Lost Gardens of Sydney
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AGHS Monaro tour
GARDEN HISTORY
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Publication
Australian Garden History, the official journal of the Australian Garden History Society, is published four times a year.

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Subscriptions (GST INCLUSIVE)
For 1 year
Single $62
Family $85
Corporate $200
Youth $20
(UNDER 25 YEARS OF AGE)
Non-profit organisations $85

Advertising Rates
1/8 page $132
(2+ issues$121 each)
1/4 page $220
(2+ issues$198 each)
1/2 page $330
(2+ issues$275 each)
Full page $550
(2+ issues$495 each)
Inserts $440
for Australia-wide mailing
Pro-rata for state-wide mailing

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ISSN 1033-3673
From the editors

Christina Dyson and Richard Aitken

This issue is the first to be produced by your new co-editors, Christina Dyson and Richard Aitken. It also has the happy circumstance of having 12 extra pages per quarterly issue and double the amount of colour pages as previous issues. We are excited at the prospect of additional space in each issue for additional articles, enhanced illustrations, more features, and the occasional longer piece of writing. What we hope will not change is the engaging style and content of the journal, the broad range of places, people, and plants covered, and contributions by garden historians, writers, and enthusiasts from all parts of Australia (and beyond!).

Inevitably, the journal will be characterised by the sharing of ideas and contacts which the luxury a co-editorship endows. We have shared research interests, but also many which are individual and quite personal. As well, co-editorship will be distinguished by our overlapping yet complementary professional fields.

Christina is currently researching post-WWII Australian designed landscapes and asking whether or not they have links with nationalism and a discernable wish to assemble Australian identity. Maybe a lesser-known fact is that for a number of years she performed with the Australian Ballet—now many years ago—and we may just see some ‘theatre’ appearing in future issues.

Richard continues his fascination with the different sources of inspiration and influence on Australian gardens. As a collector of books and ephemera, this rich and extensive means of transferring and developing ideas is a particular passion—expect therefore to see a strong literary quality to future themes of interest in the journal.

Our shared personal interests also embrace the use and cultivation of particular plants across different eras, the nature and extent of social values embodied by designed and vernacular landscapes, approaches to garden conservation (including places with intangible cultural values), and heritage places of the future. Whilst our focus will be on Australia, international perspectives will also be embraced.

We have for our guidance, the mission statement of the Society:

*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.*

We are also mindful of the need for the Society—and by extension its official journal—to facilitate the systematic identifying, recording, and restoration of gardens. As always, we welcome your feedback on each journal and suggestions for future issues. *Australian Garden History* is first and foremost, a journal published by and for its members.

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Cover: Ellis Rowan’s print ‘Sydney Wild Flowers’ (1887) introduces our extracts from Colleen Morris’s new book *Lost Gardens of Sydney* (see page 4). [Private collection]

Page 2: Gardens of the Monaro (see article on page 27)—from top to bottom: Nandawar, Michelago, and Bobundra. [Photographs: Sue Keon-Cohen]
Geometric plots in a ‘wild’ country
The earliest gardens established in colonial New South Wales were modelled on the simple squared or rectangular pattern common in the walled kitchen gardens and older estate or cottage gardens of Britain. While the prevailing fashion among wealthy landholders in Britain was to remodel their estates into a park with semi-natural clumps of trees on smooth lawn with an outlook toward a serpentine lake—the ‘modern’ style promoted by Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown—many less fashionable members of the gentry retained their more traditional walled or ornamental and kitchen gardens into the late eighteenth century. This was particularly so in Scotland, birthplace of many influential colonists.

_a simple squared or rectangular form was eminently suitable for a convict workforce_

Early Sydney gardens were essentially productive gardens with an emphasis on uncomplicated care. As well as providing a familiar regularity in an unfamiliar land, a simple squared or rectangular form was eminently suitable for a convict workforce largely unskilled as labourers. Examples of gardens laid out in simple squares and rectangles were found from Newtown to Parramatta and across the Cumberland Plain. Some weeks after his arrival in 1808, Lieutenant James Finucane (secretary to Lieutenant Governor Joseph Foveaux) visited Annandale: ‘I drove this morning to Major Johnston’s seat, called Annandale about 3 miles off. The house is neat and the grounds and garden well cleared and tastefully laid out.’ The ‘tastefully laid out’ garden had the simple formality of a grid. Generous paths with broad brick drains defined large, neat rectangular beds with carefully spaced plantings.

Johnston’s early plantings are most likely to have been fruit trees—pomegranate, China and Seville orange, brown fig, lemon, ‘Early Newington’ peach, apricots, ‘Summer Permain’ and ‘Pills Russet’ apples. Watermelon was the most popular melon, strawberries were plentiful, and ‘marygold’, sweet marjoram, thyme, hyssop, balm, dill, fennel, sage, sweet chervil, and rue were in common use as pot herbs. Ornamental plantings may have included ixias, _Canna indica_, and lemongrass. Provence Rose, wallflower, Sweet William, ‘Queen and ‘Brompton’ stocks, columbine, cloves, sweet scabious, rose campion, candytuft, lupins, and zonale pelargonium were also plentiful.

Suburbs advanced towards the estate as the nineteenth century progressed, but subdivision did not commence until 1876. The pines, senescing in the 1890s, were cut down before demolition of the house in 1905. Johnston’s Annandale, like so many other early Sydney gardens, was swept away in the suburban expansion of the early 1900s, its place taken by terrace houses with small front gardens and utilitarian back yards, now of historic interest in their own right.

Olives, vines, and Norfolk pines
When George Sutter, botanical collector for Sir Joseph Banks and pioneer orchardist, arrived in Sydney in 1800, the plants in his charge included an olive from England and eight varieties of grapes from the Cape of Good Hope (although in 1823 Barron Field observed that only one olive tree had existed in the colony until the previous year). Commissioner Bigge confidently observed in 1823 that all the finest fruits of Europe were found to succeed in the colony, ‘and yield abundantly, even under a very careless system of cultivation’. In 1825 the Horticultural Society of London sent olive plants to their colonial counterpart which placed them in the care of Charles Fraser at the Sydney Botanic Gardens. By 1828, the Botanic Gardens had 5000 olive cuttings for distribution to colonists, while others such as wealthy emancipist Samuel Terry imported their own seeds or plants.

While table grapes may have thrived, early attempts at viticulture did not succeed.
The Macarthurs at Elizabeth Farm (and later Camden Park), Dr Robert Townson at Varroville near Campbelltown, and Philip Schaefer and subsequent owners of The Vineyard at Roschill all established sizeable vineyards. Gregory Blaxland at Brush Farm near Eastwood was the first to meet with any notable success, sending a barrel of wine to Governor Macquarie in 1816. Commissioner Bigge’s 1823 report was enthusiastic about grapes as well as olives and by 1827 there were many varieties of both in the Sydney Botanic Gardens for propagation and distribution. It was an industry that thrived until nature intervened by way of the vine pest phylloxera in the late 1880s to 1890s, and old vineyards were taken out or slowly gave way to suburban expansion.

Olives survived the vicissitudes of time in unexpected locations. A line of old olives, a windbreak thought to have been planted in about 1828, grows on the crest of a rise at Cranebrook near Penrith. It is all that remains of Mount Pleasant, the estate of Samuel Terry and his wife Rosetta Marsh. The view from this rise once took in the regular pattern of small agricultural holdings on the rich alluvial soils beside the Hawkesbury River—until the early 2000s among Australia’s oldest continuously farmed land grants. But the soils held gravel, a far greater source of wealth for a city that could only grow if it could meet the demand for concrete. Today the view is over the Penrith Lakes scheme with its pattern of quarrying, man-made lakes, and vast earthworks for new development. A few early houses and gardens are conserved like architectural models on plinths—strange islands in a monumental process of destruction and renewal.

Allusions to the picturesque

The 1820s and 1830s were an important period for the development of gardening in Australia. The greatest impetus came from the inception of a civil service—and therefore a middle class—in place of the military establishment. Growing numbers of free settlers brought increasingly sophisticated concepts of landscape design. Semi-rural estates with long curving carriage drives and landscaped grounds were sited to capture rural or water views. At Elswick, a 123-acre estate in Leichhardt, lawyer James Norton followed the aesthetic of William Gilpin, an English exponent of the ‘picturesque’ movement, with its associations between painterly composition and the variety and roughness of natural scenery. Norton, recognising the role that art and literature played in the appreciation of picturesque scenery, retained clumps of native trees and the charm of rural tracks.

At Elizabeth Bay, colonial secretary Alexander Macleay was granted 54 acres and proceeded to develop one of the most important private gardens in colonial Australia. The land was unsuited for horticulture but Macleay poured money into creating botanic, flower, fruit, and kitchen gardens, which he then planted with a diverse array of useful and rare plants from all parts of the world. For a scientifically minded emigrant, here was an extraordinary opportunity to grow subtropical plants in the open air. In his lectures on landscape gardening, Thomas Shepherd praised Macleay’s retention of indigenous trees and shrubs, and the harmony between the manipulated scenery, where the land fell abruptly away to the harbour, and the ‘ornamental and lawns and polished shrubberies’. Elizabeth Bay House was
occupied in late 1839—before its completion—but just two years later the first of the estate’s many subdivisions was made. Elizabeth Bay began to be developed as a ‘genteel’ suburb in the 1880s, with an ever-increasing number of large houses and gardens. By 1882 only three acres were left around Elizabeth Bay House and in a final subdivision in 1927 these were broken into 16 lots leaving a ‘little oasis of ground entirely surrounded by modern concrete roadway’, much as it is today.

**Nurseries and villa gardens**

Establishing a nursery in early Sydney was no easy task, as Thomas Shepherd discovered in the late 1820s. Colonists had only to apply to the superintendent of the Botanic Gardens to be supplied with free plants. While other early nurseries struggled, John Baptist was gradually able to build up his nursery, which he named The Garden, buying from Shepherd’s Darling Nursery and William Macarthur’s Camden Park Nursery, and importing bulbs from England. For many years Baptist’s nursery was ‘the showgrounds of Sydney’, its owner a good judge of the needs of Sydney residents, especially owners of suburban villa gardens initially constructed around the harbour.

In 1828, Governor Darling had directed that Woolloomooloo Hill be subdivided into ‘town allotments’, with each grant to have one residence or ‘villa’ built to approved standards of quality and design, set within landscaped grounds. Many have left their legacy in street names, but of the villas only Tusculum, Barham, Telford Lodge, and Rockwall survive. All had their fine gardens removed to make way for Sydney’s suburban expansion. By the 1850s villas were being constructed further west on the Parramatta River in areas around Hunters Hill and Gladesville.

Drummoyne House, which gave its name to the suburb, was a villa in the tradition of British garden expert, J.C. Loudon. Merchant and trader William Wright purchased land on the Parramatta River and about 1856 built Drummoyne, named after a family estate in the west of Scotland. Skilled stonemasons worked on the house, ornamental steps, and balustrades, drawing the attention of the *Horticultural Magazine*.

The ornamental steps and balustrading near the river gives the place quite an Italian appearance; and when the visitor shall have finished his visit, he no doubt will come to the conclusion that the grounds, when they have been perfected, will be the beau ideal of one of the many palatial estates that dot the shores of the Italian lakes.

In 1835, Thomas Shepherd wrote of walking through the ‘tastefully arranged’ gardens at Elizabeth Bay, viewing ‘on the one side an amphitheatre of lofty woods, and on the other a large expanse of water’—all this created ‘sensations of exquisite delight in the mind’. These qualities are captured in this watercolour ‘View to Elizabeth Bay House’ (1883) by Rebecca Martens.
By the 1860s, the Gardenesque tenet of using specimen trees when planting a garden, thereby displaying the art of the gardener, had gained in importance. The generous lawn around Drummoyne House was planted with conifer specimens while select eucalypts were retained between the lawn and the river. Subdivisions divorced the house from its river frontage in the 1880s. Drummoyne House and its remaining garden were swept away for high-rise development—'Pulled down in the name of progress’, reported the Sun in 1971. A statue of Flora, attesting to the owner’s familiarity with classical Italy, was, however, saved—a detached but enduring remnant of Sydney’s past.

Rusticated fantasy and outdoor living

Garden buildings taking their inspiration from oriental structures or rustic pavilions gained in popularity during the nineteenth century. In Sydney, Governor and Mrs Macquarie had ‘100 yards of ornamental arcade for vines with circular bowers and domes at each end’ constructed along the eastern side of the new botanic garden. In 1839 English writer Louisa Johnson recommended that a corner of a modest flower garden be set aside ‘for the erection of a root house’ where the gardener could display her taste by the beauty of the flowers she trained through the ‘rural frame-work’. In Australia, Johnson’s root house was adapted and transformed into the ‘bush house’. British publications by J.C. Loudon, Edward Kemp, and Shirley Hibberd supplied colonial readers with other ideas for garden structures. The first of two octagonal rustic summerhouses, with roofs of thatched grasstree, was erected in Sydney’s Botanic Gardens in 1862, constructed by W.B. Moore of Ashfield, who advertised rustic seats, summerhouses and ‘all kinds of rustic work, on the shortest notice’.

In the late nineteenth century, garden furniture catalogues arriving from England displayed an array of structures that conjured images of rustic simplicity, all the more attractive to audiences increasingly drawn to concepts of healthy living in suburbs with detached houses and spacious gardens. William Clarson’s The Flower Garden and Shrubbery (Sydney, 1897) featured a summerhouse or ornamental arbour which could be constructed of branches of trees and the top roofed or left with light rafters, to be covered in time by creepers. Almost no early example of this type of work survives in Sydney.

Rock gardens, decorated with statuary and shells were built as features near paths and in ferneries, completing the image of artificial rusticity. Natural grottos were often enhanced with sculptural plantings but towards the end of the nineteenth century artificial grottos, arches, and rockeries became fashionable. The extensive example at Yaralla, Concord, still stands, its significance heightened as other examples have disappeared.
Suburban expansion approaches Rouse Hill House and Farm (centre), its tall araucarias appearing like exclamation marks in this aerial view from May 2007 (photograph by Skycam).

Hardy Wilson’s legacy

Architect, aesthete, and visionary, William Hardy Wilson, published _The Cow Pasture Road_ (1920) when the early to mid nineteenth century gardens he romanticised were already mature. Almost 90 years on, Wilson still influences how we think and feel about colonial gardens. Born in Campbelltown in 1881, Wilson trained as an architect, and from 1905 he furthered his experience in England and traveled through Europe and America. He returned to Australia in 1910 with the knowledge that European and American architects drew on the past for their inspiration. In 1912 he embarked on recording the ‘old colonial’ architecture of New South Wales and Tasmania.

One day we may wake to find the State’s ‘most important contribution to the art of gardening’ has almost entirely disappeared

By 1980, when historian James Broadbent paid homage to Wilson, the tranquil gardens and beautiful houses that Wilson had lovingly described in 1920 were ‘stripped of their paddocks they were built to survey, their settings irretrievably destroyed’ and their fences ‘now ramparts against encroaching suburbia’. One day we may wake to find the State’s ‘most important contribution to the art of gardening’ has almost entirely disappeared, conserved only at a few treasured estates like Denbigh at Bringelly and Brownlow Hill near Camden.

Hardy Wilson’s personal philosophy included the idea that objects of beauty but no utility fulfil a certain role in humanity. This aesthetic was embodied in the Temple, a classic pavilion with six fluted Ionic columns in the front garden at Eryldene, his commission for E.B. Waterhouse at Gordon, built in 1914. He designed a similar pavilion for his own garden at Purulia, completed in 1916. The garden at Purulia was inspired by old colonial gardens but was a copy of none—it was about form, flowers, and fragrance. Wilson’s client at Eryldene, Professor Waterhouse, who also designed and advised on gardens, shared Wilson’s aesthetic views and continued the promotion of his ideas. Garden designs founded on the simplicity of the gardens Wilson admired were concepts that sat well with the latest ideas coming from Europe and America. Wilson had, effectively, set the scene for a new direction in garden design.

Between the wars

Healthy living met with social responsibility and extended to the garden around the turn of the twentieth century. The garden city movement aimed to build communities that were complete social and physical environments. Its proponents believed that the beautification of cities had a civilising aspect on their inhabitants’ morality, and that pleasant surroundings ensured mental contentment. Although the ideals of the garden city movement were not fully realised in Sydney, by the 1920s individual home ownership of a freestanding house on a block of land became a shared aspiration for its residents. The designs of many suburban gardens at this time were little changed from the Federation period, and were essentially Gardenesque in style.
The periods following both World Wars were characterised by re-evaluation: new ways of living, aesthetically and practically, were explored. The use of stone paving for paths and patios, popular in Britain following the influence of the Arts and Crafts movement, was adopted in the 1920s. Professor Leslie Wilkinson fostered an appreciation of a Mediterranean style in architecture and gardens, promoting the use of courtyards in new buildings, and opening up vistas on established sites. Living in flats and the ‘moderne’ style of architecture were embraced in the city as trends from Paris and New York—including roof gardens—filtered through newspapers and the smart journals published by Sydney Ure Smith.

As World War II began in Europe, attention began to turn away from garden design towards ‘getting down to business on the food front’, productive gardening in a time of crisis. The diversity in garden design that characterised the inter-war period was suddenly interrupted.

**Under threat**

The movement to create bush gardens, to live with nature in the Australian environment, was the most distinct new phase in Sydney gardens following World War II. Modernist ideas had arrived, although the suburban manifestation was a do-it-yourself stripped down rationalist garden that relied on colour for impact. The studied informality of bush gardens requires a discerning eye and the recent past is always the most difficult for the generation that follows to appreciate. Betty Maloney’s house and garden was documented as a case study in *Designing Bush Gardens* (1966) but after her death in 2002, friends, colleagues, and the National Trust campaigned unsuccessfully for its protection as a house museum before turning their efforts to raising an awareness of its importance with prospective buyers.

Securing sympathetic owners is the best way to conserve gardens that require particular love and care. Maloney’s garden was a well-known example but there are many other fine bush gardens that are being transformed, often unsympathetically, by current horticulture practices of mass planting of a single species, hedging, and rigid, formal walls and steps superimposed on an informal design.

The nature of Australian cities is that they grow outwards: the pressure is relentless. Gardens are thresholds of green for our cultural imagination. The stories of Sydney’s lost gardens are an entreaty for Sydney to cherish those that remain and to ensure the creation of new gardens that can provide pleasure and inspiration for generations to come.

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Lost Gardens of Sydney by Colleen Morris is published by the Historic Houses Trust (August 2008): RRP $49.95. Available at all HHT properties, distributed nationally by Thames & Hudson to all good bookshops, and available to AGHS members directly at the discounted price of $39.95 (plus postage $5).

‘Lost Gardens of Sydney’: exhibition at Museum of Sydney, 9 August to 30 November 2008. Sponsored by the Australian Garden History Society. For further details of exhibition-related events visit [www.hht.net.au](http://www.hht.net.au)
The influence of environmental thought in Melbourne’s nineteenth-century public gardens

Georgina Whitehead

Clement Hodgkinson is a neglected figure of Australian garden history yet his influence on Victoria’s public parks and gardens was profound and his attitudes linking environmental thought and land management were enlivened by contemporary thought.

‘Improving’ nature

For centuries natural history was the embodiment of science. Collecting and classifying material was central to the study of geology, botany, and zoology. Anyone with an interest could participate. However, ideas about the natural world changed with the development of ecology, which started life as a discipline in the late nineteenth century. Ecological theories became intellectually more advanced and were often couched in technical terms, and whereas amateurs could practise natural history, ecology was the province of professionals trained in universities where this specialist field originated.

Melbourne’s first public gardens were developed during the 1850s and 1860s at a time when appreciation of the natural world still differed markedly from how we think about it today. It was a time when humans and society were seen as central to any evaluation of the environment. A distinctive aspect was the ‘improvement’ of nature, achieved by introducing plants and animals into places where they did not occur naturally to supplement the indigenous flora and fauna. It was hoped that the economy would profit by the development of local industries centred on successful introductions. Recreational and other benefits were also envisaged.

Even the early national parks were ‘improved’ by introducing exotic flora and fauna to increase their appeal as recreational facilities for an urban population. At places rich in native flora, like Audley (now Royal National Park), south of Sydney, visitors were encouraged to pick large quantities of flowers. Staff even cleared less attractive plants to make the spectacular waratahs and gymea lilies more accessible.

Scientific, economic, utilitarian, aesthetic, and spiritual or ethical elements contributed to nineteenth century environmental thought. In the 1850s William Howitt expressed his horror at what gold mining had done to the landscape: ‘Every tree is felled; every feature of Nature is annihilated’. Some people recognised that uncontrolled clearing increased flooding and erosion, although forest conservation was more often to preserve timber supplies. Ferdinand Mueller, director of Melbourne Botanic Garden, considered forests to be ‘a sacred patrimony’, saying ‘I regard the forest as a heritage given to us by nature, not for spoil or to devastate, but to be wisely used, reverently honoured, and carefully maintained’.

Forests were of great interest whether the issue was deforestation, reforestation or—in another manifestation of ‘improving’ nature—afforestation, where trees were planted in naturally treeless areas. Trees were a crucial resource for building and fuel, and the erroneous belief that tree cover increased rainfall was also important.
Work on creating the Fitzroy Gardens began in the late 1850s at much the same time as Mueller started developing the Botanic Garden, and at a time when humans were still the focus of environmental thought. Nevertheless, ideas that the twentieth century word ‘environmentalism’ represent—such as the protection, conservation, and science of the natural world—were of great concern during the nineteenth century, and this concern was expressed in the development of the Fitzroy Gardens largely through the influence of one man, Clement Hodgkinson. Mueller and Hodgkinson, the designers of Melbourne’s two premier gardens, were Victoria’s leading environmental managers whose views on the issues of the day carried much weight and who, importantly, were in positions to put their ideas into practice.

Hodgkinson was head of the Department of Crown Lands and Survey, Victoria’s most powerful government agency, and as such personally controlled all aspects of the colony’s Crown lands. He also laid out the Treasury and Flagstaff Gardens, not only deciding where paths and planting would go, but choosing the statues, fountains, and plants, visiting nurseries, and even writing to interstate nursery proprietors with instructions on how to pack the plants he had ordered.

**Hodgkinson in northern New South Wales**

Hodgkinson was a civil engineer who set off from England aged 21 intending to become a pastoralist. Arriving in 1839 he bought into a cattle station near Kempsey north of Sydney. To make ends meet he took up contract surveying, which involved exploring the wild and rugged country of northern New South Wales. This period turned the young man into a hardened bushman and, most importantly, developed his interest in the natural world. Few people were in such a fortunate position to study first hand a primeval wilderness teeming with wildlife, able to observe plants and animals only recently discovered or still unknown to science, and he took full opportunity of the situation.

However, economic depression and his wife’s death in 1843 saw him return to England. Hodgkinson decided to turn his field notes and journal into a book, *Australia, from Port Macquarie to Moreton Bay; with descriptions of the natives, their manners and customs; the geology, natural productions, fertility, and resources of that region* (London, 1845).

Hodgkinson’s description of the country near his station captures his fascination with his surroundings:

*Natives spearing fish on the Bellengen [sic] River*, print after a watercolour by Clement Hodgkinson, from his book *Australia, from Port Macquarie to Moreton Bay* (London, 1845).
Mount Yarra-Hapinni is densely wooded to the summit, with an almost impenetrable forest of gigantic trees, but its spurs towards the sea descend in beautiful verdant park-like declivities to the beach, the grass growing luxuriantly, even within reach of the salt spray of the ocean. At the south extremity of Trial bay, the granite again rises in a lofty conical grassy forest hill, to which I gave the native name of Arakoon; its gullies are enveloped in brushes of bangalo palms, cabbage palms, and gigantic ferns. In ascending the MacLeay river, from its entrance, the first objects which meet the eye on both banks are extensive mangrove flats, with thickets of myrtle, palm, and swamp oak, which, a few miles further on, are superseded by dense alluvial brushes [i.e. rainforest], rising like gigantic green walls on both sides of the river.

As he recounts his travels and experiences Hodgkinson maintains a running commentary on the landscape, describing the vegetation, how its character changes with the topography, and what sort of situation particular plants seem to enjoy. Trees occupy most of his attention, and he discovers valuable cedar and rosewood stands, many of the trees with trunks six feet in diameter and 90 feet tall before throwing out a single branch. Hodgkinson was captivated when he saw the araucarias. He marks a stream as ‘worth noticing, as being the farthest point south, and consequently, the nearest point to Sydney, at which I have found the magnificent variety of pine, generally known as “the Moreton Bay pine”. Whenever he comes upon this tree (Arucaria cunninghamii), more often called Hoop Pine today, he points out its presence in the vegetation, and he thinks it and the Norfolk Island Pine (Arucaria heterophylla), which he presumably saw growing in gardens, to be ‘the most beautiful and stately of all the genus Coniferae in the known world’.

We catch a glimpse of his interest in garden design when he comments disparagingly:

There is a signal want in Australia, even among the higher classes, of that just appreciation of the beauties of nature, and that innate taste in taking advantage of them, to enhance the picturesque effect of their neatly-arranged dwelling-houses, which, according to Washington Irving, characterize the English nation, from the peer to the peasant ... in general the neat plus ultra of colonial landscape gardening is a square patch of land, laid out in straight walks, and surrounded by hideous pailings, whilst no flowers, or even culinary vegetables, enliven the dwellings of the labouring classes, unless some stray melon or pumpkin sends its long shoots round their huts.

He discusses the local geology at length, concluding that as excellent wine was produced from grapes growing on black clay-slate on the slopes of the Rhine Valley, the clay-slate ranges in the vicinity of Dongai Creek would ‘be pre-eminently suitable’ for grape growing. Hodgkinson was particularly interested in grape cultivation and sixteen pages are devoted to wine production as an export. A period of living in south-west France had given him an interest in viticulture sufficient to permit his discussion of Continental techniques and how they could be adapted, including training vines through native ‘apple’ trees (Angophora lanceolata) instead of elms or sycamores as was done in France and Italy.
Although he writes with a view of showing how the country could be developed for export industries, he makes it clear that ‘it would never answer to clear [these rich brush lands] of the dense mass of indigenous vegetation which encumbers them, for the culture of the mere ordinary agricultural productions of New South Wales’. Rather, he proposes that with the introduction of cheap Chinese labour the rainforest could be ‘diversified’ with plantations of sugarcane, tobacco, rice, cotton, and the like.

Hodgkinson’s book was the first environmental appraisal of that then remote region in its early years of European settlement. It demonstrates that by the age of 26 he was knowledgeable about the natural world, and had an appreciation for the indigenous environment—along with the desire to improve it.

**Hodgkinson and colonial forest policy**

Seven years after returning to England, Hodgkinson once again sailed to Australia. This time he disembarked in Melbourne, his arrival coinciding with the start of the gold rushes. Early in 1852 he accepted a job in the Survey Office under Robert Hoddle, and among the skills enumerated in his application he described himself as ‘a naturalist with a particular interest in trees’. In only 10 years he rose through the ranks to become Assistant Commissioner of Crown Lands and Survey.

During this period he indulged his scientific interests, joining what was to become in 1859 the Royal Society of Victoria. His most notable contribution as a member was to argue, along with Secretary for Mines Robert Brough Smyth, the need to use Australian rather than European calculations of evaporation and precipitation to site Melbourne’s first reservoir, leading the government to choose Yan Yean. Hodgkinson was elected a vice-president of the society in 1856, along with Redmond Barry, and again in 1858 with Mueller as vice-president. He remained an active member until his appointment as Assistant Commissioner, after which he abandoned all outside activities.

By 1860 the environmental devastation that had occurred in Victoria after less than 30 years of European settlement was apparent, and the press was calling on the government to take action. Anxiety about the environment was not confined to the Australian colonies.

In his book *Man and Nature: or, physical geography as modified by human action* (New York, 1864), the American polymath George Perkins Marsh argued that humans had profoundly damaged the earth, and he called for the situation to be remedied before it was too late. It was the first book to spell out the need for reform, and nominated Australia as the country that could provide answers to questions of the extent that pioneer settlement had modified the environment. An international success, with Marsh’s ideas rapidly adopted in Europe, *Man and Nature* arrived in Melbourne to great acclaim.

**Marsh’s ... Man and Nature arrived in Melbourne to great acclaim**

Marsh’s longest chapter by far was called ‘The Woods’ in which he described the benefits forests provided and pointed out the perils of indiscriminate tree felling, such as soil erosion and loss of moisture retention. For Hodgkinson, one of his most pressing environmental concerns as head of the Lands Department was destruction of the colony’s trees. His reasons in trying to preserve the native timber were various, including its monetary and scenic value, and the perceived link to rainfall. But Hodgkinson’s main concern was to end the large-scale squandering of resources and ensure the colony had enough timber for future needs. In late 1865—the same year that *Man and Nature* reached Melbourne—the first official statement on timber policy was produced jointly by Hodgkinson, Surveyor-General Charles Ligar, and Brough Smyth, in a report to parliament entitled ‘The Advisableness of Establishing State Forests’.

A major catalyst was the devastation of native forests near the goldfields. The authors observed that more timber was destroyed than used and the resulting waste left on the forest floor contributed to bushfires. The report drew on the international situation to support its case for the need ‘to enforce a more economical use of native timber, and to conserve the forests’. Although Marsh is not acknowledged as a source, there is no doubt that *Man and Nature* supplied material relating to climate, forestry, and hydrology, particularly describing overseas experience where there was little attempt to alter Marsh’s wording.

Except for a recommendation to proclaim large forest reserves near gold mining centres, the proposals were mainly centred on planting new trees, such as the suggestion to establish ‘a large wood of indigenous and imported trees on the present treeless basaltic plains’ near Rokewood. The report went on to say that not only were the indigenous forests to be conserved, but with their proper management all the ‘overgrown trees’ would be removed and ‘other valuable trees planted in the vacant spaces’. Examples were given...
of what these should be:

In the rich soil and moist climate of the elevated wooded tracts of country proposed to be reserved for state forests at Bullarook, Macedon, Mount Disappointment, &c., the most useful deciduous trees, such as English oak, Turkey oak, elm, ash, walnut, hickory, locust, maple, chestnut, alder, &c., would thrive well; and also all the best timber-producing kinds of coniferous trees, including the Himalayan cedar, the Lebanon cedar, the Atlas cedar, and all the best pines of Europe and America.

Species selected for lower elevations included ‘the beautiful and rapidly-growing pines and cypresses of California and Oregon’.

Among those specially noted were the Radiata Pine—at the time in the process of being popularised by Mueller—Wellingtonia, and Monterey Cypress. Many pines recommended for sandy coastal soils were from the Mediterranean. All this accorded with Marsh’s belief that ‘the sooner a natural wood is brought into the state of an artificially regulated one, the better it is for all the multiplied interests which depend on the wise administration of this branch of public economy’. The report ended with a recommendation to vest the new reserves in trustees, who would ‘correspond with foreign governments, and arrange for the exchange of seeds and plants’.

Although it is not possible to distinguish with certainty each author’s particular contribution, it is probable that at least the parts referring to plant species were Hodgkinson’s, given his longstanding interest in trees. Those references and the directive to exchange seeds and plants with foreign governments—something that Mueller had been long doing—are of great interest when considering Hodgkinson’s work relating to parks and gardens.

**Hodgkinson and Melbourne’s public gardens**

Hodgkinson’s direct involvement in designing and laying out Melbourne’s first public gardens began in about 1858. He claimed that he had abandoned any ‘strict adherence to the rules of landscape gardening, with regard to the grouping of trees, &c.,’ because of the need to check the inroad of dust from the surrounding unmade streets, and provide shade along the paths. So instead of setting out picturesque groups of trees, shrubs, and flower beds in expansive lawns (as recommended in English garden journals and as William Guilfoyle would later do in the Botanic Garden), Hodgkinson lined his paths with rows of leafy trees, especially elms, backed up by dense masses of conifers and evergreen shrubs.

Hodgkinson relied on trees for his main planting effect, arguing that flowers required too much labour and water to be grown extensively, and used the same plant palette in all his gardens. Like Mueller he admired the conifers, which were a major feature of his designs. Many had only been discovered in the previous 50 years making them a popular subject for private and public parks and gardens. In Australia they were especially fashionable between about 1850 and 1870. Hodgkinson achieved local success in growing different kinds, particularly the pines and cypresses from California and Oregon described in the 1865 forest report. Many trees listed in a memorandum attached to his 1867 plan for the Treasury reserve had been included in the forests report as recommended species: Wellingtonia, Monterey Cypress, Radiata Pine, Himalayan Cedar, Atlas Cedar, Canary Island Pine, deciduous oak, elm, and chestnut, and the Australian Blue Gum.

Hodgkinson also repeatedly used rainforest species from northern New South Wales and southern Queensland. It is hard to know how much influence his youthful experiences had on his plant choice as many species from that region were equally popular with other garden designers, including the Moreton Bay Fig, Silky Oak, and the Hoop Pine that he thought so beautiful in the wild. In correspondence relating to his design for the Treasury Gardens he refers to the Norfolk...
Island Pine and Moreton Bay Fig as ‘indispensable plants’; and he intended to produce the principal effects in the Treasury Gardens by grouping together large numbers of Norfolk Island and Hoop pines, Moreton Bay figs, *Picea* from Europe, Asia, and North America, as well as other ornamental trees.

Although Mueller supplied him with large numbers of trees from the Botanic Garden, Hodgkinson went to a great deal of expense buying plants from commercial nurseries, including hundreds of Norfolk Island pines. These purchases included rainforest species from northern New South Wales and southern Queensland such as the araucarias, grevilleas, macadamia, figs, palms, native frangipani, various lilly pillies, brush boxes, and cordylines. He also bought other Australian species, including many specimens of Cypress Pine, a fine timber tree.

The exception to Hodgkinson’s reliance on trees for his landscape effects were the ferns he acquired for the Fitzroy Gardens. He turned the eroded creek bed running the length of the reserve into a fern gully, some ten years before Guilfoyle created a similar feature in Melbourne Botanic Garden. Occasionally Hodgkinson’s work took him to the Dandenong Ranges where the beauty of the natural fern gullies could hardly have failed to impress him. These gullies were much admired—part of the Fern Tree Gully was to be reserved in 1882 for public recreation—and they may have been the inspiration for redevelopment of the ugly creek bed.

Although Hodgkinson purchased tree ferns through commercial suppliers, in 1870 he instructed the Resident Bailiff of Crown Lands at Ferntree Gully to collect ferns for the gardens. Robert Thompson assembled 34 lots, seven in cases measuring 2 x 3 feet, while the others were sections of fern and musk trunks bearing different species. In a long letter he provided details such as ‘14 Blechnums from Fern Tree Gully and the mountain top, site partial shade, soil either wet or dry, poor gravelly soil very wet grows the largest sp’, while Lot 24 had the bottom of a lyre bird’s nest attached.

When Hodgkinson came to lay out Melbourne’s gardens little native vegetation remained except for a few eucalypts. In a letter to the *Argus* in 1863 he expressed his belief that although there were other trees of greater beauty and longevity it was important the eucalypts be retained—they
softened the stark appearance of an immature garden and they provided shelter for new planting. Three years later he opposed the City Council’s decision to fell 600 indigenous trees in Richmond Park because he thought the park’s picturesque qualities would be lost, and that any clearing needed to accommodate what he called ‘English or other trees’ should be done gradually.

The only Melbourne reserve in which there was an unambiguous desire to preserve the native trees was Studley Park. Initially it was treated by Hodgkinson in the same fashion as Albert Park, where belts of pines, cypress and other conifers were planted. However, Albert Park was swampland and naturally without much tree cover while Studley Park had retained a significant proportion of its natural vegetation. In 1866 Hodgkinson recommended that in future no live indigenous trees be removed from the park to make room for exotic species. And in 1873 he reported to parliament that as regards Studley Park ‘no further extension has been made in the planting out therein of non-indigenous trees, as it has been deemed desirable that one of the metropolitan parks should continue to afford a fair representation of ordinary Australian forest land’.

‘it has been deemed desirable that one of the metropolitan parks should continue to afford a fair representation of ordinary Australian forest land’

Just what prompted this attempt to preserve Studley Park’s bushland? Marsh’s book Man and Nature may well have played an important part. It had arrived in Melbourne only the year before Hodgkinson recommended the park’s indigenous trees be retained. As far as American soil went Marsh believed that for both what he called ‘poetical’ and ‘economical’ reasons it was:

desirable that some large and easily accessible region ... should remain, as far as possible, in its primitive condition, at once a museum for the instruction of the student, a garden for the recreation of the lover of nature, and an asylum where indigenous tree, and humble plant that loves the shade, and fish and fowl and four-footed beast, may dwell and perpetuate their kind, in the enjoyment of such imperfect protection as the laws of a people jealous of restraint can afford them.

Studley Park fitted the criteria of being large and easily accessible to city dwellers, and it was a popular resort for picnics and natural history enthusiasts. Unfortunately, retention of its native vegetation was compromised by the continuation of grazing. Gravel and sand were also extracted, and exotic trees continued to be planted, probably in previously cleared areas. Despite the equivocal nature of these actions, it was one of the first explicit expressions by the Victorian government of the desire to preserve the indigenous vegetation on Crown land beyond the need to conserve timber for future use.

Although Hodgkinson resigned his government position in 1874 his reputation as a landscape gardener persisted, and in 1878 he advised the Ballarat council on street trees. In 1880 the Brighton council requested his help in improving the foreshore reserves where loss of the natural vegetation had led to encroaching sand drifts. He advised planting a mix of Australian and exotic species including pines, which by then were no longer fashionable. Many plants he recommended were still growing naturally around Port Phillip Bay, and perhaps recalling his success in obtaining firs from the Dandenongs, he suggested ‘sending a trustworthy man with a spring wagon to some part of the coast near Frankston where seedlings of these indigenous trees are procurable’.

The degree to which the development of Hodgkinson’s landscapes was affected by environmental as opposed to other interests is not always clear. His gardens were provided for recreation, as distinct from the scientific and economic roles of a botanic garden. It would be prudent to assume that there was a mix of influences. Hodgkinson’s stated ambition to preserve Studley Park as a representative piece of Australian forest land makes it the only reserve where his environmental beliefs unequivocally affected its development.

Art and science

The relationship between contemporary fashion in garden design and environmental management during the period is ambiguous. Many of the trees Hodgkinson chose to plant—conifers in particular—were fashionable subjects for ornamental use as well as being considered highly appropriate for forest purposes. And as his youthful remarks on the state of the Australian garden show, he was interested in landscape design as art even though his overwhelming interests were scientific.

Hodgkinson did, however, demonstrate an aloofness from fashion with his remarks about adopting a planting style that ignored contemporary design practice in order to check dust from adjacent unmade streets. And his recommendation to plant pines along the Brighton
foreshore after they had fallen out of fashion indicates that this preference grew out of a belief they were suited to local conditions as much as an appreciation of their aesthetic or other qualities.

Perhaps the most compelling testimony is provided by the 1865 forests report. The correlation between species recommended for forest and garden cultivation cannot be accidental coming from a man who had spent much of his life studying trees and who played a major role in founding Victoria’s forest industry. Photographs from the 1870s show the Fitzroy, Flagstaff, and Treasury Gardens to be small forests dissected by paths. In creating gardens by placing white painted statuary against a dark background of trees he believed important species for forest cultivation, Hodgkinson blurred the boundaries between art and science.

Over the same period of about 15 years Mueller and Hodgkinson were responsible for developing Melbourne’s earliest and most important gardens. They shared common scientific interests and they had similar opinions regarding the need to pay heed to Australian environmental conditions rather than mindlessly applying European precedents. In areas where their work overlapped, such as forest management, their views were remarkably alike.

A parallel can be drawn with the way in which Mueller despatched many thousands of trees to public reserves and Hodgkinson’s efforts to have trees of his own choosing planted in parkland over which he had no direct control by stipulating that if sports clubs wanted to enclose ground they must plant specified numbers of particular tree species. It is interesting to speculate that Hodgkinson’s association with Mueller may have encouraged him to consider the recreation grounds as providing him with the same opportunities for experimental plantings as Mueller enjoyed. The directive contained in the 1865 forests report, to exchange seeds and plants with foreign governments, supports the notion that he wished to adopt some of the practices normally associated with a botanic garden.

Mueller’s voluminous correspondence makes it clear that his Botanic Garden directly reflected his scientific and environmental concerns. By contrast, Hodgkinson has left little to illuminate his thoughts and ambitions for the public gardens.

But the parallels between the two men are striking, and other aspects of Hodgkinson’s work strongly suggest his conscious application of environmental ideas to garden design.

The separation of professional and amateur environmental interests and the increasing specialisation of professionals—which led to a lack of breadth in the single person—meant that enthusiastic amateur natural historians such as Hodgkinson with professional duties drawing on such knowledge became increasingly rare. With the resignations of Mueller and Hodgkinson the period when an environmental consciousness united with the power to apply those ideas to Melbourne’s parkland was over.

Notes on sources

Georgina Whitehead is the author of Civilising the City (1997) and editor of Planting the Nation (2001). This article draws on her recently completed Master of Landscape Architecture thesis undertaken at RMIT University.
Survey Paddock to people’s park: the story of Richmond Park

Lee Andrews

Richmond Park was one of the earliest reservations of parkland in Melbourne’s history. Incremental changes—some sympathetic to its character and some not—have marked its subsequent development.

The Survey Paddock

The Port Phillip District’s first survey officers were appointed on 10 September 1836 following a directive from Governor Bourke that a branch of the Surveyor-General’s Department be set up in Melbourne. Officers were assigned to specific regions of the colony, and a large area of land—the Survey Paddock—was reserved to the east of Melbourne for depasturing the Department’s oxen and horses. The Survey Paddock was ideal for Departmental needs. Its distinctive, peninsula shape was formed by the sinuous course of the Yarra River, ensuring a reliable water supply and reducing the need for extensive boundary fencing. The lower ground consisted of wide alluvial floodplain, dotted with lagoons and waterholes, supporting a woodland of river red gums, while the steep river banks led to rocky outcropping on higher ground, well above the flood line.

The Survey Department made minimal changes to the reserve. Fencing was erected and a rough track gave access to a small compound of survey

Henry Burn, ‘Richmond Park’ (1869), showing the Melbourne to Hawthorn railway in the distance. Burn favoured this scene, painting it twice, each time emphasising the park-like setting of the mature indigenous trees.
buildings which, in the 1850s, housed the District Survey Office and the Deputy Surveyor-General’s cottage. In 1852 ‘Special Constable’ James Murphy was hired by Robert Hoddle to ensure the safety of the surveyors’ horses, and a dwelling—shown on plans as ‘Murphy’s Hut’—constructed for his use.

The Survey Paddock’s prosaic title belied its bucolic appearance. Surrounded on three sides by the Yarra River, the reserve was on land of the Wurundjeri people, and an important meeting place. Clear and sparkling, the waters of the river supported fish, eels, mussels, and—reputedly—the occasional porpoise. The serenity and natural beauty of the Survey Paddock was a favourite subject of artists during the mid-nineteenth century. Louis Buvelot painted scenes in the Survey Paddock in the late 1850s and early 1860s. Nicholas Chevalier undertook a matched pair of works—‘Studley Park at sunrise’ and ‘The Survey Paddock at sunset’ (1861). Henry Burn also favoured the Survey Paddock as a subject.

Not only artists appreciated the landscape afforded by the Survey Paddock. As a consequence of the 1850s Victorian gold rushes, Richmond’s previously spacious blocks of land had undergone intensive subdivision and development. Exacerbating these crowded urban conditions, there were no Council-controlled recreation grounds in the suburb. In 1856 the newly formed Richmond Council lobbied to be granted unsold government land within the municipality to be held in trust for the community’s residents.

The Survey Paddock provided not only a haven from crowded local living conditions, its rural expanses and impressive river frontage appealed to Melburnians in general, who flocked to it in boats and carriages. Although by the late 1850s many parks and gardens had been reserved and developed throughout Melbourne (including Fitzroy, Treasury, Carlton, and Flagstaff Gardens, and Yarra, Flinders, Royal, Princes, Fawkner and Albert Parks), none could match the impressive length of absolute river frontage of the Survey Paddock. Spurred to action in 1858 by the proposed extension of a rail line through the reserve, and an associated excision of 13 acres of land to its north, Richmond Council petitioned the government to grant the Survey Paddock to the people of Richmond. Aided by public meetings and a numerously signed memorial, Richmond Council was duly entrusted with the management of the Survey Paddock as a public park.

The Council’s first improvement action was a wide, tree-lined carriage drive, beginning at Bridge Road and skirting past Murphy’s Hut. Paths were formed and trees and shrubs planted. For advice, Council doubtless consulted the most influential figures in this field—Ferdinand (later von) Mueller, Director of the Melbourne Botanic Garden and Government Botanist, and Clement Hodgkinson. As an honorary consulting engineer and District Surveyor, Hodgkinson had been closely associated with Richmond since 1856. These roles, together with the fact that his office (as District Surveyor), and from 1858, his cottage (as Deputy Survey- General), were located in the Survey Paddock, gave him a close involvement. At this time Hodgkinson was involved in laying out his earliest designed landscape, the Fitzroy Gardens. Descriptions of the main carriage drive from Bridge Road through the Survey Paddock strongly suggest Mueller and Hodgkinson’s influence—a double row of pines and elms lined the drive, undoubtedly to suppress dust and provide a cool, umbrageous shade, and Mueller’s role ensured a ready supply of trees and seeds for such park plantings.
Richmond Park

As part of the Colonial Government’s plan to formally reserve the various parklands in Melbourne, the Survey Paddock was officially gazetted as Richmond Park on 1 May 1862. Initially, Special Constable Murphy (and later his son) was retained in the role of Park-keeper, with his ‘hut’, bordering the northern section of the carriage drive, later becoming the domicile of a Council-appointed park-keeper in the 1870s. The transition from Survey Paddock to public park heralded many changes.

When the influential (later ‘Royal’) Horticultural Society of Victoria applied for a portion of Richmond Park for its proposed experimental gardens, Council granted this on the condition that the ornamental section of these gardens be openly and freely accessible to the general public, to which the Society agreed. Richmond Park continued to be a favourite site for picnics and relaxation, and was particularly popular for New Year festivities. Several tea gardens were dotted along the river, and access to the Park was afforded by the river or via the railway which stopped at Pic Nic Station in the centre of the park.

In 1865 Hodgkinson, now Assistant Commissioner of Lands and Survey, agreed to Council’s request for control of the Park, subject to the condition that all trees be retained. Responding to Hodgkinson’s objection to the proposed removal of hundreds of trees, the Council replied that it intended to conserve every tree in the Park which might add to the beauty of the river bank and the Park in general. It added, rather pointedly, that the trees to which Hodgkinson referred had indeed been marked for removal ‘by or on the suggestion of the government’.

The inescapable fact that Richmond Park straddled the major corridor east from Melbourne’s centre saw it bisected by the Swan Street extension (1880), extension of Madden Grove (1884), and Burnley to Heyington railway (1889). Undaunted, Richmond Council continued to develop the vast acreage of Richmond Park. It became an important venue for organised recreation. Cricket and football were particularly popular—cricket pitches and an oval existed in the Park from at least the 1890s. By 1924, there were 17 cricket pitches in Richmond Park with demand so great that clubs routinely had to share pitches.

Tree planting of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries reflected the rising Federation-inspired popularity of native trees and shrubs, and was possibly also a reflection of the work of a newly appointed curator for the Park, A.T. Carter. In 1918, the Trustees informed the Minister of Lands of its tree planting programme, stating ‘that the reserve is sort of a national picnic ground’. ‘All of the original native trees have died off and we have replaced them and have planted thousands of trees’, they wrote, and ‘in a few years if it is kept up it will be a reserve for national timbers’.

During the 1920s a great deal of work was carried out to beautify the Park along the river, especially

Landscaping at the north end of Richmond Park (Bridge Road) in the decades prior to the construction of Yarra Boulevard, thought to show the work of Carlo Catani.
The section from Bridge Road to Swan Street. The Park was entered from Bridge Road and great efforts were made to ornament this approach with shrubs, flowers, and a rockery. (Around 1904 the Public Works Department’s dynamic Chief Engineer Carlo Catani had visited Richmond Park and prepared a plan for the improvement of the approach to Richmond Park from Bridge Road, and this planting was a likely continuation of its implementation.) New plantations of eucalypts and wattles were also made along the banks of the river. By 1927, rockwork borders constructed with boulders from the Park, and filled with flowering plants and shrubs had been constructed from Bridge Road to Swan Street. Hundreds of native trees were planted in the Park, with specimens of Monterey Pine (Pinus radiata) replaced by Yate (Eucalyptus cornuta).

Yarra Boulevard

Richmond’s largely working-class residents were badly affected by the onset of the Great Depression in 1929. In an effort to provide some relief, the state government introduced a Sustenance Scheme, where unemployed men were paid as a labour force in the construction of numerous large public works. In 1934 work commenced on construction of a new road in Richmond Park. Commencing at the newly constructed Grange Road Bridge, the road was to follow the course of the Yarra River to Bridge Road, forming part of the greater Yarra Boulevard Scheme. The intention of the scheme was to create a scenic drive, eventually joining up existing sections of the Boulevard with proposed new sections as far as Heidelberg.

From the very beginning, there was division in the Richmond Council about the merits of the proposed road. Political and class tensions were dominant, with councillors objecting that the drive would spoil one of the rare beauty spots available to local residents. It was also noted that the only users of the road would be those rich enough to own a car. Thus, the Council suggested, the road should be constructed, but on the wealthier Hawthorn side of the river.

The Richmond-Burnley section of the Yarra Boulevard was constructed between 1934 and 1939 by hand using picks and shovels. Kerbing and footpaths were formed using pre-cast concrete sections, making them easy for unskilled labour to install, and extensive rockery embankments were formed. On formally opening the new road, the Mayor declared that when the trees, shrubs and trailing plants grew, it would be ‘part of one of the finest scenic drives in the world’.

During the early 1940s, Richmond Park continued to be heavily used by Richmond residents and visitors alike. Cycling legend Hubert Opperman helped design a bicycle racing track for the Park although this was amended to a less expensive fair weather practice track, and was built by unemployed workers. During World War II, areas of Richmond Park were used for a major American Army encampment, and circuses began to regularly use the site just north of Swan Street for their performances. Part of the Park was developed as a public golf course in the early 1960s, and a section with riverside frontage near Bridge Road became the site for Richmond’s first secondary school around 1970 (and during the 1970s–80s the Park also temporarily housed a primary school during a nearby rebuilding project).

Recent land grabs

In 1969, the Yarra River at Richmond was diverted to facilitate the building of the South Eastern Freeway through the southern section of Richmond Park. One third of a mile of the river was re-routed through a newly dug canal 1400 feet long, 160 feet wide, and 50 feet deep. The old river bed was then filled to create an area of new land, later occupied by the City of Richmond Sports Reserve. As a result, the adjacent section of the Boulevard was re-routed to its present course.

Over the last decade or so the greatest change to the park has centred on Swan Street and land immediately to its south. This change was initiated by the controversial sale of a large section of Burnley Gardens to the private pharmaceutical company AMRAD in 1995. The land, consisting of orchard plantings, fallow fields, and a scattering of buildings, had played an important role in agriculture in Victoria in the twentieth century. But as largely ‘empty’ space, it was ripe for commercial development.

Burnley Gardens was registered with Heritage Victoria in December 2003 for its state-wide cultural significance, although with the sale of the AMRAD site to developers earlier that year, the Gardens came under further threat. A planned multi-storey development on the site indirectly threatened the Gardens with overshadowing, encroachment by new buildings, and inevitable over-use of the grounds by an anticipated additional 1500 employees. The proposed development also compromised the many valued environmental and recreational qualities of the surrounding Yarra River corridor and parkland. Objections to the planned development by concerned residents and other interested parties were effectively stopped, with the normal state
planning process bypassed. In February 2004, the Minister approved a plan for the redevelopment of the site, eventually leading to the dense ‘commercial park’ evident today.

Other recent changes include the removal and disassembling of the Council’s municipal depot. This depot, together with the nineteenth century park-keeper’s cottage, served for some years as a base for a Youth Grow Garden Programme run by the Jesuits Social Service. The early cottage remains, but its future is tenuous, with Council wishing to demolish it for a picnic lawn. This move is being opposed by community groups, local residents and the National Trust, who classified the cottage and Richmond Park in 2006.

Richmond Park as an entity is considered by bureaucracy to exist today only in official documents. This is not a view shared by dedicated locals and community groups who value the expansiveness of the site’s open space and its long history. While on paper the site may appear fractured, in spite of nineteenth-century major incursions, Richmond Council continued to manage the Park as a single entity without apparent difficulty for most of the twentieth century.

The park lives on

So what remains of the Park’s long history today? What stories can it tell visitors? Travelling over the Grange Road Bridge and onto the Depression-era Yarra Boulevard, the visitor traces the course of the Yarra River, for the most part, as it has been for aeons. Large open areas of bushland, peppered with clipped sporting fields, typify this zone of the Park, developed by the Council for sport from the early twentieth century. The Boulevard then winds past the trial plots and ornamental plantings of the heritage-listed Burnley Gardens, developed from 1862 and with its botanic gardened grounds open to the public ever since.

Travelling past remnant elms and eucalypts, the visitor passes underneath the 1881 Swan Street Bridge, and within metres of the location of the now vanished 1850s suite of Survey Department buildings, marked today by a single remnant Osage Orange tree—an uncommon North American species introduced to Victoria in the 1850s for hedges. Next is an unbroken length of Depression-era rockeries abutting the road. Built, like the road, by hand, the rockeries retain many of their original plantings, including flourishing succulents. Narrow, rock-lined paths lead to open parkland and a sports oval. This area of the Park is known today as Burnley Park, traditionally

The most highly developed zone in Richmond Park. Here a train line crosses the landscape and Yarra River on its 1860s bridge. Once trains would stop at the now lost Pic Nic Station, just before the bridge, to unload or collect picnickers visiting the Park. A lone Corroboree Tree stands nearby, marking the importance of the site to the Wurundjeri people, displaced from their local lands by European settlement. Looking across to Swan Street remnant Australian trees from the early twentieth century are visible, as is the clearing where circuses still pitch their big tops in a tradition stretching back some 60 years. At the far Swan Street corner of Park is an impressive stand of palms, thought to be associated with Carlo Catani’s design influence on the Park in the early 1900s.

To the north of the sports oval, the nineteenth century park-keeper’s cottage stands—its 1860s section facing the remnant avenue of elms which lined the 1850s carriage drive leading through the Park to Pic Nic Station and on to Burnley Gardens. The intact nature of this alignment and the combination of early architecture and remnant old elms make this feature of the Park remarkably eloquent and increasingly rare in illustrating this important and long-enduring aspect of the Park’s history. Following the elm avenue north, the visitor again meets the Yarra Boulevard, which here features raised rock ‘planters’ constructed to protect the roots of the historic elms from damage due to the 1930s road works.

The visiting public may not be aware of Richmond Park’s close association with and influence of notables such as Hodgkinson and Mueller. They may not know about the ferrymen, unemployed labourers, park-keepers, surveyors, Kooris, or landscape painters. But what they will be aware of when visiting Richmond Park is the wonder of such a large tract of peaceful open space with riverside frontage six kilometres east of the Melbourne CBD sitting in stark contrast to the tight urban development which surrounds it.

Lee Andrews is a heritage consultant specialising in designed landscapes. This article draws on her recent research undertaken for the National Trust’s classification of Richmond Park and Heritage Victoria’s registration of Burnley Gardens.
The Japanese garden in Australia: authentic or alien?

Jennifer Mitchelhill

Japanese influence on Australian garden design has existed since the nineteenth century, but were there any authentic Japanese gardens in Australia prior to the 1980s, and what has stimulated the creation of genuine Japanese gardens in the last thirty years?

In 2003 the *Journal of Japanese Gardening* (USA) identified twenty-five public Japanese gardens in Australia. Australian garden experts were asked to determine which of these they considered the ‘highest quality’. They were encouraged to use their own definition of ‘quality’. The results indicated that quality was equated with authenticity, as the top six gardens were all designed by a Japanese landscape architect and any buildings within them were built in a traditional Japanese style. Of interest also, is that all of these gardens are less than thirty years old. This raises two questions: were there any authentic Japanese gardens in Australia prior to the 1980s, and what stimulated the creation of genuine Japanese gardens in the last thirty years?

It has been said that ‘the typical Japanese garden is uncomfortable in an alien setting’ and it would appear that until recently, this has been the case in Australia. Although Japanese plants could be purchased from Australian nurseries such as Michael Guilfoyle & Sons in Sydney and Charles Wyatt’s Frogmore Nursery in Geelong as early as 1866, and information on Japanese garden design had been available through books such as Josiah Conder’s *Landscape Gardening in Japan* since 1893, Japanese plants in nineteenth-century
Australian gardens were not usually arranged according to traditional Japanese garden design. Gardens at Mount Macedon (Vic.) and the Blue Mountains (NSW), with cool climates and wealthy patrons, merged species common to both Japan and China with native plants to create exotic gardens in a picturesque manner. Gardens at mansions such as Rippon Lea in Melbourne did likewise. Sometimes gardens that were not really Japanese were called as such, due to the inclusion of an exotic structure or two. William Guilfoyle’s Japanese garden in Melbourne’s Treasury Gardens was one such garden.

Within an earlier structure of diagonally crossing tree-lined paths lined and a willow fringed pond Guilfoyle built a Japanese style pagoda and a bamboo balustrade in a diagonal lattice pattern beside the pond in 1902, and called it a Japanese garden. The inclusion of these structures to make a garden ‘Japanese’ resembled the nineteenth century propensity to create Japanese drawing rooms by cluttering an otherwise English room with Japanese artefacts. The intense interest in Japanese items around the end of the nineteenth century in Australia was an extension of the United Kingdom, Europe, and America’s fascination with Japan, after it had opened its doors to trade in 1854 following nearly two hundred and fifty years of seclusion.

The lack of authenticity at the Treasury Gardens could explain its demolition and redevelopment as a memorial to John F. Kennedy (1965)—post World War II anti-Japanese sentiment may also have played a role in its demise.

One of Australia’s first authentic Japanese gardens was Professor A.L. Sadler’s private garden at Warrawee, on Sydney’s North Shore. Arthur Lindsay Sadler (1882–1970) was well qualified to build a Japanese garden. Born in London, Sadler was professor of Oriental Studies at the University of Sydney (1922–48), and concurrently professor of Japanese at the Royal Military College (1931–37). Sadler had lived in Japan from 1909 to 1921, lecturing in English and Latin at the Imperial National College in Okayama (1909–18), and then at Peers College in Tokyo (1918–21). To create his Japanese garden at Warrawee, Sadler isolated a part of his existing garden by surrounding it with bamboo and giant privet, and built a Japanese gate to separate the Japanese garden from the main garden. Within the enclosure he built a tea-house and used stepping stones to lead to various terminal points marked by lanterns. Sadler’s garden was featured in The Home magazine in May 1932 (and is to be featured in the next issue of Australian Garden History—eds).
When war broke out against Japan in 1941 the 1100 Japanese living in Australia were interned as ‘enemy aliens’. Internees at the Barmera camp (SA), built a Japanese garden along with a number of wood, bark, and thatch buildings in a traditional Japanese style. The garden had a pond crossed by a wooden arched bridge, large rocks, reeds, flowering plants, and a small, grassed hill.

The prisoner of war camp at Cowra (NSW), experienced a break-out in 1944, leading to 231 Japanese and four Australian deaths. In 1964, the Japanese Government built a war cemetery at Cowra for Japanese nationals who died in Australia during the war. Some years later, citizens of Cowra suggested building a garden as a symbol of friendship, and in 1978 the first stage of the Cowra Japanese garden was completed by landscape architect Ken Nakajima. The second stage was completed under the supervision of Nakajima’s son in 1986. The garden is an Edo era (1600–1868) stroll garden covering a five-hectare site, with a tea-house, pottery house, waterfalls, ponds, and a dry rock garden. This garden was voted as the third ‘highest quality’ Japanese garden in Australia.

Contrary to what one might expect, in light of hostilities between Japan and Australia during the Pacific War (1941–45), Japanese gardens gained popularity in Australia in the late 1950s. Magazines such as *Australian Home Beautiful*, *Australian Women’s Weekly*, and *Architecture and Arts* ran articles on Japanese gardens and flower arranging, and architects incorporated Japanese style gardens in their house designs. Much of this interest was fuelled by the ‘Japonica Boom’ in America, where Japanese architecture and artefacts were extremely popular. The use of bamboo, ponds, and rocks were common, as were courtyards with Japanese plants such as azaleas and dwarf maple trees.

Wide pebble beds of the style bordering the lawn at the Katsura Detached Palace in Kyoto were used by Neville Gruzman in the Rosenburg house, NSW (1966), by Robin Sinclair Hill, landscape designer at his own residence, Edithburgh, SA, and by Neil Cleerehan and Guilford Bell at the
Simon House, Mount Eliza, Vic. (c.1963). Sand and rock courtyard gardens in the contemplative style of the Ryoanji garden, Kyoto, were used by David McGlashan at the Reid House, Aspendale, Vic. (1960) and the Strizic beach house at Carrum, Vic. (1961). Roy Grounds incorporated a Japanese courtyard at his Chinese inspired National Gallery of Victoria (1967) in the name of Asian eclecticism while Peter Muller’s Japanese style office in Paddington, NSW (1963), opened onto an authentic Japanese courtyard garden at the rear. Karl Langer combined an ‘Italian courtyard’ with a Japanese garden in a house he renovated for Dr Levy at Southport, Qld (1955). Most of these examples were not academic attempts to create a Japanese garden but were a fashionable blending of East and West, where elements of Japanese gardens were selected and applied in an Australian context.

*These examples were not academic attempts to create a Japanese garden but were a fashionable blending of East and West, where elements of Japanese gardens were selected and applied in an Australian context.*

There were attempts to create authentic Japanese gardens from the 1960s at Australian universities. Brian Lewis, Professor of Architecture at Melbourne University, and Shigeru Yura (who lectured there from 1963 to 1965), designed a Japanese *kare-sansui* (dry rock) garden at the entrance to the Architecture Building. Western Australia Institute of Technology followed suit in 1973, and Dickson College, ACT, in 1986. These gardens were precursors to the creation of sizeable authentic Japanese gardens from the 1970s onwards, most of which arose from sister city relationships. Sister city relationships between Japan and Australia began in 1963, with many being formed in the 1980s—participating twin cities currently number 105. It is the gardens of these sister cities which predominate in the top Japanese gardens in Australia, as indicated by the 2003 survey results.

The Melbourne Zoo’s Japanese garden was voted the best. Built in 1990, this modest sized garden has an arbour, waterfall, and winding stream. The Japanese garden at the University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba, came in second. Also known as ‘*Ju raku en*’, this large stroll garden was opened in 1989 and features several sub-gardens of various styles. Next was the Japanese Garden at Cowra. Fourth was the Ipswich Japanese Garden, constructed in 2000, also known as the ‘Nerima garden’. The cool climate Japanese Garden, located in the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens in Hobart was fifth, and number six was the Japanese garden in the Brisbane Botanic Gardens, a gift from Japan after Expo ’88.

It is apparent that prior to the 1980s there were few authentic Japanese gardens in Australia. Most gardens of a Japanese style were a hybrid of Australian and Japanese plants and designs. Gardens which were authentic were constructed by an Australian expert on Japan, such as Arthur Sadler; they were created to commemorate an event such as the Cowra breakout; or they were an attempt to create goodwill between two cities. These gardens, with their serious intent, aimed for authenticity in planting, layout, and meaning, and to this end used Japanese experts to create them. Their success is evidence that Japanese gardens do not have to be uncomfortable in an alien setting and, if well designed and executed, can provide a genuine snapshot of Japan to be enjoyed in Australia.

**Notes on sources**


*Jennifer Mitchelhill* is a research student at The University of Melbourne investigating the role of traditional Japanese architecture in post-war Australian house design. She is also the author of *Castles of the Samurai: power and beauty* (2003).
Our tour was at a lovely time of year, late autumn, with mostly blue skies, some cloud, hardly any wind, cool crisp frosty mornings, but lovely sunny clear days. The landscape was a real surprise—I found it amazingly beautiful. There was the vast uninterrupted expanse of rolling hills and flats, mostly treeless, so one could see for miles. The dry native grasses caught the light and stirred in the breeze and the distant horizon gave way to blue sky with scattered white clouds completing the picture. The straw colour of the grasses was constant; sometimes the light on these grasses was quite breathtaking, especially in the late afternoon. It snowed our first night so the mountains framing our view were covered with a light sprinkling of snow the whole week. Up at Thredbo itself the ground was partly snow-covered, there were flowers at the end of their time before winter, and reminders of the dreadful fires of 2003. Snow gums were making a slow recovery with epicormic growth reaching a couple of feet, and a sea of dead trees, trunks, and branches. How fragile the landscape is.

One of our most interesting visits, as far as understanding the landscape, was to Severn Park, the property of Charlie and Fiona Massy. Innovative farmer, thinker, and author of a major work on the Merino, Charlie told us that mostly the grasses are indigenous. The pasture is neither cropped nor improved, but environmental weeds are, as usual, a problem—the worst being Serrated...
John Dwyer recently joined the Australian Garden History Society’s National Management Committee. Christina Dyson caught up with him to discuss weeds and the environment.

What inspired you to study horticulture and, in particular, what was it about weeds that captivated your interest?

When I decided to retire in 1999 after a lifetime spent working in the law, including 20 years as a QC, I took up the study of horticulture. Due to my longstanding interest in heritage places, I had served on the Council of the National Trust for some 15 years, holding various offices, including that of president.

My interests had come to focus on heritage gardens and landscapes, and I wanted to be better informed. In my studies, I came to see weeds as an aspect of horticulture of particular interest and importance to heritage conservation. My PhD thesis on ‘Weeds in Victorian Landscapes’ is the culmination of years of work to understand the history and meaning of weeds in general and environmental weeds in particular.

What is the difference between ‘weeds in general’ and ‘environmental weeds’?

The term ‘environmental weed’ was coined in the 1970s to describe weeds of indigenous or other non-local Australian vegetation, as distinct, for example, from weeds of agriculture. The term itself is a manifestation of the cultural/natural divide. It is focused on conservation of ‘natural’ vegetation (commonly defined as that which was present prior to European settlement) instead of the human modified landscapes which make up most of the Victorian environment; it is inimical to the conservation of cultural landscapes.

From your perspective, what is our future with weeds, in the context of conserving historic gardens and cultural landscapes?

I see the movement against ‘environmental weeds’ as a serious threat to the conservation of significant cultural landscapes. Exotic plants and trees, which are important elements in the landscape, are being removed by those who see them as ‘environmental weeds’. They attach overriding value to conservation of the ‘natural’ environment, and see cultural landscapes as environmental degradation.

Conservation of both natural environment and cultural heritage is important. Where the two conflict, would you say that conservation should be based on relative importance?

I want to break down the distinction between cultural and natural landscapes, and to extend the idea of ‘natural’ to encompass human modified landscapes. The whole environment should be conserved, not simply those remaining indigenous elements which have not been altered by humans. I value our civilisation and its manifestations in gardens and countryside: the exotic trees in particular, which stand as markers of the way of life which our ancestors brought to this country. I see the conservation of gardens and landscapes as work of high importance.

Do you see your work having international relevance?

Yes, I do. And recently I’ve written on the assemblage of weeds depicted by Albrecht Dürer in a watercolour from the Albertina in Vienna (which we plan to publish in a forthcoming issue of Australian Garden History—eds).
Just released


The early Dutch exploration of New Holland’s coasts should remind us to look beyond the predominantly British narratives of Australian history and see the nation’s history in a wider context of competing global empires of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As part of this, Cook’s chapter ‘Gardens of the Indies Transported’ brings a fresh perspective on the challenges of collecting tropical plants destined for culture and display in predominantly cool climate European botanic gardens in an era well before Kew was a focus for imperial botany.


This thoroughly researched book places Melbourne’s botanic garden in context of that city’s major nineteenth-century cultural institutions—art gallery, library, museum, zoo—and examines the educational role of this powerful grouping. Despite the slightly clunky title, the text moves easily across the individual institutional histories, presenting ideas of self-improvement, leisure, civic value, and economic progress during a confident colonial era.

Susan McIntyre-Tamwoy (guest editor), *Global Climate Change and Cultural Heritage*, special issue of *Historic Environment*, Australia ICOMOS, Burwood, Vic., 21 (1), March 2008 (ISSN 0726 6715); softcover (all enquiries regarding subscriptions and back-copies should be addressed to Historic Environment Subscription Service, Australia ICOMOS Inc., c/-Faculty of Arts, Deakin University, 221 Burwood Highway, Burwood, Vic. 3125)

The papers in this volume were delivered at a symposium and public forum on climate change and cultural heritage held in Cairns in 2007. The message is not ‘if’ but ‘when’, and ‘sooner’ rather than ‘later’. As guest editor Susan McIntyre-Tamwoy observes: ‘It is possible that as Australian’s we have drawn undue comfort from the mantra “we have enough time to adapt” combined as this is with a long history of human adaptation to changing environments on our continent.’ Contributors cover a wide range of sites, issues, and outlooks.

Maura O’Connor & Terry Birtles, *Australia in Maps: great maps in Australian’s history from the National Library’s collection*, National Library of Australia, Canberra, 2007 (ISBN 978 0 642 27635 3); hardback RRP $59.95

This lavishly illustrated volume contains the stuff from which Australian garden history can be constructed. From early European surveys and pastoral land maps to geological surveys and town planning ideas—these and more are treated with carefully selected reproductions and accompanying text. Highly recommended for browsing, and as an aid for further research.

Michael Pollan, *In Defence of Food: the myth of nutrition and the pleasures of eating*, Allen Lane, Camberwell, Vic., 2008 (ISBN 978 1 846 14103 4); paperback RRP $32.95

A proponent of real food, Pollan exposes the alarming implications of America’s industrialisation of the food industry on the diet and health of Americans and those food cultures that have followed the way of America—including Australia’s—while applying a witty prose style to the joys and benefits of cooking with natural ingredients (straight from the kitchen garden perhaps), and proposing some simple rules of thumb for enjoying real food, rather than consuming ‘food products’.


*The Plants of the Australian Garden*, Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne, Cranbourne, Vic., 2007 (ISBN 0 97513626 7); softcover, RRP $9.95 ($12.50 posted from RBG)

This complementary pairing—one title for a general readership and the second for the serious gardener—brings the Australian Garden at Cranbourne into print for a national audience. For those who have not yet visited, these two inexpensive guides will be useful background, while for the visitor, they will form an essential reminder of the experience. The booklet by Bev Roberts forms a general illustrated guide, while the plant list gives abbreviated botanical and cultural details of all plants in this exciting new garden.
Annual General Meeting
The 28th Annual General Meeting of the Australian Garden History Society will be held on Saturday, 11 October 2008, at 8.15 am at Oxley College, Railway Parade, Burradoo, NSW. 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 22 August 2008. There are no vacancies for elected positions on the National Management Committee this year.

Lost Gardens of Sydney
A significant new book, *Lost Gardens of Sydney*, written by AGHS Chair Colleen Morris, will accompany an exhibition of the same name at the Museum of Sydney (9 August to 30 November 2008). The book, edited extracts of which are included in this issue of the journal (see page 4), is published by the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales with the generous support of the Australian Garden History Society.

www.hht.net.au/whats_on/exhibitions

Adelaide Park Lands Cultural Landscape Assessment
Adelaide City Council has made available on its website the completed Cultural Landscape Assessment of the Adelaide Park Lands, undertaken as a consultancy over several years led by University of Adelaide academic Dr David Jones. It comprises a major investigation into the heritage values of the Adelaide Park Lands and squares. The study, based on an extraordinarily high level of documentation, has been prepared within internationally accepted methodologies and represents one of the most complex such assessments for a cultural landscape in Australia.

www.adelaidecitycouncil.com
(follow links for ‘environment’)

Filleting of the NSW Heritage Office
The Australian Garden History Society has joined kindred organisations—Australia ICOMOS, Royal Australian Historical Society, National Trust of Australia, History Council of New South Wales, Engineering Heritage Committee, and Australian Society for the History of Engineering and Technology—as well as many individuals, in protest at the recent downgrading of the New South Wales Heritage Office by the New South Wales state government.

Patricia Edith Feilman, AM (1925–2008)
We note with sadness the recent death of Pat Feilman, keen gardener and promoter of horticulture in Victoria, and known to many AGHS members for her long stewardship of the Ian Potter Foundation and her tireless work promoting environmental causes. She is especially remembered for the encouragement she gave to the Potter Farmland Plan which promoted ‘whole farm planning’ to combat land degradation and promote the conservation principles which underpin the wider Landcare movement.

John Viska receives top WA heritage award
The work of garden historian John Viska in the discovery, understanding, and conservation of the state’s gardening and landscape heritage was formally recognised in June 2008 by the Heritage Council of Western Australia. John was nominated by the Western Australian Branch of the AGHS for the award for contribution to heritage in Western Australia by an individual. The Society sought recognition for John’s role as an effective advocate for the state’s designed landscapes, especially raising awareness of culturally and historically significant landscapes in Perth. John was the founding chairman of the Australian Garden History Society branch in Western Australia, a position he held from 1988 to 2000. He was also principal author of *A Guide to Conserving and Interpreting Gardens in Western Australia* (available for purchase through the Branch).

www.heritage.wa.gov.au
(follow links for ‘community’)
Edgar Dell (1901–2008)
Carol Mansfield writes from Western Australia with news of the recent death, aged 106, of botanical artist Edgar Dell. Carol’s biographical article in Australian Garden History, 9 (6), May/June 1998, tells of an extraordinary man imbued with great—yet insufficiently recognised—talent. Dell’s illustrations for C.A. Gardner’s frequently reprinted book Western Australian Wildflowers were the means of introducing the beauty of the WA flora to countless people since their first publication in 1935.

Lhotsky and the Argyle Apple
And from Burradoo, Jenny Simons writes: ‘While reading about Dr Lhotsky in the May/June issue, I was intrigued by his detailed, accurate description of the Argyle Apple (Eucalyptus cinerea), which is abundant in the area he was traversing in the Southern Highlands of New South Wales. I, too, always enjoy the sight of it before I reach Goulburn.’

Correction
In our last issue we incorrectly cited the source of the preliminary drawing for Mr Clark’s Station, Deep Creek, near Keilor by Eug ne von Gu rard. The correct citation is DL PX xx 17, folio 1, from an album of von Gu rard’s sketches (1864–77) held in the Dixon Library, State Library of New South Wales.

Schomburg’s travel writings
Richard Clough writes from Sydney in regard to Richard Schomburg’s travel account Reisen in Britisch-Guiana in den Jahren 1840–1844 (Leipzig, 1847–48) to amplify our review of Pauline Payne’s The Diplomatic Gardener (AGH, 19 (5), May/June 2008). Although this 800-page work was not published in an English-language translation until 1922–23 (in the Guyanese capital Georgetown), long after Schomburg’s death, his briefer ninety-page Botanical Reminiscences in British Guiana was published in Adelaide in 1876, bringing these travels to an English-speaking audience at a much earlier date than commonly stated.
Diary dates

JULY 2008

Saturday 5
Queensland
Moreton Island Gardens: Tour of the island’s gardens by bus, starting with Tangalooma Resort (and morning tea), with lunch and private garden visits at Cowan Cowan in the afternoon. 7am at Holt Street Wharf, Pinkenba, for 7.30am departure; return by 4pm launch from Tangalooma to Brisbane. Cost: $40 Day Cruise package plus $10 members event fee, $15 guests. Early bookings are essential. Contact Gill Jorgensen on (07) 3341 9933 or jorgenkg@picknol.com.au

Thursday 17
Victoria
Regional Botanic Gardens Project: For our second winter lecture, Roger Cousins will discuss his work with a wide variety of groups to identify and make widely available information about these historic Victorian gardens. 6 for 6.30pm, Mueller Hall, Herbarium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra. Cost: $15 members, $20 non-members, $5 students. Contact Anne Vale on (03) 9526 2041 or heriscapes@hotkey.net.au

Sunday 20
South Australia
Gardens in the Mount Lofty area: Presentation by Ann Herraman from the Mount Lofty Historical Society on the history and recording of these gardens, followed by afternoon tea in a local cafe. 2-3pm, Coventry Library, Mount Barker Road, Stirling. RSVP to Lyn Hillier on (08) 8333 1329

Saturday 26
Tasmania
Annual General Meeting: A garden visit will precede the AGM. The AGM will be followed by a City Park visit and talk. 1pm, Design Centre Launceston. Contact Robyn Hawkins on (03) 6363 6131 or jhawkins@acenet.com.au

Sunday 27
Sydney & Northern NSW
Pyrmont: Walking tour with John Challis, exploring harbour-front Pyrmont, once a gentry estate, then redeveloped for workers’ housing, and now high-rise apartments with waterfront parks and heritage interpretation. 2-4pm, walk starts at the small park on the left hand side, northern (bay) end of Harris Street, Pyrmont. Cost: $10 members, $15 guests, includes light refreshments. Bookings essential, to Stuart Read on (02) 9837 8554

AUGUST 2008

Wednesday 6
Sydney & Northern NSW
Landscape Architecture 1950s+: Talk by Matthew Taylor and short AGM. 6-8pm, Annie Wyatt Room, National Trust Centre, Observatory Hill. Cost for talk: $10 members, $15 guests, bookings to Stuart Read, (02) 9873 8554

Sunday 10
Southern Highlands
Period Gardens lecture and AGM: Miles Baldwin, author of Period Gardens, will present our Winter Lecture, discussing his approach to restoring and renovating period gardens. The lecture will be followed by lunch and a garden visit. 10am, Annesley Ballroom.

Sunday 10
Sydney & Northern NSW
Lost Gardens of Sydney floor talk: Exploring Sydney’s rich and diverse gardening heritage, this exhibition traces the rise and fall of a number of Sydney gardens and garden styles. Gallery floor talk by the exhibition’s curator, Colleen Morris. 2pm, Museum of Sydney, on the site of first Government House, corner Bridge and Phillip Streets. Cost: free with museum entry. ‘Lost Gardens of Sydney’ runs from 9 August to 30 November 2008 at MoS.

Tuesday 19
Victoria
‘My Incomparable Jos’phine’: In our third winter lecture, Sylvia Segona will talk (following our AGM) about the Empress Jos’phine’s Australian garden at Malmaison. AGM, 6.30pm, lecture 7pm, Mueller Hall, Herbarium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra. Cost for lecture: $15 members, $20 non-members, $5 students. Contact Lorraine Lawrence, lorrilawrence@bigpond.com

Wednesday 20
Sydney & Northern NSW
Lost Gardens of Sydney private viewing: Enjoy a private viewing of this exhibition with Dr James Broadbent, Colleen Morris (guest curator), and Beth Hise (HHT curator). A joint Historic Houses Trust and AGHS event. 6-8pm, Museum of Sydney. Cost: $29 members, $39 general (includes refreshments). Bookings through Historic Houses Trust members, on (02) 8239 2266
Sunday 24
Queensland
AGM and National Avenues of Honour project talk: Lyndal Plant, Principal Policy Officer, Landscape Amenity, Environment & Parks Branch, Brisbane City Council will speak about Brisbane’s contribution to this project. 2pm in the Herbarium conference room, Mount Coottha Botanic Gardens. Cost: $10 members $15 guests. Register with Gill Jorgensen (07) 3341 3933 or jorgenkg@picknowl.com.au

Sunday 24
South Australia
Carrick Hill: Richard Heathcote, Director of Carrick Hill, and 2007 recipient of a Churchill Fellowship, will speak on the children’s garden at Carrick Hill. 12.30pm, Carrick Hill, 46 Carrick Hill Drive, Springfield. $35 (includes wine and two course lunch). Bookings essential to Lyn Hillier on (08) 8333 1329

SEPTEMBER 2008
Saturday 6
Victoria
Historic Medlow: Working bee at 42 Warrigal Road, Surrey Hills (Melway 46 J12). Contact Pamela Jellie 9836 1881 or email pdjellie@hotmail.com

Saturday 13
Victoria
Eltham/Hurstbridge area: Coach tour of gardens by designer Robert Boyle. Sample the rustic delights of Monsalvat, Allwood House, and gardens at Hurstbridge, as well as Australian landscapes created in the Ford–Glass–Stones–Knox era of the 1960s. Tour departs Victorian Arts Centre 8.30am and returns 5.30pm. Further details and booking form on the flyer enclosed. Contact Pamela Jellie 9836 1881 or email pdjellie@hotmail.com

Sunday 14
Sydney & Northern NSW
Mulgoa gardens tour: Stuart Read leads a tour of colonial and Victorian-era gardens. 9–5pm, departing from outside Hyde Park Barracks (Hyde Park side). Cost: $89, includes coach travel, morning tea and lunch. A joint Historic Houses Trust and AGHS event. Bookings and enquiries to Stuart Read on (02) 9837 8554 or stuart1962@bigpond.com.au

Tuesday 16
Sydney & Northern NSW
Lost Gardens of Sydney: Michael Lehany and Colleen Morris will talk about First Government House’s lost garden. 6.30pm, Museum of Sydney, corner Bridge and Phillip Streets. Bookings through Historic Houses Trust, on (02) 8239 2211 or bookings@hht.net.au

Sunday 21
South Australia
‘The Elms’: Garden visit followed by afternoon tea in the garden at The Elms, Forreston. For details and RSVP contact Lyn Hillier on (08) 9386 7438

Sunday 21
Western Australia
Heritage Rose Garden visit: Inspect Margaret Moore’s heritage rose garden in Roleystone. Araluen Botanic Gardens and Mia Flora nursery and caf’re nearby which you may also wish to visit. This is a joint function with Heritage Rose gardens Australia. Bring a picnic morning tea. For further details contact Joy Hill on (08) 9386 7438

Sunday 28
Sydney & Northern NSW
Sydney’s lost gardens: Lost gardens walking tour of Parramatta’s heart. Discover Wisteria Gardens and Cumberland House East with Terry Smith and Stuart Read. 2–4pm, meet at Fleet Street entry, Cumberland House. Cost: $20 members, $25 guests. Bookings through Historic Houses Trust, on (02) 8239 2211 or bookings@hht.net.au

OCTOBER 2008
Wednesday 1
Victoria
Historic Medlow: Special members treat—morning tea and garden tour of historic Medlow, 42 Warrigal Road, Surrey Hills (Melway 46 J12). 10.30–12.30pm. Cost: $15. For bookings contact: Pamela Jellie 9836 1881 or email pdjellie@hotmail.com

Saturday 4
Tasmania
North Bruny Island: A day trip visiting historic properties on North Bruny Island, guided by two local historians. For further information contact Anne Thwaites on (03) 6227 9363

Sunday 5
Sydney & Northern NSW
Sydney’s lost gardens: Lost gardens walking tour of the Domain with Flora Deverall. 2–4pm, departing from Museum of Sydney, corner Bridge and Phillip Streets. Cost: $20 members, $25 guests. Bookings through Historic Houses Trust, on (02) 8239 2211 or bookings@hht.net.au

Friday 10 to Sunday 12
( Optional day Monday 13)
Southern Highlands
From Wilderness to Pleasure
Ground: AGHS Annual National Conference to be held in Bowral, New South Wales (registration brochures available from AGHS office)

NOVEMBER 2008
Saturday 9
Sydney & Northern NSW
Sydney’s lost gardens: Lost gardens walking tour of Elizabeth Bay House estate, with Scott Hill, Assistant Curator of Elizabeth Bay and Vaucluse Houses, and Stuart Read. 2–4pm. Cost: $20 members, $25 guests. Bookings and enquiries to Historic Houses Trust, on (02) 8239 2211 or bookings@hht.net.au

Sunday 16
Sydney & Northern NSW
Berrima and Bargo: Self-drive tour with the NSW National Trust, visiting Harper’s Mansion, Berrima, and the Wirrimbirra Nature Reserve, Bargo. 11–4pm. For further details contact Stuart Read on (03) 9837 8554 or stuart1962@bigpond.com.au

DECEMBER 2008
Saturday 6
Tasmania
Christmas function: Celebrate at ‘Wetmore’, a Midlands garden near Ross. For further details contact Rhyn Hawkins on (03) 6363 6131 or jhawkins@acnnet.com.au
Continued from page 27

Tussock and African Lovegrass. The basalt rock is responsible for the flat and undulating, naturally treeless landscape: in spite of earnest attempts they had been unable to establish Australian trees on this ground. On some small hills with granite outcrops there were a few trees and mixed woodland. However, the Manna Gum (Eucalyptus viminalis) trees are dying, for reasons unknown apart from drought; their dying forms, plentiful on the granite hills, a sorry sight. Ring barking and rabbits have dramatically modified the landscape.

The granite country was scattered with stones and teetering piles of wonderful boulders, large and small. The 50-year-old house and garden Nandawar exploited this feature to dramatic effect. Huge granite boulders in their natural position framed the garden’s entrance with trees and shrubs introduced around and sometimes over boulders. Framed views link the garden to the stony borrowed landscape beyond. Meandering through the boulders in the garden behind the house, exotic plantings give way to indigenous bushland plants.

Another feature of the landscape was the lakes, simply large shallow depressions and mostly dry due to the repeated dry seasons. Indeed we may not have recognised them as dry lakes had it not been pointed out. Kiah Lodge had one of these lakes just beyond the driveway fence; the water birds must be amazing to see when the lakes fill. Dryness is a characteristic of the Monaro and all the property owners consider dry the norm.

They all constantly referred to the lack of water, drought, and dryness which affected all parts of their life—running the properties, gardening, and generally living—the dry environment, rather than drought, was ‘something we all have to come to terms with’.

The borrowed landscape was used frequently in many of the gardens we visited. Lambrigg, close to Canberra and home to William Farrer from 1886 where he conducted his experiments on wheat strains suitable for Australian conditions, was another example of borrowed landscape. One looked out from the garden to the Murrumbidgee flats with the roofs of spreading Canberra in the background. The all-round view from Farrer’s chosen burial site and memorial from the hilltop behind the house and garden was even more spectacular.

Jane and Vic Carroll in Cooma built their house about 20 years ago, on a rocky hill on the edge of town. This modern house is surrounded by bush: a few exotic plants were tried unsuccessfully and the ‘garden’ now consists of bushland plants growing naturally. The house is built over the land, a slight interruption to the natural landscape.

Bobundara, the Dixons’ property, was another which made use of the borrowed landscape, in particular by means of the ha-ha wall with its view to a (dry) creek and hills in the near distance. It was a pleasant and relaxing spot to quietly absorb the view.

Other gardens made use of the ha-ha to look out to the borrowed landscape. At Rockybah...
Howard and Annie Charles built the ‘ha ha’ themselves with the unending supply of rocks on their property. At Erindale there was no ha-ha but the well-maintained garden looked out for miles to the treeless landscape and sky. Myalla, home of James and Barbara Litchfield, has a very old garden brought back from the wild, and now the view from in front of the house is across grass to a pond and the landscape beyond. Many of the gardens had stone walls, dry or otherwise, made from local stone naturally in abundance, giving a very pleasing connection to the landscape.

Plants used in the gardens and outside the gardens were repeated everywhere we went. Most obvious were the poplars. They were used extensively, particularly the Lombardy Poplar (Populus nigra var. ‘Italica’), which made a real punctuation mark in gardens, along creeks, along roads, and in the landscape. It did look beautiful with its brilliant yellow autumn colour glowing in the late afternoon sun. Yet poplars and elms planted years ago have suckered and seeded and taken over in many places. Some gardeners, such as the Litchfields at Myalla, tackled these with a bulldozer to tame parts of the garden, leaving the wildness more or less to its own devices in some places.

Apart from the elms and poplars, the next most frequently used trees were cypresses and pines (Pinus radiata). Many driveways had pines or cypresses and a great many of them were extremely old and falling apart. At Kiah Lodge pines were being replaced. Crabapples were noticeably repeated in many gardens. The best crabapple was at Maffra, very large for a crabapple, a beautiful shape and with the biggest, reddest apples I have ever seen. In the newer gardens Rockybah and Erindale there were a number of different species of crabapple, all doing very well. Ornamental Grape was frequently used over verandahs and pergolas, making bold bright red lines across house façades. The grape would provide lovely cool shade in summer but was the only bright red autumn colour against trees mostly coloured in softer yellows and oranges.

In the last garden Turalla near Bungendore there were magnificent trees, some extremely old, including the biggest and best English Oak (Quercus robur) that I have ever seen. It looked truly wonderful on the afternoon of our visit with the sun streaming through its tracery of huge limbs. There were also huge elms in this garden, crabapples, fastigate hornbeams—it was an enchanting place.

I can’t resist mentioning the veggie gardens. At Maffra the vegetable garden is well maintained and we saw pimple pumpkins and golden nuggets stored in the lovely old garden shed, along with several sacks of potatoes. Huge zucchini had been thrown on the compost heap that morning because there had been a big frost the night.
before. In another area extensive chookyards opened onto the elderly orchard, a very good combination to my mind. **Rockybah** had an immaculate veggie garden with a line of perfect cabbages while covering the long garage wall was the most disciplined and magnificent espaliered pear I have ever seen.

We had a morning with national park ranger Dan Nichol and Aboriginal education officer Rodney Mason to explain their interpretation of the landscape. Rod talked about ‘Tidbilliga’ country and the Indigenous peoples who came here called ‘Ice people’. He talked about journeys to the country in summer and people coming from far away for ceremonies, to collect important herbs that only grew in the mountains, and to feast on the abundant fruits and, of course, Bogong moths. He talked about the ‘spirits’ of the people coming here when they die and dancing.

Trisha Dixon regaled us with a continual stream of stories about the properties and their many owners. Family histories and connections were explained; in many cases properties are still being passed from one generation to the next, although mostly to the male line. People who visited the properties were often artists, writers, war historians, sculptors, academics—famous names we know so well—Banjo Paterson, Patrick White, Betty Litchfield, A.D. Hope, Barcroft Boake, Hilda Rix Nicholas, Percy Spence—and creative people who live and work here today, artist Imants Tillers amongst others.

Lasting impressions are the extensive treeless landscape, blue skies with fluffy clouds, yellow Lombardy Poplar trees, old homesteads in good use and in decline, waterless lakes, sturdy exotic garden plants and lack of native plantings, and the camaraderie of a wonderful community.

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