

Australian Garden History Society
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Victorian Branch



Photographer: Dr Kate Cregan, 19 April 2024

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| INTERVIEWEES | FRAN AND MAL FAUL |
| INTERVIEWER | DR KATE CREGAN |
| DATE OF INTERVIEW | 19 APRIL 2024 |
| PLACE OF INTERVIEW | AT THEIR HOME in HAWTHORN, VIC, 3123 |
| LENGTH OF INTERVIEW | 1 HOUR, 31 MINUTES AND 37 SECONDS |
| RESTRICTIONS OF USE | NIL |
| TRANSCRIBER | DR KATE CREGAN |
| QUOTATIONS | EXTRACTS FROM THE INTERVIEW SHOULD BE VERIFIED AGAINST THE ORIGINAL SPOKEN WORD |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENT | ALL USES OF THIS INTERVIEW SHOULD ACKNOWLEDGE THE INTERVIEWEE AND THE SOCIETY: FRAN AND MAL FAUL, AUSTRALIAN GARDEN HISTORY SOCIETY, INTERVIEWED 19 APRIL 2024 AND 2 MAY 2024 BY DR KATE CREGAN |

FRAN AND MAL FAUL RECORDING 1

Ah, so, this is Dr Kate Cregan and I'm interviewing Mal and Fran Faul, on the 19th of April 2024, at their home in Hawthorn and the purpose of the interview is to contribute to a larger oral history project being put together by the Australian Garden History Society. So, I'll ask you first Fran, if you could tell me where you were born, when you were born, where you were brought up, all those sorts of basic things please.

[FF] I was born in Melbourne in 1942. Ah, brought up with a government education, both primary school and secondary school. Lived in Strathmore, went to Strathmore Primary School then Glenroy High School, then University High School, after which I became a Home Economics teacher. [I] taught for three years after graduating in 1962. And taught in country schools, two years in Shepparton and one year in Warrnambool High School. Then I spent eighteen months overseas, travelling around, did, um, a cordon bleu certificate in London, came home, ah, after six months got a job at my old alma mater [Larnook Teachers College] and taught there for a number of years. Then went to Burwood State College in the, in the art department, taught textiles. Um, continued teaching there, met Mal on a walking tour organised by a man at Burwood State College, where we went to, went to Nepal and I'd met Mal actually beforehand when we did the walk together, some staff and students, about twenty-four of us, which was fun. Came back to Australia, continued.. oh, got a couple of empty years there, no I was still back teaching at Burwood, got married eventually to Mal, had two children, who went to primary school. We each owned a house, so we sold both of them eventually, bought this house um, ... When the children were late primary school, I went to Burnley and did a course in horticulture at Burnley, um, before it was taken over by Melbourne University. And since then I've been doing garden maintenance and interfering in other people's gardens, and that's about it.

So, was gardening a part of your childhood

[FF] No, no

Not at all? Interesting. Um Mal if you could ...

3:54

[MF] I was born in 1948, went to primary, secondary, grew up in Brighton, East Brighton, um, near the tip. Um, and ah went to primary school and secondary school at Haileybury College in Brighton. Um, Went to Monash University, did commerce, or economics Honours and then ah, I had a stint overseas, only six months, um, just travelling around. Did a little bit of book-keeping in London and um, then came here and had oh, somewhat chequered career until finally settling into public accounting, at about age 40 odd and then um, and then eventually finished my working career working for a client. So, ah, and ah, we discovered Garden History, I think, through the National Trust. We actually met on a garden, a National Trust trip for young Trust people and um, so, which culminated in the trip to Nepal with Fran and Graham Wheeler's group, and we got married in 1978. In '83 we bought this

house and been here ever since. Ah, that's about it. My mother was a keen gardener, I mowed the lawns under duress, that's about it. And ah, ah, I guess it was while the kids were very young we were inactive in Garden History and then they got a bit older and ah, so working bees came on the scene and out of nowhere I became National Treasurer for six years and ah, oh we had, yeah, we had ... quite a bit of fun together with Garden History since then. Um, and also I had a heavy involvement in the 2017 National Conference, which was sprung on Melbourne at short notice and so we might come back to that.

Yeah, yeah, so it sounds like you both had an interest in things historical.

7:06

[FF] MMM

So could you tell me a bit more about that? About your interest in is it historical buildings, just here? Overseas?

[MF] Yeah

[FF] Yeah, well I did um, I did art with it's, um, a bit of art history at school, ah. I was very interested in old buildings when I went overseas, but I consider myself pretty ignorant then. Went to all the art galleries that everybody is told they should go and see, which was enjoyable. When I went to university to do fine arts, ah, which I didn't mention before, I'd been told when I was teaching, 'oh you've got to get further qualifications' so I thought, well, I'll go to university and do art history and regular sort of history. And I didn't ever finish it because children came on the scene. But I um got high distinctions in art history and I did urban history which was very enjoyable and I would have enjoyed going on and finishing that, but didn't

And is the same true for you Mal?

[MF] Um, yeah, well I was interested in history um from an amateur point of view, I did Australian History at Year 12, um, and always been interested in travel which, if you're not interested in history, often that curtails what you can do. And ... very interested in Australian History. My grandparents were in Echuca um which has an interesting history of its own. Um, so that got me in and I used to go down to the library, often with my father, I distinctly remember seeing ah, Frank Hurley's photographs of the ah Shackleton Expedition, Expedition that was fascinating. I remember browsing through Sands and McDougall's directories of Melbourne, looking at what, what was happening in various locations at various times. You're aware of those?

Yes, I am

[MF] Um, so anyway, um, we bought an old house, we're both keen in older houses. The house that I put into the family pool wasn't, wasn't historic but I had shown an interest in, um, in historic housing up until then and have totally

ignorant, I mean ignorant of any architectural terminology or niceties but just enjoyed the variety. And um, so we were members of Garden History and I think through Garden History that we learned about, sorry, members of the National Trust, through that we learned of Garden History and I think joined about second year of Garden History's existence.

So you'd been National Trust membership was some time before that?

[FF] Fifty years we've been members of the National Trust

Really, lifetime members?

[FF] Yeah 1970 we joined.

[MF] Yeah, they put on a lovely function, guest speaker being the bequests manager [laughing] Well, very well run I thought ...

[FF] John. John Dwyer was there to get his 50 year too

[MF] Yeah, and there was Janet Thompson, was also at the same function

[FF] A Garden History person

[MF] Yeah

So that's the Australian National Trust? And you made use of ...

[FF] When we've been overseas, we've done that ...

[MF] Yes

[FF] Yeah

Because you can get reciprocal rights

[MF and FF] Yeah Yeah

Great and you said that the ... that you met at something that was organised by the National Trust

[FF] Yes

[MF] Yes, bus tour to Kangaroo Island

[FF] I looked at the ad in the National Trust magazine and thought oh that sounds fun. So I invited two girlfriends. I said, you know, that will be company for us if all the rest of the people are pretty, pretty dull

[MF] Or if there are no men [laughs]

[FF] Yes. And Mal apparently was invited by a friend of his who was a member of the Young Trust, and Gavin said to Mal you can come along in case there are no interesting women

[MF] Yeah,

[FF] And I, I was impressed. We went across by bus and I was impressed with this person who slept on the, on the floor of the bus and made anybody walking the aisle impossible to get by

[MF] [laughing] Oh it was up the back of the bus

[FF] Oh, [laughing]

[MF] But I'd already had experience of a bus trip from London to Kathmandu.

Oh, that's quite a trip

13:12

[FF] Overland to come back to Australia ...

[MF] There were quite a few people did that around 1973. In between 66 and 73, but then ...

[FF] Impossible now ...

[MF] Yeah

Ok, and so you joined the um Garden History Society, you said in 80?

[MF] In 1980, I, it'd be about the second year of the Garden History Society's existence

[FM] Do you know when it was started

I believe it was the early 80s

[FF] Yeah, well, I think it was about the second year of it ...

[MF] Whatever year that was ...

And what drew you to it and how did you become aware of it

[FF] Oh, through the National Trust again. And I thought by that stage I was more interested in gardening, I had, we had ah, wilderness in our back garden at home, which we shared at that stage. So, I said, yes, that'd be quite interesting. Nice and practical. So, we joined.

And, what do you remember of those early days of the Garden History Society?

[FF] Oh we used to go to the lectures ...

[MF] No, annual general meetings ...

[FF] Yeah

[MF] And then a contest of, contest for the committee, amazingly. An election.

14:50

[FF] Yeah, they used to give us all a sheet on our seat when we arrived and it was and you know, we're going to vote for these people. I mean it's an extraordinary thought now, you've got to hit people over the head to join the committee ...

[MF] Yeah

[FF] But, you know people used to volunteer to go on the committee and there'd be several vying for one position, so we'd have to vote

[MF] Partly because the organisation was new.

[FF] Yeah, and we were all much younger

[MF] Yeah

[FF] Yeah, but now, ah, I suppose the youngest of the people would be, well you'd be lucky to get a 55 year old really, wouldn't you

[MF] Mmm. And yet, we and a lot of other people joined when we were about, in their 30s.

[FF] Ageing.

[MF] Yeah, anyway

[FF] 40 I think, yeah

And what sorts of activities was the society doing then? What sorts of things were you doing? You say you attended meetings, you've become much more active since. What drew you towards that?

16:08

[FF] Um

[MF] I think that it was the working bees

[FF] It was the establishment of the working bees

[MF] Which meant that we could experience historic properties in various part of Victoria

[FF] And I've always been very inquisitive and there is the possibility that you go into some of these houses you see and you ...

[MF] Just roaming around the outside and all the outbuildings and the historic plants, um, that was always interesting.

So, what sorts of place did you go to with the working bees?

[FF] Oh, well, they were country properties, ah ... the *unspoken* rule is that they should be about one and half, no more than one and a half hours drive from Melbourne, because they're too far otherwise. So, I can't remember the first one we went to, it would have been Turkeith wouldn't it?

[MF] Yeah, probably and possibly Mooleric

[FF] Turkeith and Mooleric are two houses both with a heavy um Guilfoyle input.

Ok

[FF] And he, he helped design the gardens. And they were next to each at Birregurra, north of Birregurra. And um, old money, sheep stations, and the people didn't have any gardeners. Unlike in the Victorian times when they were established and they had gardeners who were able to do all the work. And they were young, young family people, children at home, and it was just too much them. They couldn't cope with all these, this big garden and unable to keep it up. So when, I think it was Helen Page who, I suppose she thought of the idea of working bees, did she?

[MF] Yeah, I think so

[FF] A bus, she hired a bus and a whole group of people went down, enthusiastic people with all their tools. They went down to um, Turkeith, leapt out of the bus and immediately started digging up, um, elm seedlings.

[MF] And eliminating the jungle

[FF] Yeah

[MF] Cutting their way through to um paths that hadn't been exposed for years because an old lady relative of the owners, the then current owners, had been the predecessor and she hadn't done anything for a couple of, for a few years, and ah, gardens require constant maintenance.

[FF] We had young children then and um we. When they were a bit older we used to take them with us and as far as I know we are the only ones who took children.

[MF] And the kids enjoyed themselves, they had hay rides, effectively. And ah

[FF] Our eldest daughter had, was able to get on of those little buggy things, you know, that are supposed to be terribly dangerous, you've got to have a roll [bar] on them

Oh the four-wheelers

19:38

[FF] Yeah, and she used to go all round where the people were working and they'd pick it up and put it in the tray at the back of it. She thought it was fantastic. And it had a big influence on her as well her parents who pushed her, because she ended up doing landscape architecture. [laughs]

[laughs] I was going to ask you if you had passed it on, but you've already answered that one

[FF] Yes

[MF] That's one, one out of two

[FF] The other one's not the slightest bit interested but she did enjoy it, yah

[MF] Even had her 12th birthday at Belmont

[FF] Yes

[MF] And ah, our host Jo Reed, made a cake

[FF] Ninth. Ninth birthday

[MF] Was it 9th? Well, I remember it well. [both laugh]

20:27

So what other houses have you been ...?

[FF] Well, those two, Eurambeen. Eurambeen was, is south, ah, it's, it's off the highway

[MF] You just need to list them I think Fran

Details are good

[FF] Eurambeen was in the news recently, during the fires, because the fires ah, the fires came in that area and um

[MF] Well they burnt up to the front door of Belmont too

[FF] Yep, so that's Turkeith, Moor .., not Mooramong

[MF and FF] Turkeith, Mooleric, Eurambeen, and Belmont

[MF] Both just out of Beaufort

[FF] Belmont's an interesting property because it was plonked down in the middle of the trip to the goldrush. And people would be coming, going through to the goldrush and they'd buy stuff from them. You know, they say that's the best way to earn money at the goldrush, not to dig for gold but to outfit. So they did that bit and then later on it was cast as a pleasure garden and people used to come from ...

[MF] Beaufort, they'd have a day excursion in a buggy out from Beaufort and have picnics around the artificial lake and under the uh pine trees. So. And the house grew like Topsy

[FF] Exponentially

[MF] The modest um

[FF] Original cottage

[MF] The little cottage. Had an extra addition and then about 1900 had a grand addition, all in weatherboard with these fantastic sunburst design ah, both in the house and in the lychgate. Um

[FF] And they were very worried about that place too, during the fires. And Jo, the owner, ah, had a very good relationship with the people from um Beaufort and, they were the firies, and they came around and it was very well protected. But the fires got up to the front gate. It was very close, but the, it was safe because they were, all those men were there with their hoses that I suppose they could draw water from the lake. So she was fine. Right so that's four.

[MF] Well we did have one grand working bee, a whole weekend down at a place called Warrock, which is an exceptional place out of Casterton, built as a village in 1848 or earlier. Um, and ...

23:25

[FF] Accessed from the south

[MF] All the tradesmen were brought in from overseas. So they had forty eight farm buildings in total around the building, around the property and ah, just a fantastic place. But way beyond the maintenance that anyone could do. But very historic and so we had a weekend down there. Um, but that's so far away

that's down past Casterton, that was a case of ah, one working bee beyond which I don't think there'd be any other

[FF] The man who owned it then no longer owns it

[MF] But gee he owned it for a long time

[FF] He did, yes

So that one broke your one and half hour rule

[FF] Yes

[MF] Oh yes, that's right

[FF] And that was organised by John Hawker. Um.

[MF] There have been other ...

[FF] Yes, so he organised that and we all went down and paintbrushes and sanders and everything. Ah

[MF] And mattocks, for the elm suckers

[FF] Mal's the mattock king [laughing] Right, then the next, another one, was Wombat Park, just um out of Daylesford. A beautiful soil, volcanic soil. Oh look I must bring, must tell you about Belmont which we have said, but the original cottage was actually seated on the ground, no gap between the ground and the cottage and Jo's kitchen, it was slopy when we first went there. She got a grant of money from the Heritage Commission, whatever it's called, and that was raised up so that it would be level, but no insulation or anything. The place would have been desperately cold in the winter, she kept the fires going in two rooms all day every day. She had, there is a stable there, a huge stable ah, for about at least four horses I would say. It's um, the place is a museum. There's a house, a car from about the 1920s in a garage, still you can peer in, peer in at this garage. It hasn't been out for years. It's be worth quite a lot to somebody. But the trouble with this stable, it lost its roof in a storm and once again the Heritage people stepped in and paid for re-roofing. But it's fascinating, two floor levels in the stables and one of our members has taken a lot of photos of it. So, Trevor Pitkin, he's very, very interested in photography of historic buildings. But perhaps you might like to say something about Wombat Park.

[MF] Ah. No, oh it's just a fantastic property and really, Garden History, as you may be aware, has put out pamphlets on a number of gardens and I'm pretty sure Wombat Park is one of them. And the atmosphere there and the historic garden is just amazing, yeah. The trees, the house, the main house is 1912 with its famous tapestry hedge on the circular driveway at the front, but the first house was a little bit ...

[FF] More humble

[MF] Yeah, but it was surrounded by trees. The trees are still there, the house is gone, but some of it, there'd probably be a number of three that'd be on the tree register. But a wonderful drive, a tree-lined driveway coming up from the road.

[FF] A lot of more exotic trees that you don't see very often. Um, the garden was um ... it was reviewed by Miffy Gilbert who did a great big report on it

[MF] A conservation study

[FF] Conservation study. That's now been filed away. But you see when you go work in these gardens, I sometimes go to these gardens and offer, offer plants because I enjoy doing propagation so I'll go and say, look there's this lovely blah-blah and I think it'd go well there. But you have to be very careful, because you can't give any more modern cultivars that were, um, that came after the garden was established.

Ok.

[FF] So they're historical

[MF] So you must have enough reading to know which ones are which. Um and so that you can replant as it was in the old days.

[FF] But um, I don't offer them plants much now, but you know, I volunteer with ideas and leave it to them if they're keen. Now that's all the country ones we've done.

[MF] No

[FF] No?

[MF] No,

[FF] What else is there?

[MF] Well, in Castlemaine we did a working bee at a little miner's cottage on the creek called Tute's Cottage ...

29:23

[FF] Oh yeah

[MF] ... so we were there for ah, quite a number of times and a number of our working bees we had two gardens in the vicinity. We had two days, so went up Saturday, stayed overnight somewhere and ah, worked at another place on the Sunday. But that was, they were very special.

[FF] Yeah, Tute's Cottage has now been taken over as a communal garden so we don't have anything to do with it now. We keep going past it and I tut-tut about this and that. Not pruning properly. [laughs] Oh we also did Buda at Castlemaine, and I think we were largely responsible for getting them to take down the big, the conifer hedge that was engulfing the garden. It was far, far too big and nobody could trim it properly so they had they had that taken down and I think they put in ...

[MF] They replanted ...

[FF] Yeah, another lot of conifers did grow up and did the same sort of thing. But we always chose to stay at Castlemaine because there was more accommodation offered. And we often go and see people and they say 'oh, remember when we stayed in that dreadful house'. [laughing]

[MF] Yeah

[FF] And once we stayed at, ah, the back of the um picture theatre in Castlemaine, there was a little bit of accommodation there.

[MF] Yeah a little weatherboard house but it had lots of rooms. Bedrooms anyway.

[FF] Yeah there was. Nina Crone was there. Ah, yeah, we had a lot of fun. Did, we'd do communal feeding. And um, yeah, so we'd go around and, oh, we stayed, there, oh we stayed over there.

Which brings up a question that's been going through my mind. How many people would you get to go to these ... working bees?

[FF] Working bees? Um, I doubt we'd ever have had more than about, an average of 12 would we?

[MF] Yeah

[FF] Sometimes we'd have more. But, you know, as time advances, they'd say ooh I've got a bad hip, I can't bend down, alright that's the end of them [laughs]

[MF] Yes, so the numbers, numbers were down

[FF] Some people would go and it'd be their social, you see, so they'd take a kneeling pad and squat with a trowel, do very little and just talk. They still do that a bit.

[MF] Yeah, but I think that Fran and I were both regarded as doers by the owners

[FF] Yeah

[MF] They tolerated the ditherers

[FF] Oh, we didn't talk about um that one with the McWhatshernames, whose daughter married the MP.

[both] Trawalla

[MF] Yeah at Trawalla.

[FF] He was a shocker, that man, Mackenzie. Helen was in charge of the working bees then and he wouldn't even let us in the house really. And we all had to bring our lunches, everybody in the old days brought their lunch and we would often, we'd go into the house. But Mr Mackenzie wouldn't let anybody in the house, probably thought we might pinch something. And he would say 'Don't cut those roses'. Well we'd say it's the right time of year, when are you going to cut them. Well he said 'if you cut them now the new shoots will be eaten by the cockatoos'.

[MF] So his basic proposition was that roses in his area should never be pruned

[FF] Yeah, because you'd always have new shoots and cockatoos. Anyway, um,

[MF] I got roundly castigated for cutting out an amazing amount of dead stuff under a, under a rose hedge. Yes. So we didn't go back after that.

[FF] Yeah, we were happy to pull the plug on that. Anyway the daughter who married the MP

[MF] Yeah, tactical error that was that

[FF] She married the MP

[MF] Yeah. The ownership went, it was joint ownership and the property went in the settlement when Jim Plowman went belly up. So

[FF] Wasn't Plowman was it? No no. But we won't go into that, it could be held against us. Melbourne Gardens.

34:13

[MF] Well, you've got Dandenongs, we've been to a couple of gardens in the Dandenongs, but more recently probably within the last ten years, um, we've been to ah,

[FF] Longacres

[MF] Longacres

[both] Arthur Streeton's garden, property

[MF] in the Dandenongs. And that would lead on possibly later into other things we've done for the Society, such as organising trips.

[FF] Ah, Ro Saxon's garden, um, in Warrigal Road [Medlow House]

[both] Warrigal Road, Surrey Hills.

[FF] We've been going there for a very long time. That's a lovely garden.

[MF] And she's basically created that, but in a style that ah would have suited the property, what the property would have had in ancient times. And ah

[FF] The Bulls originally owned it and she lectured at Melbourne University?

[MF] Don't know

[FF] Yeah,

[MF] Well-known artist, Norma Bull

[FF] And she had some, Ro has some films that were taken by um was it her son?

[MF] Oh, the Bull

[FF] The children

[MF] The Bull family took the photos 60, 70, 80 years ago. 80. They'd be 80 years ago. They cobbled them together, it's a bit jerky, but they had an artificial, they dammed the creek at the bottom of the garden.

[FF] Deep Creek?

[MF] Back Creek

[FF] Back Creek, so it was in a valley and the Creek was the property boundary on the south side and a few years ago during terrible storms here all the water came down the creek and blocked up and it caused the road to sink. Warrigal Road

Oh?

[MF] Warrigal Road got washed away and was down to one lane for a couple of years

[FF] Oh, a long time.

Ok.

[FF] And then the council and government and Heritage Victoria stepped in and got it all tickety-boo. But anyway, back to this film, they made a little boat, a model of a boat, and they made a film about this boat sailing, sailing down a big river and it was all very cleverly done. It was supposed to look like a full sized boat. It's the most wonderful film. I don't know if she's given it to ACMI or not but it certainly should, should go there. We've seen it a number of times, it's wonderful.

[MF] Yeah, and they have a little battle and one boat gets sunk,

[FF] Yeah, it's terrific

[MF] So there are little gems like that pop up when you visit interesting venues such as the um, ah, paintings around the house at the Streeton House. There's a dozen or so round the walls a few more in the sleepout, and yeah one in the, a Streeton original, I think, in the outdoor dunny.

[FF] Yeah well, after Helen conducted the working bees, um, I think she kept having differences of opinion with people and she finally said, I've done my last working bee. And um, I said oh well, I'll step up and do that. And the first thing I wrote, put down a list of rules and one of them was, if these people are having us in to do their gardens (oh I've thought of another garden) they could provide lunch for us. Which I thought was fair enough. So we now, we now go and have lunch at the places. They're very generous and it's.

38:50

[MF] Yeah, I mean, we only really ...

[FF] It's really much appreciated.

[MF] I mean in Fran's mind I had sandwiches on the list but it's got a bit grander than that in some places

[FF] We had to stop one owner giving us a bottle of wine at lunchtime, we said no, no, no you can't do that, we won't do any work. So she kept doing that

[MF] Oh, Mary Jane at, we accepted the wine at lunchtime at Mary Jane's Mooleric. Anyway.

[FF] I forgot to mention about Mount Boninyong

[MF] Oh yes,

[FF] At Buninyong south of Ballarat. So, we've had, that's a sheep property

Yes

[FF] And um I don't know, I used to say, Cecelia when is the ... when is the best time to come and do the working bee and she'd give me a date and then we'd get there and she'd say, 'tsk, huh, sheep-shearing'.

[MF] Yeah,

[FF] So we always seemed to have sheep-shearing. But she used to cut, they had a great big hedge of roses and she'd cut the, go along with the chainsaw and prune that hedge. But then they had a climbing hydrangea – huge – you don't see many climbing hydrangeas and it was growing up the top of the

[MF] Two and a half stories up I reckon it was

[FF] Yes, it was huge. And um, Celia, not Cecelia, and Celia said 'Fran we really need to prune those heads of flowers off' and I said, 'yeah, well we need to prune it properly' and I said 'it'd be nice to be able to get up there, but I don't suppose you've got a ladder'. And she said 'no, but ...

[MF] 'We've got a cherry-picker'.

[FF] So Graham?

[MF] Yeah Graham, came out with the cherry-picker

[FF] ...cherry-picker. So he came up with the cherry-picker and said 'come on Fran do you want to come up'. I wouldn't have a bar of it. So he got into the cherry-picker and with his chainsaw or whatever and I was down saying 'go a bit to your right Graham' [laughing] Anyway, everyone thought it was fantastic, to prune a, prune a garden with a cherry-picker, it was fun.

[MF] The other thing we did was, um, well, cut back a camelia, by, a hundred-year-old camelia, cut it back by about 90% with a chainsaw and the rest of the day

41:27

[FF] Picking the stuff up

[MF] Yes, so you've got productive workers dragging stuff to the bonfire or out of the garden at the very least

[FF] But you have to, I'd have to work hard to say, look if you prune the camelia, it'll be ok, it'll reshoot, it's not the end of it. So they'd be 'alright if you say so' [laughing]. It was a slash and burn prune. Yeah, but we did that a lot of places and ah, there are some people, some owners, I'd say if you cut it down to knee high, about 60cm, 'ooh I don't know that we can do that'. Yeah, um, Jo down at Belmont is never, never happy with me doing that but sometimes we've done it without her looking and then she'll say, 'you cut that back year and look at it now'. Told you so.

[MF] [laughs] But you haven't converted her. Yeah

[FF] Yes, so you had to watch it. But mostly they trust me so that's good,

[MF] Well even, they even trust me, which is not a good idea. Um. I happened to mention to Jo that she had flick-weed

[FF] Oh yes,

[MF] Getting away, which is a terrible noxious weed and it really doesn't want to get in, you don't want to let it get in to the paddocks, that'd be worse. So I mentioned it to her. Well she spent the twelve, the next twelve months pulling the stuff out. I don't know whether she solved the problem.

[FF] Oh ..it's a lot better

[MF] Oh it's certainly is a lot better and the Australian bush is slightly less at risk now as a result

So you took over ...

43:20

[MF] From Helen

From Helen and did that change any of your round of gardens to go to?

[FF] No, not really, no.

[MF] But it did change the Society, because Fran got on the Committee as the coordinator. But she happened to open her authoritative mouth on various other things. [laughs]

[FF] We were talking yesterday about the owner at Turkeith, he had trained as a mycologist, is that the word?

[MF] Yeah

[FF] And he didn't fall happily into the role of being a farmer. And Lauchie was a lovely fellow but his wife Janet was the one basically who'd run the farm, but you know, Lauchie worked really, really hard to please her and they got on alright. But he was not happy so one, one year I went said um after I'd been overseas a couple of times, and I said, um, 'you know Lauchie you could grow rosemary here because it's such a good, such a good tough plant'. He said, 'what would I do with rosemary'. I said 'rosemary oil is something that is very useful. You just grow the rosemary in this hot atmosphere and then you have to distil the oil'. Nuh, wouldn't have a bar of it. So another year I said, 'you know Lauchie', [both laugh], oh, in the meantime Tammy Fraser's sister, Christina Hindhaugh?, Hindhaugh got a Churchill scholarship to go overseas and study growing rosemary and she came back and grew rosemary wherever her farm was. I suppose it was close to the Fraser farm in the Western District, so she did that. Anyway, another year I suggested to Lauchie, 'you know Lauchie you could grow capers'. 'What would I want to grow capers for?' He hardly knew what a caper was. So I explained, 'they

grow in Sicily with their feet hard up against rocks, look at your paddocks here, they're covered in rocks, they'd grow capers very well'. 'Nah, don't want to do that'. And I tried to grow capers here, didn't succeed very well. There's now somebody in the Western District growing capers commercially. And another one, that was a later one, I said, not to Lauchie because he always said no straight out, but I said to Janet 'you know Lauchie could grow lots of different mushrooms if he had the you know, the proper building'. Oh, she thought about it, anyway, that was a no-no too. So, I tried, but they don't always set seed. No.

Um so you started to talk about the more, um, metropolitan gardens bees could you say a bit more about that?

[FF] There was one called, um, Tat tat tat ... It was 1940s garden and we didn't go on that.

[MF] Oh, one up at

[FF] Oh, it was only a one off

[MF] The one up in Heidelberg, Ivanhoe

[FF] Can't remember the name

[MF] Doesn't matter, it's not relevant to us

[FF] Were there any more in Melbourne. I can't think

[MF and FF noted during transcript review: 'an additional garden with regular working bees for a few years was Glenara, the rosarian Alister Clark's former home'.]

[MF] Can't recall

[FF] Don't think there were

[MF] No

[FF] Although there are so many historic gardens ...

[MF] However ...

47:32

[FF] Yeah ...

[MF] There was one in Melbourne ... the CWA. [Fran laughs] You tell the story of how that started. Fran gardens once a week with a small band of

[FF] Garden History people, they're all Garden History people

[MF] Who are all good friends, so basically get on the list because their friends rather than necessarily Garden History

[FF] It was when, what year was it?

[MF] 2017, Melbourne got nominated for ah,

[FF] For the, uh, yearly

[MF] The annual conference

[FF] Annual General Meeting

[MF] At short notice

[FF] Yeah

[MF] And we looked around for venues, planned a metropolitan area for the garden visits and the ideal spot for a lunch in the gardens was CWA.

[FF] Which is in Lansell Road, Toorak.

[MF] But Jackie Courmadias, I think I'm right in saying

[FF] Yea,

[MF] Who was the secretary of the organization at that stage, looked at it and said, it's not up to standard. You can't invite people in here, and we knew

[FF] 'Look at all these weeds'

[MF] And we knew they were having no garden maintenance and so she started off the working bee.

[FF] Six, six weeks before we were due to go there she said to um Kathy Wright, we'll go and do the garden and I heard from Kathy that that was on, so the three of us went along and got down on our hands and knees and started weeding. Well, I mean it's a huge garden, couple of acres. And um,

[MF] In Lansell Road Toorak,

[FF] Yeah, so we got the, we got rid of a lot of the weeds but there was no way we could have got rid of all of it, and once you've got all these weeds, what the devil do you do with weeds? They had nothing there to get rid of them. They had one green bin, which was ludicrous, and that was usually used for the food that came through

[MF] Leftover scones

[FF] Leftover food. So anyway, so we did a bit of slight-of-hand and got it all looking not too bad and then the, the lunch was over and done with and everybody moved on with life and we continued with, with the garden.

[MF] And Jackie stepped back, Jackie had nothing to do with it after the conference but Fran stepped up and became the organiser of the working bee

[FF] And it wasn't a working bee it was just Kathy and I and we did that for a year or so and they used to say, oh you know, if you must have morning tea, you can come in here and have morning. You know, get a tea bag and have morning tea here, so we did. And then we kept going, like that and then they said, um, well look you've got more people now. Well they didn't say they just made it difficult and embarrassing. So we stopped going inside and I'd bringing morning tea and we'd have a picnic we'd put the tablecloth out, because after all it was the CWA, you had to do the right thing. And um, yes, so we've been doing that since 19..., um since 2017, and they finally decided to give us some money to buy things that we need. I've been doing propagating for, ever since. I'd rip out plants that I thought were not good in a drying climate, get rid of them, and I put in substitutes, many of which I had in the garden. So, I'd come along with say four plants of this and six of that and you know we'd. One thing when you're on working bees, you find that all you're doing is pruning and getting rid of plants that have died. And I think, well, it should be a more hopeful thing. There's only one thing better than having fun in the garden and that's planting fresh plants. So I'd try and bring fresh plants every couple of weeks to put in the garden there and um a few, quite a few years ago we'd looked at all the trees that were in the garden, and we'd said that needs to go, that needs to go, that needs to go, because they were diseased, they'd never been pruned, the branches were split, so sap would only be able to go up half. Look at the front fence there, which was split um, cracked badly because big trees like um ... not a Moreton Bay fig, what is it ... Bay tree, not, not a Bay tree ... magnolia grandiflora, huge roots and their natural habitat is on the, in the Mississippi basin, water, and here it is, climate change, not enough water. Besides which, they're watering system no longer worked. So, we had to hose everything with hoses. Kathy and I would scrounge lengths of hose of people's nature strip and all these hoses were joined up with lots of joins, Mal did a lot of that, and

[MF] So did Kathy ...

[FF] It was just awful. I mean, there weren't enough hoses and the taps, they'd say I can't turn this tap on, Fran can you come and turn it off, you've got a much stronger wrist. And now, last time we were there, a plumber came around, after we'd asked for years, to have new washers put in and the plumber has done all the taps, so it'll be fantastic. ... Yeah. It's been hard, but I mean you could say we were rude enough to just keep working. You know, we should have gone and let them, let the garden go, but we've all had fun. It's been terrific and we've loved it.

[MF] And it is a historic garden, it's been around for a long time

[FF] And there was talk about Edna Walling having designed the garden, but there's really no proof

[MF] At her height I suspect there were a number of people designing in her style

[FF] People emulating, emulating her. So we've done our best to keep up with it.

[MF] So that's more or less the garden [together] working bees

[FF] Yeah

54:54

[MF] And uh, of course, Fran was on the Committee. Well, Fran has ideas. [both laugh] Fran says why don't we do such and such ...

Dangerous thing in a woman

[MF] ... And they've said, good,

[FF] If you ...

[MF] ... when it's going to happen Fran, when are you going to organise it?

[FF] If you've thought of it so I'd ...

[MF] There's a penalty for or .. for thinking of anything

[FF] Yeah, Ok, you do it, you know all about it. So we've organised a few bus trips, you know, away for weekends.

[MF] Or just the day

[FF] And I, I like think of something that's um, a little bit different, so, and not tell them about it really, and um. We had one up to the north-east, and it, do you know the film, North by North-West?

Yes, I do, Cary Grant

[FF] And it starts with the plane crash or whatever, well we organised this trip and Mal said well, what'll we call it, I said well were' going up to the north-east we'll call it, we did it together, thought of it, we called it North by North-East.

[MF] We did actually visit a couple of places due north of Melbourne before heading north-east so it was a really most apt description

[FF] And these things away, you usually had somebody to talk on the Saturday night at dinner. Well we organised the dinner at ... where was the dinner?

[MF] At the Swanpool Cinema

[FF] Have you ever been to the Swanpool Cinema

I have not

[FF] Have you heard about it?

I've heard of Swanpool

[FF] Well it's really out in the never-never and Mal and I one year heard about the Swanpool Cinema and we went and stayed at the Swanpool Hotel

[MF] Ah, it's Tatong, but that's beside the point

[FF] Doesn't matter, it's not far away. He always corrects me on things, it's very good. And we went to the Swanpool Cinema and all the people from the surrounding district come. It's not always a film that's on general release, they might get it a few years later. And the night we were keen to go, they had, they showed two films and they had an inter-, um, intermission, in between, and as there were families there at half time all the families get up and go into a room next door and they've all brought their cups and they have, have their cup of tea or coffee and the country cakes there and it's wonderful. And there, that night we went, there was a great film on, which was in a foreign language ...

[MF] Oh, yes, it, well there was Man From Snowy River which was not in a ...

[FF] ... foreign language

[MF] Foreign language and the place as packed. After interval they put on the second film called Bread and Tulips, in Italian. Fantastic film.

[FF] Anyway they missed out

[MF] And everyone had gone home at half-time

[FF] Anyway

[MF] But we enjoyed it

[FF] Anyway, so, back to our, our weekend, so we had lunch at Tatong and then we said, 'righto, in the bus'. So they all got in the bus. Oh, we didn't have a talk over dinner either,

[FF] and they all wondered where we were going.

[MF] Tatong.

[FF] It wasn't at Tatong Mal, we had dinner at the Swanpool Cinema ...

[MF] No, no. When we went up and saw Bread and Tulips we were at

[FF] Yeah, we were at Tatong ...

[MF] We were at the, Swanpool, the Tatong Hotel, but for the North-East tour, we like to do something a bit different and Fran said we'll take them to the Swanpool Cinema. So over months of negotiation we organised

[FF] a film for them to see

[MF] we organised a film called The Gardener. Which was about the creation of a garden in Canada I think it was.

[FF] In where?

[MF] In North America

[FF] Oh yes, that's right

[MF] And um, we organised for the dinner, the local auxiliary to serve dinner, we took them out there in the bus, they had no idea where they were going. Fran issued them each with a bag of Jaffas to roll down the aisle. We were greeted by a man in um

[FF] Formal dinner suit

[MF] Formal dinner suit at the front door. Everything was just fantastic. Far more than we expected and you know they have the slides at the beginning of films, well they had them in the old-fashioned style and they even one saying Welcome

[FF] Garden History

[MF] Garden History. And they had a collection of other slides such as you might have seen at the pictures in the 1950s. Ah, it was

Ladies Please Remove Your Hats

[FF] Yeah, yeah, And I think we

[MF] Now it's turn off your devices [laughing]

[FF] Ah yes, so they rolled their Jaffas down the, down the. It was just terrific wasn't it.

1:00:02

[MF] Yeah, anyway, but that was one weekend tour we organised. We organised a weekend tour to Sale District, um, and ah, day trips

[FF] Oh with the Sale one, when Garden History people go on these tours um often there's husband and wife, may, a lot of single women or people who leave their husbands at home but you can be sure the men who go are there under sufferance, because the wife is saying 'come on, come on, it won't hurt you, a weekend away'. Most of them are like that. And the Sale trip I said, we've got a couple of engineers on this, we need something to get them in, get the men in, so we organised for them to operate the swing bridge

[MF] Well to be there and watch someone else operate the swing bridge at Sale

[FF] Which was designed by ...

[MF] Oh, I think it was designed by Monash, wasn't it?

[FF] No, no, no, no, no. Um was it somebody to do with um, that musician, whatshisname?

[MF] Oh, oh, yeah. It'll come. We'll tell you the musician in a minute, when the retrieval system works

[FF] It wasn't Sir John Monash

[MF] No, no, no, no no. A 'G' word.

[FF] Grainger.

Grainger? Percy Grainger?

[FF] It was Grainger's dad who, who had designed this.

[MF] And um, there was a harbour at Sale and so, and then there's the road running south and so when boats had to go through they just swivelled the bridge and

[FF] Yeah, so, tall boats that wouldn't fit under the bridge they would all fit through. Well it was hard to drag the men away. They thought it was fantastic

1:03:00

[MF] One other property was, happened to be owned by the descendants of the Nicolas Aspro people and the bloke gave us a terrific talk standing on the fountain at the front, and they opened the Aspro Museum, which they happen to have in a barn, so people who'd seen or weren't interested in gardens could go and have a look at the Aspro Museum. Lots of other places, so many places have artefacts, some of them are better organised than Belmont's cobwebs and, over the 1930s newspapers.

[FF] And then the daytrip to go to Arthur Streeton's garden.

[MF] Well that was tops, that was a real hit

[FF] I thought we'll do a trip for the impressionists, Australian Impressionists. So we started out going on a walk around um Heidelberg, ah, and along the river where they had camped, and then back in the bus

[MF] Yes, seeing some of the painting that they'd painted with dry enamel boards down by the river

[FF] And ah

[MF] We did go to the ..

[FF] ... lots of paintings, we did have some pictures of them that we couldn't show them otherwise.

[MF] We had morning tea, or we were invited into a fantastic, what, Arts and Crafts house designed by um, famous Melbourne architect, Desbrowe-Annear Early in the 20th century. And then we went up to um,

[FF] Olinda

[MF] Yep, to Arthur Streeton's house and had a look at, over the house and garden. And we had organised to go to Tom Roberts house.

[FF] Which nobody, nobody knows about that. Nobody's, none of the people had ever seen that.

[MF] This took about twenty phone calls, including a number of phone calls to the bookseller at the bottom of the hill who said you won't get in. And,

[FF] The woman was a lecturer at Monash University but highly eccentric and Mal and I had been creeping around outside this place, we'd gone up a couple of times to do a bit of a 'reccie', and um I'd knocked at the door a couple of times when I knew, we thought that she'd probably at home. But you know.

[MF] No, didn't answer the door

[FF] No, and um, yeah, then we met, we went into this bookshop at the foot of the mountain and the chappie, we told him. Oh, yeah, she comes and buys a lot of books here. Oh she's very eccentric, you won't get in. So,

[MF] He knew her because he had owned the house opposite as well as owning the bookshop

[FF] How was it I got her to acquiesce? Oh, we had her phone number and it was persistence and finally she, she said, well you can come up and look at the garden from the outside, so I was happy to have the crumbs. So I said, ok, and before we went there we parked the bus outside and I told all the people in the bus, I think we might have had two bus fulls?

[MF] No we had the one bus broke into two groups

[FF] And, I said, this group go around and have a look at the garden from down below, you can look up, this group will go and have a look at the front entrance. So I explained it all about this woman and I said, we're going to stand at the gate and be all ready when she comes. So the woman came to the gate and started talking about it. But the group surged from behind [Mal laughs] and pushed the gate open [Fran gives impression of the woman gasping oh! Oh!] and she said the reason that these people couldn't come in was because the paths were very narrow. So I said, doesn't matter, we're. Eighteen inches she said, I said that's fine, that's fine, no fat people on our tour. This was all before. Oh, there are a lot of prickly plants and blackberries, they'll get caught on their jumpers. No worries, we're gardeners, we'll be right, don't you worry. Anyway, the surge came and she was pushed, we all pushed her you see, so she led us around. She was horrified, absolutely horrified. Anyway, people of course said 'look at this plant, I haven't seen that for years'

[MF] She was a real plants person, she had run a nursery.

[FF] And she was listening and she took the first group around the grounds and then she said to me, these people really know plants. [laughter] And I said yeah, I tried to tell you that. So that was alright. The people came out, they swapped out the base group came in and she was quite civil when she led the second group around. But in the garden was a shed that ah Tom Roberts, um

[MF] Was Tom Roberts

[FF] Was Tom Roberts studio.

[MF] Now the bookseller bloke, he knew this, because he knew yeah, ah, because he was a long-time resident. The woman had no idea what she'd bought. She was just

[FF] She wasn't even interested really and I said to her

[MF] And she hadn't opened the, she'd lived there four years knowing she had Tom Roberts studio

[both] and she'd never opened it.

[FF] You just couldn't believe it. Not that she opened it for us then, but she might have done it later. Anyway, when you got to somebody's garden you always give them a little gift and the people got back into the bus and I don't like, I get embarrassed about presenting things to people so I nudged somebody else to do it

[MF] Me

[FF] My nudge was Mal you see

[MF] Usually

[FF] We had a box of Haigh's chocolate and um

[MF] Which we had bought, specifically bought for her

1:10:00

[FF] And um, what did you say, I've got a present for you. And she was 'oh, no no, no' and she looked down at Mal and saw a bag that said Haigh's chocolate and she said 'Yes!' It was very funny. All the people in the bus thought it was terrific. But we also had on the bus, we had Peter Roberts

[MF] No

[FF] who is the grandson of Tom Roberts.

[MF] Yeah, it's alright, he cancelled. He cancelled. Davie Jellie knew him and I don't think he was on the bus.

[FF] Don't you?

[MF] We could check with Pam

[FF] He's still a grump apparently. Pam was talking about it. Anyway that's by the by. Alright, what else have we done

[MF] Well I think, we organised um, the odd event such as the walk and talk from Newmarket Saleyards down through the path that the animals used tread when they were going up to the saleyards, which is now a rather lovely stroll over cobblestones by post and rail fences,

[FF] looking at the houses that have been built

[MF] looking at the variety of modern houses that have been planted along there

[FF] Um, Mont, you know the

[MF] Oh, Mont Park, walk and talk there

[FF] Walks and Talks occur at the beginning and the end of the year.

Ok

[MF] So I think we've organised a couple of those.

[FF] And the latest one of those we did was in February

[MF] Oh yeah, that was very popular

[FF] Garden City

[MF] In Port Melbourne

[FF] Port Melbourne. That was ...fun

[MF] As luck would have it they had a beautiful, what turned out to be a perfect amphitheatre for Fran's talk and show and tell in the local park

[FF] Children's Playground. And there were sort of terraces, edged with stone and we got people to sit on there so and I'd done a great big map, I suppose like this, it was all drawn out of the river and the swamp areas and everything. They were fascinated because nobody had ever been down to Garden City and I

[MF] Most had no idea where it had, where it was

[FF] They all had to have you know, the things you have in the car

GPS?

[FF] They all had to get their mobile out because they couldn't read the Melways. Um. Yeah that was very good. And as we were going through looking at the house styles a lady who was, lived in one of the houses, popped out and she told them the story of how she'd lived in this house all her life and her parents bought the thing in the 1920s and they were, everyone was, you know it was spontaneous and everyone was fascinated. It was terrific. Yes.

[MF] Yeah.

I should probably ask you Mal about your work as Treasurer.

1:13:33

[MF] Well, just numbers adding up. Um, they all added up and ah, we ah, yeah. The certainly the place was financial but it had nothing, and it became a lot more financial when I was treasurer, but it had nothing to do with me. And we, I kept telling them, right, what are you going to spend the money on, which is what we're supposed to do as a non-profit. But they just keep accumulating and cry poor when COVID comes along and knocks their finances for a year but they're all back on an even keel now. And um, yeah.

So when did you start in your...

[MF] Wouldn't have a clue what year. It was six years, I followed Elizabeth Walker. Um, and uh, I don't know I think six years was the limit because that's two

[FF] Two terms

[MF] Two terms of three years and involves, it automatically gets you elected to the National Committee where you can say things of a broader nature in general conversation as Fran did. She wasn't just working bees, she was prime mover and shaker. I was not quite that, um. I deferred to the experts on the National Committee but that involved going ah, I think going up to Sydney once a year and the three day conference in February, in January and uh, I think there were a couple of phone link ups. Um, what else? I think it's relatively ah, relatively unremarkable. But um, I guess it did get me in the box seat to be heavily involved in the Melbourne Conference in 2017 when we were all caught short. Because they'd cancelled New Zealand and normally it's 18 months of preparation, we had six. So we had to find all the gardens, all the buses, the um

[FF] Speakers

[MF] All the speakers, and um, cast the net around. Well I really had very little to do with the speakers. We did actually through gardens, our interest in Garden History we were both of us au fait with the MMBW plans of Melbourne when they were routing sewers in Melbourne, many of which have fantastic details of the larger properties, such as where the dunnies are and the stables. So, yeah ... various, various other special things, I mean a plan of this street had um next door's stables which were there.

[FF] They were there when we bought our property.

[MF] Yeah. They stabled the Porsche there for a while. ...it had a bit of lean. I think if we'd been there with the resources we'd have restored it but they didn't. Anyway, um. So we cast around, oh well I talked just for ten minutes about the MMBW and that occupied a bit of my time that I probably didn't have with all the National Committee meetings, all the conference committee meetings we had to have. And ah, we cobbled together I think thirty odd gardens ... for the conference and a number of speakers, including people such as emeritus professor of history at Melbourne University Graeme Davison. He was speaker, he, Helen Page I think got him because he was in the Deepdene U3A, which is very active.

He wrote Marvellous Melbourne, didn't he?

[FF] Pardon.

He wrote Marvellous Melbourne, didn't he?

[MF] Oh yes, well we've got the book. And there were other very good speakers. And of course it's a challenge a) thinking of the key theme and b), getting speakers to speak to the theme. You had to take, go a little bit off-piste, you can't actually achieve that, although Brisbane did it pretty well, Ipswich did it pretty well this year I thought. And so, and they you've got to write, produce a conference booklet, get someone to write up the notes on all the gardens. And some owners are not keen to write up their gardens, so you have to do that yourself. And uh, there's just such a lot of um, you know,

things to do. But we organised some fantastic historic gardens and um, it all went swimmingly. Ah, even the mastery of the buses. I mean we had about five buses, so you've got to dovetail the buses because you can't have them all rock up to the same place at the same time. And rain was a problem one day on the optional tour up in the Dandenongs. But we luckily managed to commandeer a tent, a marquee, which the National Parks Association happened to bring out for us.

So how did ...

1:19:42

[there have been noises indicating Fran laying out some objects on the table for the last minute or so]

[MF] This is a historic garden we went to, called our place. [all laugh]

I can see that, I was wondering what you were up to

[FF] See that, a perfume bottle, Schiaparelli. All dug up in our garden.

[MF] I will, while you're doing that Fran, I'll just be one moment.

[FF] There's a bit of a face

Yeah, part of a China dolls face, yep. A nine inch nail, if ever I saw one

[FF] Yeah. I don't know if you can read what that ...

So, um, Australian Artillery something

[FF] Something First World War.

A button from someone's uniform

[MF] I hadn't made the connection Kate. We chose that title, we didn't reference Graeme Davison at all. I don't know whether anyone realised that we'd called it after, we called it the same title. You would have known.

[FF] Oh, I think that's generally accepted, Marvellous Melbourne,

[MF] Yeah, that's right, but Graeme Davison wrote the book and he was talking about it.

He would have been pleased I'm sure.

[MF] Yeah it was terrific.

So can you tell me a bit about how the Branch and the National sort of Committee work as far as you remember in your experience.

1:21:26

[MF] Ah, well by and large the branches are independent of the National Committee except that the branches have input by having a Branch representative. And, ah, so one of the things to spend the money is the airfares for the occasional bonding sessions that we have, which probably the best benefit of that is just bringing everyone together and also the National Conference. I think it feels like the National organisation but the Branches really have to fund themselves, so um, there's no interaction really. Ah, except sometimes if they can't find an auditor for the State Branches they just nominate the ah nominate the auditor who's doing the audit of the Society, but I think that's changed now, because they changed the auditors ah, so, that is a spare if it's [offers copy of conference booklet] there would be a spare that's not written on if you want. Um. Although it's not relevant I guess it's verbal, if it's a verbal history

Yes, yeah, um, there would be nowhere for me to lodge that.

[MF] No, ah, but then of course you get things like that printed

[FF] That's the MMBW plan of our garden.

Ok, yes.

[FF] Now you can see ah, the circular and the mind you, it's pretty small isn't it, but anyway

Oh it already had that sort of garden shape?

[MF] So Fran re-created that.

[FF] That wasn't like it when we bought the house

Got you

[FF] And we got a little bulldozer thing in to get rid of what was in the garden.

[MF] Bobcat

[FF] Bobcat thingy. And I reinstated that shape in the garden.

[MF] That's next door's stables

Oh, ok

[FF] See it was really to indicate where the sewerage lines were

Yes

[FF] So, our sewerage line is the length of the house and I presume that dunny, with the lane along there for the horse and cart to collect. They've all got, all got that one way or another

Dunny lane. Nightmen

[FF] Nightmen, yeah

[inaudible and long pause as they all look at the plan]

1:24:30

Um, is there anything else that you know you haven't already conveyed you would like to say about your work with the Garden History Society? You've told me a lot about your activities, which is fantastic.

[MF] Well we've been to a lot of conferences now, we probably started around 2000. We've probably been to about 15 or more I suppose. And we've been on lots of events that other people have organised as well.

[FF] Yeah,

[MF] Ah, yeah. And there's a camaraderie about the place when we've been working bee at Castlemaine we stayed, six of us stayed in a little house, little lean-to next to the picture theatre

[FF] Yeah, I said that

[MF] And um, Kathy Wright organised ah, a weekend away several days based on a property in the Western District where some people stayed in the stables and others, we shared a shearers' house. A house, 1950s house, um, and that was, that was terrific. I mean we had half a house and there were more in that house.

[FF] Yeah. No I can't think of anything else. I mean general dogsbody helping before meetings at, at um Mueller Hall, shifting furniture, doing the dishes, you know all the

[MF] You know Fran, there was a time there when Fran was the only one who knew how to turn on the dishwasher, because it was a bit quirky I think. And uh.

[FF] Yeah, we've probably had a few oops moments. I think we had an oops moment when I said, oh, I volunteer at the Herbarium every Monday afternoon I go in and mount specimens. And I know the code to get us in and one evening there was um a Garden History thing on at Mueller Hall and they needed something like an extension cord or something and I rummaged around in a few places and said oh I know where's, I don't know if it was an extension cord, but I'd said 'oh in our room'. So I was going like this to get us into our room and it was definitely a no-no because the Security man came

and said, that room's been opened and that's naughty. So that was all, all very embarrassing there. Yeah. A little knowledge is a dangerous thing. Yeah.

[MF] Yeah, so I usually get roped in for some, some contribution generally fairly minor for, but for each of the lectures, when Fran was on the Committee and probably before you were on the committee

[FF] We used to um do a lot of sharing. I said if everyone's going up to these working bees it's silly to take seven cars, we could do a bit of sharing. Well that was alright except that we found that always we were doing the driving and the other people were doing the sharing. Always, we'd go up with two people in the back of the car. But I don't think we ever went in anybody else's car.

[MF] We went in Helen's a couple of times.

[FF] But we, we'd have to take all the tools and equipment you see so we wouldn't just put in two digging forks, we'd have three or four. And you know, you take all these big tubs, I had, they'd say oh Fran I came up and I didn't have a tub. I'd say oh well, take one of ours. So it was, that was sharing, wasn't it

[MF] Yeah. Well that happens every week at the CWA. Fran brings all the tools, there are no, apart from a spade, there's no tools available. Um, and no one brings anything.

[FF] Anyway that's just par for the course

[MF] Sometimes secateurs if you're lucky I think ...

Well, I, just to explain for the audio that Fran brought out a whole lot of little objects that have been found in the garden um including little pieces of remains of toys, um, perfume bottles, bottle stoppers, as I said, I think I mentioned a nine inch nail which has been hand-forged very clearly, ah and I think that actually that looks like a ring of some kind

[FF] Not Victorian

No, but that really draws together very nicely the um the connection gardening and the historical which you both share.

[MF] Yeah.

[FF] Yeah. We had one, as school friend of one of our daughters. And Olivia had told her about how her mum and dad had found things in the garden and this school friend came and as soon as she got here, she didn't want to play games with Olivia, she said give me a trowel I'd like to do some archaeology.

[all laughing]

[MF] Was that Lisa?

[FF] No, no.

Yeah, it's brilliant.

[FF] A dice

Of some kind, yes, but it's got the letters T and H etched into it

[FF] Yeah, been in a fire. All went out with the ash.

Ok, um, unless there's something else that you, you feel you want to tell me, um, I think we've probably sort of come to a natural end.

[MF] Yeah,

Um and I'd just like to say thank you very much for taking part. It's been fascinating.

[FF] Pleasure.

So I'll turn the recording off now and explain to you a few things about what happens next.

1:31:37