tim Entwisle and one by co-authors Colleen Morris and Peter Watts.

Issues explored in the discussion papers include:

- the development in statutory listings of gardens and landscapes since the founding of the society in 1980;
- the associated growing body of knowledge about historic gardens;
- the development of the environmental movement and concerns about climate change;
- evolving thinking about cultural landscapes; and
- increased interest in landscape management in Australia as practiced by First Nations peoples.
- The definition of 'a garden' is also explored; and
- whether the term 'heritage' would be better to use than 'history' in our title.

While the focus of the society has certainly broadened since its inception, no immediate changes to the current aims or name of AGHS are proposed before consultation. Any proposed changes will be canvassed with the membership before implementation.

So the NMC needs to know what you think.

You are encouraged to submit comments about these important matters.

If you have mislaid your e-news link please contact either Sarah Edwards at the National office (info@gardenhistorysociety.org.au) or your NMC Branch representative Anne Claoue-Long (annecl@icloud.com) for access to the discussion papers and how to submit your comments.

The next NMC meeting on 6 and 7 July will discuss this matter so you are invited to submit comments by 1 July 2024.

CALL FOR AN ELECTED MEMBER TO SERVE ON THE NMC

The AGHS NMC meets regularly to organise the running of the society. There are two weekend face-to-face meetings a year (in Sydney and Melbourne) and Zoom meetings in between. More information about the NMC, how it operates and the type of work it does can be found in the document *Introducing the NMC* on the AGHS website in Committee Resources section (accessed after logging in and under the house/home image).

My time as ACT Monaro Riverina Branch representative on the NMC will terminate in October this year. I have had great fun working with others on a range of projects including updating governance documents, writing the *AGHS Advocacy Toolkit* (available on the website under Committee Resources) and progressing the scope of the Nina Crone Writing Fund to bring new voices to the society journal.

The new post-AGM Branch committee will nominate another representative from their ranks to replace me but since Bronwyn Blake stepped down at the end of her productive and successful tenure there is also a second vacancy for an elected ACT Monaro Riverina member on the NMC.

I urge you to consider standing as a member for the NMC at the National AGM elections which be held in Bunbury. You don't have to be in Bunbury to stand but you have to submit an official nomination form prior to the meeting. Watch out for the call for nominations in a national e-news email or contact the national office or your local Branch committee for assistance.

If you want more information about the NMC please do not hesitate to contact me at annecl@icloud.com

Anne Claoue-Long

OF INTEREST

CANBERRA MUSEUM AND GALLERY

<http://www.cmag.com.au/>

Exhibition: Backyard Archaeology

Until 1 September 2024

<http://www.cmag.com.au/exhibitions/backyard-archaeology>

This is an exhibition by Steve Brown, an AGHS member from our Branch. It tells the story of the many small objects that he collected during renovations and archaeological digs from an ordinary suburban house and garden. Some of the objects were collected during house renovations, others while gardening, and many from archaeological digs.

From the numerous objects, including a miniature gnome, an airline teaspoon, medicine bottles, and toy handcuffs, Steve explored the history of his property and local area. He learned about people who had lived there previously and how past lives were lived.

The exhibition shows how a person can become deeply connected to found objects and how everyday encounters with lost and forgotten things can shape us and give us a 'sense of place'.

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDENS
www.anbg.gov.au

Friends Thursday Talks – held at 12.30 pm every Thursday from February to November. Bookings can be made 30 days in advance. For program details and for bookings go to <https://www.friendsanbg.org.au/calendar> This calendar also provides information on other talks, walks and activities in the Garden.

Visitors Centre Gallery Exhibition, free, open daily 9.30am to 4.30pm.

5 – 30 June – Gardens of Academe –showing the latest watercolour and charcoal artworks by Elizabeth Truswell.

NATIONAL TRUST
<https://www.nationaltrust.org.au>

Nominations for the 2024 National Trust of Australia (ACT) Heritage Awards are now open for submission. Nominations close at 5 pm on Friday 5 July 2024.

For more information and nominations details go to
<https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/act-heritage-awards-2024/>

Sunday 30 June, 9.30 – 11.30am

Heritage Walk: *Weetangera Cemetery and the Pinnacle*

For more than 80 years the Weetangera Cemetery, one of the oldest cemeteries in the ACT, served the largely Methodist community of the Belconnen area. Come and see where the church once stood before services ceased in 1952 and the building was dismantled in 1955. We will then head to The Pinnacle Nature Reserve where Warren Bond will point out its links with the Weetangera Cemetery and outline the Reserve's history since European arrival. The reserve has reminders of each of the three main settlement periods: squatting from 1826, Free Selection from 1861, then leasing after the formation of the ACT in 1911. The Pinnacle was declared a protected area (reserve) in 1993

Bookings on Trybooking <https://www.trybooking.com/CSHQA>

NATIONAL ARBORETUM CANBERRA
www.nationalarboretum.act.gov.au

For details on walks, workshops and other events visit the Arboretum website.

HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY OF CANBERRA
<http://www.hsoc.org.au>

LAKE BURLEY GRIFFIN GUARDIANS (LBGG)
<http://lakeburleygriffinguardians.org.au>