

Australian Garden History Society

West Australian Branch

Summer Newsletter 2024

The Australian Garden History Society promotes awareness and conservation of significant gardens and cultural landscapes through engagement, research, advocacy and activities.



The Conference Committee members have all sighed with relief now that the 44th Annual Conference Hesperia: Looking West is in the past. Although some are still working on tying up loose ends such as final finance reports, sourcing tardy invoices and sending thankyou letters.

At our November meeting we continued working on a program of events for 2025 and will provide more details in the New Year.

For now though, on behalf of the WA Branch Committee, I thank you, our members, for your ongoing support and extend my warmest wishes to you and yours for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

John Viska Chair AGHS WA Branch



Source: [Esperance Wildflowers: Nuytsia floribunda – WA Christmas Tree](#)

West Australian Branch

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West Australian Branch Committee

Chair: John Viska (johnviska@gmail.com)

Secretary/Treasurer: Lynette Petersen

NMC: Felicity Farrelly

Newsletter: Lyn Oliver

Social Media Liaison: Ursula Sharman

General: Sue Medalia

Australian Garden History Society Inc. (Inc in NSW)
ABN 97 291 212 843
ARBN 654 108 915

Welcome to the West Australian Branch. Our Branch has approximately 60 members throughout the state. We conduct numerous events during the year, including lectures and garden visits. Members, guests and visitors are welcome to all events. We communicate with our members by newsletter, email and the AGHS website for all events.

<https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au>
info@gardenhistorysociety.org.au

Hesperia: Looking West Conference John Viska

Since the conference, the WA branch has received many positive comments and congratulations from interstate and local delegates that attended the 44 th National Conference.

The committee, that took on the following roles ensured the success of the event and are to be congratulated.

Lynette Petersen, Conference Secretary and budget planning, Sue Davis and Joan Low who sourced the caterers for the morning and afternoon teas, lunches and conference dinner and chose the varied and enjoyable menus. Rachel Roe, who coordinated the speaker's program as well as introducing them, Diane Pope, who organised and sourced the raffle items, Lyn Oliver for drafting the conference pamphlet and booklet. The coach captains Helen Martin-Beck, Sue Medalia, Julie Kinney and Catherine Lang who also prepared the comprehensive coach commentaries, ensured that delegates on the four coaches kept to the schedule.



The stage flower arrangements were spectacular.

Image: Arpad Mencshelyi

Though not on the committee, special thanks go to Karen Hall who volunteered to research grant requirements and prepared the successful Heritage Council Sponsorship application and Leon Tang for photography.

Sponsorship provided by the City of Bunbury, The Heritage Council of Western Australia, Caves House Yallingup and Business Events Perth helped offset costs.

On the Thursday evening, prior to the conference, the City of Bunbury provided a civic reception at which the Mayor Jaysen Miguel and Deputy Mayor Tresslyn Smith, welcomed delegates.

Over the next three days, WA attendees mixed with eastern state members that included representatives from the NSW Heritage Council, architectural historians, heritage tree specialists, garden designers and members of the other states' National Trusts.

The auditorium of the Bunbury Regional Entertainment Centre (BREC) proved to be an excellent venue for the morning lectures where attendees were able to spread themselves out. The technical requirements needed by the speakers were efficiently provided by the IT team and the foyer was an ideal space for serving the ample morning teas.

On Friday morning 18th October, after the official opening by the Mayor, talks were given by Leslie Thiele, Heidi Mippy, Bernice Barry and John Viska with Troy Bennell, a local indigenous resident giving the welcome. Presentations continued on Saturday morning 19th October by Peter Lane, Rod Cary, Edgar Hawter and Margaret Sanders and concluded on Sunday morning 20th October following the AGM, with Greg Keighery, Des Donnelly and Yolanda Cool.

Each afternoon, visits to venues and gardens were made, on Friday historic Leschenault Homestead, Alverstoke and Saint Mark's Church Picton were seen.

On Saturday the township of Dardanup was visited with lunch in the Hall. Members of Saint Aidan's Church, Ferguson Valley, had set it up, laid the tables including floral arrangements and provided homemade fare and refreshments to accompany the boxed lunches.

A scenic drive through the Ferguson Valley brought delegates to Tranquil Gardens a large property established by Dianne and Wayne Webster. This large plant person's garden with an ornamental dam delighted participants with its wide range of native and exotic plants, many in flower.

At the conference dinner in the evening, Brendan Kelly, the after dinner speaker, entertained guests with tales about Cora in a talk titled, Every Parlour Needs a Vase. Prior to his talk, a special thankyou and floral presentation was made to Lynette Petersen in appreciation for her extensive and detailed conference planning.

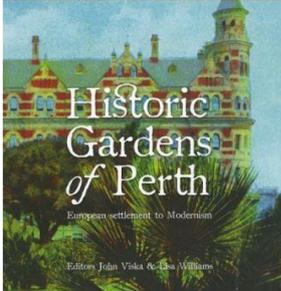
On the Sunday, coaches travelled from Bunbury through the Ludlow tuart forest, the subject of a talk that morning by Des Donnelly, to historic Wonnerup House on the outskirts of Busselton. After lunch in the grounds members travelled to Smiths Beach to experience Bill and Di's succulent garden before enjoying Devonshire Tea at Caves House Hotel Yallingup donated by proprietor Neil Jilley.

The Monday Optional day, began in Bunbury with the first stop for morning tea at the kiosk, Wellington Dam. The landscaping elements of John Oldham's 1960 design, the subject of Greg Keighery's presentation was explored. On arrival at The Golden Valley Tree Park, after visiting Gnomesville, a superb smorgasbord lunch had been laid out in the gazebo. Following lunch and an exploratory walk in the arboretum, a short trip to the historic property Ferndale was made. Here the owners Jenny and Rinze Brandsma greeted AGHS members and described the dilapidated state of the buildings when they acquired the property. The courtyard garden was a blaze of colour provided by the roses, heritage and modern, herbaceous perennials and shrubs.

On the return journey, the Balingup Cemetery was visited to see the clipped tea-tree shrubs and the headstone of Jacob Hawter, the subject of a talk given by his grandson Edgar, was found. A short distance away Hawterville featuring the original property and house was seen from the coach on the return trip to Bunbury.

The three day pre and post conference tours provided extra opportunity for gardens and properties in the Busselton Margaret River area to be seen by delegates.

Historic Gardens of Perth: European settlement to Modernism



***Book News* John Viska**

Books sales have continued with only 27 books remaining from the initial print run of 500. Talks on the branch's publication *Historic Gardens of Perth* requested by community groups have resulted in further purchases.

Retiring Committee Member – Sue Davis

We thank Sue Davis for her continual involvement as a branch committee member. During the time she had been involved with two conferences, in 1998, the first WA conference and recently this year's one. In conjunction with Joan Low, she sourced and selected the varied menus that were much enjoyed by the delegates and organised the floral decorations. Sue was the current Treasurer and had also assisted with proof reading various printed material, including *Historic Gardens of Perth*, *Early settlement to Modernism*, conference related matter, newsletters and wrote articles.

Welcome to New Committee Member – Ursula Sharman

The WA Branch warmly welcome new AGHS member, Ursula Sharman, to the Committee in the new role of Social Media Liaison. We'll now have a dedicated person to concentrate on putting information out via social media platforms FaceBook and Instagram.

Ursula Sharman is a writer with a passion for gardening and historical landscapes. She is currently preserving and restoring an original interwar garden in the Perth Hills. A member of both the Western Australian Camellia Society and Heritage Roses Australia, Ursula has a particular interest in old-fashioned hybrid teas and heritage varieties of camellias. As an active committee member of the Darlington History Group, she oversees publicity and promotions. Deeply engaged in historical research, Ursula enjoys exploring into archives to uncover and celebrate the stories behind heritage gardens and their cultural significance.



AGHS NMC Meeting 17 October 2024

Felicity Farrelly, NMC WA Representative

The NMC meeting was held the day before Conference in the Administration Centre of the City of Bunbury.

This was the last meeting presided over by the President. Lyn Walker and a number of long-term committee members were also reaching the end of their terms. There was a desire to set the Society on a sound footing following the changes in the Executive Officer position in early February.

The employment of the Executive Officer (EO) from outside the Society highlighted how much voluntary work had been undertaken by the previous EO, Lisa Nutting, who worked with equipment that was difficult to link with the financial software. There was the need to update the computer, software, printer and the concerns with ensuring timely financial records, which has led to the part time employment of a bookkeeper. The local WA branch was behind a push for this as the financials were previously not completed for the NMC to review. The lack of a direct payment facility during the year for over 3-4 months led to a review and a change to the direct payment financial provider. The above had been assessed by the Executive and approved by the NMC over the last year.

The Executive Officer, Sarah Edwards, advised that there was a request by herself and the recently employed bookkeeper, that there be a review of financial compliance. The NMC agreed that the AGHS Financial Advisory Committee be tasked with developing a manual of Financial procedures. It was agreed an industry expert based in Melbourne be contracted and employed to undertake this review. The Website Refresh committee indicated that there was a need for external assistance to ensure that there was back up support for the Website/IT knowledge especially as the assessment of the system was still happening. It was actioned that the EO, Treasurer Stephen Hathaway, and an NMC Executive member will review the website specifying the scope required by AGHS and go out for quotation. The meeting in February 8/9 will determine the direction the NMC takes on this. Branches are asked to provide activities and photos for the new website ensuring permission is obtained for people recognized

The Treasurer provided an up-to-date report which was submitted to the AGM for approval. This included the budget, and DGR status which continues to not be sanctioned for the AGHS. The NMC was reminded that there are opportunities for branches to use the Kindred Spirits Fund, the Treasurer noting that this fund had been barely used over the last few years. The Kindred Spirits Fund guidelines are found on the AGHS website. Within these guidelines it is stated that a description of a requested project, including the significance of it in relation to the mission and objectives of the AGHS is a main requirement. Please contact the Branch committee for any queries on the eligibility.

Other matters:

- Journal Editor, Francesca Beddie, was thanked for her role in bringing into life the Climate Change pamphlet published by AGHS mid-year. Thanks were extended to Tim Entwistle also.

- The NMC are pleased to see a rise in Oral Histories being completed with the inclusion of 3 new oral historians in last year and Patsy Vincents was thanked for her work on this. The NMC has provided additional funding for the coming year to support employing external historians when required.
- The Journal continues to be a strong visual advertisement for our Society and members are reminded that there is an advertising opportunity in the Journal if you want to advertise contact Francesca.
- The Advocacy Toolkit has been completed and retiring member Anne Claoue-Long was congratulated as the editor of this. Anne has offered to support branches to use the toolkit if required.
- The issue of lack of space due to excess journals in the Melbourne office was raised; NMC members were asked to request their branches to notify the EO if they required more copies - it was raised whether a sticker could go on such copies stating 'complementary of the AGHS'.
- Next issue of Journal is out in December.
- Future Directions Survey was a close vote and as a result there will be no name change.
- The 2025 meeting dates have been approved – the first will be a face to face in Melbourne 8-9 February 2025.
- Finally John Viska came into the last of these meetings with his final overview of what was a very successful Conference following the NMC.
- The AGM of the national AGHS was held on the Sunday morning at 8 am at the Conference Centre. Acting President is Prue Slatyer from Tasmania, Treasurer Stephen Hathaway was re – elected at the AGM and Secretary is Anna Long from Victoria.

Landscapes at Risk – AGHS Advocacy Issues

Hyde Park

The Hyde Park Reference Group met six times to discuss species of trees that would be suitable in the event of existing ones being removed, as well as a schedule for replacement plantings, priority areas and tree selection. The City of Vincent has adopted a policy of treatment and observation in preference to total removal.

Polyphagous Shothole Borer (PSHB)

The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development have provided a statement on the current status of the PSHB. Public Information Officer, Katelyn Fox, advised that the PSHB Quarantine Area was adjusted in September, an interactive map and information about restrictions on the movement of wood can be found on their website at <https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/borer>.

The majority of positive detections of PSHB are within Zone A of the Quarantine Area. So far, we have inspected over 2.2 million trees at over 100,000 unique premises. The

community can report suspect PSHB activity via the MyPestGuide Reporter App (<https://www.agric.wa.gov.au/pests-weeds-diseases/mypestguide>) or call the Pest and Disease Information Service on 9368 3080.

Interested groups can put through an enquiry for a presentation to: pshbpublicinformationmanager@dpird.wa.gov.au

Recent Branch Events

AGM August

Phil Palmer, currently working for the National Trust of WA, was the guest speaker at the August AGM and gave an illustrated, talk titled “Moats, Murder and Marigolds; A short Walk around Baddesley Clinton. Phil had worked as a gardener from 2016 to 2023 on the Birmingham property run by the English National Trust.

Christmas Party at Sloan’s Cottage *Lyn Oliver*



Christmas Party 2024 attendees at the front of Sloan’s Cottage

Image: Leon Tang

On Sunday 1st December AGHS members were welcomed by Simon Halling who has been working at Sloan’s Cottage for four years. After a brief history and walk around the vegetable garden it was time for beverages, tasty treats and the Chairman’s Annual Quiz. Once again it was hotly contested with two groups winning even after two tie breaker questions! It was lovely sitting in the shade of the gigantic carob tree. Fortunately the trees at Sloan’s Cottage have not been affected by the Polyphagus Shot Hole Borer and we hope that continues.

WA Branch Event Diary

Stay tuned as the WA Branch Committee is working on a range of events for 2025.

Boorloo Festival

The branch has again been invited to participate in the City of Perth's Boorloo Festival on Saturday April 13th and Sunday 14th April, 10.00 am to 3.00 pm, more details will follow.

AGHS National Events

2025 Annual National Conference, Mt Gambier, South Australia

WA Events of Interest

Royal WA Historical Society Christmas Party

Members Christmas Party 2024

A\$45.00

Members Christmas Party

Wednesday 11 December 2024, 6 -8 pm

At the Mosman Park Bowling Club

39 Bay View Terrace Mosman Park

Cost \$45 per person (canapes and first drink included)

As always there will be a Christmas raffle, tickets \$5 each

Your support on the night will be appreciated.

Tickets available from here: [Members Christmas Party 2024](#)