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Cover: Sam Leach’s 2010 Wynne Prize winning landscape painting, Proposal for a Landscaped Cosmos (courtesy of the artist).
Our cover features the controversial work *Proposal for a Landscaped Cosmos* by Sam Leach, winner of the 2010 Wynne Prize. Awarded annually by the Art Gallery of New South Wales for ‘the best landscape painting of Australian scenery in oils or watercolour’, Leach’s luminous, jewel-like canvas was immediately hailed as a worthy winner. Yet, only days after the award was made, an anonymous e-mail began to hit journalists’ in-boxes pointing out the strong resemblance between Leach’s painting and *Boatmen Moored on the Shore of a Lake* (c.1660) by Dutch landscape master Adam Pynacker. Leach was unapologetic. Yes, he knew of the Pynacker, and yes, it had inspired his own work. Indeed, he confessed candidly, he had drawn on the Pynacker from an image viewed over the internet. Suddenly, as is often the case with artistic controversies, sanctimonious critics came out of the woodwork. Debate over the award—and by extension, the merits of the painting itself—swirled through the media. Surely appropriation of the Dutch original was not within the spirit of the award? And how could this be possibly ‘Australian scenery’?

‘Gardens’, declared Humphry Repton, ‘are works of art rather than nature’. And so, it seems, in this debate over what constitutes Australian scenery, it might be necessary to paraphrase Repton’s credo to read ‘Paintings are works of art, rather than nature’. Links between gardens and art—especially gardens and painting—have been strong and sustained. The Picturesque Movement was based in controversy between the two; the appropriateness of making gardens in the manner of a picture. From here, it was only a few short decades until J.C. Loudon coined the term ‘gardenesque’, to affirm that gardens were worthy of the status accorded the sister arts (including painting and sculpture), as human creations, works of art in their own right and not to be confused with imitated nature.

So where does Leach’s painting fit into garden history? Firstly, Leach’s ‘Proposal’ discreetly draws our attention to the fact that many so-called seventeenth-century Dutch landscapes are in fact based on Italian and certainly non-Dutch scenery. Secondly, his inclusion of the term ‘Cosmos’ hints at the holistic view of nature propounded by Alexander von Humboldt, whereby political boundaries count for nothing in the realm of nature. In this context, we can see Leach’s proposition that Australian scenery is often based on much more than just Australian plants. Leach seems to be suggesting that European overlays on an Australian canvas mirror what has happened to our scenery and culture over almost two hundred and fifty years of European colonisation.

And where would garden design (or opera, or ballet, or many other musical forms) be without appropriation and adaptation? Often we crave the creator’s work in its original form, but equally, are we not enriched by creative interpretations of old masterpieces? Here Leach also encapsulates another modern dilemma for history: traditional notions of copyright are in danger of being left behind. With ever increasing speeds, the internet will deliver text, images, and sound in a way that could not have been envisaged when copyright legislation was enacted, and conventional policing seems a losing battle. We should be grateful to the artist for his richly complex vision.
In 1995 I presented a paper to the Australian Garden History Society Conference on the historical patterns of settlement in the County of Cumberland and the implications this might have for colonial gardens. In 2000, when Colleen Morris and Geoffrey Britton produced a landmark study on colonial landscapes for the National Trust of Australia (NSW), Colonial Landscapes of the Cumberland Plain and Camden NSW, the significance of this heritage and the monumental task of its preservation became frighteningly apparent. Since their report, protection of the iconic places they identified has been a task of constant vigilance and it is not surprising that lesser known places had little chance to be recorded before they disappeared.

Bellfield's garden was already lost when Morris and Britton produced their report, and on the surface there was nothing to indicate its intricate connection to Australian gardening history. Its location is tantalising—in the centre of the County of Cumberland, between the Cowpasture Road and South Creek, the two north-south routes through the county, and adjacent to Bringelly Road, the east-west link between Liverpool and the Nepean River.

Bellfield is a property of local heritage significance near Liverpool, in south-western Sydney. The heritage listing notes that

The Bellfield Farm Group is an intact early 19th century farm complex strongly vernacular in form and character. The complex retains an early slab building of interest for its simple form and primitive construction and a substantial colonial homestead.

The single storey homestead with a verandah on the eastern side, and slab kitchen nearby date from the 1830s, whilst the remnant garden was described as

informally laid out with major features of historic and aesthetic interest being mature tree plantings including several large pepper trees near the slab cottage and along the north and south boundaries, an old palm tree, an old oak in the southwest corner and a pomegranate near the slab cottage. ... Various stumps remain throughout the site indicating locations of early trees now removed.

These modest descriptions reveal little of a history linked to European settlement in New Zealand, the foundation of commercial nurseries in Sydney, Australia’s first female novelist, and a long-forgotten colonial village.

A tale of two sisters

Isabella (c.1795—1863) and Jane Susan (c.1797—1863) were born in Fifeshire, Scotland, the daughters of David and Susan Henderson. They married within two years at the same church in Hackney in London and both women migrated with their husbands in the 1820s. They settled in Sydney and their children intermarried. They died within days of each other in 1863. In a world where the surnames of their husbands defined the family businesses, the identities of these women were easily overlooked, and their close family links forgotten by later generations.

Isabella Henderson was the wife of Robert Bell, a little known settler at Bringelly. Jane Henderson was the wife of nursery proprietor and landscape gardener, Thomas Shepherd.
Thomas and Jane Shepherd

Shepherd was a successful nursery proprietor and landscape gardener well known in London, not only for his nursery but his support for the emigration of agricultural workers and tradesmen. One of the earliest groups to consider systematic emigration was the New Zealand Company, established in 1825 by London merchants, ship owners, and members of parliament. Pre-dating the better known schemes inspired by Edward Gibbon Wakefield, the first New Zealand Company members included ship owner John Buckle and economist Robert Torrens, who was later involved in the foundation of South Australia and who developed a method of land registration later adopted throughout Australia. The chief employee of the New Zealand Company was Thomas Shepherd who had been ‘brought up in the nursery trade and land surveying’ and was offered a salary of £400 by the directors, later increased to £500.

Shepherd and his first wife, Sarah Joslyn (d. c.1820), both came from Kemback, Fife. Thomas Shepherd married again in November 1823 at St John Hackney, London, and his second wife, Jane Henderson, was also from Fife. Shepherd recruited most of the settlers for the New Zealand Company from Fife. The settlers included a marine surveyor, clerks, a surgeon, an interpreter, carpenters, joiners and turners, a blacksmith, stone masons, a wheelwright, baker, shoemaker, and a cooper, a flax dresser, and five ploughmen. Robert Bell, accompanied by his wife and child, was listed with the ploughmen on a salary of £52 10s.

The Rosanna with its settlers and the Lambton, store ship, sailed from London in August 1825, reaching the coast of New Zealand in March 1826. After almost a year investigating suitable locations for a settlement, the project was abandoned and the ships sailed to Sydney. The group split, with some families (including the Shepherd and Bell families) remaining in Sydney, a few travelling independently to existing New Zealand settlements, and the rest returning to Britain.

In London, Thomas Shepherd had known fellow Scot and public servant, Alexander McLeod, then Secretary of the Linnaean Society. McLeod had arrived in Sydney as Colonial Secretary in 1826, and was aware of Shepherd’s skills. Shepherd established the Darling Nursery in inner Sydney and became a significant figure in the development of colonial horticulture and agriculture. His lectures, published in the year of his death, provided a permanent record of his advice and skill.

McLeod also supported another gardener, Robert Henderson, who may have been related to the Henderson sisters. Henderson was at the Cape of Good Hope when McLeod passed through on his way to Australia. Perhaps Henderson was awaiting news of the New Zealand venture and then decided to join the adventurers in Sydney. Henderson became McLeod’s gardener and established the grounds of Elizabeth Bay House. In 1831 Robert Henderson, aged 31, married 19-year-old Elizabeth Joslyn Shepherd, daughter of Shepherd’s first wife. When Thomas Shepherd died a few years later, the Sydney Herald’s fulsome obituary of Thomas
Shepherd was evidence of his impact on colonial horticulture and agriculture, but omitted mention of his family. Henderson was one of the trustees and managed the business until Shepherd's children were old enough to take over. Henderson then established the Camellia Grove Nursery nearby in Newtown in the 1840s.3

**Robert Bell of Bellfield**

Robert Bell was born in Kilconquhar, Fife, Scotland about 1798. He married Isabella Henderson in July 1825 in London and a month later they joined Isabella's sister and her husband in their bold adventure to New Zealand.9

Though Robert Bell was listed as a ploughman on the list of Rosanna settlers, it was intended that he supervise the agriculture of the New Zealand settlement managed by his brother-in-law, for which he would receive a salary of £100 per annum.10

In New South Wales, Robert Bell quickly found work as agricultural superintendent on the estate of John Thomas Campbell, former secretary to Governor Macquarie. Campbell had received a land grant of 1550 acres in 1811 at the junction of the Nepean River and Bringelly Creek. He developed Shangcomoro into one of the best farms in the colony. In 1824 Campbell purchased the South Creek estate of Thomas Laycock junior, known as Cottage Vale, later called The Retreat, and Kelvin. Campbell was a successful farmer and pastoralist, breeding cattle and horses and in 1826 was a member of the NSW Land Board, responsible for assessing the resources of prospective settlers who applied for land grants. Campbell died in 1830.

Robert Bell, aged 30, moved to Bringelly, and with Isabella, aged 27, two-year-old James, and six-month-old David, they were listed in the 1828 census in the employ of J.T. Campbell.11 This work enabled Bell to learn colonial conditions and he invested his funds in 24 head of cattle bred by Hannibal Macarthur. When he applied for a land grant in December 1829, he had the support of Presbyterian clergyman, the Reverend John Dunmore Lang. Lang testified that Bell's character was 'unblemished' and he was a diligent agriculturalist. Bell had £150 in cash and cattle valued at £150, giving him capital of £300.

Bell received an order for 320 acres in May 1830, which he selected in country that he already knew—on South Creek, opposite the Laycock grant. Bellfield was located on the eastern side of the upper reach of South Creek, in the Parish of Cabramatta, County of Cumberland, west of Liverpool. A glance at a parish map also shows a series of small allotments between the grant and the main road, now called Bringelly Road.

The deeds to the grant were issued in 1838 but Bell was in occupation from about 1836. This was a wild and remote location, with law and order barely maintained by the magistrates at Liverpool and Bringelly. It was a place where bushrangers roamed; assigned convicts were the main workers, and stock theft a constant problem.
Robert Bell and the village of Cabramatta

Bell had wanted his grant to extend to the Bringelly Road; however, the land along Bringelly Road had already been allocated for the village of Cabramatta. In January 1825 Earl Bathurst had instructed Governor Brisbane to arrange for the survey of the colony into counties, hundreds, and parishes, replacing the existing system of districts. The land was to be valued and land reserved for public purposes such as roads, villages, churches, and schools.12

Throughout the 1830s and 1840s Bell tried to acquire the designated township land that lay between his southern boundary and Cabramatta (later Bringelly) Road. Bell had no direct access from his farm to the main road, so the village land was crucial for the development of his grant. In March 1832, Robert Bell of Cabramatta applied for a grant of an allotment within Cabramatta village, on the west side of the church allotment in the immediate neighbourhood of his farm. He proposed to build a house, a shop, and an inn to benefit the local community and promote his own ventures but his request was ignored.

A few months later in August 1832, giving his address as Thomas Shepherd's Darling Nursery, Robert Bell applied to purchase the adjoining 120 acres. In June 1833 he applied again for land in the Cabramatta township. The Surveyor General reported that the land was reserved for a town, and there was already a school, a church, and a burial ground. It was not an ideal site for a town, having little water and located on a minor road, but when Governor Gipps considered another application from Bell in 1838, he determined that, as there was so little government land left in the County of Cumberland, the Cabramatta land should not be sold.

It was not until 1846 that the Cabramatta village allotments were put up for sale by auction. Bell purchased seven blocks of five acres each in September 1845. The following year he purchased four blocks of five and six acres, and in March 1847 purchased the remaining six acre block.13 Bell finally owned most of the village, with the exception of the church land and a block purchased in 1846 by Henry Tilson.14

The garden at Bellfield and ‘The Cabramatta Store’

The strong family connections between the Bell and Shepherd families suggest that a garden would feature at Bellfield. No plans or illustrations survive and recent site works have removed most of the trees. However, a glimpse of the garden can be found in the writing of Mary Therese Vidal, Australia’s first female novelist to publish under her own name. Mary Vidal was the wife of the Reverend Francis Vidal and the sister-in-law of the Reverend George Vidal. Francis was the Anglican clergyman at St Mary Magdalene, South Creek (St Marys) and St Mary the Virgin, Denham Court, Liverpool during the 1840s, and George was variously the clergyman at St Peters, Campbeltown, St Mary the Virgin, Denham Court, and St Thomas, Mulgoa between 1846 and 1865.
Mr Parker had taken great pains with the laying out of his grounds. It was a very pretty place, as well as a good farm. The shrubbery continued some way and Mr Parker intended to make this the principal entrance, by which means a considerable angle would be cut off in the road to the church and the settlement.

The house stood rather in a hollow, and ... only the roof and chimneys were seen... A few gnarled and twisted apple-trees (so called from the sap which is said to taste like cider) had been spared when their companions were felled and added very much to the beauty of the scene.\textsuperscript{15}

The single storey homestead had a long verandah on the eastern side covered with a luxurious creeper and the grounds were brilliant with magnificent scarlet geraniums and roses. The large white cedars provided shade for the ladies of the house and their servants to sit and sew. The men’s huts were separated from the house by an orange grove. Grapes were grown and dried in the sun to make fresh raisins.\textsuperscript{16}

**Life in the colony for the Bell family**

By the mid-1830s Bellfield butter was an identifiable product, sold at the Sydney markets at the same premium price as William Howe's Glenlee butter.\textsuperscript{17}
By July 1832 Robert Bell had two male assigned convicts at Bellfield—a general labourer and a ploughman. In 1837 he had six male assigned convict servants working on his Cabramatta property and one ticket of leave man. Mrs Bell, who had six children, had an Irish female assigned servant who was possibly the inspiration for Mary Vidal’s Irish convict washerwoman in “The Cabramatta Store.”

By 1838 Robert Bell had 160 head of cattle, valued at £640, eight working bullocks, three brood mares, two working horses, two yearly foals, ten pigs, 400 bushels of wheat in straw, as well as 300 bushels of wheat in storage and farming implements. Like his neighbours he found strange horses running in his paddocks, and suffered the theft of some of his horses.

By the 1840s Robert Bell was an established stock breeder. His wealthier neighbours, like Alfred Kennerley at The Retreat, sold him blood stock, such as Young Admiral, from whom Bell bred carriage and cart horses. By 1846 he was breeding race horses from his brown stallion, Augustus. He probably exported his horses to India, where New South Wales’ horses were in high demand.

Bell’s standing in the community was recognised in 1844 and 1848 when Liverpool magistrate Samuel Moore successfully nominated him for the District Council of Liverpool. Though the District Councils were practically defunct, membership had to be approved by the Governor, and Bell was an acceptable choice, joining Thomas Holt junior and Richard Sadlier on the council.

They called the estate Chatsworth and David Shepherd was the resident manager. By 1861 Chatsworth was sufficiently established to replace the old Darling Nursery as the main site for the Shepherd Brothers. Covering 1300 acres, bounded on the east by Eastern Creek and on the west by Rope’s Creek, there were many varieties of orange trees and other fruit trees, plantations of camellias, azaleas, rhododendrons, and acres of vegetables to supply the seed trade. The nursery had stone-lined ponds stocked with perch and other fresh water fish.

David Shepherd and his wife Jane (nee Bell) lived at Chatsworth with their seven children from 1857. The estate in the 1860s was regarded as ‘being away from any township and out of reach of religious instruction’, visited occasionally by a clergyman. Mrs David Shepherd held a Sunday school for the local children. Jane Shepherd spent the last years of her life at Ashfield, where she died at her home, Belmont, in August 1886, survived by her husband David.

Isabella Bell (nee Henderson) died at Bellfield on 3 November 1863 and was buried at Holy Innocents, Rossmore. Her sister, Jane Shepherd, widow of Thomas Shepherd had died only days earlier on 31 October 1863 at the Darling Nursery.

Robert Bell died at Bellfield in July 1877, aged 78 and was buried with his wife and near their youngest daughter, Elizabeth who had died unmarried in 1860. In 1857 their other daughter Jessie Isabella Bell had married Robert Thomas Jamison, the eldest son of Sir John Jamison of Regentville. Mary Bell Jamison was born the following year. Jessie Jamison died in 1864 and was
buried with her husband and infant son in the same tomb as Sir John Jamison at St Stephen’s Penrith.

Bellfield was left to the eldest son, James, but within a few months James also was dead, becoming ill at Dubbo on a visit to his brother David to discuss the settlement of their father’s estate. David was a stock inspector at Dubbo and inherited the estate.

In 1878 David Bell sold Bellfield to Henry Edward Holland. In 1886 Holland sold it to Michael McMahon, who renamed the estate Rossmore. Two years later McMahon sold his property to Ernest Percival Dawborn of Sydney, a land agent, who promptly advertised the subdivision of 1000 acres as the Rossmore Dairy Farms. Priced at £15 per acre, the land had good quality grass, and the soil well suited for fruit trees and vegetables. A 50-acre block included the large homestead, barns, and stables.

Bellfield was remembered in a street name in the subdivision.22

The railway from Sydney to Liverpool was built in 1860. A new station opened in 1870 and was named Cabramatta, so the never-developed village 17 kilometres further west was renamed Rossmore.

A later generation was inspired by the district’s history, architecture, and gardens. William Hardy Wilson (1881–1955) drew attention to the estates of the Cumberland Plain in The Cow Pasture Road (1920) and Old Colonial Architecture in New South Wales and Tasmania (1924). Born in Campbelltown, son of Jessie Shepherd and a great grandson of both Robert and Isabella Bell, and Thomas and Jane Shepherd, Hardy Wilson’s imagination was nurtured from family roots that included Bellfield.

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2. NSW State Heritage Inventory.

3. NSW State Heritage Inventory.

4. Sarah’s surname is spelt variously Josling / Joslyn / Joslin. Her daughter Elizabeth (b. 1814) had her mother’s surname as her second name, and this was spelt as Joslyn.


8. Sydney Herald, 10 September 1835, p. 2; Horticultural Magazine and Gardener’s Calendar of NSW, No 15, March 1865, p. 68.


12. Bathurst to Brisbane, 1 January 1825, Historical Records of Australia, Series 1, Vol. xi, pp. 434—44.

13. Packet for PA 7294.

14. Packet for PA 21426. Tilson’s block was later purchased by Noakes, and occupied by his widow and her second husband Watling until 1907, remaining outside Bell’s estate.

15. M. Vidal, Cabramatta and Woodleigh Farm, pp. 163—4

16. Ibid., pp. 53, 77.

17. Sydney Gazette, 12 April 1838, p. 2.

18. Sydney Gazette, 27 September 1832, p. 2

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24. NSW Government Gazette, 24 May 1844; Moore to Colonial Secretary, 9 May 1848, State Records 4/1162.2 District Councils 1845—60.


31. Hobart Mercury, 10 July 1877, p. 3.

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Historian Carol Liston is Associate Professor in the School of Humanities and Languages at the University of Western Sydney. She specialises in the colonial history of the Cumberland Plain (Greater Western Sydney) and researches its people, places, history, and heritage. She discovered Bellfield and Rossmore while working on her most recent book, Pictorial History Liverpool and District (2009).
The Romantic ethos (1700–1900)

Elizabeth Barlow Rogers

Romanticism’s impact on landscape design underpins a new exhibition at The Morgan Library & Museum in New York—a review will be found in our next issue. Here we list the catalogue essayist’s propositions of the Romantic ethos.

The following propositions are intended to state the several, and often contradictory tenets, tendencies, and attributes, that form the complex ethos called Romanticism.

- Romanticism holds that there is no such thing as self-evident truth discoverable by rational deduction or induction, only personal feeling, which may be shared, yet remains unique to each individual.
- Romanticism is rooted in the notion that the individual can gain knowledge and understanding through the senses as well as through the mind.
- Romanticism ranks sentiment above logic.
- Romanticism forsakes moderation for fervor.
- Romanticism champions personal religious values over ecclesiastical authority.
- Romanticism is contemptuous of court life and aristocratic privilege, defending individual rights and the dissolution of the bonds of servitude.
- Romanticism prizes memory and mood, giving license to nostalgia, affection, and melancholy and adding a new depth of meaning to history, family ties, and death.
- Romanticism promotes unsophisticated primitivism and the abandonment of social convention.
- Romanticism is drawn to things rural, common, and aged: the rustic cottage and the old mill, the graveyard beside the country church, and the peasant’s time-honored toil.
- Romanticism has a penchant for the faraway and the exotic.
- Romanticism nostalgically cherishes classical antiquity and the Middle Ages.
- Romanticism values modernity; it embraces the novel and puts faith in civilization’s progress.

- Romanticism eschews norms in favor of diversity and eclecticism.
- Romanticism chooses spontaneity as its modus operandi; the sketch, the letter, and the journal entry are its typical modes of expression, often serving as the means of capturing and preserving the emotion of the moment as a future subject.
- Romanticism prefers nature in its wilder and dramatic guise; the blasted oak, the mountain torrent, the rocky coast, and the snow-crowned peak are its hallmarks.
- Romanticism celebrates nature’s tranquility and bounty.
- Romanticism sees the universe as dynamic and organic rather than as mechanistic and foreordained.
- Romanticism is constant change, a continual becoming rather than a perpetual state of being.
- Romanticism is transcendental belief; in the face of scientific rationalism, technological innovation, materialism, and secularization, it holds nature divine.
- Romanticism believes the only valid psychology is that of the individual, that nature is humanity’s benign nurse, best teacher, and artistic muse.

In summary, the Romantic ethos is a compound of various and often opposing beliefs and preferences. For all its fluidity and multiplicity of contradictory perspectives, it is characterized first and foremost by a new sense of the meaning of the individual, society, and nature as well as their relationship to one another.

Elizabeth Barlow Rogers is a New York-based collector, scholar, educator, author, and parks activist, and president of the Foundation for Landscape Studies. This is an extract from her latest essay in Romantic Gardens: nature, art, and landscape design (see review on page 28).
The garden at Titanga

Val Lang

The eucalypt shelter belts, collection of Australian trees, and dryland garden are just some of the features that contribute to Titanga's national significance. The history of the garden and wider landscape is also personal for its current custodians.

The Titanga property is a working farm located 160 kilometres west of Melbourne. The Titanga garden began its life about 1872, the year Alexander Buchanan built the Titanga house. Buchanan had been a partner in a property situated near what is now called Lismore. When land became freehold in 1871 he retired from the partnership, taking as his share the western portion. This area he named Titanga. He then built his home—a long, low house designed by Henderson and Davidson of Geelong, and built of locally quarried bluestone with a slate roof—in the natural woodland of banksia, acacia, and casuarina. Buchanan was a bachelor and his sister, Miss Buchanan, came to keep house for him.

The dryland garden
Together Buchanan and his sister must have planned a garden suitable for the climate, rainfall, and soil. The garden was created in an area derived from granite. The surface was reddish light loam for about six inches in depth, then a layer of gravel, and, below that, clay. Surface water in those days was thought to be unsuitable, and rainfall averaged only 21 inches a year, so the garden had to be one which could ‘do without’. Undaunted, they made use of the few assets they had.

The Titanga homestead garden, of 2.5 acres, began at the side of the house and extended to the rear, thus with no fence and a clear view from the front of the house. A red gravel driveway ran across the front of the house and was extended around a circle of grass, this allowing horses to change direction.

The garden was established as a small formal garden set in an open woodland. The original layout and dryland character of the garden has...
been maintained, with gravel paths, hedging, and drought-tolerant trees surviving. From the 1880s the native woodland has been inter-planted and mainly replaced by a collection of conifers and introduced eucalypts which now form a backdrop to the garden.

Paths and flowerbeds were laid out amongst the native trees and red (pottery) Dutch tiles bordered many of the shrubberies and flowerbeds. Many of these tile borders still exist.

Watering was limited. An underground tank which collected rainwater from the roof served as the only supply of water for the household until the late 1880s, so used bathwater was run into a well from where it was hand pumped for use in the garden via a 20-gallon tank on wheels.

There was of course an orchard. The vegetable garden was a separate enclosure some distance from the homestead and tended with great success by a 'chinaman'. In the centre of the garden enclosure was a small dairy which contained a milk-cooler and a butter churn. On the eastern side of the dairy was built a fernery, which would receive shade from the dairy wall from the westerly sun and in turn it would shade the dairy from the morning sun when the milk and cream were being attended to.

**Distant views**

Unlike so many district graziers, who shut themselves away from their environment and enclosed their houses with a garden reminiscent of their homeland, the Buchanans included the distant view and paddocks in their scheme of things. The house stood on a rise overlooking a plain where, in the distance, could be seen Lake Tooliarook and the extinct volcanoes which abound in the Western District, with Mount Elephant dominating the skyline to the southwest.

**The house paddock**

As the house had an uninterrupted view of the front paddocks, Alexander Buchanan improved the outlook with many miles of shelter plantations and put many single trees in the house paddock to give it a park-like appearance.

Oral history suggests a connection between some of the Titanga tree plantations and Ferdinand von Mueller, Victoria's Government Botanist. Mueller is thought to have contributed some seeds for trialling at Titanga, and the entry in the Titanga tree register, entitled ‘Special plantation’, is a possible contender—although this is not confirmed by any explicit evidence. A detailed planting diagram is accompanied by a list of eucalypts and the following instructions.

\[A\ \text{special plantation of 15 chains in length by} \ 2\% \ \text{chains in width to be sown with special varieties of} \ \text{[eucalypt] seed in rows not less than 12 feet apart—} \ 1\% \ \text{chain on north side to sown broadcast with usual mixture—with a hedge of light wood (2 rows) to be sown with drill.}\]
A view from Titanga to Mount Elephant—faintly visible on the horizon in this early 1870s photograph—looking across the house paddock.

In 2010, the tree collection in the house paddock makes for a striking and memorable landscape experience.
Alexander Buchanan died in 1882 and his brother Colonel Buchanan inherited Titanga, selling it to John Lang Currie. J.L. Currie had settled at Lara near Darlington in 1844, and now semi-retired, he lived in St Kilda and used Titanga as his country residence. Not much is known of the garden under his ownership, but on his death, it passed to his daughter Henrietta who had married a kinsman, Patrick Sellar Lang. Henrietta and P.S. Lang managed the garden for approximately ten years. By 1911 the garden was being managed by their son, Patrick Henry Lang and his wife Molly (Eleanor Mary née Ryan). Molly was a talented artist, influenced by her aunt, the flower painter Ellis Rowan. Molly took a keen and active interest in the garden, and enhanced its character. It gave her tremendous pleasure.

Whilst Molly managed the garden, her husband turned his attention to the house paddock. He collected different varieties of eucalypts and, at the time of his death in 1947, over 200 different species grew in the house paddock.

After the First World War a tennis court was built, replacing the orchard, which had become a garden for birds and possums. The fernery was pulled down and the dairy turned into a playroom, then a maid’s room, a Corgi’s maternity hospital, and now a storage room. In 1938 it was discovered that the water from a nearby dam was suitable for plants so water was laid on and the 20-gallon tank on wheels went into semi-retirement. Molly had a small lawn and lily pond constructed; the rose bed altered to make it more interesting with a circular bed in the middle in which stands a cement garden ornament; and low rosemary and box hedges to border many of the flower beds.

Molly and her daughter Henrietta managed the garden until Molly’s death in 1967. Henrietta continued to take great care of the garden until her death in 1990. Henrietta lived with, loved, and cared for the garden for more than 70 years.

Chris Lang and myself (Val Lang) have cared for the garden since 1990. Over the years it has had changes but the original design is the same and watering is still limited. Many of the original plants still grow. These include roses and bulbs, rows of quince trees, individual pittosporum, Irish strawberry trees, and a selection of conifers that includes a Himalayan Cypress, a Chinese Weeping Cypress, and a Bunya Bunya at the back gate.

Val Lang would like to acknowledge Chris and Andrew Lang’s aunt, Henrietta. Her notes form the basis of this article and her love of her garden was passed on to the current generation of Langs at Titanga.
A stroll through a lost Sydney garden: Cairnsfoot, Arncliffe (1884–1955)

John Pearman

Combining historic photographs and family memories, the historic Sydney garden Cairnsfoot at Arncliffe is reconstructed as it appeared during the mid-1940s.

Tracing the garden at Cairnsfoot
Colleen Morris's recent exhibition and book *Lost Gardens of Sydney* included an interwar garden at Arncliffe, in suburban Sydney, named Alwyn. As Colleen has noted, Alan Evans—an accountant for Davis Gelatine—and his wife Sylvia Winifred, built Alwyn and lived there between 1927 and 1949. Their modest bungalow residence was surrounded by a prize-winning garden and Evans, who was a keen amateur photographer, has left us with a precious documentary record through his carefully recorded images. As well as his own garden, Alan Evans photographed the staff and gardens of the Davis Gelatine factory in Botany, and entered competitions run by the *Australasian Photo Review*.

I grew up at Arncliffe and so knew this area well. Old Arncliffe was dotted with Victorian mansions in large gardens—Dappeto (11 acres), Wickham (8 acres), Athelstane (5 acres), and Cairnsfoot (5 acres) to name just a few. The residence of Alan and Sylvia Evans, Alwyn, once stood next to Cairnsfoot and you can imagine my delight when I discovered that Evans had taken a wonderful series of photographs of Cairnsfoot during the mid-1940s. Not only was Alan Evans a talented photographer, but his photographic legacy is now safeguarded for future generations within the Caroline Simpson Library and Research Collection of the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales. The staff of this library and research collection combines friendly service with professional efficiency which makes research there both delightful and rewarding, and I am indebted to Tracey Gibbons, Penny Gill, and Matthew Stephens for their generous assistance.

While Cairnsfoot was not the largest or grandest of the Arncliffe mansions, it is the only one for which we have a photographic record—even though sadly incomplete it is an evocative fragment in the never-ending story of Australian gardens. Using a series of photographs by Alan Evans (and some from an earlier time) I would like to walk you through the garden at Cairnsfoot, home to several generations of the Farleigh family, during the early 1940s—the time of the Second World War.

My mother knew both the Evans family of Alwyn and the Farleigh family of Cairnsfoot. The last of the Farleighs to live at Cairnsfoot, Elizabeth and May, were family friends. They went to the same church and worked together raising money for the Red Cross during the Second World War. Apart from these treasured family memories, I have also known the garden at Cairnsfoot since I was a very young boy, although some of my earliest recollections may have dimmed with time, especially the exact names of some of the garden’s plants.

The Farleigh family of Cairnsfoot
It is thanks to the late Ron Rathbone OAM—teacher, historian, alderman, mayor—that we know much of the history of Cairnsfoot through his researching and recording of the early history of the St George district and especially through his book *A Village called Arncliffe* (1997). Rathbone records...
that Edward Manicom Farleigh was born in County Mayo, Ireland, in 1838, the son of a coastguard officer. In 1865, with his wife and two small sons, he migrated to Victoria. In 1873, they moved to Sydney where Farleigh established the leather firm of E.M. Farleigh Pty Ltd at Mascot. By 1885, the family had increased to ten children the eldest of whom, John Gibson Farleigh, was to become a leading industrialist and a Member of the New South Wales Legislative Council.

Early in 1884, the Farleighs purchased five acres of uneven ground in Loftus Street at the corner of Willington Street, Arncliffe, and erected on the site a fine two-storey Italianate mansion with extensive outbuildings which they named Cairnsfoot. Ron Rathbone notes that Edward's wife Eliza Farleigh is said to have been delighted with every feature of the house except the main staircase, which she considered mean and unnecessarily steep for a house of its size.

The origin of the name Cairnsfoot is unknown although Arncliffe (meaning 'eagle cliff') has many rocky hills which those with Gaelic background call cairns. One such cairn rises up at the northwestern end of the Farleigh land and Cairnsfoot may simply mean 'place at the foot of a rocky hill (cairn)'. Perhaps it was named for Cairnsfoot House, Sligo, Ireland, built in the early nineteenth century (and later celebrated in the book *The Celtic Twilight* (1893/rev. 1902) by W.B. Yeats).

Cairnsfoot's builder, Edward Farleigh, died in 1909, although his wife Eliza lived on there until her death at the age of 98 in 1939. After Farleigh's death the western half of the estate was sold and a new street—appropriately called Edward Street—was created. There is no known record of this part of the original estate although I suspect that it included paddocks for the horses and a house cow, a poultry run, a garden supplying vegetables and flowers to the house, and perhaps a glasshouse. There were, however dairies, poultry farms, and Chinese market gardens in Arncliffe at this time, and my speculation may be wide of the mark.

Two unmarried sisters, Elizabeth and May, were the last of Edward Manicon Farleighs family to live at Cairnsfoot, the last of the old Arncliffe mansions still being lived in by its original family. In 1955, the last surviving member of the family, Miss Elizabeth Farleigh, died. Shortly afterwards the property was purchased by the Department of Education to be a school for the developmentally delayed. It was opened as the Loftus Street Special School in 1959, and in recent years has been attractively renovated and its old name restored.

**A tour of the Cairnsfoot garden**

Despite the great reduction of the garden, photographs and memories allow us to reconstruct its layout and character, and to glimpse the use to which it was put during the Second World War. As previously mentioned, I knew the garden as a lad supplemented by from memories which my mother shared with me. My interest in architecture and gardens stems, in part, from my long friendship with Gowrie Waterhouse of Eryldene at Gordon—
after his death in 1977 I became closely involved with the management of the Eryldene garden. Supplementing my own interest in plants, fellow horticulturists and gardener lovers, Peter Valder and Carmel Quill, assisted in identifying the Cairnsfoot plants in the early photographs. I have also been guided by interviews with Rainsford Farleigh and Beverly Pescott, great grand children of Edward Manicom Farleigh.

My mother recalled the last two Farleigh sisters as pleasant women whose company she enjoyed. Elizabeth, confident and capable; May is quieter and more reticent but the enduring qualities of gentleness and warmth. Think of them as being ‘at home’ as we wander through the garden. Imagine arriving at the entrance to Cairnsfoot, with its double gates for carriages (and later cars) and a single gate for pedestrians. Beside the single gate is a large camellia bearing beautiful white flowers in winter. However, if you touch these flowers they quickly turn brown—a fact that has frustrated many a passing thief. Is this one of the reasons camellias fell out of fashion during the early 1900s and were not much grown until championed by Professor E.G. Waterhouse many years later? Behind the fence is a line of pollarded camphor laurels, while peeping over are bamboos and oleanders.

The carriage loop lawn is protected by a screen of wormwood, oleanders, and roses. The adjacent lawn has garden beds containing roses, conifers, and occasional plantings of gladioli, zinnias, wallflowers, lupins, and pansies. A pergola is covered in roses. Along the north wall of the house is a large frangipani. Considering the scarcity of gardeners during the war years the garden is well groomed.

To the south of the drive is the orchard and vegetable garden. A wooden railing marks the boundary of the ornamental garden. A fruit tree covered in blossom is a China pear; one just starting to flower is a peach. The house cow, Biddy, grazed in the orchard and terrorised the gardener when he was working there. Along the southern edge of the drive are some magnificent fine specimen trees—two large Norfolk Island pines and two American magnolias.

During the Second World War lovely gardens all over Sydney were opened to the public to raise money for the Red Cross Society and other charities connected with the war effort such as the soldiers’ comfort funds. Some owners even organised gala garden fetes. I have strong memories of Red Cross fetes in the garden at Cairnsfoot, so I was intrigued that some Evans images showed this aspect of the garden’s use.

The war evoked strong memories for the Farleigh sisters—their brother Alfred (known as Fred) had been killed in World War One. The family’s youngest son, Alfred Gordon Farleigh had served as an officer—he was awarded the Military Cross for ‘conspicuous gallantry’ (4 – 5 March 1918), gassed at Villers-Bretonneux (16 April 1918), and killed by artillery fire at Bray-sur-Somme (22 August 1918).

The rocky northern area of the garden is essentially a wild garden with remnants of the original bush—scribbly gums, Sydney red gums, Port Jackson figs,
Here we are in the rocky northern end of the garden looking west/south-west. Behind the Red Cross stall is a pergola covered in bower vine (bignonia—Pandorea jasminoides) leading to more of the wild garden. To its left you see the lattice entrance to that ubiquitous feature of Victorian gardens—the fernery with its collection of ferns, palms, orchids, and begonias.

At the garden stall during a Red Cross fete in 1944. The woman in the hat is Sylvia Evans, wife of the photographer, and neighbour from Alwyn next door. Striking a model’s catwalk pose she displays with pride her patriotic purchases, but where are all the customers? There must have been many because considerable sums were donated to the Red Cross.
together with brush box, pines, and succulents. Here is the most spectacular planting in the garden—a large grove of the century plant (*Agave americana*) in the north-eastern corner. Perched on its rocky plinth, its sculptural form and fleshy yellow striped leaves make it a stand-out specimen. Despite its common name it flowers once every 10 to 15 years, the showy inflorescence shooting skyward to a great height, although after flowering the plant dies but is replaced by new growths from the base.

Finally we’ll walk in our mind down the carriageway to the front verandah for refreshments and farewells until our next magical mystery tour of a lost garden. I encourage you to use the Caroline Simpson Library and Research Collection, which has many of its collections on-line. And for those of you curious about Sylvia Evans, neighbour of the Farleighs, look out for her book, *Tail Up: the story of ‘Manna’*, *personalities dog* (privately published from her home in Arncliffe in 1944) in which—so she tells us—‘The people, dogs, other animals and birds and the incidents chronicled in this book, are in the main, authentic’.

**Acknowledgments**

In addition to those people mentioned throughout this article, thank you also to Kirsten Broderick (Rockdale) and Niall Pettit-Yung (Hurstville), local history librarians; Lesley Bruce, Principal, Cairnsfoot School; and Gloria Henke, St George Historical Society. The photographs taken by Alan Evans between 1943 and 1947 are now held by the Caroline Simpson Library and Research Collection, Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, and those illustrated are reproduced here with permission. Information on A.G. ‘Fred’ Farleigh is available online from the Australian War Memorial <http://cas.awm.gov.au/photograph/PO7828.001>.

**John Pearman** is a retired academic. He lives in an environmental teaching house at Gordon, on Sydney’s North Shore, which many students visit to explore the concept of sustainability. This article was based on a recent illustrated presentation for the Sydney and Northern NSW branch of the AGHS.
Still on the trail of Edna Walling

Trisha Dixon

The two recent AGHS tours of Edna Walling gardens have given rise to reflection on Walling’s place in the history of an Australian gardening ethos.

It seems I have been in the footsteps of Edna Walling for some considerable time and the two recent AGHS tours looking at Walling’s gardens brought to light more interesting information, more people that knew her, more stories, and another layer of knowledge and appreciation, reinforcing my respect for her indefinable skills, her talent, her understatement, and her understanding of our dry continent.

On our tours we had an AGHS member who had lived in Edna Walling’s first house in Bickleigh Vale—Sonning as well as another member who lives in her last house, Bendles, in Buderim, Queensland. We met people who had worked alongside Walling, had employed her, and had met her—each with stories to relate.

Walking in Edna Walling’s footsteps has taken me on some interesting trails—on a bicycle ride up Big Hill near Lorne, on Victoria’s Great Ocean Road, to the ruin of a house and garden she built overlooking the southern ocean; to a garden in Tasmania that had been subdivided into many gardens, with one of Walling’s classic pergolas straddling two gardens; to Buderim where there are still remnants of her last gardens; along the winding roads of the Amalfi looking for the Capuchin convent with the pergola that inspired her famed one at Boortkoi; and to southern England to find the village of Bickleigh that inspired her own village at Mooroolbark. This turned out to be quite elusive.

Travelling around southern England with Anne Latreille and Jackie Courmadias in 1997, we three spent our days traipsing around the countryside. We ended up in the maze that tumbles down the hill at Glendurgan on the Cornwall coast, admired the Henry Moore sculpture above the jousting lawn at Dartington Hall, and saw the stimulus for Edna Walling’s early designs in Gertrude Jekyll’s Hestercombe. As we all had an interest in Edna Walling we thought we would look out the village of Bickleigh, knowing it to be in that part of the world near where Edna Walling was born in 1895. Our visit was disappointing—an unattractive town with a strong military presence—one thatched roofed cottage and little to recommend it. Time had wreaked its change—or so I thought.

Perchance that Christmas, I received in the mail, an intriguing tiny manila envelope with Richard Aitken’s trademark handwriting: ‘wish you were here, love from Edna’ and inside six small
black-and-white historic photographs of quaint thatched cottages on a river at Bickleigh, Tiverton, in the UK. Perhaps there was another Bickleigh—thank you Richard!

Years later I flew overseas with my mother and an elderly friend who we drove to Moretonhampstead in south-west England, not far from both Exeter and Dartmoor, a wonderful little market town by the River Teign where she was to stay. After a leisurely lunch, my mother and I had no immediate plans at all—we were both happy to head off into the countryside taking the road less travelled and using my traveling edict ‘if you don’t know where you’re going you can’t get lost’! Vaguely travelling north towards Bath, we meandered through the villages of Devon until we drove across a stone bridge with picturesque thatched cottages huddled along a flowing river. Simultaneously we decided this was the place to stay that night—it was the quintessential tiny English village. And so we turned the car around and drove back through the tiny hamlet, looking for a B&B sign. Having found only one, we carried our bags in and asked the name of the village. ‘Bickleigh Vale’ I was told.

How serendipitous to end up by pure chance in the village that inspired Edna Walling to create her own Bickleigh Vale in Melbourne’s eastern ranges. Situated on the River Exe, the original Bickleigh Vale was exactly as the tourist brochure proclaimed: ‘timeless and enchanting’ and ‘Devon’s prettiest village’. And how unchanged it would have been from the early 1900s when the young Edna Walling would have visited, before moving first to New Zealand and later to make her home in Australia where she has been integral in our notion of an Australian garden.

As my journey takes me into the realms of reading our landscape and climate, coming to terms with water ethics, and gardening sustainably, my respect for Edna Walling grows—how well she read our landscape and with such integrity. And so, continuing the conversation with Richard Aitken, I refer to his article ‘Walling published in the UK (1953)’ (see AGH, 21 (3), 2010) where he writes of Walling’s urgent manifesto as a vocal proponent for understanding our landscape. It is not just her crusade in advancing the cause of Australian-plant gardens, but also in her understanding of our water constraints. I believe Edna Walling changed our need to create gardens reflecting our strongly Anglo-centric heritage by her interpretation and respect for our climate and landscape. To see, on our recent tours of her gardens, large gravel forecourts designed 60–80 years ago was inspiring and to re-read her books, written in such engagingly simple language, makes me realise her philosophy is perhaps more relevant today than when first written.

Bickleigh Vale on the River Exe in Devon.
Profile

Dr Jan Schapper brings extensive experience in landscape heritage, education, and management and conservation of natural and cultural landscapes to the AGHS National Management Committee. Here, she discusses with AGH her involvement in garden and landscape heritage, conservation, some current projects, and concerns.

Ecology and design
From an early age I was intrigued by ecology. I wanted to understand the landscape and how it functioned. It continues to fascinate me, in particular semi-arid ecology. This interest led me to start studying agriculture at university, quickly moving to botany. My first degree was in science (botany) with Professors John Turner and Carrick Chambers at The University of Melbourne, and I remain very attached to botany. Later, a need for design as an adjunct to botany arose when, in the 1970s, the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) proposed to transform the creek in the reserve at the bottom of our garden into a concrete drain. I knew what was proposed was wrong but lacked the expertise needed to design an alternative. Through the input of many, the creek and its environs were ultimately saved. So, in 1978 I joined the first intake into the landscape architecture program at The University of Melbourne. Michael McCarthy was the first full-time professor of landscape architecture and I found him inspiring. Prof. George Seddon and Dr David Evans were among other inspirational academics at that time. It was a very exciting period. Through McCarthy came my first serious landscape teaching post, which provided an opportunity to bring my interests in landscape and design together.

I had also joined the National Trust Landscape Committee and later, Trust Council. During this time, the National Trust Landscape Committee was responsible for Como and Rippon Lea gardens, and I had a lot to do with these properties, as well as gingering people into preparing conservation studies for them. It is amazing to think that, until relatively recently, places such as these did not have a good sense of what they had, what was important, and why. Melbourne’s Royal Botanic Gardens became one of the early important landscapes to have a conservation study. This was supported by the Maud Gibson Trust after intense questioning by John Brookes at an AGHS conference. John Taylor, then director of the Royal Botanic Gardens and now a member of NMC was instrumental in seeing this through and Richard Aitken was one of the consultants.

At this time I also became involved in the Trust for Nature (then the Victoria Conservation Trust). I have now been, variously, a board member, board associate, and trustee of its foundation for 22 years. In these early days, Norman Wettenhall was chairman and he inculcated a wonderful culture of inclusion and encouragement. There were trips, stories, and, always, the great work people were doing was celebrated. It was such fun. Norman’s focus on covenanting as an effective conservation tool was crucial to the success of Trust for Nature’s efforts.

Ned’s Corner, 80 kilometres west of Mildura, is an important and exciting Trust for Nature project. Ned’s is the largest privately owned property in Victoria and comprises 30,000 hectares of bluebush and saltbush country with some mallee vegetation and tall eucalypts fringing the Murray River. When acquired, the landscape had been heavily grazed and was depleted and impoverished. Now, with stock and rabbits largely removed, the rich seed bank that remained in the soil has begun to regenerate with astonishing results. In addition, revegetation projects have been undertaken by management and volunteers. The results of these efforts are starting to be evident.
Through the broader Mallee Restoration Project we are now exploring opportunities for capturing carbon in this landscape, primarily by regenerating the semi-arid ecology. This venture is being observed with much interest as something of a pilot program for measuring carbon capture in the natural landscape.

**Getting things done**

The period from 1995 was a very active time for landscape heritage in Victoria, following the introduction of the *Heritage Act 1995*. This Act included provisions for dealing with heritage landscapes and generally broadened controls on
heritage places in Victoria. At this time I became the National Trust's representative on the first Heritage Council set up under the new Act. Several years later I was asked to form the Landscape Advisory Committee (LAC) to provide advice to Heritage Council. LAC also provides forums for sharing knowledge—on coastal landscapes, the Mornington Peninsula, historic towns in the landscape, and the cultural landscape of the volcanic plains and the Wimmera/Mallee. A recent publication pulls together selected papers from each of these LAC events (Heritage Landscapes: Selected forum papers 2004–2008), edited with an introduction and conclusion by Dr John Dwyer and myself, and published by the Heritage Council and launched at the 2009 AGHS Annual National Conference in Geelong. It was important to us to publish these papers so they could be more easily available to students and others. They are also accessible online on the Heritage Victoria website. LAC continues this work and has added to our understanding of heritage landscapes.

Passing things on
I am a firm believer in passing on information and ideas. This is what led me to teach at The University of Melbourne for so many years where among other subjects, I developed the course on landscape heritage. It has been my own experience, both with organisations and the extraordinary people I have worked with over the years, that it is important to pass the baton on to like-minded people who can add their knowledge and bring their own energy and ideas to problems and issues.

I am concerned about some trends in landscape design where plants can sometimes tend to look like outdoor furnishing, where the range of plants becomes impoverished, and where the resultant garden or landscape may generate neither scent nor visual delight. I personally get such joy from bringing the garden into the house, or seeing the landscape roll out in front of me. I also value memory and the associations certain plants have for me.

We should be letting the terrain and climate dictate what we grow. Being a botanist by first training, I like a broad palette of plants and do not limit myself to plants of one region, while still respecting the need for a framework of indigenous plants in certain places. I like the idea of understanding the origins of plants and then using them appropriately. I am also over lugging buckets of water around the garden. Plants are either survivors or they go. Some plants have surprised me with their tenacity.

I am not a 'preserve in aspic' heritage conservationist. While I want to see the most significant places conserved, adaptive re-use of less significant places using good design and respect for each layer of history can often generate diverse and interesting gardens and landscapes.
Netscape

Significant landscape features of Orange, NSW
www.orangesignificantscapes.com.au

In previous issues, Netscape has featured newly digitised resources from collections held by major national and international bodies (National Library of Australia, Picture Australia, Biodiversity Heritage Library). Easily accessible online, these tools are invaluable for primary research. In this issue of AGH we focus on a project where the primary research has already been undertaken—as well as fieldwork, community input, analysis, and assessments of significance. (We thank Stuart Read for bringing it to the attention of AGH.)

The project is Orange City Council’s survey of significant landscapes and trees, prepared by Andrews Neil in association with Artscape, and then published as a purpose-developed interactive website. The project explores how the cultural landscape of Orange has been shaped by an ongoing interaction between people and the landscape. One of its objectives is that an understanding of the tangible and visible evidence of a place’s history and culture will help to foster connections between people and place.

The website sets out the cultural landscape character of Orange, identifying important trees and other plantings, places and precincts, views and vistas, and streetscapes that contribute to the city’s identity and sense of place, with useful maps and good quality images.

The approach and types of features identified do not break new ground. One can think of a number of local government heritage studies and thematic environmental histories that explore similar territory, as well as a handful of studies that specifically embrace a similar landscape approach—for example, two reports prepared by Colleen Morris and Geoffrey Britton: the Castlereagh Cultural Landscape Study (1999), commissioned by the Penrith Lakes Corporation; and Colonial Landscapes of the Cumberland Plain and Camden, NSW (2000), commissioned by the Heritage Council of NSW. Local councils (such as Penrith City Council) are undertaking similar landscape character studies with the same kind of potential uses intended. Penrith City Council has worked with the NSW Heritage Office to make information on places identified in their heritage study and listed in Penrith City Council’s Local Environmental Plan (LEP) publicly available through the State Heritage Inventory on the internet, and to provide the community with a valuable research and information tool, which includes records, scanned images, and maps. What is innovative and exciting here is the presentation of the research outcomes online, not as a wad of pages in PDF format, but in a purpose-designed, user-friendly, and interactive online format.

Especially noteworthy is the folio of maps showing the shifting patterns of landuse and settlement as a series of time slices that you can ‘click’ your way through. These provide an excellent means for comprehending, at-a-glance, the intersection of settlement and landuse patterns over time within a defined area. Again, similar mapping has been prepared previously, but not then presented online. (See for example the Stonnington Thematic Environmental History by Context Pty Ltd and published by the City of Stonnington in 2006.)

The Orange significant landscape survey provides a wonderful precedent and model that other councils could consider trying for presenting the culture and history of a local area to a wide cross-section of users, contributing to a better understanding and appreciation of place, a major factor in helping to protect significant landscapes.
**For the bookshelf**


*When Modern was Green* provides an in-depth and detailed exploration of the life and work of German landscape architect Leberecht Migge (1881—1935) and challenges conventional assumptions about modern and ecological design history. This book reveals critical links between histories of agriculture, horticulture, engineering, biological theory, social theory, architecture, and planning by capturing the essence of Migge’s work which attempted the synthesis of principles from many disciplines (not always successfully and not without making enemies). The result is a warts and all tale that does not champion Migge but uses instead the study of his life and work as a prism through which to expand our understanding of German modernism. As might be expected, primary source material and recent literature relating specifically to Migge is more extensive in German than in English (the former possibly almost exclusively written in German). Fortunately, for those of us limited to English, this publication—the product of five years of research while the author was living in Berlin—makes a number of important German sources available to English-speaking readers.

*Christina Dyson*


This generously illustrated book brings to life the story of this Victorian region through its gardens and landscapes. Alex Miller in launching the book at Buda rightly criticised Australians for not celebrating our regions even though we flock overseas to enjoy regions such as Provence, Tuscany, and the Lake District. Mandy Stroebel tantalises us with her journey through the area and its gardens, and their settings presenting a region here on our own doorstep that we should be proudly flocking to. In setting the scene for us we are told frankly of ‘The Unholy Trinity’ of challenges for gardeners in the region—climatic extremes, depleted soils, and scarcity of water—which have been perennial challenges even before climate change came into our vernacular. But these gardeners have soldiered on and established gardens appropriate for the conditions and left us with a valuable legacy which, as Alex Miller continued to say, provides a valuable record of the gardens of this region now, to pass onto future generations. Throughout the book we get to know the people and are led in, out, and behind a selection of pastoral estates, productive plots, cottage, villa, and pleasure gardens, botanic gardens, avenues of honour and nurseries. If ever we needed proof that we have a wealth of gardens in the region, and this is only a selection, this is it. Gardens dear to AGHS members, especially working bee regulars, Belmont, Wombat Park, Buda, and Tutes Cottage are included. I hope that this is the first of many such regional books which will introduce a more diverse range people to our quite special garden heritage.

*Helen Page*


The first garden I truly admired was a gnomery I saw in the early 1960s. As a little boy I was awestruck by the hundreds of brightly coloured figures looking at me behind this garden fence. Perhaps this clear early memory left me with a lasting affection for these humorous ornaments. A well as looking at their origins this book discusses the different manufacturers in Britain and around the world. One of the leading makers in the UK was Major Garden Ornaments, a firm founded by the parents of 1980s British Prime Minister John Major. According to the author, Major’s operated from 1930 until 1962. These were the boom years of gnome sales, which reached its peak after the release
of the 1937 Disney film Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. By the late 1960s the gnome was perceived as vulgar and ‘low rent’ and became a symbol of derision. In recent years cement constructed figures have been partially replaced by cheaper and lighter versions and there has been a revival of appreciation for these amusing, kitsch ornaments. Appropriately for the subject the book is diminutively sized. It’s also well illustrated and gives an excellent overview of the history of gnomes from their mythic origins in Germanic folklore through their early high quality production years up to the time of mass sales in the twentieth century. This work is a must-have for garden historians and for all those with a true interest in garden ornamentation.

Silas Clifford-Smith

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**Recently released**


Produced in association with Boston publisher David R. Godine and the New York—based Foundation for Landscape Studies, this lavish colour illustrated book doubles as the catalogue for an exhibition of the same name. Detailed citations for exhibits evoking the Romantic ethos of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and its landscape manifestations England, France, Germany, and America, are complemented by a sweeping 60-page essay of Elizabeth Barlow Rogers as well as substantial notes. Rogers has been a generous contributor to garden history in the US and this catalogue stands as a stylish monument to her scholarly vision. The accompanying exhibition runs at the Morgan until 29 August 2010 (a review of the show will be found in our next issue).


An intensely personal exploration and celebration of the life of one of Australia’s premier poets, Judith Wright, through the country she loved so much. *My Blood’s Country* is a moving, poetic and illuminating memoir giving us unparalleled insight into Wright’s poetry, her activism and her ongoing legacy.

The two long professorships of Alfred Ewart and John Turner at The University of Melbourne’s School of Botany form the subject of this brief though entertaining history, highlighting issues such as links between academia and government, the rise of ecology, and the role of women in science.


Difficult to categorise, *Sunday’s Kitchen* is a mélange of photos, paintings, planting lists, and recipes from Sunday Reed’s kitchen and gardens at Heide, now the Heide Museum of Modern Art at Bulleen, ‘assuredly one of the jewels in Melbourne’s crown’ (according to Stephanie Alexander in the foreword). An enchanting, highly accessible, practical, and inspiring book, it includes useful timelines, short biographical notes, and evocative images, providing an intimate glimpse into life at Heide.


Drawing on the author’s own knowledge and experience of gardens and gardening, and photographs, *The Gardener’s Book of Days* provides a wide assortment of garden-related information, meandering between recipes, gardening tips, and historical facts, embracing local and international gardens and garden history.


This large format guidebook provides a record of the history of Beleura, an estate developed on Victoria’s Mornington Peninsula in the 1860s and then continuously maintained by several distinguished family ownerships until the death of John Tallis in 1966, when management passed to a Trust he had created. The garden has been extensively enhanced since then, and the reworked estate provides a focus for this profusely illustrated volume.


This fine regional garden history has only just crossed our desk and its combination of archival research and illustrations of surviving gardens provide an accessible introduction for the visitor and researcher alike. The period under review—late eighteenth century to the present—and urban focus make this a useful comparative reference for Australian audiences. Look out for several excellent illustrations superimposing line drawings of now-demolished structures over present-day photographs of their sites.

*The Physick Gardener: aspects of the apothecary’s world from the collections of The University of Melbourne, Medical History Museum, Faculty of Health, Dentistry and Health Sciences, The University of Melbourne, [Parkville, Vic.], 2010 (ISBN 97800646532349); paperback (for availability see www.unimelb.edu.au/culturalcollections)*

A comprehensive 64-page catalogue with essays by curator Susie Shears and former NGV curator of ceramics and antiquities Margaret Legge showcasing a remarkable and little-known cultural collection. Catch the exhibition until 30 September 2010.

Bev Roberts (ed.), *Miss D & Miss N, an extraordinary partnership: the diary of Anne Drysdale*, Australian Scholarly Publishing in association with the State Library of Victoria, North Melbourne, 2009 (ISBN 9781921509148); paperback RRP $39.95

Anne Drysdale and Caroline Newcombe formed an unconventional and remarkable pair of pioneering farmers in the Geelong region from 1839–53, a span covered by this terse yet informative diary. Garden detail sits alongside other personal and professional concerns. Regrettably the lack of a map showing the whereabouts of the pair’s properties (Boronggoop and Coriyule) and their hinterland context, and a tendency to squander the best entries in the editor’s chapter introductions mar an otherwise useful record.
The Australian backyard
On Sunday, 22 August 2010, in a forum dedicated to the Australian backyard, organised by the South Australian branch of the AGHS, six papers will be delivered on the theme by a range of speakers. Cas Middlemis on ‘The backyard clothes hoist’, Helen Livingston on ‘Backyard advice through time’, Julie Collins on ‘Children in the backyard’, Christine Finnimore on ‘Some Italian backyards’, Ray Chooate on ‘The backyard in Australian art, and Richard Heathcote on ‘Ornaments in the backyard: taking tyres where other ornaments fear to tread’.
(For more details see Diary dates on page 33.)

North American influence on the backyard. Landscaping for Modern Living was one of a series of mid-twentieth century architecture and landscape design books for the home.

2010 AGHS SA Branch essay prize
The South Australian branch of the AGHS announces an essay prize on the theme ‘Lost gardens of Adelaide’, with a prize of $750. Essays should be about South Australian gardens that have been lost—to urban or suburban development (or other reason). Essays should be no more than 4000 words, and the use of illustrative material is strongly encouraged. The closing date for entries is Monday 27 September 2010, with the winner announced on 15 October 2010 at the ‘Lost gardens of Adelaide’ exhibition opening at Carrick Hill. Entry form and rules will be available on the AGHS website.
www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au

Honour for Victor Crittenden
The Australian Garden History Society’s ‘Man of Letters’, author-publisher Victor Crittenden (see AGH, 6 (6), 1995), has been awarded the OAM for service to the arts as a researcher, author, and publisher, particularly through the biographical and literary study of the Australian colonial period. Victor, who has chaired the ACT, Monaro, and Riverina branch of the AGHS, founded Mulini Press in 1965, publisher of his indispensable history and bibliography of Australian garden books, Yesterday’s Gardens (2002). Educated at Sydney, Toronto, and London Universities, he was foundation Librarian at the University of Canberra. An indefatigable scholar, Victor is presently learning French so he can read Napoleon’s letters to Josephine in the language in which they were written.

Dennis Sharp (1933–2010)
British architect, author, teacher, critic, and editor, Professor Dennis Sharp (1933–2010), has died aged 76. Sharp was a leading scholar in the field of Modernist design and his books included Modern Architecture and Expressionism (1966), Twentieth Century Architecture: a visual history (1972), and Sources of Modern Architecture: a critical bibliography (1981). He was for many years associated professionally with his alma mater, London’s Architectural Association School of Architecture, and local scholars with long memories will recall his tenure as visiting professor at the University of Adelaide during 1984.
www.sharparchitects.co.uk

Grace Ella Fraser (1921–2010)
As this issue goes to press we notice the death (on 3 July) of Grace Fraser, aged 89. A foundation member of the AGHS, Grace Fraser was of that pioneering generation of Australian landscape architects and designers who did so much to establish the local profession on a sound footing. Following training at Burnley in the early 1940s she worked in the field of plant pathology before joining landscape architect John Stevens (see AGH, 19 (4), 2008)—and subsequently in her own private practice—on a wide range of projects. Her great passion was environmental conservation, with a special focus on Victoria’s Mornington Peninsula, her home for many years.
Dialogue

Study tour to the Outer Hebrides

This issue is running slightly late due to the recent overseas study tour by your co-editor, where—amongst many garden visits—he was also lecturing to the Garden History Society in Scotland and to the Stornoway Historical Society (Isle of Lewis) on the work of eminent Scottish landscape gardener and garden architect Charles H.J. Smith (1810–1895). In the pipeline, as a consequence of links forged with the GHSS, is a themed issue of AGH on Scottish–Australian links, while a visit to Paris has resulted in a bumper crop (and a ‘heavy baggage’ sticker on the return flight) of new French garden history titles to be reviewed in our next issue.

A sharpened focus

Mandy Stroebel (whose new book Gardens of the Goldfields is reviewed on page 27) writes from Hobart: ‘The last edition [21 (4)] was an absolute treat. I’ve read it from cover to cover already (it arrived in the mail yesterday). I loved the here-ness and now-ness of all the articles; the sense of history in the making as we finally come to terms with the fact that our continent is a dry one; and most of all, insights into how other nations are grappling with urbanisation, sustained productivity and liveable spaces in the 21st century. I hope that this journal heralds a new perspective, a new focus for the AGHS, a direction that appeals to a wider membership. I look forward to more articles of this ilk as well as those that document the intangible history of our landscapes.’

Trevor Nottle had already written in almost identical terms from Adelaide: ‘I was extremely pleased to read in the Editorial that you have charted a new course for the journal. I hope I can assume that the Society itself has also adopted this new vision. I believe it is critical to the future of the Society and Australian garden history in general.’

Well, as editors we don’t see it so much as a ‘new course’, but rather as one with a sharpened focus. What do think about the journal? Let us know.

New thinking about weeds

Material from several sources arrived in Melbourne recently containing indications of a new co-operative approach to weeds; signs that various writers are more likely to befriend them than to continue maintain the war against weeds.

Hortus (93, Spring 2010) includes an article by John Akeroyd, ‘Give weeds a chance’ which contains a learned discussion of the biology and ecology of weeds, and the positive contributions they can make. He argues that Emerson’s aphorism that a weed is ‘a plant whose virtues have not yet been discovered’ is absolutely right; and points out virtues of various weeds.

Another publication to arrive this month was Nancy Gift's A Weed by any Other Name: the virtues of a messy lawn, or learning to love the plants we don’t plant (Beacon Press, 2009). She writes as Director of the Rachel Carson Institute at Chatham University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and seems to have been driven to an acceptance of weeds based on their being preferable to the herbicides used to eliminate them. Although some of her material is contentious, her title shows well enough the theme of the book.

The April issue of The Garden contained an article with a similar theme. ‘Embellished by nature’ by Matthew Biggs gives an account of Julie Wise’s garden in Hertfordshire where many spontaneous arrivals (aka weeds) are accepted.

It seems that the ranks of those who see weeds as a force of nature with which we should learn to live are growing.

John Dwyer

Cactus and Succulent Society of Australia convention 2012

The President of the Cactus and Succulent Society of Australia (CSS), Attila Kapitany, notes in a recent correspondence to AGH, the relevance of sustainability that concerns today’s gardeners and garden conservators (in reference to AGH 21 (4) 2010) to CSS’s interests, noting also that some of Australia’s earliest gardens, were characterised by careful use of water and careful selection of plant material—from the Canary Islands, and South America, for example. The Cactus and Succulent Society of Australia is hosting an international convention in April 2012, with international and local speakers. More information can be found on the CSS website.

www.cssaustralia.org.au
Diary dates

JULY 2010

Winter lecture
Victoria
Thursday 15
Meredith Fletcher on Jean Galbraith (‘Correa’) (1906—1999), botanist, naturalist, writer, and gardener who lived at Tyers in Gippsland. Her garden at Dunedin was well known among garden enthusiasts for many years through her writing, 6 for 6.30pm, Mueller Hall, The Herbarium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra. Cost: $15 members, $20 non-members, $5 students with student card.

AGM and three historic gardens
Tasmania
Sunday 25
Robyn will talk on ‘The painters’ eye and three historic gardens’—Tarella, Sydney; Whitley, Southern Highlands, NSW; and Bentley, Tasmania. Afternoon tea will be served. 1.30pm, Supper Hall, Ross Town Hall. No charge. Bookings to Rex Bean on (03) 6260 4418 or rex.bean@bigpond.com

Mayberry Cottage and AGM
West Australia
Sunday 18
Visit to Mayberry Cottage, Northam and Districts Historical Society, for morning tea and viewing, before proceeding to Muresk Institute (set in the Dempster homestead) for the AGM and lunch. 10.30am, rendezvous at Mayberry Cottage. Cost: $30. RSVP to Joy Hill (08) 9386 7438 or joyhill@bigpond.net.au. Further details will be included in the forthcoming newsletter.

Literary landscapes
Queensland
Sunday 25
Trisha Dixon explores the connection between writers and their landscapes, and explores the question ‘does landscape shape people or are people drawn to a landscape that reflects their personality?’ The illustrated talk will look at a diverse range of writers both international and local. 2pm, Herbarium seminar room, Brisbane Botanical Gardens, Mt Coot-tha. Cost: $10 members, $15 non-members. Bookings to John Taylor on (07) 3862 4284 or at jht@hotkey.net.au

Ross Roses
South Australia
Sunday 25
Join us at Ross Roses, St Andrews Terrace, Willunga. 2.00pm, Ross Roses. Cost: $5 members, $10 non-members.

May 2010

Lesser-known European gardens
Sydney and Northern NSW
Wednesday 21
Heritage and museum consultants Chris and Margaret Betteridge will speak about four lesser-known European gardens and one cemetery, which they experienced on a recent visit to England and Europe. This is a joint AGHS and RAHS event. 6.30 for 7pm, Auditorium, History House, 133 Macquarie Street, Sydney. Cost: $20 AGHS and RAHS members, $30 non-members, includes light refreshments. Bookings essential. Contact Jeanne Villani on (02) 9997 5995 or jeanne@villani.com

AUGUST 2010

AGM and two lesser-known landscape designers
Sydney and Northern NSW
Wednesday 11
Short AGM, followed by a talk by Geoffrey Britton—Snapshot of a career in landscapes: two lesser-known landscape designers. 6pm AGM, 7pm talk, Auditorium, History House, 133 Macquarie Street, Sydney. Cost: $20 AGHS and RAHS members, $30 non-members, includes light refreshments. A joint AGHS and RAHS event. Bookings essential. Contact Jeanne Villani on (02) 9997 5995 or jeanne@villani.com
Winter lecture

Victoria

Tuesday 17

Robin Marks will speak on Winifred Waddell—teacher, botanist, naturalist, and founding member of the Native Plants Preservation Society of Victoria. The lecture at 6.30pm will follow the AGM at 6pm. Drinks and savouries will be served from 5.45pm. Mueller Hall, The Herbarium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra. Cost: $15 members, $20 non-members, $5 students with student card.

The Backyard Forum

South Australia

Sunday 22

Six papers on the Australian backyard will be presented on the theme of the Australian Backyard. The AGM will be held on the same day, 10am to 4pm (AGM 12.30pm), Kathleen Lumley College, 51 Finniss Street, North Adelaide. Cost: $45 members, $55 non-members, $25 students. Registration and payment are required by COB, 18 August 2010 (important for catering purposes). Applications with payment to Ray Choate, Barr Smith Library, The University of Adelaide, SA 5005, (08) 8303 4064 or ray.choate@adelaide.edu.au

Investigating gardens and AGM

Queensland

Sunday 29

After the AGM, landscape architect Catherine Brouwer will speak on preparing conservation plans and policies for several local historic landscapes and gardens. 2pm, the Herbarium Seminar room, Brisbane Botanical Gardens, Mt Coottha. Cost: $10 members, $15 non-members. Bookings to Keith Jorgensen on (07) 3341 3933 or jorgenk@picknowl.com.au

SEPTEMBER 2010

The ‘natural’ garden

Sydney and Northern NSW

Sunday 12

A lecture by highly regarded UK garden historian Dr Janet Waymark, ‘There’s no such thing as a “Natural” garden...is there?’ 5—7.30pm, Auditorium, History House, 133 Macquarie Street, Sydney. Joint event AGHS and RAHS. Cost: $20 AGHS and RAHS members, $30 non-members, includes light refreshments. Bookings essential. Contact Jeanne Villani on (02) 9997 5995 or jeanne@villani.com

Aspects of the ‘natural’ garden

South Australia

Monday 20

After visiting Sydney, Dr Janet Waymark will also speak in Adelaide (see Sunday 12 September event). 5.30 for 6—7.30pm, Ira Raymond Room, Barr Smith Library. Cost: $5 members, $10 non-members.

Grenfell gardens

Sydney and Northern NSW

Saturday 25–Sunday 26

A trip to Grenfell to visit four private gardens and Landra Castle Pastoral Estate. Meet 11am (Saturday 25), Taylor Park, adjacent to the museum, Grenfell. Cost: $110 members, $125 non-members, includes talks, all garden entries, two picnic lunches, Saturday afternoon tea, Saturday bus, and notes. Bookings essential. Contact Jeanne Villani on (02) 9997 5995 or jeanne@villani.com

OCTOBER 2010

Lost Gardens of Adelaide exhibition opening

South Australia

Friday 15

The exhibition ‘Lost Gardens of Adelaide’ will be launched at Carrick Hill. (This will be in conjunction with an exhibition at the Adelaide Botanic Garden entitled ‘The Garden of Ideas’.) The 2010 essay prize winner will also be announced at the event. Carrick Hill, 46 Carrick Hill Drive, Springfield.

Rhododendrons

South Australia

Saturday 16

A talk by Kenneth Cox, an international expert on rhododendrons from Scotland. This event is in conjunction with the Rhododendron Society. Further details including venue to be announced.

Thomas Shepherd’s nursery, Chippendale

Sydney and Northern NSW

Sunday 17

Talk and walk with Joan Lawrence—Reminders of Thomas Shepherd’s nursery, Chippendale. 2–4.30pm, meeting point 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
Yarra Valley day excursion

Victoria
Thursday 21

An excursion to the Yarra Valley including a visit to Lubra Bend with its dramatic recent landscaping that blends into an existing garden. Details to be confirmed.

November 2010

Annual National Conference, Launceston

Tasmania
Friday 5 – Sunday 7 / Optional day Monday 8

The Tasmanian Branch looks forward to welcoming you to Launceston in November 2010 to the Australian Garden History Society’s 31st Annual National Conference. The cultural landscape and garden history of the north of the island will be explored in a range of papers and fieldtrips, from the fire-farmed Aboriginal landscape created over a period of more than 10,000 years ago, to a landscape described by the end of the nineteenth century as ‘The Vision Splendid’.

Garden history experiences in the UK

Sydney and Northern NSW
Tuesday 16

Illustrated talk by Colleen Morris on her garden history experiences attending the Attingham Summer School in the UK in July 2010. 6.30 for 7pm, Annie Wyatt Room, National Trust Centre, Observatory Hill. Cost: $20 AGHS and RAHS members, $30 non-members, includes light refreshments.

Notes for members

30th Annual General Meeting

The 30th Annual General Meeting of the Australian Garden History Society will be held on Sunday 7 November 2010 at 8.30am at Albert Hall, Tamar Street, Launceston, Tasmania. Items to be included on the agenda should be posted to the AGHS office. Branches are asked to nominate their representative to the National Management Committee and to inform the Secretary, Sarah Lucas (c/- AGHS office) by 17 September 2010.

There will be six vacancies for elected positions on the National Management Committee this year. Malcolm Faul and Sarah Lucas have served a maximum of two terms of three years and must retire. Trisha Dixon, John Dwyer, John Viska, and Lynne Walker have served one term of three years and must stand down but may choose to re-nominate for a further three-year term. Nominations to the National Management Committee open on 23 August 2010 and close on 24 September 2010. To obtain a nomination form contact the AGHS office, phone: (03) 9650 5043 or toll free 1800 678 446 or email to info@gardenhistorysociety.org.au.

Elected members serve for a three-year term and are eligible for re-election for a maximum of one additional term. An allowance to alleviate travel costs for the meetings in Sydney and Melbourne is available if required.

Vacancy for Treasurer

The AGHS National Treasurer, Malcolm Faul, is due to retire from the National Management Committee at the AGM in November this year. The Society is looking for a suitably qualified person who could take over this position. If you feel that you that you could contribute in this way or that you would like to find out more about what the position entails please contact the AGHS office: on (03) 9650 5043 or by email. The opening and closing dates for nominations are set out above.

info@gardenhistorysociety.org.au

Journal packers

Thank you to the dedicated group of AGHS members who volunteer their time packaging each issue of Australian Garden History for postage, specifically Beryl Black, Rosemary Dare (from SA!), Diana Ellerton, Beverley and John Joyce, Laura Lewis, Anna Long, Susan Reidy, Sandra Torpey, Georgina Whitehead, and Kathy Wright.

Lost in gardens

A few items left behind at the conclusion of the recent Wallingford tour can be found at the AGHS office. If you think one of these might be yours please contact the AGHS office.
Garden history in the United Kingdom

Janet Waymark

When did garden history as a discipline in its own right take off in earnest in the UK? Who were some of the pioneering people?

Twentieth-century garden history took off in 1965 with the formation of the Garden History Society and the publication of what was then called The Journal of the Garden History Society, now just Garden History. The people behind it included Peter Hunt, Frank Clark, Miles Hadfield, and William Stearn. Mavis Batey (one of the early leading lights and, interestingly, a key worker on the secret Enigma machine which busted German codes in WWII) is still an enthusiastic supporter—she is in her eighties.

The Society's aims were, and still are, to bring together different aspects of arts and sciences and to see how they interact, and now to promote the conservation of historic gardens.

Garden History has been published since 1972. I think this journal, plus the establishment of County Garden Trusts, has been instrumental in creating a wider student public for garden history.

How did the serious study of garden history unfold? With which other disciplines is garden history generally affiliated? Do you think these affiliations are successful?

Firstly there were groups interested in gardening. Then, as training for landscape architects emerged, the subjects intermingled—though I feel garden and landscape history in the UK have been separated from each other somewhat. To generalise: I've frequently found that landscape architects are often not interested in garden history, and tend to live in the present, though that is not true of some of our best—for instance Kim Wilkie.

The first serious study of garden history was made at the Architectural Association in London, which is where I learned first about the subject, and taught there too after qualifying. Its postgraduate course in the history and conservation of historic parks and gardens began in the early 1980s, and folded up two years ago after becoming an MA course.

On the academic front: there have only been two other courses for MA Garden History in the UK, both growing out of numerous certificate and diploma courses. These were both begun in 2000; one at Bristol University under Professor Timothy Mowl, in the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology with contributions from the History of Art and visiting lecturers, and the other at Birkbeck College. Three of us got the course established at Birbeck College—Michael Symes, Sally Jeffery, and myself. Two other universities do offer support to students wanting to study garden history at postgraduate level. They are East Anglia under Professor Tom Williamson, History (there is no garden history department as such), and Nottingham, under Professor Stephen Daniels, Cultural Geography. One or two people have studied at the Royal Holloway College, London University, under Geography. There are endless practical MA courses for horticultural degrees, including studies at Sheffield University under Professor James Hitchmough (who, for ten years—returning to the UK in 1993—was Senior Lecturer at the then Victorian College of Agriculture and Horticulture, Burnley, Melbourne, later part of The University of Melbourne) and landscape architecture degrees more generally.

Unfortunately garden history does not appear to have much power to get itself established as a departmental subject—it is seen as 'niche market', and this is very sad. At present, as you probably are aware, UK universities are under a great deal of pressure financially, and Birkbeck's MA has been axed, and nobody is quite sure what is going to happen to the certificate courses (there has never been a first degree in garden history anywhere). Bristol is also expecting closure. At present I am the only person standing up for postgraduate garden history in London University, as a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Historical Research. I run seminars for postgraduates and others interested in researching garden history each term. We have a
good attendance, and there is no doubt that interest in this subject is high. Birkbeck's affiliation was with the History of Art and Film Department, and unfortunately they paid very little interest to us. On a more positive note, it’s possible that garden history might be added to the Institute of Historical Research (London University) MA on Historical Research—talks are in progress with the Director at present.

Have approaches for researching and writing garden history shifted during your experience as a writer, historian, and academic?

In research, I think you learn to use all manner of sources—wills, recordings, diaries, interviews, pictures—all matter of endless archives. Of enormous importance are maps and plans! You can’t do without them. You have to think laterally, and hopefully students can be taught these methods and sources. Everything has been speeded up as archives appear online, and people realise they have historically interesting houses and gardens and seek to put this material into public hands. Garden history is the most interlinked of all the subjects—it dips into everything from horticulture, soil science, meteorology, philosophy, architecture, art history, and so on. I have gained much insight by visiting sites—I think too much garden history is written by people who haven’t been to see what they’re studying. Yes, the subject is the only one I know whose substance vanishes very quickly! But you can still learn a lot from a study of ‘place’. It has given me a great deal of joy over time!

What are some of the areas (periods, people, place typologies for example) that are well or over researched, and those that need—and warrant—more thorough exploration?

When first beginning to study garden history I think the UK tended to bend most towards the eighteenth century. Now the over-mentioned person is Gertrude Jekyll! And the over-written-about way of gardening is with grasses. We definitely need more people to study mediaeval sites and landscapes, though that is improving.

To what extent have or do events, people, and places in Australia feature in the subject? If at all!

I don’t think Australia has ever featured in our courses in the UK—and I hope I can do something about raising its profile in my own research and writing!

Dr Janet Waymark is a senior research fellow at the Institute of Historical Research (London). She has published widely on garden history including Modern Garden Design: Innovation since 1900 (2003) and Thomas Mawson: Life, Gardens and Landscapes (2009).

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.