2006 National Conference: ‘Keeping History in Garden Design’

Silver Anniversary
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I n the last journal I wrote that the National Management Committee would devote the 2006 planning day to membership. Your membership is important to us and we want to ensure that we retain it.

As members of AGHS we are all volunteers. It is essential that we are sure we are using our time and energy in the best way possible for the aims and objects of the Society and our membership. Please take time to answer the survey form included in this journal. All answers will be confidential but if you wish to participate in a draw for a great prize, a copy of Anna Pavord’s latest book, The Naming of Names, put your name and address on the back of the envelope returning the survey. The completed questionnaire will be separated from the envelope on arrival at our office.

What is it about the Australian Garden History Society that is important to you? For me it is fostering scholarship and education, promoting the conservation of historic gardens and giving depth to my appreciation of gardening. There is room on the survey sheet for you express what it is about our Society that is important to you. We look forward to hearing from each of our members.

Colleen Morris
6 February 2006

CONTENTS
The novel industrial enterprises of Daniel Bunce - Ruth Dwyer .................................................. 3
Beyond neatness - Sarah Cain .................................................. 8
John Stevens and the Napier Courtyard - David Jones .................................................. 12
Greek Gardens in Brisbane’s West End - Glenn Cooke .................................................. 14
A Visit to Myall Park - Susan Martin .................................................. 17
For the bookshelf .................................................. 20
Diary dates .................................................. 21
Valete - Ruth Tindale and Gavin Walkley .................................................. 22
Wollemi pine auction - Peter Cousens .................................................. 24

Photo: Part of the finished courtyard featuring the seat and circular planters, c.1961.
Courtesy: University of Adelaide Property Services Archives.
The call of Unlock the Lands was that of the people of Victoria in the latter 1850s. As a member of the O'Shanassy Government, the Irish-born Charles Gavan Duffy, the President of the Board of Land and Works, formulated the Land Act of 1862. Daniel Bunce filed an application for a lease of land under Section 47 of this Act. A fee of £1 was levied to cover the cost of the survey.

Section 47 was framed with the objective of introducing to the colony the cultivation of useful plants and related industrial enterprises. The new agricultural products were to be manufactured rather than disposed of in their natural states. Encouraged was the growing of such as tobacco for cigars, hemp for the making of rope, mulberry trees for the production of silk, vines for wine and raisins, apples for drying, valonia oak, Indian corn, flax and hops.

Conditions attached to the granting of leases under Section 47 included a maximum time of thirty years, and the regulation that one half of the area granted was to be cultivated within five years. Rent was to be paid half-yearly in advance, and the whole of the land was required to be fenced within a period of three months if it were situated within the boundaries of a common; otherwise fencing was required within six months. The maximum amount of land to be granted to an individual was thirty acres.

Bunce, then Curator of the Geelong Botanic Gardens, and now ‘the friend and protegé of leading botanists and the most respected of citizens’ applied for a lease of thirty acres for thirty years for the purposes of establishing a vineyard for the manufacture of wine and a garden for medicinal plants, the details of which were not described. In this period in Europe, the planting of such as valerian, taraxicum, sarsaparilla, rhubarb, peppermint, linseed, aconite, Syrian poppies and camomile (sic) were recommended. Little was known concerning the medicinal value of Australian plants. Bunce ordered native seeds from the Herbarium, Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney. He may have intended to experiment with the resultant plants for ‘the extraction of essential oils' for medicinal purposes. Of his proposed vineyard three acres of vines were to be planted annually during the first five years of the lease.

Bunce’s chosen acreage was duly surveyed and gazetted on the 23 April 1862 as Allotment C, Section IV, Parish of Gnarwarre, then about ten miles west of Geelong. It was located in an area a little south of springs ensuring an adequate water supply.
Daniel Bunce, born 1812, Chesham, Buckinghamshire, England, the son of William and Sarah, formerly Grover, trained as a gardener prior to immigrating to Van Diemen's Land in 1833. Crossing Bass Strait in 1839, he opened a nursery in St. Kilda and later joined Leichhardt's second expedition as a botanical collector. The years prior to his appointment as Curator of the Botanical Gardens in Geelong in 1857 were spent, in part, travelling, recording and publishing various botanical writings concerning Australian flora and the documenting of Aboriginal languages.

Following the obtaining of a Novel Industrial Lease by Bunce, four further applications were made by others seeking adjacent allotments. On 1 May 1863, Francis O'Connor in his application for Allotment B in the same Section, stated his annual intents to be a vineyard of one and a half acres for the manufacture of wine, half an acre of tobacco plantation and orchards for olives, oranges and loquats, one acre in all. Thomas O'Connor, on the same date, applied also for thirty acres, Allotment E. He recorded his objectives for annual planting as two acres of vineyard for wine making, an orchard of one acre of apples and pears for cider and perry, half an acre each for the growing of maize and tobacco and a quarter for New Zealand flax for linen. Another lease granted, on 31 December 1863, was that of Jonathan Hosford for Allotment A, the planting to be a vineyard for wine, an apple orchard, the produce to be manufactured as cider, a tobacco plantation and an olive grove. On the same date, Eustace James Walshe, surgeon of Geelong, was granted a lease for Allotment D. These two allotments were each of thirty acres.

Of the above leases the sole extant file held by the Public Record Office of Victoria is that of Walshe. It states: 'Annually three acres as follows - one acre vines, Black Cluster and Flermitage, Chasselas and Reisling [sic], the produce to be manufactured into wine... an orchard of two acres for cultivating Apple and Pear trees, the produce to be made into Cider and Perry.'

Several letters within this file recorded the acceptance of the lease by Walshe and the payment of the half-yearly rent of three shillings and sixpence in advance. It is of interest to note the dissimilar handwriting of these letters. That relating to the payment of rent is unmistakably the same strong hand throughout, that of Walshe. The other, concerning the acceptance of the lease and the proposed planting of the allotment was written by another in an almost illegible hand, with the signature, 'E. J. Walshe' in the same hand. By the mid 1860s the allotments of Walshe and Hosford had become forfeit to the Crown.

The activities of Bunce were clarified on 7 November 1868 when he applied to select the two forfeited allotments under Section 42 of the Grant Act of 1865.

Botanical Gardens
Geelong
30 October 1868
The Land Commissioners
Winchelsea
Gentlemen
I hereby beg to apply under the 42nd Section of the amending Land Act ... for two 30 acre lots of land originally taken up by EJ Walshe and J Hosford [sic] respectively and which are forfeited to the Crown.

I have the honour to be, gentlemen,
your obedient servant
Daniel Bunce

In so doing Bunce was required to state to the Board of Land and Works the extent of land already owned. This amounted to ninety acres adjoining the proposed selection, and encompassed Bunce's own originally leased land and that of Francis and Thomas O'Connor. A pre-emptive right later included in the Acts governing Novel Industrial Leases had enabled purchase of an allotment should the rents paid amount to £1 per acre. Bunce had used his father-in-law, Francis O'Connor, an architect and surveyor, and his brother-in-law, Thomas, as dummies to acquire more land than was permitted under Section 47 of the 1862 Act. The hand of the letter in this file was that recording the Walshe planting. On this occasion the signature was that of Bunce.
The Rate Books of the Barrabool Shire in 1867 show Francis O’Connor being rated for a dwelling and ten acres, these being designated as the property of Bunce. There is no record of Bunce paying rates on the remaining eighty acres. Marshall and Palmer were rated for this holding.  

A Royal Commission into Section 47 of the Land Act of 1862 was held in 1871. Of the five questions asked, Bunce answered only the second one – “What particular plants would you recommend as eligible in your neighborhood for industrial and commercial purposes, and as deserving of prominent attention?” His hasty response stated ‘New Zealand flax for exportation. The osier for basket making. Beet for sugar. Rushes in the lakes and swamps for bottle envelopes, etc., etc.’ There was no mention whatever of the medicinal or other plants as indicated on the applications for the Novel Industrial Leases. The report in the press indicated that the growing of cinchona or Peruvian bark tree showed signs of success. The medicine resulting was to be used to relieve fever. Also recommended was the cultivation of poppies for the extraction of opium. This had proved to be very successful as far as medicinal plants were concerned.  

Perhaps Bunce’s influence can further be seen locally. James McCarthy applied for Allotment F, Section IV, another Novel Industrial Lease, on 10 May 1864. He indicated that he intended to plant mulberry trees for the manufacture of silk, and valonia oak, the acorn cups to be used for tanning, dyeing and the making of ink. Emanuel Read with an application under the 1865 Act for Allotment 1, Section IV, dated 7 November 1868, may have been encouraged by Bunce to plant cassia for fencing. In the absence of botanical identification, it seems reasonable to suggest that the cassia seeds may have been used as a purgative.  

On 2 July 1872, Daniel Bunce died in Geelong. Julia Bunce, formerly O’Connor, the last wife and now widow, took up residence on this holding in the Parish of Gnarwarre. One of Bunce’s executors, the solicitor William Higgins, of Yarra Street, Geelong, then applied for the Crown Grants for Allotments A and D. The local Crown Lands Bailiff, Mounted Constable Newman Hagger, inspected the holding, noting barely adequate fencing erected in 1869 and a ‘waterhole’ four feet deep. Cultivation on the lightly timbered sixty acres included only wheat, barley and potatoes, an amount of six acres in all. Apart from removing dead timber, no other land had been cleared. There was no mention of the supposed plantings of Walshe and Hosford. The Crown Grants were obtained on 3 October 1873. Julia Bunce thus gained title to the sixty acres, and now held 150 acres in all in Section IV, Parish of Gnarwarre.
In late 1879, correspondence from Julia Bunce to Walter Maddern Esq., President of the Board of Land and Works, revealed further details of the property. Mrs. Bunce protested against the proposed local drainage plan:

...I am the widow of a poor selector... on a previous occasion some years ago a drain was made by the council and a deep cutting made inside and outside my fence caused a portion of my fencing to be washed away, and considerable damage was done to orange trees and vines and other valuable plants imported from Sydney at a very great expense for Novel Industry purposes.

She then protested against further attempts to drain the marshland through her property: ‘... if heavy rain comes or a flood the property is in great danger.’ This statement also gives a possible explanation for the forfeiture of the adjoining leases of Walshe and Hosford.

In spite of the objections of Mrs. Bunce, the Barrabool Shire again attempted to drain the marsh in the early summer of 1879-80. This proved to be unsuccessful. In a second letter, dated 13 January 1880, Mrs. Bunce expressed her view as to a solution to the problem:

...the residents of the district should have a permanent supply of water... a dam nearest to the south side on a line with the Church of England as the fall of water lies in that direction... have it placed under the care of the Shire Council...

A letter of reply from George Williams, the Secretary of the Shire, dated 7 April 1880, indicated that the marshland north of the Bunce holding would be drained and a dam excavated. The Gnarwarre Water Reserve was situated as recommended by Mrs. Bunce, alleviating to an extent the threat of flooding to the property.10

The 150 acres remained in the possession of Mrs Bunce until her death in 1914 in Melbourne. From 1883, she, described as a gentlewoman, was appointed to the position of postmistress in Geelong. In the latter years, from 1888, the 150 acres were leased to William Ambrose Alsop, for grazing purposes. Payment of rent is shown in her probate papers as amounting to 100 pounds 15 shillings, dated 9 March 1915, for an undisclosed period.19

If one visits the area today during a wet winter, one can see flooding both in the Bunce acreage and to the north, no doubt the reason for the failure of the novel industrial enterprises. A modern topographical map clearly shows the marsh, or springs, with dams on the watercourses midway through Bunce’s land. Until the last few years rows of short blackened stumps were all that could be seen of his planting. They may be the remains of his vineyard or of the orange grove originally planned for Allotment B, Section 4, by Francis O’Connor, Bunce’s father-in-law. The blackened stumps may still be seen adjacent to Monahans Road on the south side of Barrabool Road.

Acknowledgement:
I am grateful for the interest and advice of George Jones of Geelong.

Ruth Dwyer is a researcher and occasional author with an interest in the decorative arts and the non-British community in 19th century Victoria.

Approximate Conversions:
One acre = 0.4 hectare.
One mile = 1.6 kilometres.
One foot = 0.3 metre.
One pound = $2.
One shilling = 10 cents.

Abbreviations:
PROV – Public Record Office, Victoria.
VPRS – Victorian Public Record Series.

Notes:


2. PROV VPRS, 44/P/o, Unit 76, No. 71. Inward Registered and Unregistered Correspondence. Indenture setting out regulations concerning leases of land under the 47th Section of the Land Act, 1862.


4. PROV VPRS, 13018/P/1, Unit 1, Register of Leases, Section 47, Land Act of 1862, No. 140, (1862) Daniel Bunce. Argus, 18 June 1861, p. 5. Native seeds ordered by Bunce were listed on 13 August 1863 in the MS Books of Plants Sent Out, Vol. 3, the register held by the Herbarium, Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney. No details were given.
I acknowledge the assistance of Tom Bartels of Northbridge in this search.


6. PROV VPRS, 13018/P/1, Unit 1, Register of Leases, Section 47, Land Act of 1862, No. 38, (1863)
   Francis O'Connor.

7. PROV VPRS, 13018/P/1, Unit 1, Register of Leases, Section 47, Land Act of 1862, No. 93, (1863)
   Thomas O'Connor.

8. PROV VPRS, 13018/P/1, Unit 1, Register of Leases, Section 47, Land Act of 1862, No. 140, (1864)
   Jonathan Hosford. Hosford was the collector for the gas office in Market Square, Geelong.

9. PROV VPRS, 13018/P/1, Unit 1, Register of Leases, Section 47, Land Act of 1862, No. 71, (1864),
   Eustace James Walshe. Was Walshe, a surgeon, to use or dispose of the produce from Bunce's medicinal garden?

10. PROV VPRS, 44/P/0, Unit 76, Inward Registered and Unregistered Correspondence, No. 71,
    E J Walshe.

11. Ibid.

12. PROV VPRS, 627/P/0, Unit 164, Land Selection Files, Land Act 1869, Section 31,14301/31, Daniel Bunce.

13. Shire of Barrabool rates paid, 1867. Information from the late H S McAdam, honorary historian of the Barrabool Shire. The location of this record is now unknown. It is not in the collection of the Geelong Heritage Centre.

14. PROV VPRS, 2596/P/0, Unit 76, Inward Registered and Unregistered Correspondence, No. 71,
    E J Walshe.

15. Ibid.

16. PROV VPRS, 627/P/0, Unit 164, Land Selection Files, Land Act 1869, Section 31,14301/31, Daniel Bunce.

17. PROV VPRS, 627/P/0, Unit 164, Land Selection Files, Land Act 1869, Section 31,14301/31, Daniel Bunce.

18. PROV VPRS, 626/P/0 Unit 942, Land Selection Files by Land District, Sections 19 and 20, Land Act of 1869, 1279/19.20, Patrick Corbett.

19. PROV VPRS, 2596/P/0, Unit 76, Inward Registered and Unregistered Correspondence, No. 71,
    E J Walshe.

20. Shire of Barrabool Rate Book, 1871, showed that the vigneron, Bernhard Seidel, was occupying "botanist" Bunce's tenement and ten acres in Section IV, perhaps the vineyard; Victoria, Acts of Parliament 41, 1877-8, p. 225, "The Diseases in Vines Act"; Victoria Government Gazette.

Honours for AGHS members

Congratulations to Mrs Janet Calvert-Jones on the award of AO in the Australia Day Honours, for service to the community through philanthropy and support for medical research, access to education in rural areas, development of significant cultural and botanical collections, and to the print media. And also to Mrs Natalie Paton of Moss Vale who was awarded an AM for service to the community as founder of the Nursing Mothers' Association of Australia, and to the development of policies, protocols, management, support and training methods to assist nursing mothers and their babies.

A new Tasmanian Blue Gum

May this new species have long and fruitful life! It is the re-vamped Tasmanian Branch newsletter, edited by Robyn Hawkins. It not only details forthcoming branch activities but includes informative articles by Warwick Oakman and Ivan Saltmarsh.

Interested in a trip to New Zealand?

Remember Julie Keegan's generous raffle prize of a free place on a special Garden Tour of New Zealand and return airfares from Melbourne or Sydney to Christchurch. The raffle will be drawn on 21 March. Contact your local branch for tickets or phone Jackie Courmadias for details on (03) 9650 5043. Toll Free: 1800 678 446.
Sarah Cain, an experienced gardener from the Southern Highlands of NSW, and her husband, Geoff, turned away from a strong local tradition of European style gardening to follow a road less travelled.

Living in a natural garden has changed the way we see beauty. The subtle charms of Australian native plants have us enthralled, but above all, in this garden we have discovered a rich extra dimension; we have found a deep sense of worth. It arises from the fact that our garden is not pleasing only to human senses. As the plants in our seven-year-old garden grow and begin to link arms, we find ourselves watching the development of a lively feeding ground, habitat zone and centre of biodiversity. To our delight, the whole of our acre is beginning to flutter, croak, wriggle, scratch, zoom, hop and buzz.

A house is built

Our new garden adventure began with the building of a house. We were fortunate to cross paths with Canberra architect, Bert Read, whose work is defined by a belief that absolute beauty is found in the natural world. His buildings draw integrity from the genius of the site, paying homage to colour, form, texture and the effects of light. Bert Read designs with pure geometric lines and natural materials, locking into the landscape by avoiding intrusive statements, reflective surfaces and gratuitous decoration. The serene and lovely house he designed for us is highly functional and beautifully 'liveable'. As they mature, house and garden are developing into essential elements of one another.

A spirit of restraint

We try to heed the spirit of restraint that marks this place and avoid imposing decoration on either house or garden. In the garden we keep to the use of elemental materials such as timber, rock and water; but I have a passion for wood-fired pots. I am fascinated by the action of fire on clay and I am captured by the idea of earth being formed by the hands of a potter and delivered to me in useful and beautiful shapes that enhance everyday life. Pots find their way into our house and garden and settle down comfortably. I tell myself that a love affair with the rich, natural colours and seductive textures of fired clay is a logical progression from a love of the soil.

Texture

For me it is all about texture with the plants, too. I am drawn to the richness and detail of the green tapestry that is growing around us. Flowers, of course, add seasonal attraction. It
is sometimes argued that the flowers of native plants are less striking than those of exotic plants, but for us that is far from the truth. We delight in native flowers for their integrity, delicacy and generosity. Most plants remain in flower for months and when the main flowering is over will produce more flowers in response to a shower of rain.

Forgiveness

We watch for signs that the natural world is forgiving us for damage caused when we built the house in 1998. Soil compaction caused by builders’ trucks is beginning to yield as layers of mulch, organic matter, worms and roots work their magic. Plants are growing up around the building and we have found tiny seedlings under the protective skirts of parent plants. Every drop of storm water soaks into the soil, caught in the rock creek bed constructed to steady its flow. Last week we found a large frog hiding under rocks in its course. During last winter a white-throated tree-creeper roosted in a sheltered spot under our pergola and a male satin bowerbird built his bower in a group of shrubs in the front garden. We find these happenings immensely rewarding.

Building the house left us with patches of poor drainage caused by soil compaction. Having lost plants in some of these positions, we turned to reference books to learn more. We discovered treasures such as Banksia robur, with its strongly architectural form and its flowers like fat, blue-grey possums. It will grow happily with wet feet. Likewise, Correa decumbens. Most coreas insist on sharp drainage, but C. decumbens, with its useful prostrate habit, shiny foliage and red, bird-attracting flowers, puts up with poor drainage. These two, together with beautiful and floriferous callistemons, leptospermums and melaleucas, are now filling a difficult area where we lost plants due to the rigours of full summer sun and periodic ponding after heavy rain.

Today I ate my lunch in shade cast by a lovely little Melaleuca cuticularis, one of two I planted from six-inch pots in April 2000. This tree quickly became a favourite after I saw its picture in a book; multiple shapely trunks covered in peeling white bark reaching upwards to support tabulate layers of fine, blue-green foliage. As with many other trees in the garden, these two have twice suffered damage in winter snowfalls, but they continue to thrive and grace the courtyard with their strongly ornamental form.

Good-bye to noisy tools and neatness

Sitting under my tree watching a cloud of tiny insects, I looked forward to the moment when a neighbouring gardener would turn off a mechanical blower. When we left our exotic garden we happily said goodbye to all mechanical tools. We had fallen out-of-love with neatness. With our senses now tuned to the energy of a natural garden, neatness seems to represent sterility, hard work and a constant battle for control. We have abandoned raking, preferring to preserve the layer of life that thrives in leaf litter and topsoil. And there is no mowing to cause noise and soil compaction and to use up fuel and our gardening time. Two people can manage this garden with hand tools and sporadic bursts of attention. Because we are not really in control we relax in the knowledge things will look after themselves when we choose to turn our backs.

Balance

There is a balance evident in this garden. Because so many different forms of wildlife visit, no one species dominates. We have seen surprising bird behaviour such as rosella parrots chasing currawongs out of the birdbath and
wattlebirds taking on crows. The charming little eastern spinebills that zip around the garden sipping nectar from flowers are happy to share space with wrens, shrike thrushes, thornbills, whip birds and others. Feral birds do not come here. Cobwebby bags of caterpillars that appear on leptospermums and melaleucas disappear without our intervention; and I suspect that our neighbours’ rosebuds benefit from the rosella parrots’ passion for the red-flowered callistemons, correas and lambertias we plant for their delectation. When the cockatoos tear chunks out of banksias and hakeas in their quest for fruit we comfort ourselves with the knowledge that they are eating the food best suited to their nutrition. The plants respond to this rather savage pruning with flourishes of new growth and trunk stability fit to withstand our mountaintop gales.

Having lost plants in our exotic garden because of the belief that we could grow anything we wished by artificially altering garden conditions, we are now more circumspect. We tried and failed to grow some of the beautiful Western Australian banksias before reminding ourselves that altering conditions to suit the plant puts us into conflict with the land; we find it far more successful to choose a plant to suit our given conditions rather than the reverse. Australia is a vast continent encompassing hugely diverse soils and climate. The fact that a plant is an Australian native does not mean it will succeed on our patch.

In our exotic garden we had difficulty finding effective groundcover plants to help retain water in the soil and to provide living mulch. With the native plant palette we have had much more success, discovering a wealth of vigorous and hardy plants happy to scoot around the garden filling spaces between larger plants. Some, like grevilleas, cover themselves in nectar-filled flowers in spring much to the delight of the birds. Others, such as the myoporums, are more modest in flower, but form such a dense, green carpet that even flick weed cannot penetrate their defences.
The rewards of research

There is a wealth of wonderful discoveries awaiting gardeners venturing into the world of Australian plants, but, somewhat dauntingly, there are 25,000 plus species of plants on this continent. Good reference books are a must. Failure has often resulted when we have caved in to impulse and bought plants we have not learned about.

As a comprehensive all-in-one gardeners’ guide, it would be hard to better Wrigley and Fagg’s *Native Plants* (Reed Books, 1966). The Australian Plants Society publishes periodicals that make excellent reading and are a mine of information; they include notices of plant growers’ sale days held in Canberra and at Mt Annan Botanic Garden. Those gardeners with dollars to spend and a desire to know all, are anticipating the completion of the comprehensive *Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants* (Elliott and Jones, Lothian 1980). The eight volumes currently available, (plant names A-So), provide all the information you could ever need in readable and easily digested text.

A dream realised

There is a casuarina forest outside our front door. I imagined it when the house was being built, dreaming of patterns of light and shade, sighing wind and a carpet of brown needles. I chose a species that sounded good to me, but I made a mistake. I should have chosen a local species. Now the trees are quite tall, but each year we fell a few and replace them with the local *Casuarina littoralis*. This is not because we are ‘purists’ wanting to grow only indigenous species, but because we found out about the Glossy Black Cockatoo. The Glossy Black Cockatoo is an endangered bird that lives locally; its nutrition depends heavily on the fruit of indigenous casuarina trees.

Not long ago there were plenty of Glossy Black Cockatoos because there were plenty of indigenous casuarinas; but then also not long ago the Southern Highlands of NSW were a natural garden. That garden has vanished. It has vanished because we gardeners have changed the landscape from cool temperate forest to beautifully ordered sterility.

Change

Times have changed; conditions are different from those that predominated when early gardeners, dreaming of England, selected privileged areas such as this for the pleasant climate and rich soil and established garden style in Australia. Dr Peter Valder has referred to these areas collectively as ‘the hill stations’. These days ‘hill station’ gardeners are not immune to new realities of a diminishing water supply, a changing climate and greatly diminished biodiversity. These considerations now need to be addressed by all gardeners.

Far be it from me to suggest that we should destroy the lovely and historic gardens that distinguish our favoured gardening districts; that we should eliminate all our beautiful exotics to plant natives. I am suggesting that we enrich our gardens; that we reserve at least 20% of all garden space for native plants in order to preserve and nurture our endangered local treasures. We need to study, research, choose, display and care for native plants with respect equal to that which we show for our well-loved exotics.

We are privileged to live and garden on this uniquely beautiful continent, to be stewards of our own corners of this wide brown land. With that privilege comes obligation. Every year thousands of visitors come to our gardens, particularly to those in ‘hill station’ districts. They come to find inspiration and to learn. Committed and experienced garden owners like us need to set an example; to show that we are flexible and intelligent and capable; to show that we respond to new challenges by a practical demonstration of the fact that an essential element of gardening is the ability to change.
This is the first of several articles on South Australian garden design to prepare for the 27th Annual National Conference in Adelaide from 20th to 22nd October 2006.

The recent registration of Melbourne's Orica House and its grounds on the National Heritage List has highlighted the credibility of contemporary design as possessing heritage merit. It has also pointed to the undervalued design work by landscape architect John Stevens (b.1920). While the majority of Stevens' projects were in Victoria and the ACT, there is one project that he undertook in South Australia that has long been forgotten and is relatively intact, hidden on the University of Adelaide's North Terrace campus.

Stevens, a graduate in horticulture from Burnley and agriculture from the University of Melbourne, worked as a garden designer with Melbourne contractors R P Knight & Co. With the encouragement of architect Roy Grounds, Stevens established his own landscape architecture practice in 1952 and rapidly attracted a client partnership with some of the most innovative and contemporary architects in Melbourne including Grounds, Robin Boyd, Stephenson & Turner, Bates Smart & McCutcheon, and Godfrey Spowers. In 1964 he left private practice to become landscape architect to the Australian National University (1964-87) and much of its acclaimed landscape setting today is witness to the skill of Stevens.

The characteristic design style of Stevens in the late 1950s and early 1960s was very much influenced by Brazilian landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx and his designs and ideas. Marx was passionate about the use of art in landscape design and applied this through a strong use of dramatic shapes and colours in forms and plants. Stevens applied the same palette and approach using abstract sculptural forms, succulents and feature fountains and pools all of which could be observed from the perimeters and from windows in buildings.

In contrast to Marx's colourful South American plant palette, Stevens used succulents and often plants with architectural forms to accentuate the design. He also used slate, concrete pavers, river pebbles as features - river pebbled embedded concrete pavers, or river pebbles embedded in abstract shaped concrete form work - to create his designs. While most of these designs were strategically crafted to be looked into and down upon, many allowed human access enabling people to wander and rest in the spaces.

Precedent projects in Melbourne by Stevens included the former ICI House sculpture garden (1958), the former Southgate Fountain (1958-59), the surrounds of Wilson Hall at the University of Melbourne (1956), and the Memorial Park Crematorium at Altona North (1958-62).

As part of expansion works at the University of Adelaide in 1960, architects Bates Smart & McCutcheon were selected to design and supervise the erection of the Napier Building...
complex following a limited competition. Stevens was drawn into this commission to guide the design of plaza ground surfaces around the Building and also to design the courtyard. BSM engaged local innovative architects Cheesman Doley Brabham & Neighbour to supervise the building works. Coincidentally, landscape architect Allan Correy was employed by the University in 1963 to design the adjacent Walter Young Garden which drew upon the design style established in the Napier Building including river pebbled embedded rectangular pre-cast concrete pavers with Correy's penchant for indigenous species.

The Napier Courtyard design, prepared by Stevens in February 1961, repeats the design style he was using in Melbourne as characterized in the Orica House courtyard. It is a classic example of his translation of Marx's design style employing the plant and hard surface materials that Stevens was commonly using at the time.

The Courtyard is a square shape surrounded by 4 floors of building that house academic and administrative offices associated with humanities and social science programs. Within the square, Stevens crafted an organic flowing lawn and then draped a Y-shaped abstract sculptural form over the lawn. The form was articulated by concrete form work with river pebbles embedded in the formwork.

To the western side of the square was a rectangular pre-cast concrete paved plaza space with a feature free-form poured, square-shaped, concrete seat in the north-western corner and a river pebble lined organic-shaped pool in the south-western corner. The latter was positioned under the Jacaranda (Jacaranda mimosifolia) tree and is home today to a family of ducks and ducklings.

While the courtyard served as a feature to the Building, it was also positioned on top of the lower lecture theatre complex. Accordingly, Stevens had to design a roof garden, with needs to accommodate the roots of the two feature trees, and two circular air conditioning ducts. These constraints were successfully tackled as the courtyard is a visually delightful feature today and one would not know that it is a roof garden. While the Silk Tree (Albizia julibrissin) was later removed, the Jacaranda (Jacaranda mimosifolia) thrives in its location. The only main change has been to the air conditioning ducts. These ducts, enabling air to be released from the below ground air conditioning plant, were designed with inverted arcing wrought iron rod covers that were flush to the ground level. Unfortunately the noise from the original air conditioning plant was unacceptable to the Building's occupants and the University erected a 1.4m high concrete cylinder over one of the ducts and added a 1.4m high square-shaped duct in the north-eastern corner of the Courtyard.

Within the lawn was positioned a young Silk Tree (Albizia julibrissin) and a young Jacaranda (Jacaranda mimosifolia). Surrounding the lawn was a series of garden beds dominated by colourful succulents, so relevant to Adelaide's Mediterranean landscape, but typical of his Melbourne plant palette. These gardens were dominated by Kalanchoe fedtschenkoi, Echeveria gibbiflora 'Metallica', Cotyledon macrantha or virescens, Graptopetalum paraguayense, Euphorbia ledenii, Agave attenuata, Xanthosoma flavida, Tibouchina sp, Hypericum cerastioides, Kunzea pomifera, Thymus serpyllum, and an arc-shaped carpet of Lesser Periwinkle (Vinca minor f. alba).

Today the Courtyard remains forgotten within the building footprint of the University as it is not on an access route but rather is only seen by the occupants of the adjacent offices. While many of the succulents have been replaced by the University gardening staff, the overall design is intact providing a quality space with considerable interest and quiet refuge for the resident duck family.

Associate Professor David Jones is Director of the Landscape Architecture Program in the School of Architecture, Landscape Architecture & Urban Design in the University of Adelaide. He serves on the Editorial Advisory Panel for Australian Garden History.
Brisbane's inner suburban West End continues to be a suburb in transition. Notable as a refuge for workers, migrants, students and the underprivileged for generations, West End is now identified as a 'trendy' address and is being gentrified. Suburban histories are quickly disappearing because of this redevelopment but the history most under threat is that of migrant Greeks.

Arrival

Greek migration to Australia largely began after the disastrous Graeco-Turkish War in 1897 when mainland Greece had to absorb over a million Greek refugees. Many Greeks, in turn, migrated and most chose to settle in the United States. However, in 1924 the United States government put a brake on immigration and Greek migrants turned instead to Australia. Although the Second World War temporarily halted migration, in 1947 the Labor government introduced mass non-British immigration which began the process of transforming Australia to the multicultural society it is today. Many Greek migrants settled in the South Brisbane suburb of West End and the most visible evidence is to be found in institutions such as the Orthodox Church of St George, the Greek Club and Convention Centre, the Hellenic Society, St Nicholas Nursing Home, Colossus Hall, Cyprus House, and the popular, annual Paniyri Festival. A more pervasive evidence of the influence of Greek culture in West End is to be seen in many gardens distinctive because of the range of selected plantings.

The scented garden

The surest indicator of contemporary Greek occupation in a house is the clump of bush basil (Ocimum gratissimum) near the front entrance, frequently on the footpath. These plants add a spicy note as you brush by but their presence is largely symbolic as, according to my informant, the more usual sweet basil (Ocimum basilicum) is used in cooking. However, in Greek Orthodox communities the priest breaks a sprig off to dip in water to bless the house and its inhabitants and visitors also break off a sprig to place near the door to let the householder know they had a caller.

The small front garden of these 'Queenslander' houses (renovated in inimitable style) is the most visible signifier of a Greek garden and it is dominated by perfumed plants. Here a citrus tree (frequently a lemon) adds the benefit of fruit to its sweetly scented white blossoms. Roses proliferate as do carnations, stock, jasmines and even night blooming cestrum but you will never discover lavender, except in very recent plantings. More tropical interlopers include the gardenia and brunfelsia but not a frangipani. Why? Because they drop their leaves and their sap stains the concrete. The fronts of Greek houses are defined by swathes of the ever practical concrete, sometimes embellished with bricks, tiles, mosaics, or shells.

In this suburb in transition one of the surest indicators of its former occupation by a Greek family is a bush of jasmine – frequently trained over archways. Its sparse foliaged form survives in neglected front gardens and the equally sparse pink buds continue to develop into white, heavily-scented flowers. It is the perfumière's jasmine (Jasminum grandiflorum). Carnations, so out-of-favour with contemporary garden styles, even cottage gardens, proliferate in pots. They are with their clove-like perfume another distinctive feature. Indeed pots proliferate in most Greek gardens reflecting the lack of gardens in the villages of the home country. Other flowers include geraniums ('poor man's roses') including the ivy and scented leaf varieties. However, the brilliant
red bracts of the winter blooming poinsettia and other tropical plants such as cordylines find favour in Greek gardens.

The productive garden

The vegetable garden is usually at the back of the house and if you walk around West End you get to view them largely from side streets. Small lawns for the children do appear but they are dominated by the surrounding vegetable garden. We forget how much migrant tastes have changed Australia. Greek migrants were forced to grow their favourite vegetables such as capsicums, continental cucumbers, cos lettuce, broad beans, egg plants, garlic, okra, zucchini and herbs like basil and rosemary as they were simply unavailable at the standard greengrocer.

The tropical mango, so generous in its spread in other Brisbane back-yards, is banned as its shade is too extensive for a productive garden. Pawpaws are grown in Greek gardens as they don't grow very tall and have a short life span and passionfruit vines can be constrained even though they grow rampantly. Loquats, particularly the tart varieties are favoured and occasionally you will find a clump of prickly pears. The most distinctive tree in back gardens is the low, squat shape of the fig, in season protected with netting. (The heavy scent of figs I noticed in my walk a few months ago wasn't the ripening fruit but the trees being grubbed out.) Surprisingly, mature olive trees are rare in West End although they have been appearing in contemporary plantings - Brisbane's climate is not particularly conducive to their growth.

Many of the seeds (such as amaranth which is used as a leafy vegetable and for which the seeds were not available commercially) are passed from one gardener to another. Rocket is a popular salad vegetable now, but according to my Greek contact the selection from the supermarket is bland. Its proper pungency is achieved when it is grown in poor, dry soils. One of the most visible of the Greek productive gardens is that of the Georgiou Family at 215 Boundary Road, adjacent to the West End shopping centre. Because there is literally no back yard, the front garden is a happy melange of flowers and vegetables.
Above: Detail of the front garden.
Below: Overall view of front garden.

The gardeners

Two Greek gardeners were documented in the recent exhibition at the Museum of Brisbane ‘Migrant Gardeners in Brisbane’ (19 Aug.-27 Nov. 2005). This was researched by Professor Helen Armstrong, formerly of the Queensland University of Technology who is well noted for her research on migrant gardens. In one garden grape vines form a sheltering arbour in Brisbane’s hot and humid summers and although they aren’t well suited for our climate, gardener Nikos Manolis actually makes wine from his grapes. The principal use of the vine is of course the young leaves for dolmades.

The second Greek gardener was Mrs Anastasia Kasoti who was born in Rhodes and is very unusual as her interest has been in the productive garden which is usually the province of the male. Mrs Kasoti grows garlic, basil, rosemary, eggplants, capsicums, figs and vines for dolmades, but more recently she has included roses in her front garden.

Like these two gardeners, Greek gardeners of the post-World War II migration are getting quite elderly. As their families have grown up the need for a productive garden diminishes, especially as a broader range of fresh produce becomes available through shops and I’ve noticed several gardens falling fallow over the years. The children of these first generation Greeks have now established themselves in newer, outer suburbs (especially Carindale) and adjusted themselves to contemporary Queensland lifestyles. The scented garden will survive, but what is the fate of these productive gardens now that vegetables such as okra and broad-beans are becoming increasingly available through the supermarkets?

Glenn Cooke is Research Curator, Queensland Heritage, at the Queensland Art Gallery. He is a past president of the Queensland Branch of AGHS and served on the National Management Committee for six years latterly as vice-chair.

The Myall Park weekend, 3-4 September 2005, stretched into the lives of the group of twenty Queensland Branch members in a similarly gentle manner to the way the Western wonga vine (Pandorea pandorana) cascades over the west-facing wall of the Myall Park Gallery, prettily displaying its small trumpet pink flowers, with delicate purple throat - an indelible reminder of the beauty in native plant colour. The dainty Queensland hop bush (Dodonaea viscosa subsp. spatulata) was in flower too, the paleness of its small yellow petals topping a lush green spring growth and pushing up against the greyness of the sawmill.

Life is special; how philosophical one should be about it. This is the story of Myall Park Botanic Garden (MPBG) where one man, with his family, looked into the landscape to see the true loveliness of Australian plants.

Mr David Gordon, Dave to his friends, but Mr Gordon to all of us who are now privileged to travel the paths of his vision, had a plan for a journey through the natural beauty which is the life of our land. Before Europeans arrived, with their cloven-hoofed domestic animals, Australia held a wealth of wondrous indigenous botanical life; this world, so fragile and complex, existed in a perverse climate that challenged life itself. But exist it did, seldom tempered by the Dreamtime people, a rare native bush garden, illustrating its own story over thousands of years.

A small number of the early settlers sought to conserve this collection. In the Glenmorgan district, Gordon country always was a safe haven for native flora and thus the idea for the garden began.

Dorinda Schwennesen, our accomplished guide, met us at the old sawmill, next to the gallery, where Mr Gordon once milled timber for buildings on his property. The Schwennesen and Gordon families share a friendship extending over several generations; Dorinda has been involved since the inauguration of the committee for Myall Park Botanic Garden Ltd in 1988 when David Gordon made the decision to gift the garden to this enthusiastic group of people to ensure that the MPBG would live on.

Dorinda’s knowledge of the Park is extensive, a botanical expert, she gives time each week to the physical tabulation of the many species. With a real love for the garden and a delightful collection of anecdotes, Dorinda took us on an excellent tour.

We travelled around the garden on the white gravel loop road, stopping often to walk into different areas: the Gumnut, Acacia and Honeyeater Walks, each with their own special attractions. The September colour is yellow for wattles with predominance of Acacia crassa (banana-leaf wattle), which has naturalised well throughout the garden, to the point where some need removing as unwanted plants. Acacias cultivate easily and there are examples of A. conferta, A. deanei and A. cuthbertsonii though not to be confused with Senna artemisioides, previously the silver cassia, with its silver leaves and cape of gold, cup-shaped flowers. Cassia brewsteri (Leichhardt bean), with its dangling, cylindrical bronze seedpods, is also an unusual sight, with a structure and form that distinguish it from many other plants.
Some trees of Myall Park

We were told that banksias had not done well in the park, too arid perhaps, but in the region of the Western Walk there was a wonderful surprise: *Banksia ashbyii*. Carrying cones from previous seasons along with this year’s yellow/orange candle-shaped flowers, it was spectacular against the blue of the clear spring sky. Originally from the central coast of Western Australia it is rare in the MPBG collection as it is difficult to grow outside its natural range.

We were treated to displays of the tall, red flowering *Eucalyptus erythronema* with pink flowering *Micromyrtus rosea* below them. *E. angustissima*, the tiniest eucalypt, was found in flower beside the road. There is a row of *Eucalyptus salubris*, so loved by Pro Hart in his art. The ever-changing glorious colours of the trunks could capture anyone’s imagination. However, the best description of *E. salubris* comes from the botanical artist Dorothy Gordon, Mr Gordon’s wife who declared that ‘stroking a trunk feels like stroking a horse’s neck, softly muscled, with rippled silver to red colouring’. Here is a talented woman, quite obviously at home in her own garden.

The Old Eucalypt Way has to be a favourite for most visitors. There is an unexpected discovery around each bend, down every gully, into a clearing or along a ridge: Augustus Gregory’s medium *Brachychiton gregorii*, the soft grey mallee trunks of the fluted horn mallee (*Eucalyptus stowardi*), the smooth barked apple (*Angophora leiocarpa*) shading a picnic table, the small reddish/purple trumpet flowers of *Eremophila maculata* and the real joy of coming upon the quiet stand of majestic *Eucalyptus argophloia* with their bright white bark. These stately Chinchilla white gums – threatened in their restricted natural habitat – are being trialled throughout the Park with a ‘drive’ of immature trees now lining the road from the entrance gate.

Walking along any track in this natural bush garden, one is struck by its unmarred naturalness. Labels do not intrude and the signage is perfect, sensitive to the vision David Gordon had for his native park. A ‘cut’ arrow on a length of cypress amongst the grass shows us the way, the oblique saw on a sapling, or the old taps, hidden and safe, in an ancient stump, a pipeline covered by bark, an erosion problem solved with a criss-cross of sticks, all that is required to maintain tranquillity. Truly Mr Gordon was a man ahead of his time. Dorinda recalls that to be taken on a guided walk with him was a rare and beautiful experience.

The Gordon grevilleas, attracting birds and bright with colour, are obvious in the 90-hectare garden. The hybridised grevilleas, named for his daughters: G. ‘Robyn Gordon’ (so successful in our gardens and recently announced official floral emblem of the 2006 ‘Year of the Outback’), G. ‘Sandra Gordon’ and G. ‘Merinda Gordon’ grow in the Myall Park Gallery area; and the parents of these fine specimens can be found in the Park also.

There is a lovely walk to the big red tank-stand through an avenue of several new hybrid plants. Indeed, the Scottish spirit of a true Gordon can be seen as the flowers and foliage of ‘Robyn’ (mindful of her tragic loss through leukaemia when barely out of her teens) toss like a tartan in the breeze. Here Nancy Schuster finds delight in studying the bright swath of yellow flowers and inhaling the heavy honey-like scent of the narrow-leafed G. *obliquistigma*.
The nursery, closed in 1995, houses the detailed garden records. The herbarium of over 5,000 specimens, kept in the homestead, is a valuable resource still referred to by botanists from as far afield as Kew Gardens, London.

In the nursery, Dorinda explained the new system of markers for indicating the origin of each plant; we were shown the box of casualty books and the original collection books that record the date, site number and species of plants. This material is being added to the same database (Microsoft Access) as is used by the Australian Botanic Gardens. Seeds are continually being collected in the Park by hand, placed in brown paper bags to prevent sweating and stored in the many small drawers of the old silky oak cabinets. The potting shed is still used, where plants are readied for the louvered glasshouse and the outside hardening bays. There is also a resident family of skinks under this historic 1950s building!

The Gallery is a hub of activity. It houses the permanent Dorothy Gordon botanic art exhibition, in a space often shared with a visiting exhibition; the Pinhole Photographs of the Garden by Victoria Cooper are here too. Artist workshops, school children’s visits to ‘paint the park’, meetings, MPBG business, a stream of visitors and the Gallery Shop all make for a very busy year for these committed volunteers. On the outside eastern wall is the extraordinary mural: Cyberflora, a gift from the Glenmorgan Art Group that depicts plants, animals in the garden, and a history of favourite scenes set against a backdrop of the changeable weather.

A happy evening meal at the Glenmorgan Hotel had us turning early for ‘home’ at the MPBG where our overnight accommodation was good fun, most adequate and a part of living history. We quickly bedded down in the old quarters for workmen, (complete with a record of scores pencilled on the verandah wall from furiously contested dart games in the past), and the quaintness of Avochie Cottage, sometime home of an overseer. The Park Manager, Marion Firns, pleasantly made the group welcome, extending our knowledge by answering many questions.

Everyone would have a favourite plant in this beautiful garden. Mr Gordon’s favourite tree was Eucalyptus pachyphylla. He planted it in memory of a mother who took him for walks in the bush when he was a boy. My favourite is Acacia cyperophylla, for its spectacular reddish curled bark and wiliness; or it just might be Angophora leiocarpa, the lovely Queensland sugar gum, which is an endearing small part of my childhood psyche.

At sunset, on the western border of the garden, we met Sandra Neill (née Gordon), camera in hand, rushing to snap her favourite purple pompom flowers of Melaleuca filifolia, in the last light of a splendid day in her family garden; she graciously agreed to be part of this photograph.

Susan Martin is an active member of the Queensland Branch of AGHS with a special interest in researching the contribution rural families have made to garden history. This article first appeared in the Queensland Branch Newsletter.
WIN THIS BOOK

A copy of *The Naming of Names* will forwarded to the member whose completed Membership Survey Questionnaire is drawn from those returned to Jackie Courmadias at the AGHS Office, Gate Lodge, Birdwood Avenue, Melbourne, by 24 March. [See ‘From the Chair’ on page 2 for details and the form enclosed with this journal.]

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**THE NAMING OF NAMES**

Anna Pavord

Bloomsbury

ISBN: 0 7475 7952 0

RRP: $79.95

Reviewed by Nina Crone

The sweep of *The Naming of Names* is both breath-taking and inspiring. Anna Pavord adopts a prismatic approach in her elegant history of taxonomy and the science of botany. Delightfully woven into the narrative is her personal odyssey through notable libraries as she redeems the seminal place of Theophrastus, puts Pliny in his place, dusts down Dioscorides and acknowledges the contributions of Arab and Jewish scholars before turning to Western European herbalists, Renaissance artists and the scientists of the Enlightenment.

Central to the book is the philosophical question of classifying and codifying plants, an issue first addressed by Pavord’s hero Theophrastus and later worked on by the pragmatic Romans who delayed the key line of thought by adopting an encyclopaedic pharmacopoeia style classification based on the medicinal use of plants.

But the book is far more than an account of scientific endeavour. It opens up the essence of communication - issues of translation, linguistics, plagiarism, the interrelation of word and picture, readership – against the backdrop of scholarship in the classical world, the dark ages, the medieval period, the Renaissance and eighteenth century Enlightenment.

Pavord’s research glows with passion, empathy and sensitivity as she recounts an excursion into the jungle of Guyana where her ignorance of the environment in general, and plant life in particular, creates mental disorientation placing her in a situation somewhat analogous to that facing the early thinkers. Then, a visit to the Tien Shan area of central Asia where she recognises the plants because of their botanical names and their introduction into European gardens, confirms the enormous debt owed to the cast of her book.

The reader is ensnared in detective work as Pavord traces the provenance of fabulous manuscripts through libraries, private ownership and the ravages of fire, insect damage and neglect. Through palpable descriptions she shares the pleasure of the researcher – ‘I sit in the poundingly silent rare book room at the University Library, Cambridge...’, ‘I want to sniff the leather [of the ancient bindings] like a dog’ - or her joy in Florence when Ivan Illich helps her gain access to the Museo Botanico to view Cesalpino’s herbarium.

Many readers will relish the insights into the personalities of those whose names grace botanical genera – Bauhin, Brunfels, Cesalpino, Dilleniis, Dodoens, Fuchs, Gesner, Lobelius, Magnol, Mattioli, Monardes, Nicot and Rondelet among others. But, in some of her finest writing, Pavord also rescues several, like the English cleric William Turner, from comparative obscurity. The book concludes with the work of John Ray whose *Synopsis methodica stirpium Britannicaium* (1690) laid down the rules for a system of plant nomenclature.

The epilogue deals with the development of the new science, botany, and pays rather grudging tribute to Linnaeus for his contribution to the standardisation of Ray’s system. As befits its subject *The Naming of Names* is rich in magnificent illustrations, from early manuscripts, medieval herbals, Renaissance pictures, herbaria, and florilegia.

Just as a memorable meal prepared by a master chef leaves one both supremely satisfied yet wanting more, so Anna Pavord’s work is to be savoured. She has paved the way and whetted the taste for the story of the new directions in taxonomy based on DNA, another giant step in plant classification. If you can only afford one book in 2006, this is the one.

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For the Bookshelf
**MARCH**

3 Friday
Tasmania, Hobart
Visit to the exhibition ‘Transplanted to Tasmania – Botanical Art and Attitude’ at the Allport Library.

12 Sunday
Queensland, Brisbane
‘Gardens of the Mayne Family’, talk by Dr Bernadette Turner in the Seminar Room, Mt Coot-tha Gardens. Contact: Wendy Lees (07) 3289 0280
tallowwood@iprimus.com.au

15 Wednesday
Victoria, Melbourne
Working Bee at Bishopscourt. Contact: Helen Page (03) 9396 2260.

26 Sunday
South Australia, Adelaide
Visit to Drapers Hall, a property dating back to the 1880s.

**APRIL**

2 Sunday
Victoria, Langwarrin
25th anniversary celebrations at Cruden Farm – see invitation enclosed with this journal or contact Jackie Courmadias (03) 9650 5043.

5 Sunday
Villa Alba, 44 Walmer St, Kew: open 1-4 pm. See the recently re-created 1880s garden and the magnificent painted murals in the mansion, www.villaalbamuseum.org

5 Wednesday to 9 Sunday

**COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES**

**MARCH**

4 Saturday & 5 Sunday
Autumn Plant Sale - Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne. Inside E Gate off Birdwood Avenue South Yarra. (Melway 2L B2) Saturday 10am-4pm, Sunday 10am-3pm. Rare and unusual plants and old favourites. Enquiries Julie Tel on (03) 9380 8253 or jkhorsfall@westnet.com.au

25 Sunday
Plant Sale at RBG Sydney 9am to 5pm. The Growing Friends offer 10% discount on stock for Friends of the RBG Sydney.

**APRIL**

2 Sunday
Villa Alba, 44 Walmer St, Kew: open 1-4 pm. See the recently re-created 1880s garden and the magnificent painted murals in the mansion, www.villaalbamuseum.org

5 Wednesday to 9 Sunday

**VICTORIA - ONGOING WORKING BEES**

St Helier’s Abbotsford Convent Gardens: First Wednesday & third Saturday of every month except January. Starting time 9.30am, morning tea is provided, BYO lunch and gardening gloves. Assistance in garden is most welcome. Contact: Pamela Jellie pjellie@hotmail.com

Bishopscourt: Third Wednesday of every month
The AGHS maintains this garden at 120 Clarendon St, East Melbourne and welcomes new volunteers. Contact: helenpage@bigpond.com

**JUNE**

17 Saturday
Southern Highlands, Burradoo
David Burke will present an illustrated lecture on the Railway Garden Movement. Bookings essential.
Margaret Ruth Tindale (née Adams) 1918–2006

Ruth Tindale, sculptor, artist, plant collector and gardener who, with her husband George, created an exceptional exotic garden among the lofty eucalypts at Sherbrooke in the Dandenong Ranges has died in Melbourne, aged 88. After her husband’s death in 1977, she donated the 2.4 hectare garden at 33 Sherbrooke Road to the people of Victoria through the Victorian Conservation Trust.

The Tindales’ garden reflected their dedication to horticulture and was visited by plant enthusiasts from all over the world. While George’s interest was the trees and shrubs, Ruth contributed most of the detailed planting with bulbs and rock and alpine plants. She was a keen seed raiser and gleaned her knowledge of plants from the many societies she belonged to including the Royal Horticultural Society, the American, Scottish, and New Zealand Rock Garden Societies, the Alpine Garden Society and the South African Botanical Society. She propagated dwarf narcissi, American trout lilies (*Erythronium* sp.), crocuses, species tulips, fritillaries, scillas and many alpine plants.

A meticulous record keeper Ruth recorded all plant acquisitions, their source and growth history so that the information would be of future use to horticulturists. The Tindales sought out rare and choice plants that suited the acid soil of the Dandenongs to add to their collection. These were northern hemisphere plants that had been developed over many years such as azaleas, rhododendrons, kalmias, camellias and magnolias.

Ruth was born in Kyabram where her father, Hugh Adams, was a Presbyterian minister. She inherited her love of plants and nature from her artistic mother, Florida, who always made a garden wherever she lived, despite moving often. Florida was a student of the painters Clara Southern and Walter Withers and her mother’s youngest brother was the artist Rex Battarbee, who painted in Australia’s outback and did much to assist Albert Namatjira and other aboriginal artists.

Educated in Melbourne at Fintona Girls School and Swinburne Technical College where she studied art Ruth moved to Tasmania with her family in 1938 and continued her art training, later developing an interest in puppetry. Returning to Melbourne in 1945 she became involved with the National Fitness Council’s Children’s Theatre. Modelling puppet heads inspired her to attend sculpture classes at RMIT where Lenton Parr ‘was like a shaft of light’. The puppets she made for touring performers Joan and Betty Rayner are now displayed in the Performing Arts Museum.

Ruth continued to paint and sculpt in clay and metal and in 1961 she shared first prize in the Mildura Triennial Sculpture Competition with a work now held in the National Gallery of Victoria. She met George Tindale while working for the Department of Agriculture. They married in 1961 and moved to Sherbrooke and gardened together for 16 years rarely taking a holiday or time off. In 1990 Ruth was awarded an Order of Australia for her services to conservation and the environment.

Pamela Jellie
Gavin Walkley, CBE
1911-2005

The instigator of the landscape architecture profession in South Australia, Gavin Walkley passed away in late November 2005. A prominent educationalist, Walkley led the maturation of the architecture, landscape architecture and planning professions in South Australia in the 1960s and 1970s rising to become national president of AILA (1971-73).

While not personally interested in garden history, Walkley fostered the development of the landscape architecture profession in South Australia. He served as President of the National Trust of South Australia (1988-90) and was active in urban conservation and property management committee-work.

Born in Adelaide, Walkley initially studied architectural engineering at the University of Adelaide, was articled to Woods Bagot Laybourne-Smith & Irwin serving under architect Louis Laybourne-Smith and then obtained a Master of Letters and a Master of Arts at Clare College in Cambridge. Following World War II he worked with (Sir) John Overall on the design and development of Elizabeth before accepting, in 1951, the position of Head of the Louis Laybourne-Smith School of Architecture at the South Australian Institute of Technology (University of South Australia): a position he held until 1976.

While visiting the University of Durham, in 1949, Walkley met Professor Brian Hackett and was enthusiastically introduced to landscape architecture. It has always been falsely assumed that Walkley only undertook administrative work in landscape architecture. Rather, Walkley supervised the renovation and re-landscape design of ‘Princess Royal’ station near Burra, numerous BHP related recreational facilities in Port Pirie, and the Murray Bridge oval remodelling amongst other projects under Overall & Walkley. In 1950 when Overall prepared a set of detailed sketches for a glasshouse in the Adelaide Botanic Gardens, at Director Noel Lothian’s invitation, he recalled that ‘Gavin took control of this job.’

As part of his interest in and commitment to design in South Australia, in 1955 Walkley commissioned architect Robin Boyd to design his new residence at 26 Palmer Place in North Adelaide. In recognition of the landscape design abilities of Elsie Marion Cornish, the former owner of the property, Walkley retained a Silky Oak (Grevillea robusta) and a vine (Vitis ssp) planted by Cornish.

Walkley served as State President of AILA (SA) (1970-71), National President of AILA (1971-73), Grand Councillor of IFAL (1973-75). Allied to these positions he is unique in holding the national presidencies of AILA (1971-73), RAIA (1965-66) and PIA (then RAPI) (1964-66), and also served on the National Capital Planning Committee (1958-67), and as inaugural director of the Australian Institute of Urban Studies (1968-70).

He was a consummate educator and administrator, passionate about the advancement of design and planning education: he actively sought the establishment of a single unified Australian environmental design institute that brought together all planning and design professions, and strongly believed that education in landscape architecture was essential to the advancement of the profession in South Australia.

David Jones
About 500 bidders and curious spectators gathered in the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney, on a warm Sunday afternoon last October for the 'Collectors Edition' sale of the first generation of the rare Wollemi pine *Wollemia nobilis*. A grove of fewer than 100 of these trees was accidentally discovered by David Noble, Michael Casteleyn and Tony Zimmerman in a remote canyon of the rugged Blue Mountain not far from Sydney on 10 September 1994. The trees are regarded as living fossils from the age of dinosaurs. The auction attracted a large contingent of local and international media.

The plants on sale were grown from original cuttings taken from 15 trees. Each parent tree has been named and each of the 292 trees sold was provided with its own authentication certificate detailing its provenance. The lots comprised 79 single trees, 35 duos, 26 trios, 6 groves (of five trees each), a special collection of 15 trees and an avenue of 20 trees. A beautifully illustrated catalogue provided the particulars of every tree on sale. Proceeds of the sale were directed towards assisting conservation and cultural organisations across the world, and funding the conservation of other rare or threatened plant species.

The atmosphere was tense when Lot 1, a single tree grown from a cutting from 'The Bill Tree', the 40m. tall 'King of the Wollemi', 'the grandest Wollemi Pine on the planet', was offered. This tree was named after Bill Hillingsworth, the helicopter pilot who skilfully delivered scientists to the secret location. What would the first tree fetch? The crowd was anxious, 100 overseas collectors hung on the telephone lines. Bidding began tentatively, and steadily rose until it reached $5,000, double the highest estimate, plus 20% as auctioneer's commission and 10% GST. The scene was set for an exciting sale.

The highest price realised on the day was for Lot 20, 15 trees, known as 'the Sir Joseph Banks Collection'. Lot 20 was the closest it was possible to replicate the actual wild grove: it contained a tree propagated from each of the 15 wild trees from which cuttings were taken. The crowd spontaneously applauded when it attracted a whopping $115,000, 3.8 times the lower estimate, plus commission and GST. In comparison, the avenue of 20 trees grown from cuttings taken from tree 7, 'The Hercules Tree', and propagated February in 1999 could be considered a bargain at $18,000 plus commission and GST.

A mystery buyer is reputed to have spent about $230,000 over the three hours on 47 trees for his private collection and others for donation to botanical gardens.

Over one million dollars was raised from the sale. If you were not a lucky buyer, don't despair. The second, 'Limited Edition', sale will be held in April 2006. After that the Wollemi pine will be available at selected nurseries. Further details are available at www.wollemipine.com

Peter Cousens is an active member of the Sydney and Northern NSW Branch of AGHS. He has a degree in art history and is currently researching women's pioneer memorial gardens of the 1930s.