



AUSTRALIAN GARDEN HISTORY SOCIETY
NATIONAL ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION
ACT MONARO RIVERINA BRANCH



Elaine Lawson OAM, photo ACT Monaro Riverina Branch Newsletter, Feb 2017

Interviewee:	ELAINE (LAINIE) LAWSON, OAM (NEE REED)
Interviewer:	ROSLYN BURGE
Date of interview:	12 NOVEMBER 2019 & 3 JULY 2020
Place of Interview:	NATIONAL TRUST, SYDNEY ERINDALE, NIMMITABEL
Details:	1 HR 39 MINS – 12 NOV IN PERSON 1 HR 33 MINS – 3 JULY BY ZOOM [P27]
Restrictions on use:	NIL
All quotations	SHOULD BE VERIFIED AGAINST THE ORIGINAL SPOKEN WORD IN THE INTERVIEW

Chronology

- 1942 Born, Henley Beach, South Australia
- 2017 Ms Elaine Lawson OAM - for **service to horticultural history**, Australia Day Honours

Until July 2001 - Senior Curator – Historic Places – ACT Government (Cultural Facilities Corporation) since 1987. Responsible for the management of Lanyon, Calthorpes' House and Mugga-Mugga: three historic sites which conserve and interpret Canberra's heritage and present a wide range of community and educational programs.

Also, occasional lecturer in heritage and curatorship at University of Canberra, Australian National University, Curtin University, Canberra CIT. Involved in a consultancy role in various conservation projects including: Bishops Lodge (Hay NSW), Bernie's House (Ilfracombe, Queensland), Blundells' Cottage (ACT) and the garden at Gungahlin (ACT).

Trustee – Official Establishments Trust 1999 - 2011. The Trust provides advice on the conservation, maintenance and furnishing of the Lodge, Government House, Kirribilli House and Admiralty House.

Trustee – Historic Houses Trust – 2003 - 2010. The HHT manages historic properties and museums on behalf of the NSW government.

Member - Council - Australiana Fund 1993 - 2004. (Chairman of its ACT Committee 1994-2002) The Australiana Fund purchases works of art, memorabilia, furniture and objects d'art either relating to the lives of former governors general and prime ministers or demonstrating the skills of Australian artists and craft workers.

Member - Board of Directors 1993-1998 – re-appointed May 2002 – resigned July 2004, of Australia's Open Garden Scheme which opens gardens throughout Australia, contributes towards the conservation of significant gardens, makes substantial donations to charity and promotes and encourages gardening in the community.

Member - National Management Committee, Australian Garden History Society 2014-2017; ACT Monaro Riverina Branch

- 1966 **BA (hons)** University of Adelaide - majoring in English Language and Literature
- 1967 **Married** to Richard Lawson, (until his death 2017) grazier and security vetting contractor.



This is an interview with Lainie Lawson OAM, who is being interviewed for the Australian Garden History Society's National Oral History Collection, particularly the ACT Monaro Riverina Branch. Lainie is being interviewed about her association with the Society, and we will touch upon her role in the wider conservation and cultural life of the nation.

The interview is taking place at the National Trust at Observatory Hill in Sydney on Tuesday, 12 November 2019, and the interviewer is Roslyn Burge.

AUDIO FILE 1 – 1 HR 22 MINS

Note: *The interview took place from 2-4 pm on a very hot day. The essential airconditioner makes a soft background hum; and traffic noise (particularly trucks) on the approach to the Sydney Harbour Bridge intrude.*

Lainie, thank you for making this big trip from your home in Nimmitabel to be part of this.

I'm delighted to do so.

Thank you. We just might start with some early biographical details. Where and when were you born?

I was born in Adelaide in 1942.

And who were your parents?

Tom and Audrey Reed. My father was a clergyman and he ended up being Archbishop of Adelaide, the first Archbishop of the Diocese of Adelaide. My mother grew up in the country, up on the river near Renmark and so we ... I had a very interesting childhood, moving from the first rectory that I remember, and I was interested in gardening, really, I think from the time I could walk. My mother was a good gardener and she had that ability to make something look interesting in a very short while.

Such as?

Well, she had no particular knowledge, or interest in design, but she liked things to be organized and tidy and she liked a bit of colour, and a few different plants. She didn't want to be exactly the same as anyone else.

Was water a priority as well at that time?

Not really. I wasn't conscious of water ever being a priority. I think I spent most of my childhood in the summer running in and out of a hose, which always seemed to be a sprinkler, it always seemed to be on somewhere in the garden.

So the garden would have been a public place as well, with people coming and going to visit your father?

Yes, it certainly was. The first one that I remember certainly was, because just across the road were about twelve little joined cottages, and they were occupied by elderly women ... elderly gentle women of reduced circumstances. That's how it was put and they were in and out of my parents' house several times a day. Some of them, great visitors in and out, just for company really. So I grew up being very interested and tolerant of older people, which has sort of stood me in good stead over the years.

It sounds like an interview in itself.

And so what I really remember clearly of the first garden, was the orchard because there were three trees that had triple grafts of plums and apples and I found that as a child fascinating, that you could have different fruit on the same tree.

Is that a common thing, even today?

Well, it's not common. It's done, but it's not common.

Have you reproduced that yourself?

No, no. Never. No. Then when we moved from that particular rectory to what was called the Deanery, because by that stage my father was Dean of Adelaide, we moved into one half of a very big old building opposite St Peter's Cathedral in Adelaide and there was literally no garden at all, but there was a little square of rather barren ground, which my parents very quickly it seemed to me turned into a very pleasant patch of grass, with a border all around it.

That again was something that I thought, yes this is something one can do. And then a few years after that, it was big enough to have a marquee on it for my sister's wedding.

That's not a little patch of grass.

So yes, I started thinking about things and about creepers because there was a Virginia creeper all over this particular building, and I could see how it crept into the cracks and crevices and my parents always worried about this - fear of mortar falling off, etc. Then the next house was Bishop's Court, Adelaide, which was on nearly two acres of ground, in a wonderful position in Brougham Place, North Adelaide looking over the city. In fact, up from my bedroom window, I could look across and see Colonel Light's statue pointing across to the City of Adelaide.

Wonderful.

When we moved there, the garden was fairly run down, it was big and it was rambling. And there were a couple of significant trees, but not much in the way of perennials, and the sorts of things that my mother liked and she also planted quite a few trees as well. But one thing she did do, which as I think about now, absolutely horrifies me was she removed a huge palm tree from the circular bed around, which was in the middle of the drive, the circular carriage turning circle.

She didn't want that beastly big palm tree, she wanted roses there. So up came the palm tree and in went hybrid tea roses of the sort, very popular in the late 1950s. Every colour of the rainbow very, very vigorous and very, very colourful.

Did you miss the palm?

No, not at the time. But as I think back on it, I think that was absolutely appalling. As far as the history of the garden ... garden history was concerned it was something that should never have happened.

So at the same time, your reality and challenges that you speak of only last year in your address to the ACT Branch, the conservation of the fabric with the ivy and the destruction of the palm tree.

So they were things that ... I suppose the interest was sparked then, although I didn't realize it.

Did you help your mother? Or did she have help in the garden?

She had help in the garden. Occasionally, I was sent out to weed a patch or ... I didn't do a lot. I was far too busy doing other things in the social line.

And you were busy, amongst other things going to the University of Adelaide where you did medieval studies?

Yes, I did English language and linguistics and I found that totally fascinating, I still do. But as far as being something useful for a future career, it was absolutely a dead loss.

But that must have been a thread that has followed you in life.

Oh yes, it has.

In gardens, or in what sort of ways?

No, really more in language. I'm very interested in regional language in Australia, and the differences between the states. Not only in accents, but in actual words. So I've stayed connected to the written and spoken word.

Has that interest produced a dictionary, or anything written?

Produced absolutely nothing.

Your continued interest. So what was your first job?

8.40 My first job was working for Sun Books. And Sun Books was a little publishing venture begun by Max Harris and Geoffrey Dutton and Brian Stonier. They published a lot of ... some new, and some out of print Australian books, under the Sun Books label, and they were all paperbacks, and a very distinctive cover; they were all black and white and gray covers, very smart.

And my first job was to be selling them, taking them around to bookshops in a suitcase, and this was how it was done. "This is this wonderful new lot of books, would you like to buy some?" Some bookshops did, some bookshops didn't. But I learnt quite a lot about what was almost door to door salesmanship. And out of that came an offer to work for Geoffrey and Ninette Dutton, proofreading, still touting the books around.

And my mornings were meant to be working for Geoffrey, and my afternoons for Nine, with the children. This was an Anlaby station, about an hour north of Adelaide and I think that's where my real interest in understanding about garden history began.

How so?

Well, it was originally a huge garden and in its heyday, it had fourteen permanent gardeners, and it was enormous. By the 1960s, it was overgrown it had shrunk to just around the house and the rest of it was very, very unloved, shall we say. And there were brave attempts made by the Duttons to rescue little parts of the garden and they'd work frantically in one particular area.

Geoffrey too?

Yes. Yes! And they loved it. The children too, we'd have a blitz on a certain area of weeding and tidying. But it was a bit like painting the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

Was it also not their first priority perhaps?

No. Of course, it wasn't. No. Geoffrey was very much involved in his own writing, in editing the magazine that came out, *Australian Letters*, and busy with some books and also he did a lot of radio and television work, and he was still lecturing at Adelaide University in the English department.

11.35 When you think it's an hour drive to Adelaide, so he was very much involved in all sorts of other things. And Nine was a very, very talented enamellist, she did wonderful enamelling on copper. So she was out in her workshop, he was off and I certainly did quite a lot with him in the early mornings, but I also spent a lot of time with children, which I loved. And they were a wonderful family to live with, great company, interesting conversation, interesting activities, and a gorgeous house to live in.

And because I had grown up in old houses, I guess I did have some appreciation and I was always interested in furniture. I was interested in paintings. I was interested in textiles, thanks to my parents' interest in such.

But if you lived in Lainie, that's quite an old-fashioned kind of job in a way.

It was. It was a very old-fashioned kind of job, but with very modern people – *laughter* - living in a very old house in an old garden. So wonderful contradictions really.

So did you have some free time, or was your life entirely wedded to the Duttons?

I went home most weekends. So I was there during the week, Sunday afternoon until Friday evening. The weekends were my own, unless there was something happening and I would just stay for the weekend. They had people staying, but it probably worked well, because then they could do their thing, when they didn't have me hanging around, while they had their weekend activities happening. And I could carry on my rather active social life in Adelaide.

So how long did you do that for?

I did it for a year.

Was that long enough?

Yes, because I was already engaged later in that year and I was married the following March. So I went straight from university to the Duttons and then got married.

It's quite a series of swift changes in a short period of time.

Yes. Yes, that's right. Yes.

So did you want to travel? That didn't occur to you?

Not really. No, I thought I would at some stage. But it wasn't one of those things that I thought, the minute I left school, I must get on a boat, ship, and go to England as a lot of my friends did. I really wanted to go to university and at that stage, I think I had some rather grand ideas of being a tremendously serious academic. Well that was never going to happen – ever; especially as I didn't attend enough lectures and I spent a lot of time on the back of a motorcycle going to the beach with a friend.

And yet you still managed to get honours?

How that ever happened, I do not know.

If it is not too presumptuous, you knew who the Duttons were, before you went?

Yes, I did indeed.

Was he one of your lecturers?

Mm-hmm.

So then you married, and you moved to another large house?

Mm-hmm. Not initially. I moved into the tiniest cottage you could ever imagine. A tiny, late 1840s stone cottage in the garden of the 1880s house. So my husband Richard and I lived in this tiny cottage and his parents lived in the big house across the orchard. And that's where I really did my own first gardening, and it was incredibly romantic, because the little cottage looked out onto a grove of Robinier faux-acacia and beneath them were planted thousands and thousands of bulbs. So in spring it was just gorgeous. In winter, it was dank and dark and drear and the cottage was very damp. And I was very cold.

How long did you live in that for?

I suppose, until ... well, I had three children quickly. And so we rather exploded. The cottage rather exploded at the seams, and so then we all moved in together, hugger-mugger in the big house.

Did that work?

Surprisingly, yes. It did work. Of course, there were moments of drama, but it worked very well because it was a big house and Richard's parents were away a lot. And we all got on very, very well together. And I have to say that Richard's parents were wonderful as far as our children were concerned. They really were the perfect grandparents. So I was very lucky in that.

And they were lucky to have that, link backwards.

Well, yes they were, because Richard was a very precious only child so they were thrilled to have a family suddenly. They were not at all precious about the house, as far as the children and Richard and myself were concerned, but it was strange because we were, I would have thought, perfectly responsible. But although we were living in the house, we weren't ever allowed to use the drawing room. And we weren't allowed to even go into the drawing room, and neither were the children. It was far too special.

And what was it used for?

Nothing.

It's really just like a suburban house of that era.

Because we lived in the gorgeous big sunroom, which was the only room in the house that got any sun.

And the house was?

18.14 The house was Padthaway Station.

Is it still a private home?

No. I'm absolutely delighted that it has been bought by someone I knew as a child, and he has bought it and is busily restoring the homestead and doing it up. I don't know for what purpose. Since we left there in 1980, it's had several owners and it was a sort of smart hotel, come guest house at one stage, and then someone lived in it for a while. But it's wonderful that it's being restored. What is happening in the garden, I really don't know.

But the Padthaway garden was really interesting, because the early photographs that I've seen, taken around about 1910 show a house with such a typically late Victorian arrangement of small symmetrical beds in front of the house with gravel paths, etc. And when Richard's parents moved into the house, it had been occupied by great aunts, who had done virtually nothing, and they

moved into the house, just after the war in the late 1940s (they had been living in another cottage on the place), and they eradicated every bit of the original garden design into something that they felt was much better.

They kept the semi-circular driveway, kept half of the driveway, originally it had been a carriage turning circle, so they kept half of that. So you came in, and swept up the front of the house and you could sweep out again. But it was basically lawn and some nice stone walls and there's one interesting aerial photograph of the garden, with ... on the back of it was written, Miss Walling's copy.

And so I think at some stage, they must have had Edna Walling to look at the garden: I wish I had known this while they were still alive, and Richard had no recollection of it at all. But anyway, Miss Walling did not do anything, and I can't imagine she and Richard's mother would have got at all well. They would be so different from one another it just couldn't have worked. But what did happen, was that they did employ a protegee of Edna Walling's called Ellis Stones. And Ellis Stones and his daughter spent quite a lot of time building the stone walls.

Why did they pick Ellis Stones?

I don't know, again.

Perhaps they came from the link in the letter.

It could well have. And these are all things that I'd love to know, but I don't. But the walls are very nice and the terracing is good.

And that has been retained?

Yeah, it has been retained. Yes. Then a few rather strange, what I think of as strange things, were introduced into the garden and one was a rose garden, eight rectangular beds with standard roses where the old tennis court had been, and they never really thrived. So when Richard's parents decided to move to Adelaide most of the time, I took out nearly all of those roses, and just put grass back there.

And use it as a tennis court?

No. No. It was just there. It was extra bit of grass.

Did you transplant the roses or they vanished?

They vanished.

Roses are not your particular favourite.

I adore roses, yes, but not sickly standard roses. So I was quite happy to get rid of them.

I'm just thinking about the garden. And this is only a side-line about Padthaway. But when the aunts got rid of the terracing, the beds and the geometric ...

No, they didn't get rid of it.

They didn't, excuse me.

No. No. They left it exactly as it was. It was Richard's mother who got rid of the beds.

In the late 40s?

Yes, that's right. Yes.

Postwar efficiency.

Pass for efficiency. Mm-hmm And the new look, lawn and trees.

Is that still the setting for the house today? Do you know?

Yes. Well, I guess so. Yes.

Have you been engaged or involved in ...with all that expertise you have?

No, things move on, and sometimes it's for the best.

True. So when you were there, that's between 66 ... you married in 67, and you moved from there in the '80s, '81?

Yes, the end of 1980.

Were you working during that time or consulting?

No, I wasn't. I was doing a bit of work for the National Trust, a bit of cataloguing for the National Trust in Naracoorte, but very little. Richard was President of the National Trust in Naracoorte at the time but no, basically, I was a stay at home mother.

But very engaged from the sound of it? Your husband was involved with the National Trust ...

Yes, yes.

You must have been as well.

And also, it was a big house and the garden was big. So I was busy on the home front.

You almost say that as though you need to explain being a house person.

No, I don't have any regrets. Because at the time, there was no thought that I could do anything else. Where could I work? What would I do? Where could I go? I was actually not trained to do anything. I had my lovely degree but it was not very useful in the country.

How far is Pathway from Adelaide?

Well, it's three hours drive. I suppose, it's about 200 ... I can't remember. I guess about 290.

So no commuting?

25.13 No. No. And Naracoorte was, well ... I'll say it in the old terms ... it was 30 miles. Keith, the other town in the northerly direction was 40. And Bordertown was about 38 miles, all these miles, but that's how I thought of them.

Mm-hmm Mm-hmm.

And so we were quite ... we had a tiny little village, with a general store, but I had plenty to keep me out of mischief.

Did you feel isolated?

No, not a bit. But I've never been an isolationist sort of person. I'm very happy with my own company, I like it quite a lot. *(Laughter)*

So Lainie, moving to Canberra and your first job there I believe was recreating the fernery at Lanyon.

That's right.

What was that like, when you first saw it?

It wasn't actually my first job, I have to be honest. I had a job, not that I was going to be dishonest, but I had a job for a while working as a doctor's assistant receptionist in the city. And it was a job I fell into because someone I knew had resigned from this particular job and the doctor was looking for someone just to answer the phone and do the vacuuming.

Well, I wasn't very good at the answering the phone bit and doing the bookings. I could answer the phone perfectly well, but getting the bookings correct, I wasn't so good at, but I was terribly good at doing the vacuuming. *(Laughter)*

Why is vacuuming a particular skill for you?

Well, when you live in a 20 plus roomed house, and I grew up in one, which was bigger, you learn a lot about the vacuum, and the straw broom in the corners and the damp dusting. This is really all about housekeeping, and I am passionate about housekeeping and the history of housekeeping, and the importance of housekeeping in historic houses. I can laugh about, but I'm really very deadly serious about how important it is.

I don't think you're alone there. So how do you tear yourself away from the vacuuming in the doctor's surgery to create the fernery?

Well, that really was chance. I was doing some volunteering for the National Trust as a ... they called them guardians at Lanyon Homestead, where that's exactly what we did. We stood around and made sure that people didn't touch things. That was all we did. We chatted charmingly to people as they came and went, but there was nothing really much more than that.

I guess I was interested in how the house was presented. I was interested in what was going on. And I guess, I asked a lot of questions. I became friendly with the Chairman of the Restoration Committee and his wife. I guess just over a period of months we realized that we were interested in the same sorts of things. And I think they felt that maybe I could be useful.

So I was offered this particular project, I think to see whether I was going to be any good at anything much in this line, and I absolutely loved doing it. I found it fascinating, enjoyed the research and the whole process. So, things really went from there. I then applied for a position as a paid guide at Lanyon Homestead, and it was part-time, yes, I was lucky enough to get the job. And it was part-time, short term contract work with the ACT government.

Because although National Trust had quite a very close relationship with Lanyon Homestead, it was actually owned and administered by the government, and the National Trust provided the volunteers and also raised money, and through a loan program furnished the homestead initially.

Was there enough funds in that era to allow for it to be furnished properly?

Yes, it was very well done. There was an excellent committee of volunteers. And to the credit of what was the sport and recreation section of the ACT government, which Heritage came under that little umbrella, they just allowed the committee to get on with it, which was very clever.

Mm-hmm.

30.36 So this committee, the Lanyon Restoration and Acquisitions Committee, had representatives of the National Trust, the government, and then experts in various fields - architects, landscape designers, etc. So it was a clever ... a clever beginning.

Was that special for Lanyon, or was that something that spread across other places in the ACT?

Well, no. There weren't any other places at that time.

Lanyon was the first?

Was the first, yes.

Because you speak at one point, and I forget where I read this Lainie, but you say that the ages were dream years, there was money, there was will.

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Yes, well, I really believe that. It was the time of the development of the conservation plan, and Lanyon was one of the first, built on ... well, on the same lines as now, but now there are these great doorsteps that get put in a bookshelf and I don't know they're as useful.

How big was the first one for Lanyon?

Quite fat! But it was a Bible, because it was the first sort of thing of its type, and it was prepared by Philip Cox and Howard Tanner and okay, there have been two more since, but I believe that probably, and it was basically Howard Tanner was the best, because it stuck to fact, the research was amazing, and it also spawned other pieces of research. Instead of jamming them all into the one cover, there were stand-alone volumes of great merit.¹

Such as?

Well, a local historian Pam Ray did a sort of social history of Lanyon, whereas the conservation and management plan was more an architectural history. So Pam Ray's was very good in filling in the background of the people who had lived on the property.²

And this was a paid project, not a voluntary?

No, no, it was a paid project, funded by the ACT government. And then another historian called Don Chambers, researched and wrote a history of the convict time at Lanyon. And so there is a very detailed history of the convict years, and as far as the garden is concerned, in 1987, Michael Lehaney was engaged to do an analysis of all of the Lanyon photographs that showed any garden at all, and to prepare a landscape plan for the ongoing development of the garden, conservation of the garden.

And that, I think, is a most amazingly significant document in itself, because the analysis of the photographs is quite brilliant. He took photographs in the same position as all of the photographs that were existing had been taken. And so the layering and the ability to see what had happened over the generations was absolutely invaluable for the conservation of the garden, as it was then carried out.

And are those documents still used today?

I can't answer that. I really don't know. What I'd say is that the maintenance of the garden today is of a very high standard. But because there is no curator, they no longer have a curator in the ACT government for the historic basis. They have managers. But there is not any curatorial oversight. So there's good gardening practice, but I think some of the subtlety is being lost. And that is very worrying, when so much research went into this whole project, to see it gradually being eroded is ... well it's disappointing.

I don't want to be raining on anyone's parade, but I just would love to see a little bit of a return to the documentary evidence, and a little bit less fanciful planting of things that might look nice today. I'm being careful in what I say because, as I say, I don't want to criticize, because I know there are so many pressures. I mean, in an ideal world, we would have good curatorial oversight, but it's not an ideal world.

And you're not involved with Lanyon anymore?

Not at all, no, no, no.

¹ *Lanyon Historic Site, Tharwa ACT, Management Plan*, Cox, Tanner Pty Ltd & Philip Cox Partners P/L 1979 (300 pages)

² *Lanyon : a report prepared for the Lanyon Restoration and Acquisitions Committee*, Pam Ray, 1981.

So again, Lainie, it just strikes me that, with Howard Tana being involved and his involvement with the society early on, were you aware of the Garden History Society at that time?

Yes, I was aware of it.

Were you a member?

But Howard Turner's Conservation Management Plan was before that, it was before the garden history was even began. Because I think the conservation management plan was 1976.

Okay. Yes.

So I have been talking in a very elastic manner-

No, I understand where you are now.

Of the development of these other reports.

Yes.

Mm-hmm. But I was aware of the Garden History Society early on. I wasn't a member, but I certainly was aware of its existence. I did manage to get the ACT government (I can't remember what year it was) but we certainly had a, I suppose, what you'd call now a corporate membership. I was able to go to conferences and things on occasions. So I was certainly aware of it, but I wasn't involved.

From the '80s, would you have been aware of it or later?

Yes, yes, from the '80s.

'80s?

Yes.

But also the involvement, that fertility of the '70s and the flowering I suppose in the '80s, it was a very different era than today.

Yes.

And you've hinted at that in your comments.

Yes.

How does that strike you?

I think today, there is ... oh look, it's very easy to generalize, and in every generalization there's going to be an exception. But I do think that the Garden History Society and Australia's Open Garden Scheme were wonderfully ... what's the correct word for it? Complementary organizations, because the Open Garden Scheme raised the bar tremendously of domestic and suburban gardening, but it also enabled country gardens to be open in a way that they had never been opened before except perhaps for the Red Cross or the local church.

Because there was money, there was this split between the administration and the garden owner and the selectors for the Scheme for the gardens to be opened with the Open Garden Scheme were all people from the local communities. And there was this tremendous burgeoning of interest in gardens and gardening. The Garden History Society was right there at the right time because suddenly, gardens that had not been heard of or people weren't aware of the Garden History Society could pick up on and then become involved in maybe mapping the garden or just being aware of the garden.

Are you talking nationally or particularly ACT / New South Wales?

I'm really talking nationally in a very vague sort of way because my real knowledge was New South Wales, but I was on the first board of the Open Garden Scheme as it developed into a national organization.

What prompted you to join that?

Well, like anything else, I was invited and I said, "Thanks, yes, that would really interesting."

So a lot of these exciting things have come your way, one way and another?

They have. I've been incredibly lucky. I've been very, very lucky. I think that often, it's not anything particularly special about me. I think I've been lucky about being in the right place at the right time.

Serendipity?

Yes. And I think this is so often the case.

As well as your skills.

But I really believe that the Garden History Society and the Open Garden Scheme were so mutually well ... supportive ... there was jealousy, of course between them. That's always the case with successful organizations.

How did you navigate that?

Well, the way you navigate anything. I hope by being sensible and patient.

Do you remember the first gardens that you orchestrated to be part of the Open Garden Scheme?

Yes, I do. Because when the Open Garden Scheme moved from Victoria to the ACT and southern New South Wales, we had some very, very good selectors (as they were called) and Charles and Martha Campbell, who lived at Woden Homestead, just out of Canberra, they had both grown up in the district: Martha had grown up in Gidley at Bungendore³, and Charles lived at Woden Homestead all his life, and they had an immense circle of friends and family.

42.55 So they knew the country gardens and, more importantly, they didn't only know the gardens, but they knew the owners, and were able to persuade them to open for this virtually unknown scheme. And I was responsible for opening some gardens in Canberra and I did this really with the help of Canberra residents that I knew and again, it was quite difficult because a lot of people just were was so suspicious. They'd be absolutely fine to open their garden for the Red Cross or the church, but what is this peculiar organization? And why do we have to sign these forms? And why do you care about insurance and all of this sort of thing? Suddenly, it was a different ballgame. And it took a while before this was accepted, as just something that happened.

What's a while? A couple of years?

I would say it was probably ... yes. Yes, at least two years. I think the publication of the little Guide Book, and the involvement of the ABC in the Open Garden Scheme, all of those things made it happen and work and also the fact that there was an absolutely excellent CEO, Neil Robertson, who has sadly died but he was brilliant with volunteers. And he was prepared to travel all over Australia. Sure, he was paid, but he did an awful lot out of his own pocket.

Your role in that was voluntary?

Yes. Yes.

³ Obituary, Martha Campbell, 2014, <http://oa.anu.edu.au/obituary/campbell-martha-17861>

So you've had a practice of opening gardens that you've continued today.

Yeah. Yeah.

Just looking at your career, it seems incredibly busy and a large chunk of it is volunteer. Has that been something you've been able to juggle?

No. Certainly a certain amount has been being volunteer, but I certainly had a very ... I loved my paid job as Senior Curator with the ACT government ... I loved it. And I didn't ever want to go up the corporate ladder when I was asked if I'd like to do this or that acting thing, I'd just think, yes, I'd love the extra money, but I couldn't bear to give up my job that I loved.

When did you cease that employment?

2000. So it's a long time ago. I feel a bit diffident about speaking about things that I did then, because it is a long time ago, and things have moved on, and priorities have changed.

We've just had a small break Lainie, and you began before I turned on, telling me a lovely story about Dawn Calthorpe could you just recount that again for the tape?

46.21 Yes, of course I can. I absolutely loved my years of working with Dawn Calthorpe, as she was, but then became Dawn Waterhouse, when she married Doug Waterhouse. Because her memory of the house and the garden is quite amazing. She has the most extraordinary memory for tiny detail. And so, listening to her walking around the house and the garden with her, every time I did it, I would learn something else.

The more the garden became the garden of her childhood again, as we worked on it according to her instruction, the more she remembered. I just found that fascinating. But then, as you think about it of course it's the same as having this interview. The more questions you ask me, the more I remember. And so ... but when we first... it was the federal government actually who acquired Calthorpes' House in 1983, and again, a wonderful conservation and management plan – this time Richard Aitken and Nigel Lewis, brilliant - really, really well done. And the garden part of it, Richard Ratcliffe, who of course, was very much involved with the Garden History Society and also prepared that wonderful little booklet about recording gardens, he was amazing in his very analytical and practical analysis of the garden.⁴

What he was able to do was to map the garden according to what Dawn remembered, but also according to the physical evidence. So I found that a wonderful process. We had Dawn's memories but then we had Richard Ratcliffe down on his hands and knees finding the edges of beds that were no longer there, without wonderful drone photographs or the tools that are available now, but just hands and knees and a good brain.

So that was just really the restoration of the Calthorpes' garden, was a most fascinating project because there it was ... it was all there. It hadn't been messed around with, it had just quietly fallen into decay. So no new beds, no changes to the layout. And it was only a matter of recovering what had been there. And a certain amount of re-creation of what had vanished. It ... to me it was probably one of the most satisfying parts of my career - because it was real, and it was right - correct. And that's what worries me a bit now.

49.44 But Dawn was able to recall not only what was planted in the beds at which time of year by her mother ... individual plants - she could recall the plants that were there, and of course, she did this in conjunction with her sister who was living in Queensland, with the two of them, who spoke nearly every day. They just teased all the information out and got it right.

⁴ *Recording gardens: a guide to measuring and drawing gardens based on an Australian Garden History Society seminar*, Richard Ratcliffe, 1998

Were you recording this at the time?

Yes of course. But she'd been interviewed by Richard Aitken and she had talked a lot to Dick Ratcliffe, etc, but there was more, it kept coming, there was more and more. Because I was project managing the job at this stage, I got more information every time I saw her virtually so it was wonderful cumulative stuff.

It was really a very exciting job, a very exciting time to have that person who lived there ...

It was wonderful.

To guide you.

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

And it must be, I mean, perhaps unique is such a big word, but there certainly can't be too many properties in the nation where that first-hand memory is there telling you, in a waking, living, alert moment.

No. It's a remarkable house. And it's remarkable, because it's so unremarkable.

That's a lot of 'remarkables' ...

Because it's a suburban house.

Is that what makes it unremarkable?

Well, the protests, the horror, the shock when the government bought the property, they were amazing. There was an awful lot of ... poor old Dawn collected a lot of flack. And because the house was not ... it didn't belong to anyone particularly famous, it didn't have a beautiful collection of furniture, it had all this stuff from Beard Watsons, and the Calthorpes were not in any way grand. They were just a decent couple who lived their life, loved their daughters and loved their house and garden.

And when Harry Calthorpe died, he was a stock and station agent, there was Mrs Calthorpe left, without much money but her beautiful house that she adored. And I think it was a combination of lack of money as much as anything which enabled it to stay the way it was. Now, others might say, "Oh no, she loved it." But I think that there are certain little clues that one hears, that make one think she would have changed it if she could have. Because at one stage Marian Hall Best visited the house to make a few suggestions as to how it could be modernized.

Now, you don't do that unless you actually feel a change is warranted, but in the end she didn't do anything. And I don't ... and Dawn always said 'oh because the colours and everything she suggested were too startling'. "Startling" was the word she used, but I think money could have had a bit to do with it too.

Well, well, well.

Mm-hmm. But this amazing detail of what was where, and when and how. And then this is where Dick came in, and was so clever, was in the re-creation of the shrubbery - the side garden, because that was just completely overgrown with pyracantha and cotoneaster and every weed, sapling and so on known to man, but Dawn knew exactly ... or, not exactly, but she knew approximately where the beds had been, where the little garden beds had been, where the summer house had been. The layout of the garden, as I said before, had never changed. It had just quietly been ... well, the outline had been blurred, totally blurred. And so to find those edges, to find those corners, to find the roses that had grown over this summer house, rootstock there

still, was just wonderful. So it was just this whole discovery process. And, as I said before, the more it became the garden of her childhood, the more she remembered, and so the more we could do to make it even better.

So she visited from time to time while you were there.

Time to time? Every other day. No, she was incredibly generous with her time and with her knowledge. She's a very forthright person and so when something wasn't right, she was very, very ready to say it wasn't. And that's good too.

Yes, in all it sounds like a volatile and very productive relationship between you. Volatile in the best sense.

I think that what saddens me now is that, it's a bit the same as Lanyon, the maintenance is of a high standard, according to 2019.

Meaning?

Well, there's mulch everywhere, to conserve the moisture, but there wasn't ever moss. There might have been manure thrown around, and the old leaves tossed on the garden, but there wasn't a thick blanket of mulch. And sometimes the beds were bare, when there was in between the plantings of the seasonal annuals. That doesn't happen. And all of the pruning worries me because shrubs in that side garden are now pruned into shapes.

Now, they weren't ever pruned into shapes. They just grew, and if one bit was going to hit you in the eye as you walked past, well, you'd get rid of it, but there is this absolute delight at the moment in having every sharp shrub made either into a cloud or a column or a box, and this did not happen. The front hedge, which was privet was cut and neat, but not all the time.

Is it still privet?

Yes. I had a big battle to get that privet because, of course, no one wanted privet being planted, but as long as it's kept trimmed and it's not allowed to flower, etc, well, it's not going to be escaping into the bush.

57.17 But sadly, you'd see things like the *Pyracantha* and the cotoneaster that were growing in the back garden they're no longer there, because they're politically incorrect. And instead of replanting the eucalyptus in the back garden, some other things been planted, which is, I think, totally inappropriate. And things like the bark that was always over the top of the airraid shelter is now swept away, to be tidy.

And there's a fence around the vegetable garden. Well the vegetable garden was always attacked by rabbits and anything and you just put up with it you don't fence it off. You just say, "Look, those lettuces have all been eaten, and that's rabbits from Red Hill." But there ... to me, there's this tidiness, this protection, this political correctness has crept into the presentation and the maintenance. Now that's because they don't have curatorial oversight, and they don't have a fierce old witch like me. *(laughter)*

So I sense, perhaps for another time, there's some rich branches to follow through about Calthorpes' garden, and the other gardens, but I'd like to get back to Lanyon as well, Lainie. Have you finished with Calthorpes' garden?

For the moment.

It's a foolish question to imagine you're ever finished with it, but I can see as you speak, you're clearly transformed, as people are when they're passionate about something, that your life and blood, and your interests and best interests for the property have gone into that. So it must be a huge attachment.

There is, but I think I'm a bit of an obsessive person. If I'm doing something, well, that's it, I will do it as well as I possibly can and bore everyone rigid.

Well, for a moment, if we could return to Lanyon, because also in that small break, I learnt that you actually lived at Lanyon.

Yes, yes.

Tell me about that.

Well, that was just a marvellous experience. Because after I had been working there for a while, one of the cottages became vacant. And at that stage we'd been renting in Canberra because we had made a decision that ... well, we couldn't actually afford to buy anything, but we would rent in inner Canberra so it was easy for our children to attend schools and go to where they were going on their bicycles or on foot. So we rented houses, and the annoying ... but one way annoying, and in another way quite satisfying thing was that any house that I live in, I garden. And so the fact that these rented properties were not mine didn't matter at least, I just wanted to have good plants around me. So what would happen would be, I'd get the garden looking absolutely super to my ... and then the jolly owners would decide it was a good time to put it on the market. *(laughter)*.

And your commission was?

1 HR Nil! Anyway, the little cottage, Cottage 5 at Lanyon became available, and it was just a little workman's cottage - timber and painted white and on the banks of the Murrumbidgee, just below the Homestead. And it had one beautiful quercus ilex home oak in the back garden, and that was the garden.

So I asked if we could put a fence so that I could garden - it had as a sort of ricketty looking fence, anyway that was repaired. And so I set to, and planted everything I really wanted in what, at that stage... because we were into cottage gardens in the 1980s, late '80s and early '90s, and so I planted everything I could lay my hands on from other people's gardens and I pinched a few things from the Lanyon garden too.

I got a lot of satisfaction out of it, put it that way, and enjoyed my time, because it was the most glorious soil to work with, wonderful alluvial soil. And they were good years too, we had good rain, and so anything you planted just grew.

Was it awkward living and working at the same place?

No, it wasn't. I found it wonderful. Because in a sense, I treated it as though I was living on a country station property as I had been in South Australia. And Richard didn't mind driving in and out to Canberra because he felt, well, you geared yourself up on the way in, and then you download on the way back. So I started work every morning at half past seven and met the gardeners and the cleaner on site every day. To me, it meant a lot, because I was very involved with every aspect of the actual day-to-day running of the place. It's not something that would suit everybody, but it suited me. And I think it was good for the men, for the gardener at the time and his off-sider because they had a pattern to every day and also I was there because I was directing that pattern. I think it worked well.

When you designed your own garden around the cottage, did you keep a plan of that for the general materials relating to the house. You didn't?

No. No. It just happened.

Is it still there?

No! Only takes a month, open the gate, let the sheep in, and don't water the tree, and have a tenant who doesn't like anything that's not native. You can wreck a garden very easily and very quickly.

What about the ilex? Is it still there?

Half of it is there.

Could we roll back, again further to the fernery, when you first went to Lanyon?

Oh that was a lovely project. And it was just something so new to me. I knew nothing about ferns I really didn't know. I knew a bit about conservatories as such but this was a bit different, because it was a netted in part of the verandah, at the end of the Lanyon Homestead verandah.

Was it already a fernery in a sense?

It hadn't been for many years. It had been in the early 1900s. And there were no photographs. There were little glimpses of the end of it, but there weren't really any records. And so it was a matter of doing a fair amount of research of what of any similar places in the district, and the sorts of plants that were grown and in this Charles Campbell was tremendously helpful, because what was growing in the Woden Homestead, they didn't have a fernery as such, but they certainly had ferns growing in the end of the verandah. And also, by looking at what pots were available, the shape of pots. So I really did a lot of research on trying to get it right. And then coming up with suggestions of what to plant. And then it was a matter of finding a potter who could make the pots.

You made the pots?

Yes, yes, we did. So I found two super potters in Canberra, two girls who made these lovely shaped clay pots, we had them in various sizes. And then we set about buying some of the plants, getting some from other people. It was just a lovely project and it really worked. And we also got canvas blinds made, similar to the old canvas blinds that we could see in the photographs of Lanyon in the 1920s.

So there was a bit of a slide in the actual dating, but I don't believe that matters at all, because it's the old thing that wonderful historian, Jack Ravensdale said - that houses have a history, not a date. And so, just even things like getting the canvas blinds made in Queanbeyan with their little leather straps, etc, this was just such a joy to me to be following these things up, and being a ferreting sort of person, I ferreted around and found these people in these places. And so that little project really set me on my way, and I knew this is what I wanted to do for the rest of my working life. I wanted to be involved with old houses and old gardens.

Is the fernery still there?

Yes.

And the blinds?

I presume so. I haven't been in for a while. I can't imagine they wouldn't be.

So, I can see why your career led on to the Historic Houses Trust.

Well and it is interesting, isn't it because nowadays, you couldn't (well there are hardly any curators left anywhere), but you couldn't be one, unless you had a degree in museum studies and this, that and the other. Well, I didn't have anything relevant like that. But I had lived in old houses, I knew a lot about housekeeping, I had a bit to do with gardening, and I had a brain in my head so I learnt a lot, and I learnt from other people. And there were wonderful people that one could learn from.

James Broadbent might be a lot younger than me, but I learnt a lot from him, because he was meticulous in his research. Jesse Searle, who has just died ... Jesse Searle⁵ was the most amazing fund - absolute fund of information, and she was a wonderful historian and brilliant at analysing photographs of early interiors. I learned an awful lot from her and Charles and Martha Campbell, I learnt a lot from them. Then you start to get a bit more involved in the museum world, and things like Garden History conferences. All of those things, just meant that I just kept building up the layers.

And was the museum industry, for want of a better term momentarily, was that still in its embryonic stage at that time? Is this the '80s?

Yes. Well, yes. And I'd say late '80s, going into the '90s, it was very good. There were good times. There was huge enthusiasm, huge amount of ... not only the small museums, but the big museums. And look, the Powerhouse, the Historic Houses Trust, and then these wonderful smaller museums, like the Pioneer Women's Hut at Tumberumba - people like Wendy Hucker, who single-handedly really set up this brilliant little museum about women's work.

There is a little house museum that you're still involved in Nimmitabel ... that you're involved in ...

No, just the Geldmacher House Museum. That's just a little ... you'd have to call it really a folk museum. But it has some splendid interpretive panels that, I suppose they would have been prepared and installed close on 30 years ago. They're as good now as the day they were installed. Beautifully written, really interesting information. Perfect example of simple interpretive material in a small museum.

Joy.

Wonderful. You don't have to change things if they're good enough.

So, I'm thinking and hearing in your enthusiasm for this, Lainie, that you haven't really retired.

1 HR 10 No.

We talked about that off tape fleetingly and you're quite adamant.

No, no, because I've been lucky. When I left the ACT government service, somehow, projects came my way. And I let it be known, that I was happy to do things as long as they didn't take me too far away from home, and as long as I didn't have to write a huge report. I'm very, very happy to do little reports, and also to do hands on things. I'm very happy to spend days cleaning linoleum, getting it back to being able to be read and to be supple. I'm happy to clean furniture. I'm happy to do housekeeping workshops, about getting down on your hands and knees.

Very hands on.

Yes. I love that sort of thing. And so I've done projects like that, I've done housekeeping projects, and I've done projects which included advice on textiles and that sort of thing. I'm not an expert in anything. But I've got a bit of information about quite a lot of things.

So, have you formally pursued these interests? Or it's simply intelligence that you've gathered along the way from your own research?

I've done a lot of short courses on various things.

⁵ *Australians at Home: A Documentary History of Australian Interiors 1788-1914*, Oxford University Press, 1990.

Overseas?

No. I haven't done any courses overseas. I have visited and looked and learned but I've done no overseas courses. I've done building materials and techniques short courses, but nothing formal. And so I'd probably not be employed today by anyone who was looking for someone who had lots of excellent qualifications. So it was a matter of accumulation of skill and knowledge.

And I think that's a thread that's been part of this interview, that things have changed and your reflections on those changes are very interesting to record. Of course, the other garden that's very important in your life is Mugga-Mugga.

That again was a fascinating project and working with Miss Sylvia Curley was an extraordinary experience, because when I first met her, she was in her early '90s, and she was on to her third career, having first been a nurse, and ending up Deputy Matron of the Canberra Hospital. She then went into ... she ran an employment agency, and was renowned for her skill in providing excellent secretaries for doctors and lawyers and people around Canberra.⁶

I think her awareness of the importance of saving - not the good and the great and the grand - but saving smaller places and the memories of unimportant people, that was her third career: was to preserve her old house, that she'd grown up in, her father was a shepherd for the Campbells, and her mother was a remarkably stalwart sort of person, who lived out at Mugga-Mugga in this tiny, tiny house with not one convenience and getting water from the well etc, etc.

Sylvia Curley wanted to make sure what she called "the little people" were remembered. That was her mission and she was also very interested in environmental education. Now, we're talking about 1993, 1994; she wanted her little bit of land. She wanted to keep the way it had been. She wanted the grasses left as they were. She wanted light grazing. She wanted to continue to have horses on the place, just a few.

She was ahead of her time. She just could see that this little baby bit of land with its tiny house would be a wonderful educational resource for the ACT, because it was literally a five minute drive from the closest school and she could see the benefits for school children to come out and see where early Canberra had begun, and a paddock still virtually unchanged. She was a remarkable woman. She was terrifying. Terrifying! So - I suppose I'd have to say obsessed with getting this all to happen while she was still alive.

In your nineties, I can imagine.

Yeah.

That must be a ... but I'm wondering, tell me this as well, Lainie, did she see the example of Lanyon beforehand and Calthorpes' beforehand?

She didn't approve of either of them, because they were celebrating ... she wasn't interested in them. She was not interested in them. She was interested in Mugga-Mugga.

Yes, but the idea of giving back a house to the public, quote unquote.

Yes, she thought that was important, but it was more preserving the memories, there's a difference. And this little Mugga-Mugga, well, I just found the whole thing to be incredible, because she hadn't lived in the house for many, many years, not since her sister had died. She had a flat in Manuka but she went out to Mugga-Mugga quite a lot, and she was very friendly with Will van Weerdenburg who had horses on her place. So that was her arrangement,

⁶ Sylvia Curley OAM - <https://trove.nla.gov.au/people/741067?c=people>

as far as I know, probably still there, maybe another generation of horses, but she was very involved and she tried to get the National Trust to take over Mugga-Mugga. Well the National Trust didn't have the funds or the inclination to do so, so she bludgeoned the ACT government to take it on.

1 HR 18 min That's a big word.

Well, there's no other way to describe it. She was never, never not going to succeed. That was a very peculiar sentence, but you understand what I'm saying.

I do.

She was determined. She was highly articulate, and she had a lot of support, in curious ways and curious places. She managed to get the CFMEU to donate a lot of time and materials to the construction of the education centre.

So there's an education centre there?

There is. And that's all part of her dream. And as for the refurbishing of the cottage ... so when I first saw it, it was virtually derelict. It had an old iron bed in it and it might have had a chair or two. And there was great evidence of rats and possums and anything else you could imagine, but there was a galvanised iron shed with a great big padlock on it and she said, "All of the furniture is in there. And when the house is restored, you can see it and have it."

Was she a Matron you said?

She was Deputy Matron.

Deputy Matron.

Look, I could talk about this for a day, but what was again really interesting was like Dawn Waterhouse, Sylvia Curley's perception and her memory, and her memory of peculiar, minute detail was remarkable. So she was very good about processes, the sort of person she was, she wasn't really interested in decoration or any frippery of any sort. But the housekeeping processes, she remembered everything, the way her mother ... how she made jam, how she did preserves, how she did pickles, what she did in the house and what sort of cooking etc, etc. And also how she looked after her garden with the water from the well in the bucket, and her pot plants, which were geraniums in jam tins on the front veranda. And the little paths edged with whitewash stone. Not a blade of grass, anywhere. Swept paths, swept yard, and just a few lilacs and a few things.

The simplicity is just wonderful. And I'm a bit sad about that too, because it's much easier to let grass grow. And so there are no swept paths anymore.

And OH&S is required - rails and paths and goodness knows what. So the authenticity has been eroded and compromises made. And it's sad. That's all I'll say. It's sad. And I think some things are inevitable, which is such a contrast to something that is privately owned. When you look at some of the wonderful old houses and old gardens that are still in the hands of the owners, yes, they make compromises, but their compromises that are part of the ongoing history of the place, in a very different way than compromises that are imposed because of government regulations.

Yes. Yes

AUDIO 2 – 17 MINS

Lainie, we've just had a small break again, and drawing back to the AGHS, you were very involved in the adventures at Montague Island.

Yes I was, and it was the most exciting project. It really all came out of Colleen Morris's excellent report on the garden at Montague Island, and the vibrant, vigorous committee in Canberra who were always on for any project that came anywhere near them.

If it wasn't recording a garden, it was going on an excursion, it was visiting somewhere that no one had ever heard of. The committee of the Garden History Society in Canberra has been ... and I was talking to you about this earlier, has always had a wonderful collection of people, it's always been evenly balanced, men and women and people who were doers, not people who sat and went to the meetings and went home again, and didn't think about it for another month.

The activities were many and the participation by committee was very, very high. And the activities were all so good.

Are there any that stand out for you?

No, because they're all stand-outs. But certainly Montague Island is one that does stand out.⁷

Did you commission Colleen?

The Garden History Society did.

Did you know of her work beforehand?

Yes, yes. I'd known about her for a long time. And she's remarkable. Certainly in her time as Chair of the Garden History Society she was outstanding.

Indeed. What about the logistics of getting to Montague?

3.40 Well, I shall just tell you all about that. At one of the committee meetings the decision had been taken and money had been found to do restoration work at the old kitchen garden on Montague Island. And so at one of the committee meetings, Sue Byrne was Chair and said, "Well, anyone want to go? Anyone like to go to Montague Island? It'll be a lot of work and it could be cold, and it's a bit scary getting there, if you're liable to be seasick don't even think about it."

And so a small group ... I hope I get this right and don't forget anyone. There was myself and Sue Byrne and Judy Pearce and Nancy Clarke and ... did Max Bourke come on that first one? I can't remember whether he was on both of them, but he did certainly. And then Ann Charles from Nimmitabel, she came along because she was just keen to come because I was asked if there was anyone else I thought it would be good, and she happens to be an extremely good vegetable gardener. And so I thought she'd be a real asset. She's also a real worker and strong. And so we decided on going.

And all of this was arranged with Sue. Sue was in touch with Cass (Cassandra) Bendixssen who was the ranger for NPWS, and a remarkable young woman - very, very, very committed to education and very committed to Montague Island. She really wanted to see this happening because she thought it was such a great opportunity for engaging the local community and making something special to see on the island apart from just the wonderful lighthouse.

And so it was all organized that we would spend two nights and do as much as we possibly could in that time. We'd take our own food and so we met down there at the wharf, at Narooma, and

⁷ *Plan for the reinstatement of the kitchen garden, Montague Island*, prepared by Colleen Morris for the Australian Garden History Society ACT Monaro Riverina Branch and National Parks and Wildlife Service NSW, 2014.

got into a tiny little National Parks boat, and thumped across and saw seals and we saw excitement, and it became very rough as you're going across the breakwater.

And Montague Island is the most magical place. The noise from the seagulls is just remarkable and the wind is something else. And the lighthouse is ... somehow a lighthouse on an island is even more exciting than a lighthouse on a promontory ... I don't know why, that's just ...

Something quite romantic.

Quite romantic. Yes. And the trees on the island just say it all. They're almost lying on the ground, the wind is so tremendous.

And so we were lucky enough to stay in the beautifully restored Lighthouse-keeper's House. This is one area that National Parks does really well, is getting these houses to a state where they're comfortable, they're practical, they work and I think they make some money out of them and that's excellent.

Anyway, we were able to stay there and Cass had organized for the local nursery to have plants and things for us, and we were able to just go and we bought what was necessary.

This was a case where compromise was absolutely inevitable and essential and perfectly okay, because we're talking about annuals, we're talking about plants, we're talking about schoolkids and food. And so it was just not possible to get the wonderful old varieties that one can get but in this case it was a job that needed to be done, it needed to have local support, so the local nursery to be involved, was a good thing.

Who was going to look after the plants once you'd put them in?

Wait, wait, wait, wait. There's more. The local community was very keen on this project and a couple of the schools came and were involved in planting. And the ranger who lived on the island was very happy to water them, et cetera, et cetera. So it was a case of clearing the site, digging over the beds, planting, weeding, tidying. And it was absolutely wonderful, it really was. We got a lot done. We had a lot of fun, and Cass was so enthusiastic and the follow-up was good because people who visited the island were interested in the project, the local community was interested.

The local community on the island?

No, in Narooma.

Narooma?

Mm-hmm . And it was very exciting. We went back for another go the next year. And then I think I wasn't part of another visit, but that was more not so much with the vegetable garden as the clearing of weeds, because horrid weeds had taken over the garden in a big way. And so they had a lot of working bees to pull out terrible creepers and things.

The Society had or NPWS?

Yes, it was the Society, yes.

Gosh.

And NPWS helping. It was such a very good collaborative arrangement, and one felt that one was doing something very worthwhile.

Have you been back since?

No, I haven't. And like so many of these things it's dependent on who's the person on the ground. And Cass has moved on and I don't know what's happening now.

And again, there are all of these regulations now. It becomes more complicated to have children involved. If you've got volunteers like we were, you've all got to go through the Working with Children thing and all of that sort of stuff. And it just means that something that was simple is no longer simple.

But to do it, at least the vegetable garden, the area has been cleared, the beds have been created. It would be very easy if the right person came along, that right person would say, "Oh, we've got to get this going again." And it would happen again.

And all the reports and documentation are there?

Everything. The documentation's all there. And Colleen's wonderful report was there and all the documentation of what was done by AGHS in those working bees, it's all there. And there are some great photos.

It strikes me over the term of the Garden History Society that there are these big adventures and big projects like Montague and smaller projects as well, but really the Society, if those were all gathered together from every branch across the nation, there'd be a huge effort that the Society has put in.

Huge effort, huge effort, and also tremendously valuable in so many ways.

For the future ... it's not just for now.

For the future. Because, just thinking of the ACT Monaro Branch, those booklets about the gardens are wonderful, they're the best little resources, and they will be for the future.

They began, I understand ... the first one was initiated sometime after the conference I think the first conference was '85 in Canberra. But then, as we remarked, every one of those booklets has a garden, Mount Erlington Garden, St Omer (if I'm pronouncing it correctly) Garden, Early Ainslie Gardens - so there's that constant focus and reiteration of garden.

Mm, mm.

Do you attend many events now in Canberra with your distance away in Nimmitabel?

I do. I try to. This year has been a bad year for me, but certainly. And I've got a couple of mates, and we tend to go to any events that we can because they're so good.

And then in 2016 there was the conference that they put on, *The Scientists in the Garden*.

That was a great conference.

Were you involved in the preparation or just like me, attending?

I was just attending. I was involved a bit, I was, the way one is if you're on the committee. But no, I wasn't involved in the same way as those who are living in Canberra were.

Yes, yes. Do you remember any of the speakers in particular? This is catching you on the hop perhaps. There's was that wonderful Soil and Grasses?

Yes. That was absolutely wonderful.

And the very Genetic Paper.

Oh, I loved the Genetic Paper because Oliver Mayo, who gave that paper is a very old friend of mine, I've known him since he was a school boy, and it was absolutely lovely to catch up with him again. And I enjoyed his subtle humour about it all. Some other people thought it was absolutely crashingly boring, but I was fascinated by it.

But isn't that also part of the Society's richness that not everybody's on the same page all the time?

No. And that wonderful talk by Richard Stirzaker about water.⁸

Yes.

Astonishing.

So do you regularly attend the conferences?

I do. I didn't go to New Zealand - it just wasn't possible this year.

I'm thinking as you talked about Montague. I was thinking the New Zealand conference was the first offshore venture, but maybe Montague was the first offshore venture.

Maybe. Maybe it was, maybe it was. But no, I love the conferences because I've never been to a dud one. I loved going to Albany and the whole adventure of course it's far away and I hadn't been to Western Australia for a long time, so there was a lot of other things about going there. But I thought it was an excellent conference and enjoyed it immensely.

Were you still on the NMC when the first New Zealand conference was proposed?

13.18 Yes, yes.

And then Melbourne very quickly stepped in to that?

Yes, that's right, yes.

What do you think about the idea of the New Zealand conference?

Well, I gather, I'm sad I wasn't there. I think it's a splendid idea. I think it's a wonderful linking.

Not stretching our wings beyond potential?

I don't think so. No. I don't believe so, but I don't know what the outcome will be. I don't know how financially successful it's been. I just don't know that. But I've spoken to several ... Because several of my friends went and they really loved it. And I think they felt that ... a couple of them had not been to New Zealand before and they really loved seeing the differences and the similarities in the gardens and they enjoyed the speakers as well. So I think it was good idea.

Good. The time is marching on Lainie, and we're here at the National Trust because you are going on to your next committee meeting, the Collections Committee. What does that involve briefly?

Well, it's a very interesting committee because it involves every aspect of the collections held by the National Trust at every property. And so it's a matter of focusing on what is important at the time, whether it is the conservation of a particular piece of furniture at one of the houses, or it's something that has been offered as a gift, or it's something that needs to be de-accessioned because it's no longer needed or relevant.

It might be dealing with a whole lot of outside machinery and what about its conservation? Do you leave it there? Do you put it under a cover? Do you accept the fact that not everything can be preserved forever and you allow it to just gradually disintegrate? So every aspect of the care of each collection and so it's very much my interest because it's curatorial oversight really.

I'm also on the Saumarez Committee, and I find the whole ... Saumarez is a very interesting house and the garden in particular. And there's a lot of discussion about whether that Rose Garden should ever have been helicoptered in.

⁸ Dr Oliver Mayo, CSIRO Agriculture and Food, Adelaide – *Some Questions about Genetic Engineering of Possible Interest to Garden Historians*; Dr Richard Stirzaker, CSIRO Agriculture and Food, *The Backyard Laboratory: Garden Water Management*.

Which was an agreement with the AGHS.

It is indeed. And so I find that very interesting. And one half of my brain says this is a total irrelevance, the other half of my brain says why not? This is a collection of roses. It's now an amazing attraction for Saumarez, so it's good for the actual property. It's not damaging anything and it's really along the lines of the Burra Charter in a way, in that tomorrow you could take it up and it would leave no ... it's reversible.

And so although I consider myself a purist in a lot of ways, I'm very happy to bend the rules if I can see that it's not damaging anything else.

I think given the constraints of time, that's a perfect note on which to end. And we can perhaps truly round out and finish the tailings at our next meeting.

Certainly.

Thank you Lainie.

Thank you, Roz.

This is the second part of the interview with Lainie Lawson, OAM, who is being interviewed for the Australian Garden History Society's National Oral History Collection, particularly focused on the ACT Monaro Riverina Branch. The interview is taking place today on 3 July 2020 at both our homes, Lainie in Nimmitabel, and the interviewer, Roslyn Burge, in Lilyfield in Sydney.

Lainie, thank you for participating once more in this project, and as a new addition to the interview introduction, I thought it might be pertinent to say where we're both speaking from. If you could tell me where you're speaking from today.

I think that's a splendid idea, and I'm speaking from the land of the Ngarigo people, and I acknowledge them as traditional owners of this land where I work and where I live. And I recognize their continuing connection with this land, and I'd like to pay my respect to Elders past, present, and future.

Thank you. And I'm speaking today on the lands of the Gadigal and the Wangals people, just that intersecting border, if there be such a thing.

It's a very short history that we're really speaking about, Lainie, in relation to that much vaster history; it's the 40th anniversary this year of the AGHS, and we talked previously about your earlier years and some of those influences, but I'd like to launch straight into the AGHS and ask you about how you first became interested in the AGHS.

I first became interested in the AGHS when my mother became interested, and she told me about it, and then I thought, well, this is something that it's really important for the ACT government to know about and to have some sort of connection with. And I was working at Lanyon Homestead which was owned and managed by the ACT government. And I suggested that we, the Museums Unit as it was then, should become members. And so that was really my first introduction and I was sort of spasmodically involved at that stage and I didn't attend many meetings. I did attend some events, and so my involvement was not great in those early years.

And those early years would be mid-eighties do you think?

Yes. Mid-eighties.

And you were working full time, it's hard always to fit in a number of other events working full time, but do you recall whether there was a collective philosophy or ethos in the Society at that time?

I believe there was. Certainly the meetings that I did attend, the focus on garden history was obvious and important. And so I don't think it's ever veered from that course. What's happened is that of course it's broadened its focus and many more events, activities, publications, et cetera, and advocacy. But I think it's never lost its way.

And at the same time, almost as it began, the Society began researching properties; you were also writing your own publications then about Mugga-Mugga and Lanyon and so on. Did you have any input into any of those publications in the Branch?

No, I didn't. Not at that time. But I certainly have benefited from those publications. And I think that they are absolutely splendid because the fact that they were small, good photographs, good texts, accessible, as opposed to the giant conservation plans where they might've just had a tiny little chapter - I think they have been a really clever and useful ongoing method of

preserving the history of significant gardens. In fact, I was only reading the *Coolringdon* one last week because I've been doing an extra bit of work on *Coolringdon* Homestead. And so I reread Trisha's *Coolringdon* book, and I thought this is so helpful to the current and future owners.

It's quite charming with its magical references and fairies and so forth. It's really sweet. May I ask what you're working on there? Are you able to talk about that?

Yes. Coolringdon, the whole property is now owned by Sydney University and there's a Trust which administers the property and also manages the homestead. And I could talk about this for hours, but I won't. And so Sydney University have put funds aside for some important conservation works in the homestead. And because I was involved with the preparation of the original conservation and management plan in 2003, which Peter Freeman wrote and Trisha was involved too, they asked me if I'd just come and do a little bit of steering as to what was appropriate and what needed to be done.

And so I've just had several meetings. So my involvement isn't great, but it's just to provide an opinion because they're being guided by Peter's conservation and management plan for the architectural work and the building works that need to be done at the moment.

Are you working in the garden there at all?

No. No. Always providing opinions, but not actually working.

In 2018, you gave the address to the AGM of the Branch with that wonderful title of *Rescue and Reality*, lovely alliteration and you talked about garden conservation and garden restoration, and a phrase that leapt out from that for me was the *lurking in the background is the temptation to gild the lily*. I hope that that's not happening anywhere around.

No. No. Nowhere close to here anyway.

You questioned at that point some of the methods and outcomes of garden restorations projects. Has that garden restoration, and not that particular garden, but the realm of garden restoration and garden conservation, has that changed in your career?

That's quite a difficult question to answer Ros. I think the best answer is yes, it has changed. I think there is less rigor, less attention to preserving integrity, and more inclination to please the public.

That's a rather ...

That's disappointing, but I think that's the reality. And I understand it. I understand it, and I also understand that compromise is necessary. That's when I was talking about the realities that compromise is necessary: one would perhaps wish it otherwise, but the reality is that it comes down to funding, certainly, but it also comes down to management and something which I really do care a lot about is the importance of curatorial overview. And with garden conservation, I think the Burra Charter's wonderful 'damndbalap' is the way to go. Less is so much better than more.

Thank you. That was a very big question. That's a terrific consideration of that. Lainie, you weren't able to attend some of the Branch events in the eighties, working and so on, but have you been able to attend any more recently?

10.00 Yes, indeed. Since I moved to Nimmitabel, of course my time was suddenly (... I'd never say it was my own, but I certainly had a lot more flexibility) and so I have attended many more, many more activities and have persuaded some of my neighbours and friends to join and also to participate in activities, lectures. Please don't ask me to specify anything because that's too

difficult. But what I would like to say, is that I love this combination of pleasure and education. And I think that's what my neighbours here have enjoyed so much.

And the whole experience of gardened Canberra, which is two arms, attending a lecture, meeting some like-minded and interesting people and coming home again - so it's not just whizzing around the corner. It requires quite an effort and a wish to do this and what I would like to say is that the Garden History Society has provided sufficiently interesting and worthwhile events for people like myself and my friends that say, yes, we must make an effort to go to this.

You touch on that distance, which I don't think even with Sydney's worst traffic, before the pandemic Lainie, we would take two hours to get to an event, but the Branch covers a huge part of the state. Why was there such a scooping in of so much of that area? Do you recall that discussion early on?

I really don't. No. But it's quite interesting to me because the size of the Branch, it's a similar sort of geographic parcel to when Australia's Open Garden Scheme expanded from Victoria into the Riverina, the ACT and the edge of the Southern Highlands. So I don't know the reason, but it's seemed to work because of there hasn't been a need to change it.

So you were very involved in the Open Garden Scheme. Were you part of the foundation of that?

I certainly was involved from the time it expanded from Victoria into southern New South Wales because it began as Victoria's Open Garden Scheme in 1987, based on the English Garden Scheme, and so it was immensely successful in Victoria, and the expansion into the Riverina and southern New South, the ACT, was just a natural expansion. And yes, I was involved and I was a member of the first board. It was wonderful experience and something which I learnt a huge amount and also, I met so many amazingly knowledgeable gardeners. And of course there was the opportunity too, because being a Selector one also saw the most wonderful gardens. And the early expansion into New South Wales and the ACT was terribly exciting because it just opened so many, not doors, but garden gates - and I think those early years were the ones that I remember with the greatest pleasure.

And how on earth do you pick and select?

Well, I think this is where the Open Garden Scheme was very good. There were sensible selection criteria and selectors were appointed who really did know the gardens, or had something to offer and had some knowledge. And I think that it was very rigorous and that was the success, the initial success. So the gardens had to be of a certain standard, maintenance of a certain standard to have sufficient interest to hold one's attention for half an hour or so and to have some particular features that would make them stand out, or have some interesting history.

And I think that by sticking to the selection criteria, it really did take the gardens into a bit of a different league from, well, maybe we can just say some charity groups who would just open any garden where the gardener would put his or her hand up and say, "Do come to me". Well, that's all very nice, but it wasn't what the Open Garden Scheme was about, which was about raising the bar and about raising the interest and arousing more interest in gardens, garden history throughout Australia. So it wasn't just about making a bit of money for the local community group, but that was part of it. And I think that the financial structure was both a success in the beginning, but eventually led to its demise.

You'd didn't ask me that question, but I'm sorry. I've answered it in that way.

No, no, no. Because it is no more, is it, the Australian Garden Scheme?

No, it is no more, but I think its legacy is quite remarkable.

That legacy is?

Well, that legacy is that in its time from, well from, let's say 1987 in Victoria to 2000, and when was it, 2016? I have to check that date, but I think it was 2016. Well over a thousand gardens were opened throughout Australia in every state, and the awareness of gardening as a pleasure, a pastime, and something worthwhile was quite amazing. And at one stage, I think this is true, that more people were attending open gardens than attending football matches. I like that.

Laughter

And of course the other thing was that a lot of money was raised. And the great criticism of Australia's Open Garden Scheme in the beginning was that not all of the money went to the owner or to the owner's nominated charity. It was a 35:65% split. And so the owner would get the 35%, the Open Garden Scheme would retain 65%. And that was for administration, advertisement, publication and community grants programs. And that was something which was initially resisted, but then it was obvious that it was doing a lot of good and so people were happy with it.

When you say resisted, by the garden owners or others within the system?

Yes, because when they'd open their own garden for maybe the local church, Red Cross, whatever in the past, they would have got all the money to be able to do exactly what they liked with it. And so that was initially a barrier. But then when the benefits would ... The main benefit of course, was the insurance. And so one was covered by this great umbrella of insurance really for everything; and so that was very, very important and not the case. There was no such thing with the smaller openings. So, that really was a huge step forward.

Were you a selector ... where was your patch to select?

20.00 Well, I was living in Canberra at the time, and so I selected in the Canberra area. But because of being on the committee and I found other selectors as did Trisha, because Trisha was the coordinator. Tricia Dixon was the coordinator for ACT and the Monaro at that time, when it first leapt across the border. And we had a small team of selectors who were knowledgeable about the area surrounding the ACT and in particular, Charles and Martha Campbell who lived at Woden Homestead, and Martha had been Martha Routledge who grew up at Gidleigh near Bungendore, they had wonderful contacts in the Bungendore, Braidwood area. And so they persuaded people to come on board and then ... who in turn then said, "Look, this is a good organization. Why not join up next year?"

And so those first couple of years were tricky in just persuading people that this would be a good thing to do. And so I focused on Canberra; Trisha also found other gardens. We looked towards Yass and Boorowa, those areas and then down towards the coast. So it was a matter of just finding people in the particular district who had contacts and who had understanding of what it was all about.

And you hadn't yet moved. You were living in Canberra then, but you hadn't moved to ... You moved to Nimmitabel during that time of your engagement.

Didn't move to Nimmitabel til 2001.

Right. But you were still very much involved with the Open Garden Scheme then.

Yes, I was. Yes.

And did that bring different gardens to the scheme?

Yes.

Your own garden?

I believed strongly that we shouldn't only open the gardens of the good and the grand, but to open smaller gardens, to open new gardens and just to try to make gardening achievable for everybody. Because I think to open some small suburban gardens meant that younger people starting their own gardens weren't disheartened and overcome, but could see that, yes, I can do this. And so those gardens never got as many visitors as the gardens that were wonderful and historic and big but I still feel that that was an important thing to have done.

Was that your particular emphasis and interest to include those?

Yes, I felt, and I still feel very strongly, that you do need to have a balance and you do need to try to appeal to a very wide public and yes, to be encouraging.

And I guess with Canberra at the centre of the ... Both for that area, for the Open Gardens, but also for the Australian Garden History Society, there's a great mix of public lands, public planting, small domestic gardens in the urban area, with a rapid proximity to larger rural, regional properties of great significance?

Yes. Which of course is what made it also interesting. And I think that the Garden History Society is now doing, I think, a tremendous job in advocacy, because they have a huge job to be vigilant about Canberra, because the vision, Burley Griffin's vision is so important to preserve. And I think that the vulnerability of Lake Burley Griffin is well known, and the Garden History Society has been a very vocal, and I'm hoping will continue to be an effective advocate for preservation of the foreshores of the Lake.

Lainie, this is a tandem sort of question, not specifically about the Society, but why do you think there's been such a ... For a long time, there was a great respect for Canberra and all that early planting and emphasis. Why has that shifted so in recent times, to warrant the Canberra Branch, of all Branches, the ACT branch, to become so engaged with advocacy?

I think it's a lot about the growth of Canberra. Because in this last 30 years, Canberra has spread enormously, in particular suburban growth with this really regrettable plot ratio imbalance, with houses getting bigger and bigger, and gardens getting smaller and smaller and also, suburban plantings not being nearly as well controlled as when Canberra, and the NCDC, and the early government departments were far more concerned than they are now about preserving what is unique about Canberra. And so therefore, I think this is where the Garden History Society has such a responsibility to try to fight these battles.

It is a fight ...

Because, a couple of weeks ago I was looking at that very good little film that Brian Voce organized, and Trisha presented. And I think it's some ... It's a little video that anybody who's involved in making decisions in ACT suburban development should see. It should be compulsory viewing.⁹

Will they watch it. So in fact, I'm not sure whether any other branch has actually undertaken films of their area, so does that speak to the innovation that the branch has adopted-

Yes, I think so.

⁹ A Gardener's City: Canberra's Garden Heritage, Brian Voce, 2006
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C3ZBemA6uVk&feature=emb_title

... With its publications and recording gardens?

The booklets and that film, I think they do represent the fact that this Branch has always been very focused on its own concerns. And I'm not saying that as a criticism, I'm saying that is a really important contribution.

I think that's really in essence what the Society does as well, because of its breadth nationally. We're missing a Branch in the Northern Territory, I'm not sure if that was ever canvassed, but that emphasis ... as you speak about the Open Gardens Scheme, and there must be a large element of voluntary work in that and there's a very large voluntary contribution to the AGHS as well, as you know. You've been on the National Management Committee yourself, 2014-17. Do you see the shift in a different world today impacting that volunteerism?

I don't think so. I don't think so. And I think it's very, very encouraging to see a younger generation becoming very, very committed to the preservation of our landscape and our cultural heritage. And it's good to see people like Bronwyn Blake, Ruth Morgan, et cetera, being part of the management, being prepared to take on responsibility and work with people who are all 40 years older than they are. It's very encouraging to see.

When the Society began, people like Peter Watts were in their thirties, even younger still, and still in engaged in the society.

30.00 Yes.

Who was the Chair when you first joined? Would that have been Margaret Darling at that point?

Yes.

Do you remember her chairmanship? I wondered, just to paint a picture for somebody listening to this in a hundred years time, Lainie, whether you could paint a picture of Margaret Darling?

Well, she was a very impressive woman. She had a clear vision, she didn't suffer fools gladly. She had very strong opinions, but she did recognize the need for diversity and she was good at picking the right people at the right time. I think that the importance of strategic committees and strategic boards was certainly always forefront of her thinking. And I mean, she was a jolly good gardener, too. So she did understand what it was all about. She wasn't a chairman, as they say, "helicoptered in". She knew what she was about. Because I think with so many boards, they just get a name and they have what one calls a content free person who's steering it along. But that certainly wasn't Margaret, no. And I think it was also the case with Sue Ebury, a very great involvement and knowledge and understanding. And that's the way to keep it. Keep the show on the road, as it were.

And were you there when she came to Saumarez, with your engagement with Saumarez?

No. No. No.

But certainly her early death is a sad event. During your time on the NMC there were also the two Chairs, John Taylor ... Were you there still, under his time?

Yes.

And Richard Heathcote?

Yes.

Could you describe those men for me?

Oh yes. In their way ... It's so important to have Chairman, Chairpersons, Chairwomen, who have their own real vision. And of course, John, very much concerned with the broader environment, the cultural landscape. Of course his wife Jane (Lennon), too. They were a

fantastic combination of what I'd call the big picture. Richard was, and is, very, very knowledgeable about the specifics: the gardens themselves, the history of individual gardens, his own knowledge of the process of preserving and caring for historic gardens and historic places. So I think they both had very different contributions to make. And we've got now - with the two Chairs, I think that's a novel and a really splendid approach, because Stuart (Read), of course, has been involved for such a long time, but with his great knowledge of both plants, and of course of heritage and heritage values, not only in the landscape as well as the built environment. And then Bronwyn (Blake) with her younger, fresh approach, but real understanding of gardens and plants, and also a great awareness of the need for advocacy, for events, for community involvement. Got a great combination.

Does that duality of chairmanship speak to both the growing role that the Society has, perhaps? And whether that's feasible, perhaps, in the next term of chairman, that there'd be a chairman on North and South of the nation or East and West of the nation? Not necessarily even within drivability of each other. But is the volume of work in the Society growing to warrant that?

I'm not sure about that, but I think it's certainly not unlikely. Not unlikely. And don't you think that you have to respond to the needs at the time. And if that appears to be the right thing to do, I think that the Society is flexible enough to be able to meet that sort of challenge.

Has it always been thus?

Probably not.

Lainie, I remember we both were on the NMC, overlapping a little at one point with John Taylor, and a particular concern of his at that time was the membership numbers of the Society, and his concern, and the concern of us all that the numbers were diminishing. Do you think that should be a preoccupation of the Society?

No. I don't. I think that the popularity, that's perhaps not the right word, of societies waxes and wanes, and sometimes it's issues that will make people join, sometimes it's events. I think of course you have to make great efforts to keep membership at a certain and a viable level, but I don't think you should be obsessed by it. And I think it's far more important to be really focusing on events, activities, publications, and I think membership will follow.

I'm not sure what the membership of the Branch is right now in the ACT, but certainly Sue Byrne is engaged in advocacy. Again, for the hundred years syndrome, could you describe Sue Byrne and her role?

Yes. I think Sue is involved in advocacy. She's one of the quiet achievers. She's a tremendously good delegator in that she doesn't want to be standing on a rostrum and being important, she wants to get the job done. And she's got on her committee, and she's always had, people who do things extremely well. And I think that's her great strength, is in finding people who will each have his or her own particular skills and she lets them do what to do, and encourages them in what they're proposing. And I think that's how it's worked so well. But she's just a very modest sort of person, but active in the background.

And librarianship has been a strength of the Society too, in that branch. With Nancy ...

Oh yes. Nancy Clarke has been absolutely remarkable. And I do think too, the monthly newsletter that Judy Pearce sends us, is wonderful. And that's really why I think the events and activities are so successful because there's always plenty of notice as to what's going to happen, there's a good description, and you can make informed judgments about what you're going to participate in. So I think that with those things, with a good chair, a good committee, a good newsletter, good record keeping, the future of the ACT Branch is pretty good.

In earlier times there was also the librarianship engagement from Victor Crittenden and his press.

41.00 Of course, yes.

Do you recall Victor?

I do. I do.

And could you, again, just for the future, describe Victor and his role?

He was such a modest, quiet, gentle man. And that's how I remember him. I didn't have anything much to do with him, but I've been at meetings when he made just quiet, clever comments. And he just was very learned, very precise, and that's my memories of him, not anything much more. But that's not very useful but that's how I do remember him.

No, it's a lovely snapshot. Thank you, Lainie. Lainie, also one of the recent chairs of the ACT branch is Max Bourke. Could you paint a picture of Max?

I'd love to paint a picture of Max, because he is such a huge personality in himself. He's exuberant, he's enthusiastic, he's voluble, and he's opinionated, but he's an achiever. And he's generous. He's generous with his knowledge, he's generous with his time, he's generous in himself. I think that the world would be a lot poorer if there weren't a lot ... With people without Max's enthusiasm and geniality. And underneath it, of course, is this amazing brain, because he's insightful, his knowledge is encyclopaedic, and his work experience, and also his life experience ... He's a remarkable man and I count him as a friend, and I love being with him because he's great fun. You know, a lot of very knowledgeable and very clever people are dire to be with. But he's fun.

And of course, Margie is a stalwart of the Society as well, and worked on the ..

Yes. She is indeed. And she's such a foil, because she, just quietly in the background, she gets on with the job, she organizes things. For so many years she has been the one who always makes sure that any Garden History Society event has great catering, good food. So important. But it just happens, and I think she also just ... She keeps Max in check when he's absolutely not drawing breath. She just quietly meanders him away. And she has of course had tremendous input into the organization of the last conference in Canberra.

That's right.

She's extremely efficient as well as being, I think, remarkable in her handling of a very exuberant husband.

Were you in ...

I'm sorry, I'm being very politically incorrect here, but ...

No, no. No, I think one of the joys of oral history is that it paints a picture that isn't evident in the annual reports and the formalities of the journal. But just thinking about the conference, Canberra's certainly pulled its weight with its mix of conferences. Were you able to attend the last one? That two thousand-

Yes, I did. Yes. Yes. I attended it and I enjoyed it tremendously. There were criticisms offered by those who said it was too dry, it was too intellectual, and the papers were dull. Well, I didn't agree with any of that. I found the papers absolutely fascinating. And because they were outside my ... Not that I ever think I've got any expertise, but outside my field of knowledge.

And so, I learnt a lot from that conference. Don't ask me anything because I can't retain a thing these days, but I know at the time I thought, "Oh, this is wonderful." Papers like Richard Stirzaker and water - I mean, he's entertaining, but he was spot on and fascinating. And Oliver Mayo's genetics. Well, I've known Oliver since he was 14, and I hadn't seen him for probably 40 years, but the same seriousness mingled with this wonderful, dry wry humour. That to me, was a wonderful paper.

It was.

And we had some great visits. It was a very good conference. Canberra's a good place for it, because actually the variety of places one can visit and things one can see and do is marvellous. And aren't we lucky to have that wonderful Arboretum?

Yes, yes.

Yes.

Lainie, you speak about the catering, and this isn't part of the mission by any means, or the aims of the Society to provide catering. But nevertheless, that's an important element. And I know there are some people who've said that they will go to one particular branch's events regardless of the event, simply because the catering is so fantastic. But I think, while that seems very lightweight, I think it provides an opportunity, as you say, for people to mingle and mix, and join together.

It does. Look, it cannot be underestimated. And I believe that if you've got a comfortable atmosphere, you've got good food, you've got the opportunity for people to mingle, to meet one another, to actually talk at a different level. Terribly important.

Just going back to that group of people who've been involved in the society early on. Of course, one was James Broadbent, who you engaged, I think, with Mugga-Mugga? Or was it Lanyon? One of your properties?

No. James was on the Lanyon Restoration and Acquisitions Committee, which was an ACT government appointed committee, which really was the steering committee for the historic properties in the ACT. That committee really informed all of the decisions in the particularly at Lanyon. James was instrumental in getting Michael Lehany to prepare the analysis of the garden, which was a, let me think, 1987 document. James and Michael worked very closely in the preparation of that plan and it was an absolutely excellent one. I don't think it could be bettered which is saying a lot.

It is, it is indeed.

Because there was this really objective understanding of the layering of the garden, and yes, important to try to restore some of the very, very special features, but to acknowledge the contributions of each succeeding generation. But also to, again here we come with this compromise, to accept the fact that it was a public place and you had to have public amenity. So you had to water the grass so that people could picnic and sit on it. It wasn't just dry spiky sward.

James and Michael, both wonderful analysis of early photographs in picking up what plants were what. I think the fact that some of those early, early photographs, the detail with of course glass plate negatives, the earliest ones, and very good cameras, of course, the detail much easier to pick up and snap, snap away with the iPhone.

What's your ...

50.00 James, a most knowledgeable man and rigorous in all dealings I've had. I've worked with James for 30 plus years. I have the greatest respect for him, not only with his knowledge of gardens, both his knowledge of architecture and interiors. So he's really ... as far as being a historic place, a curator ... he's as good as they come.

That's a very large statement.

Well, I really believe it.

When I interviewed him earlier in the 2000s, he has quite a wicked sense of humour and he talked about yearning to go round gardens that were open with a bottle of Zero or whatever the insecticide is to kill such plants. That's in the public domain.

I remember describing Iceberg roses as boringly reliable and reliably boring. James just has a wonderful sense of humour. I love his own house in garden because they're so much ... they just distill his essence of what he is as a person. The garden is such an honest garden. He's only got in that garden what is appropriate for that place and no gilding of the lily there.

So would that garden be unique for that or are there others around?

No, there's no other garden like his. No. No, it's a very special garden. It's lucky that it survived. It's been nearly succumbed to fire on several occasions.

That's right. This year too. Just moving back through the years, one constant presence from the beginning of the Society until even now in different ways is Peter Watts. Of course you worked with Peter on the trust, the Historic Houses Trust too.

I did, yes. I've got the greatest admiration for Peter because not only is he knowledgeable about gardens, buildings, interiors, places et cetera, his ability to deal with government, to deal with government employees, to deal with very difficult situations in people was quite remarkable. And I saw this as ... the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales was a really remarkable organization in what it did and what it achieved and Peter steered that organization from its beginnings until its demise – and I will say demise because that's what happened. After he left, it just lost direction. It didn't lose direction because he hadn't surrounded himself with good people, he had, but I'm not sure (of course, I'm not privy to the reasons why it needed to change its name, why suddenly, there were no more curators, there were only managers) I don't know why these decisions were made, but they were certainly disastrous.

Historic Houses Trust, it said what it was about. What does Sydney Living Museums say? You think, "Well, what does that mean?" There's a parallel there between the Historic Houses Trust and the Open Garden Scheme because Neil Robertson was the CEO from its beginning until a couple of years before its death and Neil, like Peter, was the figurehead of the organization, was intelligent, accessible, aware of the need to deal very carefully with relatable bodies, for example, government with Peter, the ABC with the Open Garden Scheme. When Neil resigned, really for health reasons, the organization then became unbalanced. There was less respect for the volunteers, less connection with the volunteers, the creation of a top heavy administrative group and changing the name from the Open Garden Scheme to Open Gardens Australia.

Well, it wasn't necessary, but it was just again this great desire for meaningless change, which one sees in other organizations. And they do it to their peril. I think that happened with both the Historic Houses Trust and with Australia's Open Garden Scheme.

But Peter, Peter had this great ability to know when a place should be acquired, what the potential was, and how to deal with local communities. He was good with this. I just can't understand why such brilliant ideas as the Endangered Houses Trust just went nowhere. That

was brilliant. That was of course Peter's baby. And what a good idea, buy an endangered property - do it up so that it is livable in the 21st century- sell it on with some caveats, but what a great idea. Well, the minute that Peter left the organization, I think we'd never heard about it since. But Peter, I'm so glad he is still working. He's still now has input into all sorts of other organizations - in particular, National Trust that he's still certainly very much involved in the Garden History Society. I think his legacy is a profound one.

Indeed. Your discussion then, Lainie, of the change of name - just to divert from the names for a moment - over the years, there've been discussions about dropping the name "history" from Garden History, changing "studies" to a different name. Do you have any thoughts about ... I mean you've kind of hinted ... meaningless change, but perhaps you feel differently about changing the name of the AGHS?

I don't. I don't feel differently at all. I cannot understand why you can't just say it as it is. That's what it is. Why do you need to be clever, too clever for one's own good? Usually. So no, I don't think there needs to be a name change. I can't see the point. If someone could convince me there'd be a point, well, I might think about it. But I'm not thinking about it at all.

So returning just briefly to some of those earlier chairs, Howard Tanner was also involved very early on and still keeps an interest. But do you recall Howard's involvement with the Society?

1 hr I don't recall his involvement with Society as such. But I certainly recall I had quite a bit to do with Howard very early, early 80s when he was involved with, again, the preparation of the Lanyon Restoration and Acquisition Committees' Lanyon Conservation and Management Plan, which he ... it was at that time, Phillip Cox and Howard Tanner, but Howard did the bulk of the work. So Howard was involved on an ongoing basis with advice to Lanyon Restoration Acquisition Committee. So I saw him a lot during that time.

I think Howard is ... again Howard is very knowledgeable. He's got a very personable, nice manner. I think nice manners are such a help in this world. Even when he was saying something that was maybe a bit critical or a bit unpalatable to the bureaucrats, he was very good at not ruffling feathers. And I think that's been all the way through ... I've actually dealt with him in other matters, other places and it's been a stand up feature of considered opinion delivered in a way that that was not unpalatable, clever, a clever approach.

All this coterie of people we've just spoken of were we're part of that world of garden history, heritage, engagement with history in the 80s, which I'm not sure where, but I think you described as the dream years, the 80s.

Yes.

Are they very different today or the same?

I guess I'm not really in a position to say, because I'm no longer involved directly. But I think that the early 80s was the time when conservation and management plans were new. It was a new thing to do and we thought they were wonderful. They were because they really did guide a whole lot of decisions. They were a great reference and I think a tool to be used and they were used. But now, I really can criticize them roundly now, because now they're a sort of industry for people to make money out of preparing and so they're so thick one can hardly carry them. They're so dull that you don't want to read them. And they're so useless that they put up on a shelf never to be looked at again, unless to be used as a doorstop or something to elevate your computer, so you can see it basically. I don't know if that answers the question.

No, I think you've nailed it as they say, Lainie. I have to say this morning, I have to confess - one of the things I want to do is we've talked about the Branch publications, but I also want to talk more broadly about the Society's publications, and I have to confess that that earlier I had my computer propped on, the wonderful *Companion* and *The Reed Warbler* I didn't think they were quite thick enough they need to be thicker.¹⁰

I got to say, I had the *Reed Warbler* beside my bed for a very long time. I think it's a remarkable book, but it's not bedtime reading. It's a book you need to read sitting at a table with your mind engaged.

That's a subject of another interview.

It is. But it takes me back to your, your question. That is that at the time in the early 80s, when these conservation and management plans were being prepared for historic properties, private and public was a time when there was a focus on interiors, and on architecture, and on houses and gardens within their context. Now that's gone out of fashion. It's gone out of fashion because the focus is now on the wider landscape and the preservation of the natural environment is seen to be far more important. And I think so there's a different balance and a different emphasis.

Lainie, I'm a bit perplexed because if you're doing a landscapes conservation and management plan for a house or a property, you've got to do it on that, you can't simply bring in the natural landscape, the wider natural landscape. Is there not room for both?

Of course, there's. I think there's absolutely room for both, but I'm just saying, I think the emphasis has changed. Whereas it was an accepted and a popular pastime to visit an historic property and enjoy the interiors and the garden, it's not fashionable any more. It's far more fashionable to go for a bush walk. I'm not criticizing it. I'm just saying, I think that's fact. We can see that fact, we can see it in visitor numbers or the people who visit national parks as opposed to visiting historic houses. I think it's just a reality that at the moment, that's where it is. Who's to say that that balance might change in the future.

Shift back. Lainie, because the time is moving on, regrettably, there are so many elements of the things that you raise that I think are worthy of a single interview, but just coming to the Society's publications, it was involved with the publication of the *Companion* by Richard Aitken. Do you, do you recall that and the energy around that at the time? Do you have any thoughts about the value of that, such a publication?

Yeah, it's extremely valuable. Yes. Extremely valuable. Again, I think Richard did a splendid job in amassing that enormous number of short articles. Look, it might be fat and a doorstop, but I consort it. I like it. I think it was worthwhile. Yes.

Of course, Richard for a long time was the Editor of the journal and probably together with others, produce the most number of journals. But I was surprised looking the other day, Trisha on her own produced the greatest number of journals, 35. I just have with me because I thought it might be interesting to just have your reflections upon the journal. There's this older one from 19 .., the covers have changed somewhat. This is more recently in the time of Tim North. You had some thoughts about Tim North?

Yes, I do. I've actually still got about 20 copies or maybe I haven't as many as that, of their first little *Garden Cuttings*. That was really the beginnings. I think ... I wasn't party to the blow up and what happened to me in the end between Tim and Keva, and the Garden History Society,

¹⁰ *Call of the Reed Warbler, A new agriculture – a new earth*, Charles Massy, St Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 2017; *The Oxford companion to Australian gardens*, ed Richard Aitken & Michael Looker, South Melbourne, OUP & AGHS, 2002.

but I thought Tim produced a good journal and with scholarly articles, and very much of the time and the look of the journal, that cover you showed me, that was typical. Typical of what was around at the time. It was for members. It wasn't trying to do what the journal is doing today. The journal today is I think a splendid, splendid magazine, which lot more people should read and could read because the articles are of a very, very high quality. It's just a different time, a different place, appealing to a different lot of people.

1hr10 Again, a comparison with the Open Garden Scheme. When it first started, there was a tiny little booklet, size of a Penguin paperback, that's the first one that I remember, the Victorian one. When it moved into the ACTs and Southern New South Wales, it was slightly bigger, but the same size, still glove box. That was the plan. The articles, it was all black and white.

The articles were a couple of hundred words. So you actually got a feeling of the garden that you were going to visit. We spent ages writing up those - because the selectors had to write the blurbs for the gardens and it's so much more difficult to write 200 words than 2000. That really worked, that little publication. People did have it in their glove boxes, easy to have in your handbag, et cetera. But I was actually one of those who fought really hard to maintain that small size. But it went to a magazine format - that was all part of ... It was part of the ABC's involvement in a magazine format being important. Also the fact that it could be sold in news agencies along with magazines. So it was a magazine format. It became full colour and it just was appealing to a different group of people. So it's ... I mean, of course it's not a direct comparison, but it just indicates the change of the times, that what was appropriate in the 1990s is not necessarily appropriate in 2020.

No, and I was quite struck by the Journal issue at the beginning of the year which, that's the January edition, which things just got worse throughout the year, but how do you think the Journal travels today?

I think it's travelling well and I'm always interested with a change of editor and having seen them over the years and they do bring their own particular focus, and so they should, and so I'm looking forward to seeing what the new editors do and I've enjoyed all of them and I like the variety. I think the Journal is traveling well. I think it needs to be careful to retain the balance of entertaining and scholarly. I think there is room for both, and it's important to have both. Journals that survive have to meet a very broad variety of people who are reading it. And if they flip through and think, "That looks boring," well, that's not really what you want. But I enjoy it. When it arrives, I sit down and I read it.

Oh, good for you.

I don't think, "Oh yeah, I'll get to that some other time." Because the last one was sufficiently interesting, well, I'm wanting to see what the next one will bring. I don't necessarily find all of the articles interesting, but then that doesn't matter because what I enjoy someone else might not and vice versa.

Quite. Quite. Lainie, I think we're coming to a natural conclusion of the interview and certainly the time is escaping and you've been very generous this morning. I just wanted to touch on recent ... We have a co-chair now who's a woman - the last woman chair we had was Colleen Morris who's also been so significant in the scholarship aspect of the Society and the Studies and her own publications, which draw on history of plants and gardens and so on. And I just wondered whether you have a picture of Colleen in mind.

Oh, I do. I've got the greatest respect for Colleen for her scholarship, but also not only for her scholarship, but also for her ability to present quite complex issues in an accessible and simple way. I think her exhibition on, I can't remember its title, but was it Forgotten Gardens or-

Lost Gardens.

I can't remember what it was. Maybe you can correct me on that.

Lost Gardens of Sydney

That's right. *Lost Gardens.* It was absolutely splendid and it's certainly raised a lot of people's awareness. I also ... Look, she's a great researcher and of course it was her excellent report on the garden at Montague Island which fired the group of us who went there with such enthusiasm, and she was part of it too, she came, too, on our first visit when we had our first working party. So Colleen's a person who's not only a really serious academic, but she's prepared to get her hands dirty and participate and be part of a project and enjoy doing so. She's a very balanced, sensible person. She might think that's a terribly dull description, but if I add to it she's also a serious scholar, I think she might be happier than just being a balanced, sensible person.

Perhaps those elements also sum up the Society. Lainie, I'm not sure whether I asked this in the beginning, given as it's the 40th anniversary of the Society, but I wonder whether just ... Lainie, we just had a small pause there, but as we come back to the interview and winding up really today, because it's the 40th anniversary of the Society, I wonder what those people would have thought who were there in the beginning. But do you think it has changed greatly since early days, and if so, how?

1 hr 18 I think it's changed in that it does have ... it probably has a more ... a more academic side to it, especially as far as the Journal, the Studies, et cetera, but I think also it's remained the same in essence. It's remained true to what its name suggests, and I think that's actually terribly important. I think as far as the future is concerned, probably advocacy is going to be incredibly important. I also think that continuing to appeal to as wide as possible a membership is really important, hence making sure the Journal is balanced, making sure that the activities are balanced and between suburban, country, bush - get the balance of what the garden scheme is trying to achieve in being a mouth piece for those who care, not only about their own gardens but about the environment in general.

I think it's terribly important that not only individuals, but organizations and corporations are aware of garden history and its wider implications, and this can be done best through the things that the Garden History Society is so good at. Events, conferences, activities, lectures, publications. If they continue with those, I think the future is assured. If they were to drop any of those things, I think a compromise could be dangerous. And so more of the same would seem to me to be a good way to go.

Well, Lainie, I think that's a perfect point on which to conclude the interview. So may I thank you for your contribution to this collection and thank you for the time you've given today and that steamy room at the National Trust last year. Thank you for all of this, Lainie. It's really terrific.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to do so, Roz.

Good-bye.

DISCUSSION ABOUT LAINIE'S GARDEN IN NIMMITABEL

... during the interview, of course is your own garden, which you've developed in Nimmitabel. And you sent me this glorious photograph, which I might include with the interview materials, of your view this morning. Tell me about your garden.

1hr 21 Well, my garden is unremarkable except I do have a beautiful view. I'm on the side of a hill looking down the Tom Groggin Valley and it is a wonderful long view. I can't see any other

houses, I can't see anything, I can see a couple of sheds, but the Monaro is tough gardening country. I'm 1,170 meters above sea level and the rainfall is very little. It's black and red basalt country and it's very, very hilly and very, very rocky. When we moved here in 2001, the previous owners, Peter and Sally Curlewis, had developed a garden around the house and they in turn had extended the garden from the previous owners. There have only been three. Three owners of this in the last 150 years.

Sally and Peter pushed out the garden from a tiny little fence which was probably about two metres from the house all around when they arrived here in the early 1980s, and they planted a very good windbreak, a Cypress hedge on the western side and had also planted a grove of birches, some nice deciduous trees in the garden and had formed garden beds around it with just tough perennials. The garden was quite tight, it wasn't large. When we arrived, actually before we bought the place, I did say to my husband, "I really do want to extend the garden. Will you promise me we will do that, one of the first things that we do?" So that was agreed upon. And so I did something which is not terribly clever for people in their sixties, I tripled the size of the garden.

Wow.

And so now I suppose it's all, in total, it's about two acres. One part of it is, and that's the section that I'm still working on, is a rocky hill, a gravel garden. And in order to plant even a bulb, you need a pick because there'll be 20 stones. But going back to the original question is that the garden is just a simple country ... simple extended cottage garden. Yes, the design is one you could draw on a plan and it would look all right.

What I've done is extended it in every way in that I removed sleepers from the edges of all of the beds because I just wanted dug edges, I wanted soft, informal, loose borders and created more borders. Planted a lot of bulbs and a lot of perennials. There is nothing in this garden that's in any way precious or special. A lot of things are special to me, but in the general sense of the word not special. What I did do was to take advice from good gardeners around here, was to wait 12 months before I did anything really dramatic, see the four seasons here and to visit as many local gardens within a 50 kilometre range.

I did that and I think it saved me a lot of heartache and saved me a lot of money. Because this is what's fascinating about this district, is that gardens basically all have the same plants. So it's wonderful. You've got the same toolkit and it's just what one does with them and the different shapes and sizes. I love visiting my friends' gardens around here because we're all doing different things with the same plant material and I find that deeply interesting. And so, I mean, I'm still planning. I'm still changing. I'm still doing different things in the garden. I'm lucky in that I can get help from the village if I need it. I don't have any regular help, but I do have a marvellous fellow who will wield his chainsaw with enthusiasm if that needs to be done or who will actually dig all my edges once a year and then I maintain and will take away my rubbish if I get an enormous amount and do all the things that my husband used to do.

So I'm lucky that I've still got that sort of support, but I really enjoy mowing. I enjoy whipper snipping. I enjoy pruning. I love all of those aspects of the garden. And I spend probably, depending on the weather and one's activities, probably, oh, two to three hours in the garden every day. Its' sort of ... my ... It's what I do and what I enjoy doing. I'm very interested in preserving my views for getting visitors into the paddocks and preserving certain trees that I like to look at in the landscape and on having not a huge contrast, but a flow from domestic then into paddock. And so I haven't contained the garden as such.

So there's just a farm fence around three quarters of it, and then there's the hedge that protects me from the worst winds. But it's a garden which gives me pleasure because you don't see it all at once. You wander around and come across things unexpectedly. It's not manicured. It's mostly reasonably tidy. But I love bulbs so I have a lot of daffodils and jonquils. I really enjoy perennials that are tough. Anything that multiplies I say thank you very much, except for a particular euphorbia which I'm trying to get rid of. And I love deciduous trees and trees that have a good shape. I'm also very happy to have very common things that do well. I don't have a garden philosophy as such, except that I feel the house and the garden and the landscape should all talk to one another and be comfortable. I'm not trying to prove anything at all. Just want to have an environment that suits the house, suits me and sits in the landscape.

In the third one I'm looking at that you sent me this morning, Lainie, it looks, and I've only printed it off in black and white so it's a bit indistinct and I can't see the colour version, but it looks like there's a lot of vegetation beyond your boundary. Is that right?

1 hr 30 Well there's, yes, because there's a valley and there's bush over the other side of the valley.

I'll send you some more photos and you'll get a better idea.

Oh, good.

We're so sad that we couldn't do this in person because then you could've seen it.

Well, you were very generous to welcome me there. And I think it's worth recording that we're speaking obviously in the time of the pandemic and it's just not possible. This is an innovation for the Society, as always, innovating and keeping up. But, Lainie, this picture, the Monaro seems like a ... and everybody speaks of it as a treeless area, but this is an abundance of vegetation and trees.

Well, they're the treeless planes, but I'm not on the treeless planes because that's just a little bit further away. But there's not an abundance. I think that photograph's a bit misleading. But there are scattered trees and that's certainly the country that you can see where they are. Across the other side of the valley is bushland, but it's scattered, small eucalyptus. It's not dense at all.

Are these daffodils already? It's a bit hard to see in this photograph, but when you ...

No daffodils yet.

Well, I think that's a lovely note again, to end on. Lainie, is there anything further about your garden that you wanted to include?

I don't think so. I really enjoy people visiting my garden because you always learn something from people who comment on something they might have had, or perhaps have a plant that they would ... I love giving people cuttings and pieces because you think, "Well, there's a little piece of my garden is going somewhere else." Just as I like receiving always. I can remember when I would visit other gardens, this was when I had children living at home. "Oh mum, what have you got in the boot this time?"

The boot. They must be big cuttings. Well ...

1hr33 So I think that the sharing, the lovely thing that happens, I think it happens everywhere but particularly in this district where it is pretty tough, that we do share our plants. We share our ideas. And so, as I said before, you do see familiar friends popping up in every garden around here.

Good, good. Well, Lainie, thank you again for your contribution to the collection and this lovely intimate detail of your own garden as we wind up for today. Thank you.

Thank you.