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Editors
Christina Dyson
Richard Arben
editor@gardenhistorysociety.org.au
8 Eastern Place, Hawthorn East, Victoria, 3123

Enquiries
Toll-Free 1800 678 446
Phone: 03 9650 5043
Fax: 03 9650 8470
Email: info@gardenhistorysociety.org.au
Website: www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au

Postal Address
AGHS, Gate Lodge
100 Birdwood Avenue
Melbourne Victoria 3004

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Helen Elliot
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Canberra ACT 2601
elloth@bigpond.net.au

Queensland
John Taylor
11 Joynt St
Hamilton QLD 4007
Phone: 07 3862 4284
jht@hotkey.net.au

South Australia
Ray Choate
Barr Smith Library
University of Adelaide
Adelaide SA 5005
Phone: 08 8303 4064
raychoate@adelaide.edu.au

Southern Highlands
Eleanor Dartnall
478 Argyle Street
Moss Vale NSW 2577
Phone: 02 4869 1825
eleanor@dartnalladvisors.com.au

Sydney & Northern NSW
Stuart Read
Phone: 02 9873 8554 (w)
stuart.read@planning.nsw.gov.au

Tasmania
Elizabeth Kerry
PO Box 89, Richmond, TAS
Phone: (03) 6260 4216
liz.kerry@keypoint.com.au

Victoria
Pamela Jellic
5 Claremont Cres
Canterbury VIC 3126
pjdjellie@hotmail.com

Western Australia
Caroline Grant
9A Grange Street
Claremont WA 6010
chgrant@yahoo.com

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Cover: Detail from the Panoramic View of King Georges Sound (1834) by British artist Robert Dale and engraver Robert Havell Jr. a work featured in the Experimental Gentlemen exhibition at Melbourne’s Potter Museum (see page 28) and reproduced in full in John Ryan’s article (see pages 9–14). (The University of Melbourne Art Collection (Gift of the Sir Russell and Mab Grimwade Bequest, 1973))

Opposite: Eminent Australian landscape architect and educator Professor Richard Clough lists George Molnar as one of his formative influences (see story on page 19). Molnar’s witty cartoons marked him as an Antigonean Osbert Lancaster; the caricature here—from his book Cooking for Bachelors (1959), sequel to Oh, for a French Wife—bears witness to this cultured milieu.

Back cover: Salt lakes and bush interface with farmland in one of Western Australia’s diverse landscapes, a feature of this issue of Australian Garden History. (Photo: Andrew Howe, The Planning Group, Perth)
Protecting cultural landscapes

Stuart Read

The mission of the Australian Garden History Society states that we will be ‘the leader in concern for, and conservation of significant cultural landscapes’ and I believe our Society can boost awareness of our special landscapes. Our members address many issues yet how many Australian gardens feature local plants? How well do we know how to propagate or prune them, their life spans? What food, fibre, or medicinal plants remain untapped? Couldn’t these provide sustainable income for Aboriginal or rural communities, through careful commercialisation? Why is Hawa’ii expert on our macadamias? We’ve barely scratched the surface in understanding our soils, water, plants, and animals.

Australia’s great age, slow drift north, and botanical legacies of Pangaea and Gondwana (cycads, conifers, eucalypts) provide lessons in adaptability to fire, aridity, and low nutrients. So why can’t we buy suitable plants at Woolworths? Why aren’t we hybridising, exporting?

The long understanding Aboriginal peoples have for ‘country’ offers opportunities—from strengthening weakened cultural traditions to bolstering attachment to place and each other. Indigenous knowledge of ‘carrying capacity’ and sustainable use may be critical to our survival.

We still seem at best dozy about where, who, and in what we are, seeing our centre as dead and clinging to the coasts. Our deserts are clothed with plants, a treasure-house of sustainability, adapted to aridity, with opportunities to improve our urban amenity. Why irrigate lawns, gardens, nature strips, parks (keeping the wrong plants alive)? We need to refocus our study of edges as the places of greatest change and potential. These include coasts (where most of us live) as well as forest, wetland, and riverine edges. How should we conserve and (re)design these?

Gardeners are major land and resource users, controlling over half of all urban land (where eighty per cent of us live). Saying ‘I’m just a gardener’ is denying the power we all have, to grow what, how, with what? Should we ‘fear the hose’ (as George Seddon opined), paying more for our water? We used far less before its reticulation. We replicate cultural programming to garden and domesticate our surroundings—regardless of location.

We mimic American and European popular culture, in contrast to our modest engagement with, say, south-east Asia and Polynesia and implications for future links. Or our understanding and response to our continent’s Chinese and Indian pasts in terms of trade, migration, and other economic, social, and cultural links—what can these mean where the world’s rising empires are run from Beijing and New Delhi? Australia provides distance-education to youth from both, but principally in accountancy and law—why not also in culture, the natural sciences, landscape management, and sustainability?

I believe that we should discuss landscapes more, especially when our politicians so lack leadership on them—we’ve been slow to change our colonial, resource-extractive thinking. We should work to improve how we view and treat our country, especially with dwindling water and burgeoning population. It’s crucial we balance conservation and development.
Some struggle with the phrase ‘cultural landscapes’. UNESCO and ICOMOS (its expert adviser on cultural heritage) have defined three kinds: (1) designed as in formal gardens/parks; (2) organically evolved as in rural landscapes, and (3) associative where the hand of humans may be hard to see (such as Uluru—Kata Tjuta National Park). We all know examples, even if we don’t call them this—a favourite country town, beach, ski landscape, shopping strip, or suburb.

Landscapes are creations of mind and heart as well as hands. What’s essential is personal or community attachment. Loving a landscape is wanting to conserve what gives it ‘significance’—we must understand this to conserve it. This involves identifying land uses and users. We can help identify, assess, and talk with stakeholders—facilitating conversations on land use planning.

The Whitlam Government did urban and regional development—but little since! Why isn’t the Commonwealth involved in planning city infrastructure—metro and freight rail between and within each city and port. Each state has its own planning system of tools and policy. Most are in complete denial on landscape assessment and management. We need to lobby to correct this.

Victoria has done much visual landscape assessment that could be emulated. It has also done more on recognising landscapes as heritage items, ‘talking them up’ at regional forums and seminars—a model. We can contribute to such events. Our submissions to inquiries on planning should seek the protection and wise use of agricultural and horticultural land. Open space and recreation lands (such as parks) must be a non-negotiable core part of all planning.

Each state has its own planning system of tools and policy. Most are in complete denial on landscape assessment and management.

conservation, strategic investment, infrastructure development, and maintenance. We should compare our landscapes with other similar landscapes, to determine how significant they are, how rare, and what priority actions this throws up.

We need to document examples, promote techniques to manage them to retain significance, acknowledge the importance of expert input, and actively seek community input and verification—to gain ownership of ideas and an understanding and consensus on the degree of changes that might occur, where, and how. We need to engage with the planning system and understand its potential for landscape management. We should promote visual tools such as 3-D mapping (a good example by Orange City Council is at [www.orangesignificantscapes.com.au](http://www.orangesignificantscapes.com.au)), illustrated controls for new developments, maps, and photomontages. These make it easier for the community to understand landscape planning.

We need to seek landscape heritage listings, enhanced boundary descriptions of existing (ill-defined) listings, broader statements of significance embracing landscape significance, and lobby for clearer management controls and guidance.

Australia doesn’t do ‘planning’ at national level—beyond defence, airports, or customs. Government planning departments have responded to world developments in planning, adopting innovations such as green belts, garden suburbs and cities, parks, and recreation spaces. But that was nearly 100 years ago!

Good stewardship applies to landscape management—this needs strategies with clear planning objectives and ones that incorporate social planning, education, and place-attachment mapping to capture intangible aspects of social significance such as memories and emotion. We should promote focus groups, inviting people to participate, while stressing careful choice of language. Yet we need to remember that the community is not always the best source of information, sometimes lacking knowledge or understanding of its region’s values and preferring to block change. There is a place for expert opinion and we need to promote preparation of soundly based conservation management plans to guide decisions on our rich resource of cultural landscapes.

Stuart Read acted as rapporteur for the Australian Garden History Society (WA Branch) forum ‘Understanding Place: the resource of landscape’ held in Perth on 12 March 2011—this text is a synopsis of his concluding remarks.
Understanding the resource of our landscapes

This is an edited transcript of Marion Blackwell’s address to the recent forum: ‘Understanding Place: the resource of Landscape’, hosted by the Western Australian Branch of the Australian Garden History Society.

Our ancient continent

Australia is an ancient continent, worn down, vast, and varied; of wide horizons, rounded contours, and muted colours. It also houses amazing ancient treasures. As it drifted across the globe in prehistoric times, it was part of Pangaea (during which time life on earth began); then part of Gondwana, the great southern land, where 300 million years ago, this Australian land-mass was near the south pole and parts of it were covered by ice sheets.

Vegetation at that time was made up of seed ferns and other fern-like flora in tundra-like conditions. As the climate began to warm, a more diverse flora evolved, including cycads, gingkos, some of our more recent conifers (Agathis, Araucaria, Podocarpus), ferns, seed ferns, and tree ferns. Warm and wet conditions prevailed as a consequence of the moisture-laden winds blowing in off the embayed sea. Everything was green and lush. Thus began the nutrient depletion of our soils (with all that rain, and with little vulcanisation thereafter for nutrient replenishment).

About 45 million years ago the Australian land mass separated from Antarctica and became an isolated continent supported by its own stable tectonic plate. Henceforth, its fauna and flora evolved in isolation. The south-west winds now blew off a cold ocean, which initiated the onset of aridification of the land, and plants had to adapt to a completely new environment. This led to all manner of anatomical as well as physiological and biochemical adaptations, such as:

- Schlerophylly—for example, anatomically leathery, small, or needle-like leaves;
- Modification of leaf stalks to form phylodes and stems to form cladodes—all to cut down transpiration and to conserve water;
- Geophytes—plants hiding underground in adverse seasons, as bulbs, corms, tubers, and rhizomes;
- Adaptations to fire, heat, and drought—with epicornic re-growth and woody seed cases that open after heat;

The aesthetic qualities of our diverse landscapes are a much under-utilised resource in Australian garden design, especially those derived from arid landscapes.

Photo: Marion Blackwell
- Mycorrhizal associations—with fungi, to acquire food, and other forms of mutually beneficial symbiosis (for instance in cycads, casuarinas, and legumes); and
- The development of C4 plants, CAM plants, photosynthesis in the dark, Proteaceous roots, and the like.

All this provided the wherewithal for existence in a more demanding environment.

**Cultural adaptations**

Let us now think about the culture of Australia’s Aboriginal peoples, the first inhabitants of this land. At the time of European settlement, Australia was the ‘garden home’ to a multitude of nations of Aboriginal peoples. It is well known that these communities cherished and revered the countryside, knew it intimately, and believed that they belonged to this land, and had the responsibility for looking after it. But what is not well understood is that these communities used their own horticultural practices, under traditional governance to provide for their future needs. This included patch burning at advantageous times of the year and selective tuber harvesting, for example of the large yams produced by the spectacular Convovulas creepers of great floribundance which flourished near the present town of Wiluna, along the beginnings of the Canning Stock Route and through the Little Sandy Desert. (I have been out with the women tapping the ground with their digging sticks until you heard a somewhat hollow sound, then digging and severing the yam in a very specific way, so that next year that rhizome produced two or more yams, instead of just one.) Also the distribution of seeds into selected new areas—how else did the ancient food-producing cycads move from the stable Yilgarn plateau out and along the new coastal plains?

Aboriginal people, because of their nomadic way of life, did not encumber themselves with material possessions. Travelling seasonally to sites of good harvests, this included festive gatherings in areas of great abundance of choice foods—an example close to Perth being ‘Manyn festival’ which hinged upon the flowering of Banksia grandis and the plentiful nectar which it produced. On the eastern seaboard the famous Bogong moth festival and the harvesting bunya bunya ‘pine’ cones brought Aboriginal peoples together from hundreds of miles away. Aboriginal horticultural practices were based on a sophisticated knowledge and deep understanding of our plants, their life cycles, growth habits, and seasonal performance, as well as their response to climatic events. To most Europeans, arriving with preconceived ideas and the greater number of whom were not even willing to find out about this new land they had taken or its people, the Aboriginal lifestyle as hunters and gatherers was considered to be archaic, stigmatised as ‘primitive’ and ‘savage’.

As a culture relying on oral and artistic traditions it was difficult to communicate such erudition, or explain different attitudes, knowledge, ideas, and ideals. Europeans came to stay and they changed the landscape. They took it for granted that they owned and could do whatever they liked with and to the land. To Aboriginal peoples, the land was inalienable and to be cared for.

**Considering the Australian flora**

I am greatly interested in our plants, particularly in the light of climate change, in their habitats and the ability of many to grow within the adversities of desert conditions. By contrast with this flora, I have driven up the west coast of Africa for hundreds of miles through the Namib Desert without seeing one green leaf, and only a fleeting glimpse of an animal.
How do ours differ? Australian deserts as a whole, although they fulfill international criteria in all but one factor, don’t look like deserts because they are vegetated and not just vast expanses of bare sand and stone. Why? It’s because we have, as a result of our history, what I am calling ‘clever plants’ that have adapted as the adverse conditions developed to keep on growing by effectual strategies and physical modifications.

Plants are the pivotal items of habitat. They provide homes for all those ‘others’—the insects, birds, animals, and humans—that have been able also to co-evolve or use the habitat as migratory species. Many Australian plants are unlike those of another other country. And one has to change into a different gear on coming to Western Australia (even Australian botanists with extensive Eastern states’ experience)—almost everything is different.

Western Australia makes up almost a third of this continent and two thirds of it is desert. It has the oldest rocks and rock crystals in the world; in the fossil reefs at North Pole near Marble Bar (dated at 3500 million years of age), it also holds the oldest record of life on earth from when we were part of the original land mass Pangaea. If this is not remarkable enough, in Hamlin Pool (at the head of Shark Bay) and in some of our lakes, we have living examples of the ‘original life on earth’. This life form exists as stromatolites, composed of pre-animal, pre-plant unicellular organisms called cyanophytes which have aggregated together, trapping sediments to form matter and humped structures, shaped by the ebb and flow of the tides. These are living very much as they once did so very long ago, in a hyper-saline habitat which even now keeps their predators away.

It was these organisms that first harnessed the energy of the sun to combine water and carbon dioxide from the air, in order to manufacture energy containing sugar for growth and reproduction; with the very significant by-product from this process being oxygen, which they released into the then, extremely toxic air—converts it eventually into a life sustainable atmosphere. This was the first step along a path of biological evolution on earth. The next, which took a billion years to effect, was the development of the more complicated early algae. And so it went on.

Western Australia still supports many living examples of this early plant life, as well as of the fungi involved in the essential provision of food to plants growing in nutrient-depleted soils. There include:

- Algae—one of the richest sea algal floras exists around the south coast of Australia, and nobody has yet really looked at the inland ones;
- Lichen—these amazing symbiotic associations of fungi plus algae which can live in some of the most inhospitable places on earth, for instance, hot barren rock faces;
- Mosses and ferns—still restricted to moist habitats;
- Cycads—those living fossils in which Australia is quite rich;
- Gymnosperms—not many left, but of which Western Australia has a few curious representatives including a shrubby, fleshy-fruiting Podocarpus; and
- Angiosperms—both monocots and dicots, about eighty per cent of which are endemic.

The history of the earth’s evolution can be read in its rocks and we know that Western Australia was once covered by rainforests. Some of these plants still survive in the rainforests of the Eastern states.
Western Australia's landscapes exhibit striking regional diversity. From magnificent karri and other eucalypt forests of the Southwest to harsher landscapes of the inland, but all exhibit a rich clothing of seasonal flowers which have long been the focus of botanists and horticulturists.

(For example, great trees of Agathis and Araucaria), but what remains in the West is mainly fossil records. Even the physical form of the landscape has changed dramatically—after millions of years, whole mountains have been worn away by river erosion.

So much of this state is desert, but clothed desert—a treasure house of adaptations to adversity almost untapped from the point of view of sustainability, food, and shelter, to say nothing of urban amenity. It is full of individuality and character. Yet what knowledge do we have of our plants? There are many about which we don't yet even have basis knowledge, much less have we researched their potential, or learnt from Aboriginal peoples about so many of their uses.

An example of our under-appreciated landscape is the Kwongan—an arid, low, scrub-covered sand plain, close to Perth—for which I carried out the first detailed botanical survey. This area—which was verbally dismissed by my associates varyingly as ‘scungy old scrub’ or ‘boring old bush of no consequence’—proved to be full of surprises.

It has a diversity of greater than one species per square metre which sent ripples around the botanical world, as species-wise it was considered richer than that of rainforests. It was full of plants with the most amazing adaptations. It alone is an encyclopaedic resource of valuable information upon successful survival under inclement conditions of heat, drying, and nutrient depletion.

We are destroying our largely as-yet-little-understood heritage at a rate of knots and it is not only the plants but their habitats and the landscape in which they and we live. I don’t believe politicians of this world are even thinking about humankind’s future in the face of climate change. Here we have resources adapted to aridity and they’ve hardly as yet been looked at or tapped. We need a wake-up call.

Marion Blackwell is a landscape architect and environmental scientist based in Western Australia. Now enjoying her eighth decade, she is currently on an extended visit exploring the MacDonnell Ranges in central Australia.
Sifting horticulture from botany: John Lindley’s ‘A Sketch of the Vegetation of the Swan River Colony’ (1840)

British botanist John Lindley (1799–1865) published A Sketch of the Vegetation of the Swan River Colony (1840) to promote western Australian plants in European gardens, in the process revealing vivacious opinions about antipodean species.

The anatomy of Lindley’s Sketch

British botanist John Lindley’s A Sketch of the Vegetation of the Swan River Colony (1840) based on collections received in England by numerous influential botanists is one of the foundation documents of Australian garden history. Yet today it languishes in relative obscurity. Lindley’s Sketch disseminated sound information to the world about colonial Perth’s flora. Significantly for gardeners and horticulturists, it provided the most succinct portrait to date of the flora of the Swan River settlement (established in 1829 before Western Australian statehood). Aiming to demystify this confounding flora, Lindley wanted to kindle the introduction of attractive Swan River plants to Europe—his pursuit was for ‘horticultural objects’. In the process he treated his readers to an intimate glimpse into the novelties of antipodean nature.

John Lindley was Professor of Botany at University College in London and only 40 when the Sketch was published. It was issued as an appendix to Edwards’s Botanical Register during November 1839 to January 1840 and also separately published on its completion. Established in 1815 by natural history artist Sydenham Edwards, the Botanical Register was an illustrated magazine with horticultural as well as botanical intent.
Lindley wrote inexhaustibly about horticulture. The reformation of plant names also preoccupied his writings. He urged gardeners to become familiar with his Sketch to ‘avoid the vexation of buying plants of no value under high sounding and imposing names’. In promoting Swan River plants, Lindley’s Sketch would help gardeners ‘to judge on the one hand what to send home, and on the other, what to ask their correspondents to collect’.

Royal Horticultural Society Lindley Library London

Nine hand-coloured lithographs by an unidentified artist, along with four wood-cuts, illustrated Lindley’s 58-page discussion. Through the worldwide distribution of such botanical tracts, the Swan River environs and its distinctive vegetation was ushered onto the global stage. Lindley explained the need for his account:

The frequent arrival of seeds from this Colony, the excellent state in which they are received, and the facility with which further supplies can be procured, appear to render some Botanical account of this remarkable country a desirable appendage to a work which, like the Botanical Register, forms an original record of new plants introduced, or worthy of introduction, to our Gardens.

Western Australia’s enigmatic plant life

The plants of Western Australia are specially adapted to harsh conditions, namely low soil nutriment and high solar exposure. As such, this flora exhibits astounding diversity, uncanny growth forms, and often bizarre, yet elegant, means for coping with its climate. For European botanists in Australia, such novel flora confounded their taxonomic footings. British botanist James Edward Smith had published the first book on Australian flora, A Specimen of the Botany of New Holland, in 1793. A colleague of the cosmopolitan botanist-explorer Joseph Banks, Smith forewarned prospective botanists that the beliefs of naturalists trained to see plants with European eyes would be jarred:

When a botanist first enters on the investigation of so remote a country as New Holland, he finds himself as it were in a new world. He can scarcely meet with any certain fixed points from whence to draw his analogies … Whole tribes of plants, which at first sight seem familiar to his acquaintance … prove, on a nearer examination, total strangers, with other configurations, other economy, and other qualities …

In his Sketch, Lindley gathered together the ‘several scattered notices of Swan River plants’. At the time, the only notable account of western Australian flora was Austrian botanist Stephan Endlicher’s Enumeratio Plantarum (1837), based on the collections of his compatriot, diplomat, and naturalist Carl von Hügel. Prior to that, accounts had appeared as brief articles in botanical journals. In 1830, Sydney Botanic Garden superintendent Charles Fraser had published ‘Remarks on the Botany, &c. of the Banks of the Swan River’ in Hooker’s Botanical Miscellany. British botanist Robert Brown had also published a vignette, ‘General view of the
botany of the vicinity of Swan River’ in the Journal of the Royal Geographical Society (1832), basing his observations on 142 plants supplied by Sydney-based savant Alexander Macleay and British collector James Mangles (who had travelled to Swan River in 1831).

Although some of Lindley’s judgements were based on live plants growing in English gardens, the vast majority of his observations were of dried specimens, certainly influencing his judgment. He decided, for instance, that the genus Tribonanthes were ‘plants of no beauty, as far as can be ascertained by their appearance in the form of dried specimens’. Lindley freely acknowledged his reliance on such secondary sources: ‘The materials from which the following sketch has been drawn up are the foregoing documents, and an herbarium of about 1000 species, formed by the communications of Mr. James Drummond, now resident in the Colony, Captain James Mangles’ and others. Lindley’s Sketch was also based largely on a collection supplied by early colonist Georgiana Molloy’s in her first dispatch of plants to England in 1838.

Lindley’s intrigue for the eccentricity of some Swan River plants is clearly evident. Calothamnus was ‘so peculiar as to deserve to become the subject of special enquiry’. Falling outside of botanical conventions, others were strange and befuddling: ‘D. Quadrilatera has leaves which look more like objects prepared to puzzle a geometrician than any thing already known in the vegetable kingdom’. The leaves of hakeas and grevilleas were ‘so varied and peculiar that a young Botanist might be excused for mistaking them for ferns’. Even today, a young botanist—especially one whose taxonomic training has taken place outside of Australia—could be forgiven for such an understandable error of judgment.

A crisis of naming

Before the arrival of European colonists, the plants of the Swan River were denoted by Aboriginal names specific to the region. In an Aboriginal sense, names are intimately connected with the plants themselves and the habitats in which the plants grow. Name-granting is also an essential
practice for science. Before the horticultural market could communicate about Swan River plants, Lindley first needed to standardise what the species were to be called. Yet his profession suffered many misattributions since the naming of plants varied so enormously between hemispheres. ‘The language of Botany is marvellously in want of reformation’ he lamented in his book *The Elements of Botany*. Problems of two or more names for the same plant and imprecise terminologies plagued botanists and also hampered the global cultivation of Australian species.

Lindley sought to remedy the crisis of communication so that his readership could more readily decide ‘whether particular species are worth possession, either for the sake of their beauty or singularity’. His strategy involved comparisons with familiar European plants using associations—ones that are still encountered in the common names of Western Australian taxa. The Swan River mahogany (*Eucalyptus marginata*) is a good example. *Cyclogynae* called ‘to mind the European species of *Onobrychis*. A kind of sundew bore ‘bright scarlet bulbs the size of the largest kind of hazel nut’. *Synaphaea* was ‘a strange oak-leaved plant ... whose leaves seem as if they were intended to be larger, but starved into hard dry lobes’. In his *Sketch* Lindley drew word pictures to bring the Swan River’s strange configurations into more familiar corridors.

Much naming commemorated figures in the history of botany. *Manglesia* was ‘named by Endlicher in compliment to Captain James Mangles ... to whose exertions the country owes the greater part of the plants as yet introduced from this colony into our gardens’. The genus *Loudonia* was a tribute ‘to the eminent services rendered to Horticultural Botany by John Claudius Loudon, Esq., author of the Arboretum Britannicum, and of many other valuable works well known in every part of the civilized world’. Like the names of mountains, deserts, and lakes, plant names often honour explorers and notable figures in the history of horticulture and botany.

**The horticultural object**

As a resource for horticultural markets, Lindley’s *Sketch* titillated the European imagination with beautiful images and intriguing descriptions of the antipodean flora. Not content to rely only on taxonomy Lindley promoted select colonial plants by using notions of botanical beauty. A member of the myrtle family, for instance, formed ‘a most striking object in the vegetation’. Lindley even presented some of the flora as beautiful works of art: certain horticultural objects glimmered like jewels in the monolithic rough of the remote
colony. *Thomasia*, he enthused, ‘bear fine showy flowers and deserve a place in a conservatory’.

While some plants were praise-worthy, others were ruled out. Lindley referred to the family *Goodeniaceae* in largely dismissive terms as ‘not at all suited to the objects of cultivators’. With the exception of the fine royal blue *Leschenaultia* and the indigo *Dampiera* in the family, ‘all the other species, and there are many’ were ‘by no means beautiful objects’. Similarly, the *Stackhousia* were set aside as ‘species of no beauty’. The genera *Roea* and *Dichoxema* were two others—in Lindley’s opinion—‘of little beauty … neither of which possess the slightest interest for horticultural purposes’.

Although not showy horticultural objects, some plants were strongly aromatic. The myrtle family was ‘not in general so handsome as those already mentioned’ even though ‘the fragrance of which exceeded any thing’. Two species of *Lyperanthus* had ‘no pretensions to beauty, but have a very singular appearance with their dingy sad-coloured flowers, and are very fragrant’. Lindley speculated about the potential economic importance of these odorous plants. The fragrant leaves and half-ripe fruits of *Hedaroma* ‘might be worth collecting for the use of the perfumer; and if so they would furnish a new and most agreeable article of luxury to Europe’.

In parts of a *Sketch*, Lindley showed an interest in making Swan River plants into global exports. The Sundew family, for instance, appeared ‘likely to be in some cases of commercial value as dyer’s plants’. The bulbs of other species possessed ‘a deep scarlet powder secreted by the scales of the bulb … more like the colour obtained from Archil than anything else to which I can compare it’. This violet dye (from lichens of the Canary Islands) connected the Swan River flora with commercial values intelligible to a European audience.

**Revisiting Lindley’s Sketch**

While a foundation document in Australian garden history, Lindley’s Sketch was also about the perception of place. Images of distinctive plant families evoked the general sense of Swan River terrain in the imaginations of distant audiences. Lindley concluded that some species, more than others, represented the landscape’s antipodean character. The abundant, water-loving and carnivorous sundew or *Droseraceae* were ‘evidence … [of] the springy nature of the soil at Swan River’, he opined. In his assessment, the colony was the ‘headquarters’ of the *Haemodoraceae* family, including the iconic kangaroo paws.
'to which the expression nullibi copiosae [not widespread] recently applied to it, is no longer applicable; for at the Swan River they seem to form about one-fiftieth of the species'.

Lindley’s Sketch demonstrates a burgeoning European appetite in botany and horticulture for colonial flora. It also presents a record of emerging networks between the western Australian colony and Europe. The exchange entailed plants, seeds, and dried specimens, but also ideas about Swan River plants and place. Lindley was interested in the beauty of the flora based on standards formed outside Australia.

Yet for readers today, Lindley’s Sketch lacks crucial information about the growth habits and climactic requirements of the novel plants. Just how would these ‘horticultural objects’ survive outside of their habitats? This burning shortcoming of Lindley’s Sketch highlights the wonderful complexities of Western Australian flora, complexities that are still being unravelled by botanists and horticulturists alike.

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PRIMARY SOURCES

Unless otherwise noted, all quotations are from John Lindley, A Sketch of the Vegetation of the Swan River Colony, James Ridgway, London, 1840. The other primary sources are as follows (arranged chronologically):


Charles Fraser, ‘Remarks on the botany, &c. of the banks of Swan River, Isle of Buache, Baie Geographie, and Cape Naturaliste’, Hooke’s Botanical Miscellany, i, 1830, pp.221–36.


NATURAL HISTORY IN EARLY COLONIAL AUSTRALIA


WESTERN AUSTRALIAN FLORA


Francis Aubie Sharr, Western Australian Plant Names and Their Meanings: a glossary, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, WA, 1996.

For a more comprehensive treatment of this subject, please see my paper ‘Values and evaluations: reading for beauty in John Lindley’s A Sketch of the Vegetation of the Swan River Colony (1839–1840)’, The New Critic, 10, 2010, pp.1–17.
Creating gardens in the West

Western Australia’s varied climates and soils have elicited diverse responses from garden makers and, combined with a distinctive local flora, create the potential for a strong regional character—here the focus is on WA’s Southwest.

On the western fringes of the continent, Western Australians have at times felt forgotten or overlooked by their fellow Australians, and as a result, seem to be in an enduring struggle to prove themselves worthy of recognition, both nationally and abroad. Tales of a Cinderella state, waiting for a handsome prince (or mining magnate) to whisk her away, have been perpetuated by generations of home-grown myth makers, including our politicians, journalists, and historians. But for this state’s garden histories, there is at least some truth to these tales of neglect.

Despite the efforts of local researchers, Western Australian garden history remains a largely unexplored field of endeavour, still ripe with stories of gardeners and their gardens to be discovered. Doubtless these await the intrepid researcher in the National Library of Australia’s ‘Trove’ search engine, the J.S. Battye Library, the State Records Office, historical societies, museums, and private collections. Photographs and paintings, diaries, government publications, nursery guides, oral histories, and heritage assessments can each provide vital clues to Western Australia’s gardening past. Simply talking to members of the local Australian Garden History Society branch has many rewards!

It is worth digging up this state’s gardening past because its histories, heritages, and legacies are unique. After all, Western Australia is the ‘wildflower state’ and its Southwest is an internationally recognised biodiversity hotspot. In this region, between the coastal towns of Geraldton and Esperance, generations of gardeners endeavoured to overcome challenges posed by the region’s long dry summers and sandy soils. The development of the Southwest’s gardens reflects not only these natural limitations but also Western Australia’s social histories. As a result, such gardens differ from others elsewhere in Australia. These differences should be cause for celebration, not for omission. Examining these gardens of the past can contribute to our understanding of place and offer a range of possibilities for gardening in the future.

Gardening, like the rest of the Swan River Colony, struggled in the early years of European settlement. The colonial homes of Fremantle,
Perth, and Guildford were built on large blocks with generous street setbacks, providing space aplenty to cultivate productive and ornamental gardens. But sandy soils and limited water availability restricted gardening beyond the alluvial soils around the Southwest's rivers.

The gardens of this early colonial period featured species introduced from Europe and its diverse colonial outposts, as well as local species. Early colonists at the Swan River Colony brought with them boxes of plant stock from the Royal Horticultural Society in London, including dahlias and chrysanthemums. Plants suited to the Mediterranean climate thrived and the Colony earned the title 'the land of the olive and the vine'. Traces of this southern European past remain at the monastic town of New Norcia, north east of Perth.

During the 1890s, gold discoveries and the achievement of self-government dramatically transformed the social, economic, and political circumstances of Western Australia, and its gardens reflected these changes. The availability of reticulated water allowed affluent gardeners to maintain their gardens and buffalo grass lawns throughout the dry summer months. The blooming of the state's fortunes also coincided with the growing influence of the British and North American Garden City and City Beautiful ideas on the improvement of Western Australia's civic image. Such ideas helped inspire the development of amenities such as Kings Park (1895), the Zoological Gardens (1898), and a host of smaller municipal parks and gardens. Likewise, the planting of street trees by the Woods and Forest Department increased across Perth's suburbs. This endeavour was supported by the establishment of the government nursery at Hamel, near Bunbury, in 1897, which distributed free trees to municipal authorities, schools, institutions, and farming communities.

By the end of the nineteenth century, additional commercial nurseries had been opened. These included Wilson and Johns, C.F. Newman and Son, the Darling Range Nursery (later, Blackwood Nursery), and Dawson and Harrison (still in operation). Newman and Son developed the hardy Rosa X fortuniana, which was suited to the harsh local conditions, and also published one of the first gardening guides for Western Australian gardeners in 1905, a Manual for the Garden, Orchard and Farm 'for the guidance of those who may not have at their command the services of a professional gardener'. The paucity of such local gardening literature during the nineteenth century remains especially challenging to garden historians.

The international Garden City and City Beautiful Movements continued to influence Perth's parks and gardens after the Great War. In 1919, a State Parks and Gardens Board was formed to manage all government gardens and reserves. Perth City Council town clerk William Bold led efforts to introduce town planning legislation and to implement schemes for garden suburbs and civic developments. Twelve years after Bold had formed the Town Planning Association in 1916, the organisation successfully lobbied for the first comprehensive town planning legislation in Australia. These efforts helped change the face of Perth, laying the groundwork for public parks, sports facilities, children's playgrounds, the first public golf-course, and development of the model suburbs City Beach and Floreat Park.

Gardeners and botanists alike were also struck by the richness and beauty of the local species. They retained the local eucalypts, banksias, zamias, and grass trees in their gardens, collected seeds and cuttings, and transplanted wildflowers from the bush. The local flora was also appreciated in England and Europe, where the Swan River colonists sent seeds and specimens for cultivation.

Transportation of convicts to the Swan River in the middle of the nineteenth century not only boosted the Colony's prospects but also improved its stocks of gardening knowledge. In the 1860s, after he was pardoned, former convict Enoch Barratt established one of the Colony's first nurseries—armed with experience from London's Kew Gardens, he went on to become the Government Gardener for the site now known as Stirling Gardens.

Town planning captured the imagination of local government in Perth in the early decades of the twentieth century with street trees being one focus of its landscaping efforts. This view shows the mutilation of trees due to poles and wires being erected in the wrong position along Ord Street, West Perth (from W.A. Saw 'Some aspects of town planning', Journal & Proceedings of the Royal Society of W.A., Vol. 5, 1918-19). State Library of Western Australia
After the Great War, Western Australians commemorated their fallen at war memorials in towns and suburbs across the state. Although most of these sites featured stone obelisks, many also established honour avenues lined with trees such as eucalypt, cypress, and plane. Street tree planting was also increased and households were encouraged to plant their verges to grass to limit dust. During the 1920s—30s, palms became very popular in the city parks and gardens across Perth, while Norfolk Island pines became synonymous with the beachside suburbs of Swanbourne and Cottesloe. The State Parks and Gardens Board undertook major landscape works during these depression years, such as the improvement of amenities at the John Forrest National Park at Greenmount and at Yanchep Park.

Poor soils challenged the efforts of aspiring gardeners

Local gardeners were assisted in their efforts to cultivate gardens by the publication of catalogues by the nurserymen of Wilson and Johns in the mid-1920s. Until this time, they had relied mostly upon journals from England, local newspapers, and locally produced agricultural and household guides, such as the Handbook of Horticulture and Viticulture of Western Australia (1895) by Adrian Despeissis and Lady Hackett’s Australian Household Guide (1916). In 1932, the Horticultural Society of Western Australia commenced publication of the West Australian Gardener, which, apart from a brief abeyance, has continued into the twenty-first century. This magazine was targeted at amateur home gardeners and sought to redress the reputation of the Southwest as being a difficult place to garden. The cultivation of roses bloomed in the 1930s following the establishment of the West Australian Rose Society in 1932. Specialist nurseries opened to cater to this interest and roses became a feature of public parks and war memorials.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the state government had encouraged farmers to open up the lands between the Avon Valley and the eastern goldfields to create the Wheatbelt region. These efforts continued after the Second World War when returned servicemen and their families were encouraged to clear ‘a million acres a year’. Combined with the pressures of farming life, lack of rain and the region’s poor soils challenged the efforts of aspiring gardeners. But many persevered and were rewarded. After the war, some parts of the Wheatbelt were reticulated, which eased pressures on farm water supplies. Farms in these areas could leave behind their verandah gardens of pots, tins, and vases and adopt more sophisticated garden styles with lawns and flowerbeds—a source of civic pride in the post-war era.

Western Australians were swept away with post-war optimism for the future of their state. New industries had been attracted to Western Australia and a major resources boom brought welcome prosperity. New suburbs opened; gardens became less productive and now focused on entertainment and outdoor living. Meanwhile, the profession of landscape architecture had emerged and formalised horticultural training and apprenticeships were introduced. In the mid-1950s, John Oldham was appointed the government landscape architect and landscape design became an integral part of public works. The Stephenson and Hepburn plan for Perth and Fremantle, for instance, allowed for green belts of open space, public parklands, and wetlands.

But the pace of the state’s urban and industrial development was a source of concern for some Western Australians. In their suburban gardens, they found a place to express their anxieties and many turned to native plants to create bush gardens around their homes. Local wildflowers had long been popular among Western Australians and visitors to the state, and a Wildflower Society had been formed in the 1950s. The establishment of the state’s botanic gardens at Kings Park in the mid-1960s, under the directorship of Dr J. S. Beard, was also a significant influence on gardening tastes.

The West Australian Gardener was re-launched in 1969 and played an important role in advising gardeners about native plants, providing ‘A guide to Western Australia’s floral wealth’. During the

*Perth’s Kings Park Botanic Garden showcased Western Australian flora with small sections set aside for plants from similar climatic zones, such as California, the Mediterranean, and South Africa (photographed here in November 1965).*

State Library of Western Australia (I33583PD)
1970s, nurseries specialising in native plants (Australian and local) were established. These nurseries introduced gardeners to new hybrids and made a number of native plants that had been previously difficult to domesticate available to the gardening public. The bush gardening trend was also strengthened by the introduction of water restrictions in the 1970s, including a total sprinkler ban at the end of the decade. Water authorities and specialist nurseries promoted Australian plants as low maintenance, ‘no water’ alternatives to other varieties. Bush gardens were complemented by brick paving, woodchips, mulch, and timber sleepers. By the early 1980s, however, bush gardens had earned a reputation for being messy, ugly, and boring, especially as many gardeners were not familiar with the requirements of native plants. Inspired by a revival of interest in heritage buildings and homes, suburban tastes turned to the cottage garden.

At the turn of the twenty-first century, Western Australian gardeners have again responded to the imperative of reduced water usage around their homes, particularly in their gardens. They have been fortunate that water restrictions in the Southwest have been less severe than in the eastern states and many have invested in bores to utilise supplies of shallow groundwater. With a wider choice of low-water use plants and better advice available to guide their cultivation, some gardeners are also turning to plants and landscaping styles adapted to drier conditions.

Other gardeners have embraced a minimalist approach to garden design and plant choice, which favours structural-looking plants over flowering or ornate varieties. This trend has emerged from a combination of longer work hours, smaller blocks, and larger homes. Many gardens have continued the progression away from a productive space to a space of relaxation and entertainment, which leaves little room for large garden beds. Popular tourist destinations in south-east Asia also appear to have had a strong influence on the design of these outdoor areas. Others meanwhile have turned back the clock and taken up productive gardening in response to broader ecological and health concerns.

Whatever their gardening tastes, Western Australia gardeners today have unprecedented access to advice and guidance for their gardens—from specialist nurseries and popular local television personalities to the internet. Yet most would be unaware of the fascinating history of gardening in their state. In the historic gardens of Western Australia’s Southwest region lie traces of the state’s socio-economic, cultural, political, and environmental histories, as well as personal stories about the roles of the garden in the daily life of the past. I invite historians across the nation to look west to help us find our hidden gardens and gardeners. We need more hands on deck—there is still so much to do!

Some key references for studying the garden history of Western Australia


2006 George Seddon & Gillian Lilleyman, A Landscape for Learning: a history of the grounds of the University of Western Australia, UWA Press, Crawley, WA, 2006.


Ruth Morgan is a Perth-based environmental historian currently completing doctoral studies at The University of Western Australia and is a branch committee member of the Australian Garden History Society.
Australian landscape architect and educator Richard Clough turned 90 in 2011 and he here reflects on those people who were influential in his early career in the energetic post-war years.

In December 1991 Ralph Neale, then editor of Landscape Australia, wrote to seventeen landscape architects asking them to contribute to an article, ‘Most Influential Books’, he was proposing to include in a future issue. I kept a copy of my response, and when asked to contribute to this issue of Australian Garden History I looked for it thinking it might be suitable for, as far as I can remember, it was never published. However on re-reading it I concluded I had been influenced more by people than by books, so I decided to use this opportunity to pay tribute to those who developed my education in gardening and landscaping.

My mother and her father, who had both learnt from my German-born great grandmother, gave me my first lessons in gardening. In the days when Wagga Wagga was too small to have nurseries or florists she sold seedlings and cut flowers from her own garden and bulbs she bought each year from Holland. While I don’t remember her—she died when I was three—I have a clear picture of her garden and many of the plants that she grew in it.

Art wasn’t a subject I studied at school but I had lessons from the drawing master in my free time. I remember the subject of my first exercise was a landscape and I produced one I thought very exciting with precipitous mountains, cliffs, and waterfalls. This was summarily dismissed and I was given the task of recording the local scenes, dominated as they were, by remnant river red gums and yellow box trees. While I didn’t know it at the time I was being influenced by the work of Australian painter Hans Heysen and taught to appreciate the visual qualities of the surroundings...
I grew up in, which were so similar to those he excelled in depicting and which, up till then, I had judged purely in economic terms, values I had acquired from my family.

The subjects taught at university to students of architecture, and the ways they were taught, I found very exciting. While only indirectly connected to gardening and landscape some teachers stressed the relationships between buildings and the open spaces they created as well as their settings. I particularly recall Professor Leslie Wilkinson and Mr W.R. Richardson doing this. While a number of teachers influenced my approach to design George Molnar had the strongest and most lasting impact, turning me into a convinced functionalist. You will notice I dropped George’s title. In writing this I have included or omitted them to indicate how I addressed such people at the time. Sydney University was sufficiently small—there were only thirty students in the Faculty of Architecture in 1939—for students to be influenced by staff in other disciplines. I was taught directly by A.L. Sadler, Professor of Oriental Studies, and indirectly by E.G. Waterhouse, Professor of German. The first introduced me to the amazing cultures of Asia, including their gardens, cultures that have given me so much pleasure ever since. The latter first showed me that gardening could be a fine art, the equal to painting or sculpture, and this, in time, came to change the course of my professional life.

When my university studies were interrupted by war service, I was fortunate to be posted to the same unit as Harry Luke. He was a professional forester who became the well known authority on bush fires. In New Guinea he introduced me to ecology as he studied and explained the processes that resulted from the Papuan’s agricultural, or more accurately, gardening practices. These we traced from the clearing of jungle, to its use for growing food, then, after its abandonment for new and more fertile areas, to its gradual return to jungle. This practical grounding in ecology, reinforced by my later experiences at Basildon, where a classic example of ecological succession was to be found, gave me a rationale for judging environmental issues.

Professor Waterhouse had been active promoting education in landscape architecture from the mid 1930s and when I met him in London in 1950 he prevailed on me to study it while I was there. It so happened that a landscape course was about to begin at University College and

I was able to join the first group of students. Peter Youngman, a practicing landscape architect, was in charge of the course, and fortunately for me he came from a natural history background that complemented my design one. The post-war period in Britain was an exciting one. The Institute of Landscape Architects was made up of talented and enthusiastic members who supported Peter Youngman and encouraged his students. We all, the whole nine of us, owe an enormous debt to all of them for providing us with the theoretical knowledge that we then built on. Together with their Scandinavian colleagues these were the people who transformed landscape architecture in Europe from a garden design oriented profession to one which sought to serve the community as a whole by dealing with all aspects of land use and development.

When I began studying, landscape architects had been facing the problems of adapting to Modernism for some time. This was happening all over Europe, with the work done in Scandinavia being especially admired and emulated. The Festival of Britain served as a showcase for the talents of many local practitioners, Mr Youngman amongst them. My introduction to Modernism had come when I returned to university in 1945 from war service. This was the year George Molnar joined the staff and he was our design
master for two years. He encouraged us to adopt the design style he had learnt and practiced in Hungary (but owing its genesis to the work at the Bauhaus in Germany). This background provided a smooth transition to the landscape design approach being taught at University College by Mr Youngman and other teachers such as Mrs Shephard. Her career is of interest as it shows how interlocked the profession was in Europe at that time. An Italian, she studied in Berlin where the first European university-based courses had been established. She practiced in Rome designing, amongst other commissions, the landscapes for many of the monumental developments Mussolini was erecting. After the war, having married an Englishman, she continued her career in London, where her clients had very different objectives to those of her pre-war employers. We visited historic gardens and were shown over modern ones, including the over-praised Sissinghurst, by their designers. When I travelled outside Britain I was given letters of introduction to local practitioners who often volunteered to show me their work. The landscape I admired most was Gunnar Asplund's Woodland Cemetery, which I visited with a fellow student Inga Hermelin.

The person to whom I owe the greatest debt is Sylvia Crowe whose contributions to her profession are now recognised internationally. After passing the Institute of Landscape Architects' final examinations in 1954, its secretary, Mrs Brown, told me Miss Crowe was looking for someone to work on the landscaping of Basildon New Town in Essex, forty kilometres east of London. As I thought it was foolish to have academic knowledge and no practical experience I applied for and was given the position. I had to work at Basildon, and every Thursday Miss Crowe came down to deal with the great variety of projects involved in designing and building a new town from scratch. Her approach was so firmly based on the principles she went on to describe in her books that working with her was immensely instructive and satisfying. It remains the high point in my career.

On returning to Australia in 1956 the major problems I had to face were my lack of local landscape experience and knowledge, especially of plant material. Fortunately I met Peter Valder in Sydney and he helped me generously with his extensive horticultural knowledge. Then on moving to Canberra in 1959 I was similarly helped by Professor Lindsay Pryor and Ray Margules. They had recognised the need for an organisation like the National Capital Development Commission, and after its establishment supported the work it was doing. They put their knowledge, the result of their training as foresters in Canberra and their long experience in curating and managing its landscapes at the disposal of the Commission. This was especially valuable in the first years of its existence.

This attempt to record the people who influenced me, and I know there were others, shows how varied their professions and interests were and from what different countries and disciplines they were drawn. If this record shows how complex attributing influence can be, it will—I hope—have served a useful purpose.
View of central Canberra from the north illustrating the impact of the recently filled Lake Burley Griffin. Earthworks in the Parliamentary Triangle are nearing completion while those of Anzac Parade are just commencing. The early plantings on the lakeside open spaces are beginning to make an impact.

Published writings of Richard Clough

1960

1963

1964

1970

1971

1980

1982

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‘Canberra’s landscape [letter to the editor]’, Landscape Australia, 5 (1), February 1983, p.5.

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1986
[Richard Clough], ‘Maurice Bloom [obituary]’, Landscape Australia, 8 (1), 1986, p.24.

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[John Baptist and Son’s plant list for Prince Alfred Park, Sydney], [untitled letter to the editor], Australian Garden History, 2 (4), January/February 1991, p.2.
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1996

1998

1999

2000

2001
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2004

2005

2007
Notes from a hillside villa

As I began these notes in mid-April I’d just become aware of a programme about to air on BBC2—Monty Don’s Great Gardens of Italy—and its companion publication. Great excitement on my part; there would be a chance to relive the pleasures of some of the gardens I’ve been visiting. I thought I’d be able to watch it online, via something like the ABC’s iView. Alas, not so, and now the programme has run its course. Although slightly miffed, I am managing to make do with the real thing while wondering if it was merely fortuitous that this new series would coincide, almost exactly, with the eightieth anniversary of an important exhibition in Florence on the very same subject—Mostra del Giardino Italiano (Exhibition of the Italian Garden)—that opened at the Palazzo Vecchio in mid-April 1931. Perhaps Don explains the coincidence in his series? The correlation is rather elegant if ironic, considering this new production is English and a pretext for the somewhat Fascist-driven enterprise of 1931 was to remedy a dearth of local scholarship in Italian garden history, by reclaiming and reinterpreting territory previously dominated by enthusiastic non-Italian scholars (who were also criticised for using non-Italian terms to describe what they encountered).

At the Mostra del Giardino Italiano, 4000 or so objects were assembled to represent Italian garden history from the Renaissance to the end of the eighteenth century. Did this mean that gardens and designed landscapes of note ceased to be created in Italy after 1800? I’ve only had time for a small taste of twentieth-century Italian gardens so I’m probably not in a position to comment. However in his book written with Artillo Mordini, Giardini d’Occidente e d’Oriente (1966), Italian landscape designer Pietro Porcinai (1910–1986) decried the neglect by his own culture (and others) of ‘the garden as symbol, a place for meditation and relaxation’, qualities that he observed and valued in the Tuscan Renaissance garden.

In regard to garden history we also remember Porcinai for his part in promoting the ICOMOS-IFLA International Committee for Historic Gardens at the international symposium for the protection and restoration of historic gardens held in Fontainebleau in 1971. In May 1981, at the Florentine Academy of Arts and Design, this committee met to discuss the development of a charter for the conservation and protection of historic gardens known as the ICOMOS Charter for Historical Gardens (the Florence Charter 1982). Although later charters have superseded this document (including the Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter), as an addendum to the pioneering Venice Charter (1964) it was an important first step in broadening the focus of heritage conservation from monuments to sites and, later, to cultural landscapes and values. The year Porcinai died, George Seddon wrote on him for Landscape Australia. As well as describing aspects of his works and wider social aims, Seddon wrote of Porcinai’s advocacy for more public, usable green spaces in cities—il verde. Alas, this gained little traction in cities such as Florence.

After all that stone and marble I often feel calmly relieved returning from the city centre to the hills below Settignano and Fiesole where we are living. Here, with the advent of spring, il verde abounds—fields of waving grasses and ‘wild’ flowers, olive trees, new growth on the vines, cypress, ilex, hornbeam hedges, and loads of other spontaneous growth. Most green space is privately owned and fenced or walled. Yet elsewhere, open gateways, paths, and benches invite and welcome wandering public. And now it’s warmer we love taking a rug to sit or play among the olive trees at the neighbouring farm.

It really seems not so long ago we were enjoying the warm weather of summer and the cooling shade of the Boboli gardens, then with so many months stretching tantalisingly ahead of us. During the intervening time we’ve managed to cover quite a lot of ground, experiencing some extraordinary places, gardens and parks, cultural landscapes, garden-related exhibitions, museums, frescoes (some with glorious depictions of agricultural landscapes and meadow flowers such as those by Benozzo Gozzoli). We’ve also ventured beyond our little hillside enclave, to Milan, Liguria, Barcelona, Paris, and Versailles. Now, with roughly two months remaining there is just time to take in some of the other big guns of garden history—firstly to Rome (and thence to the Villa d’Este and Hadrian’s Villa at Tivoli, then Palazzo Farnese a Caprorola), and finally to England (Sussex), to pay homage to William Robinson’s Gravetye Manor. Arrivederci.

Christina Dyson


Australian Garden History, 23 (1), July/August/September 2011
Landscaping for Australia

Dianne Firth

Glen Wilson’s long-awaited book Landscaping for Australia—the culmination of a long and distinguished career—has just been published. Dianne Firth’s foreword to the book captures the author’s special qualities and his fierce passion for the Australian landscape.

The natural landscapes of Australia are rich and variable. Appreciating and understanding their aesthetic and ecological values can provide inspiration and vision for the design and care of the landscapes we create. If, as this book suggests, ‘landscape is the screen on which we see the variable environment’, then Australia’s environment is being compromised.

Over the past two hundred years European ideas and sensibilities have dominated the agenda and have not always served us well. Insensitivity to the unique qualities of the Australian landscape and inappropriate development have led not only to the loss of a distinctive Australian landscape character, but to land degradation and a dramatic reduction in biodiversity. With the onset of climate change, the time is right for a change in perspective.

Since before his 1975 publication of Landscaping with Australian Plants, Glen Wilson has been an unashamed advocate for the Australian landscape and the Australian garden. He is one of the founding members of the landscape architecture profession in Australia and a conservationist with a clear message that we are custodians of the land. In this book he comprehensively sets out a way to move forward. He explains the inspiration and philosophical framework that underpin his belief that an understanding of the natural Australian landscape and appreciation of its character are fundamental to designing and managing landscapes at a range of scales—from national parks and farms to urban streets, parks, and open spaces as well as private gardens and estates.

Glen Wilson articulates for his readers the general principles of design and learning from natural Australian landscapes. He advises on ways to create an Australian style of landscape design, encourages sustainability through developing low-demand landscapes and management and design for low water use, and develops principles for using plants in the landscape and guiding the landscape to maturity. Water management, including techniques of harvesting and irrigation, is addressed and case studies illuminate Wilson’s vision and application of principles. Almost as an aside he expands on the delight of human creativity through sculpture and its enhancement through placement in the landscape.

Wilson has a lifetime of experience in both the theory and practice of creating landscapes. It encompasses working as a landscape contractor, landscape consultant, horticulturist, nurseryman, and lecturer, as well as writing about landscapes and photographing them.

From 1978 I had the good fortune to be a student of Wilson at the University of Canberra, then the Canberra College of Advanced Education. His teaching and personality were memorable. Not only was his wealth of practical experience appreciated, he was passionate about engaging his students in seeing the Australian landscape, delighting in it, then using it as inspiration to create memorable gardens and places by designing under the rubric of ‘keeping Australia looking like Australia’. His teaching was also underpinned by a strong conservation ethic and duty of care.

Landscaping for Australia is a timely book as Australia’s fragile landscape future is dependent on remedial steps being taken today. Issues of sustainability, water scarcity, climate change, loss of habitat, inappropriate land use, and land degradation are addressed and steps to mitigate their impacts are provided. I commend this book to all who appreciate the Australian landscape and share an interest in how we design and manage land. It is particularly useful and full of practical information for designers of the built environment such as architects, landscape architects and engineers, and also for farmers, property managers, students of landscape architecture and home gardeners.

Dr Dianne Firth is Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Canberra and is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects. Glen Wilson reflected on his work as a writer in Australian Garden History, 22 (2), 2010.

Landscaping for Australia is now available in hardback ($143) and paperback ($99.95) by mail order from Hansen Printing, PO Box 416, Wangaratta, Victoria, 3676 (add $12 postage for Australian addresses; overseas postage on request). For more information visit the website www.glenwilsonlandscape.com which accompanies this publication.
Modernism in the designed environment arose out of the ruins of the Great War. The rebuilding of vast areas of war-torn Europe demanded urgent action and practical solutions. Architecture was at the forefront of modernist design, where functional forms and new materials created a bold, frankly expressed aesthetic. In the aftermath of World War Two, modernism’s European focus was increasingly joined by that of North America and both sources were highly influential on Australia. And yet gardens remained slow to adapt to modernist influence, in part because of the difficulty of reconciling functionalism with gardening and garden making. Regional influences formed critical influences; national character often a vital driver.

Modernism and its links to garden history has been a subject of scholarly interest for the last two decades, and yet the field is still wide open, each new study or publication adding richness and complexity to the overall picture. Biographies of seminal figures are still appearing and those on Brenda Colvin and Christopher Tunnard have now added considerably to our stock of knowledge. Of Anglo-Indian birth, Colvin commenced her career in England during 1922, designing modest private gardens at a time when professional advice was rarely sought. Trish Gibson traces Gibson’s oeuvre through her travel, early involvement in the professionalisation of landscape architecture in Britain, to her post-war engagement with ecological design of large, often institutional sites—a pioneer in this field. From 1932, Canadian-born Tunnard straddled first Britain and then America in his professional career, in the process renouncing modernism as he saw post-war America descending into urban chaos. Gibson’s Colvin paints a simple and elegantly presented picture although recourse to David Jacques’ article ‘Modern needs, art and instincts’ (Garden History, 28:1, 2000) is still useful to place Colvin’s philosophy in a wider context. On the other hand, Jacques & Woudstra’s Tunnard benefits from multiple contributors, providing a more densely woven story.

Alexandra Harris presents us with an entirely different kind of book, biographical in focus, but literary in style and wide-ranging in scope. Modestly though effectively illustrated, Harris traverses the English landscape in search of modernism, finding it in country villages, breezy seascides, and in sentimental attachment to the landscape. Her ‘romantic moderns’ are not confined to garden makers—though they receive a separate chapter—but include writers, artists, journalists, and musicians. There is much to reflect on here for Australian readers as the prose whistles by. Our strong British heritage retains vestiges of the traditions that Harris uses to such good effect, yet our attachment to land is a complex mix of yearning wistfulness and bold inventiveness, nowhere better seen than in Australia’s complex gardening traditions. These thoughts are also aroused by Foster’s examination of South African heritage—a settler society with parallels to our own. Like Harris, he examines art, literature, and personal testimony for influential moments and illuminating works in search of national character, modern perhaps, but not overtly modernist in a design sense. Both works will help us grapple with this period of Australia’s garden history.

Richard Aitken

Jeremy Foster, Washed with Sun: landscape and the making of White South Africa, University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, PA, 2008
ISBN 9780822959588: 376pp, paperback, RRP US$27.95


Recent releases


Brown on Brown—it’s an appealing combination. Many readers will know Brown’s earlier works, from her immensely successful Gardens of a Golden Afternoon, to slightly less well-known titles such as Eminent Gardeners. Here she turns back the hand of time to the mid-eighteenth century, to England’s best known exponent of the landscape garden, Capability Brown. Although poorly represented by personal papers or plans, Brown’s prodigious catalogue of surviving landscape parks and gardens allows for a pleasing blend of scholarship and reception, fact and imagination.


Recently reissued as an e-book by UWA Publishing, this well researched and accessibly presented life of professional forester Charles Lane Poole reads like a ‘Boy’s Own’ adventure. English born, French trained, and with colonial African experience, Lane Poole cast a large shadow across Australian forestry during the interwar period. His strong opinions, forthright nature, and a zealous devotion to forests are the stuff which Dargavel—one of our most experienced forest historians—works to great advantage. From Western Australia to Canberra, The Zealous Conservator sizzles.


Readers familiar with the writings of Katie Holmes will recognise some familiar voices here and be pleased to find others less well known, all presented in a series of finely crafted pen portraits, an empathetic melding of the author and her subjects. For anyone who has kept a diary, found consolation in gardening during times of despair, or even dreamt of garden-making as an escape, Between the Leaves will awaken memories and provide fresh inspiration.


Although the name is unlikely to trigger even a flicker of recognition, Adam Forster’s work will be known to many readers through his illustrations to Wild Flowers of Australia by Thistle Harris, first published in 1938 and reprinted many times. German born, Carl Ludwig August Wiardia migrated to Australia in 1891 and took the name Forster, possibly influenced by admiration of his countryman Johann Georg Adam Forster (who had accompanied Cook on his second voyage to the Pacific). Mattingley engaging sketches Forster’s life while the bulk of the book is devoted to a selection of his delicate wildflower paintings.


Hard on the heels of Turner’s Asian Gardens is this overview of European gardens; a complementary volume to that title and also an update of the author’s Garden History (2005). Turner is an individual thinker and analyst, his books the product of long and deep engagement with his subject. Not everyone will agree with his categorisation of the ‘Landscape style’ to describe a site such as London’s Crystal Palace Gardens (1852), for instance, but we should enjoy the intellectual rigour in following his clear and well illustrated explanations of prevailing uses, forms, and philosophies.

John Wolseley’s richly layered natural history paintings will be known to many readers and Lines for Birds (UWA Publishing: RRP $59.95) reproduces a generous selection complemented by poems of award-winning writer Barry Hill.
Experimental Gentlemen
Curated by Henry Skerritt, Grimwade Intern at The University of Melbourne’s Ian Potter Museum of Art, the exhibition Experimental Gentlemen reinterprets items of colonial art drawn from the Miegunyah collection of Sir Russell and Mab Grimwade. Through works by Glover, von Guérand, Earle, Havell—whose Panoramic View of King George Sound (1834) is reproduced on pages 9–14 of this issue)—and their contemporaries, the exhibition charts changing attitudes to the Australian landscape and current interpretations of traditional narratives. We speak with curator Henry Skerritt in our issue 23 (3). Experimental Gentlemen is showing at the Potter until 25 September 2011.
www.art-museum.unimelb.edu.au

The Garden of Ideas
Based on the book of the same title, The Garden of Ideas is an Australian Garden History Society National Traveling Exhibition that has now moved from South Australia to Victoria, and is on at The Johnston Collection until 4 October 2011. Complemented by a wide range of interpretative public programmes (full details on AGHS and TJC websites), The Garden of Ideas considers historical styles of gardens and garden-making through literature, art, and architecture. It locates gardens as sites for the exploration of ideas about society, culture, and design. In the process, we can engage in debate over the continuum of past, present, and future garden-making in Australia.
www.johnstoncollection.org
www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au

Nature Revealed
This major Eugene von Guérand retrospective continues at the National Gallery of Victoria until 7 August 2011. Complementing the show is a profusely illustrated 300-page catalogue containing essays by co-curators Ruth Pullin and Michael Varcoe-Cocks, with contributions by over 30 specialists on individual works—available in hardback ($69.95) or paperback ($49.95). This publication—based on detailed research by AGHS member Ruth Pullin—presents a well-known artist’s career in new light, deftly interlinking contexts in the worlds of art and science, with a nineteenth-century appreciation of nature as its focus.

This Wondrous Land
A two-part exhibition of colonial art on paper runs at NGV International until 25 September and at NGV Australia until 27 November 2011—a symposium exploring issues of colonial art and history will be held on 16 July 2011. The first part of the exhibition has as its focus the period from the 1770s until the 1850s, whilst the second part concentrates on Melbourne artists and their depictions of the growing city. A substantial catalogue accompanies the exhibition. If you are extremely well organised on your visit to Melbourne it is even possible—for a limited time—to catch the cultural landscape quadrella: The Garden of Ideas (Johnston Collection), Revealing Nature and This Wondrous Land (NGV), and Experimental Gentlemen (Potter Museum).
www.ngv.vic.gov.au

International Botanical Congress
Of interest to many members will be the XVIII International Botanical Congress, to be held in Melbourne from 23–30 July 2011. This is only the second time this prestigious congress has been held in Australia—following Sydney in 1981—but many Australia gardeners and botanists have participated in these gatherings since the first congress in the Belgian capital, Brussels, in 1864. Charles Moore for instance, director of Sydney Botanic Gardens, visited Paris (1867) and Florence (1874) for congresses; at the former he met and travelled with William Robinson. Ferdinand Mueller contributed a paper for London (1866), and throughout the nineteenth century, the Gardeners’ Chronicle provided the horticultural world with extensive reports. Modern congresses—held about every five years and consecutively numbered—commenced in Paris in 1900. A full listing is included in the indispensable Australian Botanist’s Companion (2009) edited and published by well-known Australian botanist and historian Alex George (a.george@murdoch.edu.au). It is at such congresses where nomenclature is discussed and fixed, through international codes, and at the Melbourne meeting a proposal to reclassify the genus Acacia will be debated. Expect politics to mix with science as the de-typifiers go head to head with alternatively oriented revisionists.
www.ibc2011.com
AGHS News

‘The Botany Behind Gardens’ forum
This event is to be held in the School of Botany at The University of Melbourne, on 22 October 2011 from 10am to 4pm. A stimulating programme of speakers has been arranged, including historian Paul Fox and botanist Pauline Ladiges. Botany underpins much that we do in the garden, and this forum aims to examine and interpret links between the practicalities of gardening and horticulture with the science of botany. A flyer, providing more information about the forum can be found as an insert in this journal.

National Management Committee
The Society’s National Management Committee meets regularly and at the meeting held via phone link on 4 April 2011, items for discussion included ‘The Botany Behind Gardens’ forum, a pledge of support for Recherche Bay, a report on the successful Western Australian Branch landscape forum and progress with the forthcoming Historic Gardens of Perth exhibition, ways of increasing the Society’s online presence, as well as extensive reports on national and branch activities. Protocols for garden visits by the AGHS were also approved and a summary of these will appear in our next issue. The next NMC meetings are scheduled for June, August, and October.

Annual General Meeting
The 31th Annual General Meeting of the Australian Garden History Society will be held on Saturday, 22 October 2011, at 11.30am in the Turner Theatre, School of Botany, The University of Melbourne, Parkville, Victoria. Items to be included on the agenda should be posted or emailed to the AGHS office. Branches are asked to nominate their representative to the National Management Committee and to inform the Secretary, Lynne Walker (c/- AGHS office) by 2 September 2011. There are no vacancies for elected positions on the National Management Committee this year. This year the Annual General Meeting will be held in conjunction with ‘The Botany Behind Gardens’ forum at Melbourne University from 10am to 4pm. Members who wish to attend AGM without attending the forum are welcome to do so.

Finance Sub Committee
The National Management Committee has resolved to set up a Finance Sub Committee to assist the Treasurer Kathy Wright and the NMC with advice as to investment and management of the Society’s funds. The Treasurer and the Executive Officer, Jackie Courmadias, will also be members of the Committee, which will be based in Melbourne. The Committee would meet as required, perhaps two or three times per year.

Appointments for an initial term of three years are now being made. If you have knowledge and expertise in this area and would like to volunteer your time, please submit a short CV to the AGHS by post: Gate Lodge, 100 Birdwood Avenue, Melbourne, 3004, or by e-mail:
info@gardenhistorysociety.org.au

Vale Tony Byrne
The Australian Garden History Society lost a good friend and hard worker when Tony Byrne, Chairman of the ACT, Riverina, and Monaro Branch died suddenly on 27 May in the Galapagos Islands. Shortly before his departure for South America he hosted a lecture by Richard Airken at the National Library of Australia as part of the successful series run by this Branch for some years. Tony was well known to members generally, having attended the last five annual national conferences and had been Chair of this Branch since 2007. During that time he had seen successful fundraising for the Society through projects such as the English Garden survey, a rehabilitation project for the ACT Government, and most recently working on the records of the Yarralumla Nursery for historical preservation. The Branch thrived during his tenure and through it, the Society. He was a first class though quiet leader and he will be very much missed by friends and members.

Max Bourke

Conference update
Limited places are left for the 2011 AGHS Annual National Conference (19–21 August), optional day (22 August), and post-conference tour. To be held in Maryborough, Queensland, the conference is always a highlight in the Society’s year. Booking forms available on the AGHS website and from the office.

www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au
Facelift for journal
We all need a bit of nip and tuck occasionally and after 15 issues our journal has had a little work done. Congratulations to our dedicated but generally anonymous designer Mariana Rollgeiser, who seems to survive suburban Canberra domesticity on little more than strong black coffee, apple pie and cream, a large screen, and a leaf blower. As always, reader’s comments on the journal are welcomed.

Timeless gardens?
I was rather bemused to hear Deborah Malor’s summation of the AGHS Conference in Launceston and then to read her account in the last issue of the journal of her personal peeve, the ‘timeless’ garden, with my name the only one mentioned for evoking this particular vision. I had supplied photographs for the book written by Judith Baskin for the National Library of Australia entitled Australia’s Timeless Gardens. It was not my title, but chosen by the NLA. I smiled as, doing some research this evening, I pulled out the book The Natural Australian Garden by a grand old man of the natural Australian garden, Gordon Ford, whose philosophies I admire more than any. There in the foreword he writes ‘A well-designed bush garden is timeless—a garden for today and a garden for tomorrow. A garden with a sense of region, a sense of place.’

Trisha Dixon Burkitt

Buda guidebooks
Two new guidebooks for the Central Victorian garden Buda at Castlemaine have just been published. Buda Garden, by popular author Peter Cuffley, is a greatly revised edition of the publication commissioned by the Australian Garden History Society (Victorian Branch) in 1999. Extensively illustrated with historical photographs and current photographs as well as a detailed plan and plant list, this is a must for garden visitors. Curator Lauretta Zilles has written a companion volume, Buda and the Leviny Family, tracing the history of the family and their extraordinary custodianship of this significant garden property.

www.budacastlemaine.org

Recherche Bay
Tasmanian State Representative on the National Management Committee, Mike Evans, has recently reported on his discussions with Tasmanian Land Conservancy staff regarding a pledge of funds for the significant site at Recherche Bay. It was suggested that funding be directed towards a multi-media kit, modeled on one prepared for the significant site at Chauncey Vale. This has now been approved by the NMC and the funding is to be directed towards promoting the garden and landscape significance of the site.

Journal packing
Thanks to the following members who have assisted our hard-working Executive Officer Jackie Gourmadias with the packing of the last volume of the journal: Beryl Black, Helen Botham, Mary Chapman, Diana Ellerton, Fran and Mal Faul, Anna Howe, Pamela Jellie, Jane Johnston, Beverley and John Joyce, Rosemary Kiellerup, Laura Lewis, Anna Long, Ann Miller, Susan Reidy, Kay Stokes, Sandra and John Torpey, Marie Walpole, Pera Wells, Georgina Whitehead, and Kathy Wright.

Queen’s Birthday honours
As we go to press, the Queens Birthday honours have just been announced and AGHS members and friends will salute Helen Mawditt Page OAM, honoured ‘for service to the community, particularly through the Australian Garden History Society’. Congratulations also to Professor Graeme John Davison AO, recognised for his distinguished service to the community as a leading scholar and commentator on Australian urban history’, and to Trevor Budge AM, the late David Dolan AM, Richard Leplastrier AO, Gregory Burgess AM, and Jennifer Bantow OAM, all honoured for their service in the fields of urban design, heritage, and environmentally sensitive design.

Rare Treasure from Edna Walling Garden
Heirloom jewellery box crafted by wood artist Yanni Rigos from exquisite yew tree from celebrated Edna Walling garden Mawarra in Sherbrooke. Price $5,000

www.woodalchemy.com
E: yanni@woodalchemy.com or T: 03 9755 2722
Profile: Caroline Grant

Shaping attitudes to landscape

My interest in garden history has grown out of a love of gardens and a profound curiosity about the landscapes I’ve experienced around the world—from the Wheatbelt of Western Australia, England, Burma (Myanmar), Yemen, and eventually back to Perth.

Most of my family are avid gardeners. My father’s mother was born into a farming family in the Cotswolds. The family was advised to migrate to Australia in the early 1900s due to the children’s respiratory illnesses and so they settled in dairy country at Harvey, in Western Australia’s south west. My mother, a Perth girl (though of English West Country by descent) is a complete Angophile, visiting England at any opportunity.

I grew up in the Wheatbelt of Western Australia, on a farm near Kulin—my attitudes to landscape have therefore been influenced by the environment and landscapes of my childhood. My father’s father began farming at Kulin in 1925 with his brother who, with several young neighbours, had completed studies at Roseworthy Agricultural College in South Australia. One wonders how they managed in the harsh, dry environment and the West’s peculiar conditions, particularly during the collapse in wheat prices during the 1930s. Geoffrey Bolton explains this period of Western Australia’s history eloquently in his book A Fine Country to Starve In (1972).

Kulin’s social network and exchange of ideas was very strong. My grandmother and her neighbours each kept a cow, grew fruit and vegetables, and exchanged an abundance of produce. As is the case with most gardeners, their efforts were not purely utilitarian—my grandmother was involved in judging flower shows. My mother’s enthusiasm for gardening and love of flowers also led her to judge flower shows (when she took over my grandmother’s garden) and I remember driving great distances with her and a neighbour, listening to their appraisals of arrangements of lovingly grown flowers displayed in agricultural halls. I loved driving in the Wheatbelt, with good conversation barely interrupted by any traffic all the while enjoying scenery composed of salmon gums, wattle, and wheat crops, with clear changes in its landscape between heavy clay country, granite rocks, salt lakes, and the sand plain. I longed to understand how it all worked but had no education in this sort of geography. When I expressed an interest in studying geology at university, I was strongly discouraged, and drifted into history and politics instead.

My mother’s parents also had a profound effect on my attitudes to landscape. Statuesque eucalypts framed their 1940s home in Swanbourne, unusual for its time. Part of a circle of friends including Vincent Serventy and Ray and John Oldham, they were actively involved in conservation of both landscape and buildings.

Learning more about landscapes

Later I found myself working with geologists and petroleum engineers, planning the development of the North West Shelf, and discovered that my great grandfather had been the State Mining Engineer. I then married a geologist and spent some years overseas, fascinated by exotic cultures and landscapes.

After several overseas postings, we returned to Perth where I enrolled in the Bachelor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Western Australia. I was very concerned about the perceived negativity of the environmental movement at the time and believed that if we all understood catchments and forests better, we could make the landscape more productive while conserving natural values (such as biodiversity of species) as well as enjoying the environment.

Shortly after I qualified in landscape architecture our family decided to take a posting in England, so our children could get to know their English relatives and their father’s country of birth. With the children happily settled in school I decided to indulge my love of gardens and undertook a Masters in Landscape Conservation and Change at the Architectural Association in London. The course had evolved out of the garden history diploma, which itself had evolved out of the need to restore and conserve the settings of buildings which had received attention during the 1970s.
and 1980s. Many of the staff who taught me, including David Jacques, Brian Dix, and Jan Woudstra, had been closely involved with the restoration of the Privy Garden at Hampton Court Palace, a project of astonishing scale which I had seen and been impressed by back in the 1990s.

They were all active members of the Garden History Society and pointed out that Australia had a very good garden history society of its own, so I promptly joined. The course itself had many wonderful aspects including open-minded staff and exposure to landscape conservation professionals and their current projects.

Mining, planning, sustainability, and garden history

Since returning to Western Australia the state has been in the grip of a boom, which barely abated during the Global Financial Crisis. Each mining boom in Western Australia has had a profound effect on the landscape, and this one is no exception. In the drive for ‘sustainability’, the shrinking of suburban block size in Perth and an increase in house size is resulting in much less space for trees and gardens. There is much planning talk about sustainability but little planning for trees, particularly in hard landscape areas, although there is some hope of conserving native trees in remnant bushland due to the Perth Biodiversity Project. As we heard from John Viska in the recent AGHS landscape forum, the standards of horticulture in Perth have changed, and often in public areas, drought-resistant exotic plants are regarded as environmental weeds, even when close examination of the situation might prove otherwise.

Once I began working professionally in heritage conservation, I became disappointed with the inadequate framework for landscape assessment, management, and conservation. The overall Western Australian attitude to mining seems at risk of lying somewhere between ‘dig it up quickly before the investors change their minds or the price drops’ and ‘I want a bigger boat’. Those who express a view that not all mining projects need to be developed at once, and that income from mining could be diverted to other beneficial projects in the long term, risk being considered the lunatic green fringe.

Although the cyclical nature of mineral prices may not suit government budgetary cycles, we have the education and ability to plan what we could do with our landscape beyond mining, particularly in temperate regions with productive agriculture. The dispute over the proposed coal mine in Margaret River continues. There are concerns about the use of groundwater near Mingenew for mining, with agricultural users trying to compete for this precious resource. There is, however, a glimmer of hope on the horizon. Niche food producers and magazine editors are beginning to express a view that horticultural and agricultural regions need enhanced consideration and protection in the planning system. Once more populous regions have addressed their concerns about landscape management and conservation it may be possible for the state’s planning system to take more seriously the conservation of biodiversity and other landscape issues emerging in other regions of the state, notably the Pilbara and the Kimberley.

What has this to do with garden history? The West has some of the most extraordinary plants in the world, and a number of internationally recognised biodiversity hotspots. From that perspective, the whole state is a garden, which needs to be studied much more closely than is currently the case, and tended where necessary. Its garden history, including the gardening practices of Aboriginal communities, has barely been studied. Clearly I am not against mining, as my family’s income depends on mining hydrocarbons. I do think some of our mining practices and attempts to sell to the first bidder need examining, however, especially in light of the long-term benefit for the landscape and its inhabitants (us).
JULY 2011

Monday 4 July–Friday 21 October  The Garden of Ideas  NATIONAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE


Saturday 9  The Garden of Ideas: Study Day 1  NATIONAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Convened by Christine Reid, presented in conjunction with The Johnston Collection. Speakers for this full day programme in East Melbourne include Richard Aitken, James Broadbent, Terence Lane, and Neil Robertson. 9.30am to 4pm: Cost $12.5 (inc. box lunch), bookings essential through The Johnston Collection—tel: 03 9416 2515; email: info@johnstoncollection.org. Full details at www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au and www.johnstoncollection.org

Sunday 10  La Perouse day  SYDNEY & NORTHERN NSW

Walking tour in La Perouse, which will include the 1788 garden, exhibition, and Botany Cemetery. 2–5pm, meeting place to be advised when booking. Cost: $15 members, $25 non-members, includes light refreshments. Bookings essential. For bookings and enquiries contact Jeanne Villani on (02) 9997 5995 or jeanne@villani.com

Wednesday 13  Heritage Chinese Scholar Gardens of Suzhou  ACT/MONARO/RIVERINA

Lecture by Kay Johnstone. 6pm, Discovery Centre, CSIRO, Clunies Ross Street, Black Mountain. Cost: $10 members, $15 non-members, includes refreshments. Bookings to Nancy Clarke on nclarke@grapevine.com.au

Sunday 24  Talk on the Walter Hill Project, and AGM  QUEENSLAND

Following the Branch AGM, artists K.T. Doyle and Jay Dee Dearness will present on their work in textiles and paper exhibited as ‘Collected patterns: the botany of Walter Hill’. This explores plants cultivated in the Brisbane Botanic Gardens by Hill when he was curator (1855–81). 2pm, Herbarium Seminar Room, Brisbane Botanical Gardens, Mt Coot-tha, Toowong. Cost: $10 members, $15 non-members. Bookings to Keith Jorgensen on (07) 3341 3933 or jorgenkg@picknowl.com.au

Tuesday 26  Talk on Marble Hill garden  SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Trevor Nottle will give an illustrated lecture on the Marble Hill garden, former South Australian vice-regal summer residence (1880–1955)—further details in branch newsletter. RSVP Ray Choate (08) 8303 4064 or ray.choate@Adelaide.edu.au

Sunday 31  Gould’s book of plants, and AGM  TASMANIA

Those who attended the Launceston conference were fascinated by Associate Professor Hamish Maxwell Stewart’s lecture on this subject. We are delighted that he has agreed to present this lecture to the Tasmanian Branch, as many of our members were unable to attend the Conference. Being an AGM this event will be free. Afternoon tea will be provided. The event will be held at Rannymede. For enquiries contact Liz Kerry at liz.kerry@keypoint.com.au

AUGUST 2011

Tuesday 2  Canberra Horticultural Society and The Canberra Gardener  ACT/MONARO/RIVERINA

Presentation by Merilyn Condon and John le Mesurier on the history of the Canberra Horticultural Society as reflected in ten editions of The Canberra Gardener. 5.30pm (AGM), 6pm (presentation). More information in the next Branch Newsletter.

Wednesday 3  Eastern influences in English gardens, and AGM  SYDNEY & NORTHERN NSW

A short AGM will be followed by Colleen Morris speaking on Eastern influences in the English garden. 6pm (AGM), 7pm (talk). Annie Wyatt Room, National Trust Centre, Observatory Hill. Cost: $20 members, $30 non-members, includes light refreshments. Bookings essential. For bookings and enquiries contact Jeanne Villani on (02) 9997 5995 or jeanne@villani.com
Friday 19–Sunday 21
32nd Annual National Conference, Maryborough
QUEENSLAND

The Australian Garden History Society's 32nd Annual National Conference enters new territory for the Society as Maryborough is deep in the sub-tropics. Expect to see and experience different landscapes and a sub-tropical approach to gardening. Maryborough is a fine heritage city with many beautiful buildings and gardens. The optional day offers a rare opportunity to visit some grazing properties in the hinterland. Booking form on the AGHS website or from the office.

Sunday 28
Collecting garden tools, and AGM
SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Lunch followed by AGM, with guest speakers Richard Bird and Lynn Walker from 'The Old Mole' talking on collecting garden tools—further details in branch newsletter.

SEPTEMBER 2011

Saturday 10
‘Fair Hall & Glad Parlour’: The Garden of Ideas Study Day 2
NATIONAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Convened by curator Richard Aitken, half day programme examining the history and use of flowers in Australian domestic interiors, presented in conjunction with The Johnston Collection. Topics include Arranging Australian plants (Richard Aitken), Artificial flowers in the Australian interior (Elizabeth Anya-Petrinva), and Modernist art and the Australian interior (Gloria Strzelecki). 9.30am to 2.30pm, cost $80, bookings essential through The Johnston Collection—tel: 03 9416 2515; email: info@johnstoncollection.org

Full details at www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au and www.johnstoncollection.org

Sunday 11
The gardens and architecture of MONA, the Museum of Old and New Art
TASMANIA

A guided tour of this significant new Tasmanian garden. New landscaping designed to complement the architecture of the new museum building is set among endemic vegetation and remnants of the original Alcorno garden. The tour will provide a chance to see the vertical garden designed by Patrick Blanc, his first work in Tasmania and only his third in Australia. For enquiries contact Liz Kerry at liz.kerry@keypoint.com.au

Thursday 15
The Garden of Ideas exclusive viewing
VICTORIA

Exclusive members-only lecture, Q&A, and exhibition tour at The Johnston Collection with curator Richard Aitken. 7–8.30pm, $15 per person, limit of 2 places per AGHS member. Bookings essential through The Johnston Collection—tel: 03 9416 2515; email: info@johnstoncollection.org. Full details at www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au

Sunday 18
Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens
QUEENSLAND

Guided tour of the Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens. Over the last eight years 20,000 plants, native and exotic, have been planted in the Gardens on the banks of the picturesque Nerang River. We will also visit the garden of the original owner of the land, Jean Rosser. 10am, Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens Friends’ Centre, for morning tea and orientation. Bring lunch to share. Cost: $10 Members $15 non-members. Bookings to John Taylor on 3862 4284 or jht@hotkey.net.au

Sunday 25
Old Anlaby, Kapunda, Angaston
SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Possible bus trip to Old Anlaby Garden via Kapunda and Heritage Rose Repository at Angaston, with brief stop in historic Kapunda town. BYO picnic lunch to eat in Anlaby Garden. Expressions of interest at July meeting or AGM—further details in branch newsletter.

Wednesday 28
Remembrance Driveway
SYDNEY & NORTHERN NSW

Talk by Chris Betteridge on the evolution and heritage values of the Remembrance Driveway, Sydney to Canberra. 6pm for 6.30–8.30pm, Annie Wyatt Room, National Trust Centre, Observatory Hill. Cost: $20 members, $30 non-members, includes light refreshments. Bookings essential. For bookings and enquiries contact Jeanne Villani on (02) 9997 5995 or jeanne@villani.com

OCTOBER 2011

Tuesday 11
Nasmyth, Alva, and Mr Johnston
VICTORIA

Lecture by Richard Aitken on the Scottish garden Alva, one of the featured works in The Garden of Ideas. Explore a rich heritage of Scottish landscape painting and gardening and the role of the emigrant landscape gardener in shaping the Australian countryside. 10.15–11.45am, cost $30, bookings essential through The Johnston Collection—tel: 03 9416 2515; email: info@johnstoncollection.org.

Full details at www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au and www.johnstoncollection.org
Whether you are an avid horticulturist or simply love ‘smelling the roses’.

Private Gardens of New Zealand
WELLINGTON • BLenheim • KAIKOURA • ASHBURTON • DUNEDIN
31 Oct - 12 Nov 2011
Tour Leader: Julie Kinney
Visit over ten magnificent and varied gardens, meet their owners and enjoy their warm Kiwi hospitality.

Sri Lanka: Gardens in Paradise
COLOMBO • SOUTH COAST & GALLE • HIGHLANDS & KANDY • SIGIRIYA & ANURADHAPURA
March 2012 (2 weeks)
An exotic blend of lush tropical flora, beaches, wildlife, mountains and World Heritage cultural treasures. With visits to colonial, contemporary and botanical gardens.

Japanese Gardens in the Spring
KAGOSHIMA • KUMAMOTO • HIROSHIMA • OKAYAMA • KYOTO
11 – 26 April 2012
Tour Leader: Robert Slarke
On this ‘off-the-beaten-track’ itinerary from Kyushu to Kyoto, discover the extraordinary history, design and art of Japanese gardens.
Mission Statement

The Australian Garden History Society is the leader in concern for and conservation of significant cultural landscapes and historic gardens through committed, relevant and sustainable action.

Phone: 03 9650 5043  Tollfree: 1800 678 446  www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au