



GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP

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Dear Members,

As we prepare to put our property *Yanderra* on the market after 30 years, please forgive me a little self indulgence! The extract below, in Anne Wareham's book "The Bad Tempered Gardener" proved irresistible. As well, I am sure many members, who are in the same position or, perhaps once were, will emote.

I contemplate the future and think it may be a relief to move on one day. To shed the work, the aggravation, the fears, expense and headaches. But then someone else would believe this to be theirs. As long as I am alive to know it that feels totally outrageous. And what about others who would then be excluded? Good friends whose friendships with me were created out of this garden and who in their encouragement helped create it? The idea that the gate would close against those friends is unthinkable, terrible and of course true. I know people talk a lot of pious nonsense about gardens - that they don't stand still, that they should be permitted to change after the creators' death, that the creators think that it is all jolly good and OK. It is not. It is horrendous. This is me and it is us and it - and we - should be here, just this way forever. Everyone knows that ; why pretend otherwise? And it is the garden all the time that reminds us of our mortality, as a garden is totally reflective of time and in a garden time is inescapable. Death is here. And it is not welcome. I will not pretend I have come to terms with death or my fate or the fate of the garden. I can wake in a cold sweat terrified by the knowledge that all this and us will inevitably end, and I live with that knowledge only by ignoring it most of the time. Though sometimes I also stare it in the face in the hope that I can learn to bear it.

On with a similar theme, congratulations are in order to the Melbourne branch of the GDSG in general and Margaret James and Chris Larkin in particular, who have kick started the Significant Garden recording venture in earnest and have almost finished the first garden to be recorded, that of Bev and John Hanson. I hope that members can follow their lead in the other States and Territories. As a significant garden is recorded a shortened version (with a few of the photos) will appear in the newsletter with the link to the full report (and all the photos) on our website.

As you will note the bulk of this NL consists of writings on the gardens visited at the various group meetings - a plethora of design and horticultural information awaits...read on!

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CORRESPONDENCE

I have read with great interest the contribution Winifred Waddell made to conservation in our country, also Dr Karl Langer in the previous newsletter with his insights into landscape design. Ellis Stones, with whom I worked for eight years, I feel was one of these great Australians .

I am at present working with a group, mainly his former employees, to create a memorial to commemorate his life's work at Melbourne University.

Bev Hanson Vic.

I think that Diana's comments about formal gardens versus informal in the last Newsletter were spot on. Our gardens are much more complex than a line of box and some pots of citrus, lovely though the Italian gardens are.

Also, we are carving out our successful gardening ideas with natives at this point - there is nothing traditional to fall back on, we have to work it out for ourselves.

Very exciting and somewhat frustrating at times. Apart of my frustration with gardening with Australian natives is the lack of reliability in all areas. You can't get the plants you want, you can't get the same plants again, and if you do they don't perform in the same way as the first lot. Descriptions are not poor, breeders try their best, but unreliable. Sizes vary tremendously depending on the provenance of the plant. People genuinely do not know how a plant will perform. The one that they grew was 3m high and bloomed every year in clear purple while the same one that you just bought is 1m high and hardly blooms at all with muddy white flowers.

This is in marked contrast to the plants we grew in America which matched their descriptions, performed reliably and were available for purchase more than one year in a row! They also grew much more reliably and over longer periods. Losses were rare. It is all about how long the plants have been in production, how long the production companies have been in business, how long the plants themselves have been in cultivation and how much they have been selected over how many years. We are only at the very start of using Australian natives in gardens and this is part of both the excitement and the frustration of trying to design with Aussie plants.

Ros Walcott ACT

Marg James and I have now finished our record of a 'significant garden'. Remember the project we started 2 or 3 years ago now? We are poised to send off our report with pics to go on the website in a section we hope will be created called 'Visit a garden' or some-such.

Chris Larkin Vic.

Recording Significant Gardens Project

A small subset of the Victorian Garden Design Study Group met several times in last year to draw up a format for recording significant Australian plant gardens in private hands. We created quite an extensive list of factors to consider starting with the age & history of the garden, the stages in its development, the owner's aims and motivations, moving on to a consideration of the plants, hard landscaping, use of water, maintenance regime and ending with an assessment of the aesthetic value of the garden.

The next step was to try out the format on a real garden and Bev Hanson's Warrandyte garden was chosen for the trial. This garden is featured annually in the Open Garden Scheme and provides a display garden for Bev's landscape design clients. The property comprises 4 hectares, but the created garden only accounts for about 0.4 hectares and is carefully designed to meld with the bush setting. Bev and John Hanson were extremely helpful to the project, providing detailed written notes which I could draw on to write up the report after a visit to the garden with Bev as a guide. At another visit, with the Melbourne Garden Design Study Group on March 4th, I decided to alter what I had previously written. I wandered round, mostly on my own this time, enjoying the way the various garden rooms flowed into each other and noticing more details, such as the interaction of light and shade and the provision of views for every window in the house. Members of the Garden Design Study Group wrote their own comments, endorsing my perceptions and adding additional insights:

The Hanson garden evokes the same feeling of harmony and tranquility [at each visit]. A perfect example of blending surround bush with the 'house' garden. The house garden shows how natives and exotics can be blended to look just right. Bev's garden is sympathetic to its natural environment and there is an easy "flow" between her garden and the bush setting it sits in. The ponds are the things that impressed me most including the very small ones, they are very beautiful. The use of ferns gives the area a lush cool feeling. I like the feeling of age in the garden, the changing levels and the way the surrounding bushland sets it all off. View from the breakfast table works like an amphitheatre where one can sit and watch the wildlife

in action. The ponds and green ferns give a sense of peace and coolness. The garden blends into the bush with no hard boundary. The paths invite exploration into the bushland. (Bryan Loft)

Tony and Brenda Moore liked the variation in atmosphere and microclimates between open grassed and working areas and the deep dank fernery and ponds. It is peaceful and calm – a wonderful garden to explore with rocks, trees, ferns, birds, skinks, mosses.

Bev's garden offers multi levels and increasing points of interest, but I queried access for an elderly person. Indeed wheel chairs and prams can access the garden from the back. I noticed the wealth of fauna – butterflies, kookaburras going to their next and calling territorial, and a highlight – a small group of silver eyes. Amongst it, you hear the occasional call of two types of frog. There are a significant number of ponds surrounding the house – at least 4 (possibly up to 8) and a gorgeous smell of freshness as we walked through. Views from the windows in the house are very restful and engaging. (Nicky Zanen)

I just love the water features – grand and small. So many to discover – connected to the major run and pooling of water that hugs round the house – or further afield tucked into the garden. The garden mounds, rocks and plants are quite naturalistic and lovely. A beautiful garden to move through and enjoy. (Chris Larkin)

I enjoyed the naturalness of the garden and that it blends with the surrounding bush of the Warrandyte State Park. (Rosalee Davey)

My full report of this significant garden is intended for the GDSD website and more gardens will be added as different recorders complete their assignments.

Photographs of these significant gardens are of course essential and will be included on the website.

Margaret James Vic.

DESIGN

ELLIS STONES

Ellis Stones was born at Wodonga and brought up at Essendon, Melbourne, where on leaving school early, he became a carpenters' apprentice. Within a year World War 1 broke out and he enlisted in the Army. At the landing of Gallipoli he was one of the only men to survive in his platoon. He was plucked from the sea badly wounded in the lower leg, and taken to hospital in Egypt. By his time the leg had become gangrene and the doctors were preparing to amputate when a nurse, seeing how young he was (still in his teens), pleaded to try to save the leg. He was always grateful to his nurse even though the leg was to plague him for the rest of his life.

On his return home, after recovering, he took up building in the country, where he became aware that houses could become an integral part of the natural landscape using local materials such as stone and timber instead of the more expensive "brought in" materials. He developed also in this time, a love of the beauty and serenity of the bush, particularly admiring the massive granite rock outcrops of the Stathbogie area, developing an appreciation of the way rocks were positioned in nature. In his gardens he was to copy the natural landscape with rock outcrops, placing of trees, shrubs and ground cover plants.

It was in the 1930's when Ellis first met Edna Walling, Australia's greatest landscape architect of that time. She admired his talent in building a 'dry' rock wall, and advised him to move into the landscape field. In those days all heavy materials such as rocks and timber had to be moved without the aid of machines. Ellis would recall with a laugh how Edna Walling, on finding something beyond her to move, would wait for the baker to arrive, and greet him with "do you mind just helping me for a minute."

He began to create urban landscapes in naturalistic character using rocks, timber, pebbles, etc., and even the revolutionary step of using native plants. Landscape architecture at this time was based on the use of exotic plants. Native Australian plants were considered dull and unsuitable in home gardens. He earned the nickname "Rocky Stones" – jokingly he would inform people that to his friends it was because he always used rocks in his garden, to others, it was because he had "rocks in his head".

He tried relentlessly for many years to change people's thinking and attitude towards their own environment, to open their eyes to destruction of the natural landscape around Melbourne, often by governmental leaders. He fiercely opposed

the Board of Works for its continual destruction of creek and river valleys, reducing them to underground drains. He strongly spoke out against the billabongs on the Yarra at Ivanhoe being filled in, the pruning of street trees by councils, etc. He was labeled as a “crank” and anti-progressive, for his articulate writings and speeches against public authorities.

Gradually however, architects and homeowners came to appreciate his ability to create the form, subtlety and peace of the bush in large and small man-made spaces. His ideas were considered very revolutionary at the time. The “Back to Eltham” movement in the fifties gathered for him a sizeable number of admirers and converts, the earth-building going hand in hand with a bush setting.

In his suburban landscapes he had the creative ability to make something out of nothing by changing levels on a flat block, and planting so that the whole area could not be viewed at once, adding large naturally placed rocks or perhaps a pool.

He advocated the hiding of boundaries, e.g. with planting, to give the feeling that the trees next door then became part of the garden. If a path had a curve, then there should be a reason for that curve, such as a tree to go around. If a driveway was made to curve away out of sight, an illusion of space could be created. He was a warm caring person with a keen sense of humour. His youthfulness always surprised people who would mistake him to be ten years or so younger. He was also very determined with a fighting spirit with the things he believed in. He bravely kept going after many bouts of sickness and hospitalization, suffering a slight stroke, heart condition, dermatitis, and always from his leg.

It was not till the last decade of his life when he was in his 70's, that he received his most important commissions. Councils he had been criticizing for years, e.g. Heidelberg Council invited him to be Landscape Consultant. As Consultant to Nunawading Council, he designed the section of Springvale Road, north of Canterbury Road, for the first time with native planting, which has now reached maturity with its bush character and low maintenance quality.

As Housing Commission Landscape Consultant, he designed areas with the children of these high-rise flats in mind, with workshops, adventure playgrounds, etc., which were continually knocked back by the Commissioners in favour of the conventional layout, with plenty of car parking, a few flower beds and lawn to tidy the area up. He handed in his resignation, telling them they would be breeding the next generation of vandals for the city, in not catering for the children of high-rise flats as he had seen working overseas.

The largest scale development he was commissioned to landscape were both Merchant Builders projects of “Elliston” at Rosanna, and “Winter Park” at Doncaster.

Both were cluster sub-divisions carried out by a firm who recognized that a landscape architect should be called in at the drawing board stage, and not after to tidy up, which is what Ellis had been trying to get across for years.

The Board of Works too, bowed to public pressure, and in the last year of his life, at 79 years, commissioned him to design a section of the derelict badly-eroded Glass Creek at Kew, to a naturalistic environment instead of its proposed fate, another barrel drain creek. Heidelberg Council too, asked him to landscape Salt Creek at Rosanna, a project which he was working on till the day he died.

In 1977 The University of Melbourne set up the Ellis Stones Memorial Fund in his name, for the establishment and protraction of teaching and research in landscape Architecture, which will keep his memory of the tremendous work of this great pioneer of the Australian Garden Design.

Beverly Hanson Vic.

A Visit to Nicky Zanen's Garden

One of the best things about hosting the Melbourne members of the Garden Design Study Group meeting is that it makes you tidy up. My garden is small and easily maintained, but if one doesn't spend much time at home, this doesn't easily happen.

Four years ago I hosted the GDSG members for the first time. It was winter and we were sitting around my dining room table, looking out at the backyard. Suggestions included moving the clothes line out of view and placing a pond in view of the dining area, splitting the garden with a footpath and removing the lawn, mowing strips and border plants.

One of our APS members, Michael Cook, helped me and I gulped when he mentioned bringing a bobcat in. I had just put in a new fence, but this was no problem as a portion of it was removed and replaced when the work was done.

As well as removing concrete mowing strips and digging in a footpath, Michael Cook brought in several rocks and positioned them well. They are big, softened by foliage, and are a fine feature in my garden.

The clothes line was moved to the southern fence and an area paved underneath stretching to the area set aside for a pond/soak. This was dug out of the clay, and would stay filled for a couple of days, but not much longer. I was desperate to attract frogs, so six months later the pond we sealed the pond with a heavy duty propylene liner and framed with various stones and rocks. This work was done between

Christmas and New Year and we were terribly hot as the sun shone straight down on us, reflecting heat from the pavers and the brick walls.

The pond is approximately 6 ft by 4 ft, and runs alongside the paved area, and has a gravel footpath circling it. Various plants that are in the pond have grown extremely well and it should likely be thinned out. One side has strappy plants and grasses, but the rest is sparse backing on to the gravel path. Most of the GDSG members recommended strongly that I plant more shade and protection giving plants and do away with the path around most of the pond. One person also suggested removing one row of the paving stones and replacing this with strappy plants.

An aside here – our local council has the ‘Gardens for Wildlife’ scheme and I rated second highest when I joined. Once I started hearing a froglet call, and having seen a tadpole in my pond, I reckon I have the highest rating!

I had raised several maintenance type questions in anticipation of the visit. Just outside my door I have a lovely *Dichondra argentea* which I inherited and know is not a native. It has thrived with all the rain this year and I am reluctant to remove it. Most people said remove it, one person suggested leaving it for now and another reminded me how invasive this plant can be.

There are baby tears along my wall, forming a lovely mat but I have been warned that it will harbour humidity and is not good for the house. Everyone’s response was to remove it. Permanently.

A ptylotis I planted looked good in the pot and had several large flowers and leaves. When I removed it from the pot a small ball of soil came away and there was no sign of roots. I planted it anyway and asked what other members would have done. Most felt the plant was dead or dying, and one person rated a 30% chance of success. However, I mentioned to my friend in Holland that the ptylotis had had no roots, and her comment was that the ptylotis has a tuber and possibly hadn’t had time to establish in the pot. I’ll leave it there and see what happens.

A sticky daisy is well past its best and either needs severe pruning or elimination. Cut it back and take cuttings. Sound advice, I thought!

I have an *Acacia leprosa*, now named *A strictophylla*, which has a lovely weeping form but is shooting up too high. I have kept it reasonably well pruned around its perimeter (there is a *Persoonia pinifolia* just behind it and a small struggling *Backhousia citriodora* – planted because Michael insisted the one I had planted just outside my kitchen door would grow too big for its position and I wanted to cover my bets). Ideally I want all three plants but the upward growth in the past couple of months means I can’t reach the high branches. The advice: Live with it as is, or buy a cutting pole.

Along my fence, on a mound, I have tried to grow a row of three *Eucalyptus caesias* on the south side of my fence, so they don’t get much sun. All three were planted at

the same time. One has grown well, one has toppled over and died and the third one has been attacked by grubs and partly fallen over, and is almost growing prostrate. The comments included 'difficult to grow, probably cut out', 'plant more behind', 'leave alone', and the best was 'change your vision, leave it!'.

My final question for my back garden. The footpath is being taken over by a *Brachyscome multifida* which softens the lines but cuts the width of the footpath. Most recommended cutting it back but a couple added avoid hard edge and trim lightly.

My area of garden immediately outside my front door is surrounded by a built up mound and steeply humped paved path. This was put in after I had a flooding event early last year. Again rocks have been used effectively and several plants are growing exceptionally well. Where I had difficulty in placing some plants I have kept them in their pots, with relative success.

Not only was the benefit of having my visitors in getting a tidy garden and clean garage, but it was great having the extra eyes.

The wall on the north side of the house is bare, but I had not actually "seen" it. Several people suggested I plant something in front of it to soften the lines there. A good idea, I thought, although it may put in jeopardy the lemon tree (struggling at the moment) that I planted there earlier this year. Maybe I have to accept that a lemon tree is not feasible and change my vision here too.

Nicky Zanen Vic.

PLANTS

MYRTLE RUST -- BE WATCHFULL and CONCERNED

I have had myrtle rust (*Uredo rangelii*) in my suburban garden in northern Sydney for over a year. It is infecting many of the Myrtaceae plants and two plants, *Austromyrtus* 'Blushing Beauty' (two metres high) have had to be removed as they were completely covered in Myrtle Rust in only three weeks.

I now have it again in my *Acmenia smithii* var minor, which is a worry as I have used many of them and their seedlings as a privacy screen across my back yard. The current infestation is not bad enough to cause removal of affected plants, so far.

My treatment consists of cutting off all affected branches and spraying all my Myrtaceae plants with Mancozeb every 7 to 14 days. I am now alternating Mancozeb with Copper oxychloride to stop it building up resistance to one spray. Nurseries have access to many more fungicides than the home gardener.

A few facts

- Myrtle Rust is a plant fungal disease that was first diagnosed in NSW in Myrtaceae family plants in April 2010. Myrtle Rust can be spread by people moving infected plant material, contaminated equipment, clothing and vehicles. It can also spread by wind, insects and other animals.
- Myrtle rust has the potential to infect all myrtaceous plants in both our built (gardens & landscape) and natural environments plus a range of industries (nursery production, timber, cut flower, etc) more likely along the coastline of Australia due to suitable environmental conditions. Under threat from this disease, if it becomes widely established, are a number of identified threatened native plant species across Australia plus a number of endangered wildlife habitat(s) that could have a major impact on our natural biodiversity.
- It has now been identified all along the Eastern seaboard.
- Myrtle Rust is known only to affect Myrtaceae plants.
- Affected plants should be removed and disposed of in a way that minimises the spread of Myrtle Rust ie place in sealed plastic bags. Leave out in the sun for three weeks and then place bag in garbage bin, not your green bin.
- Replacing removed plants with known Myrtle Rust hosts or other Myrtaceae plants may/does result in re-infection.
- Fungicides have been effective in the control of Myrtle Rust. Rotation of fungicides between products containing different active ingredients is recommended to ensure fungicide applications remain effective.
- Myrtle rust (*Uredo rangelii*), a plant fungal disease native to South America, is a member of the fungal complex known as the guava rust (*Puccinia psidii*) group. Based on experiences in Australia between April 2010 and February 2012, information from New South Wales and Queensland, shows myrtle rust has an expanding host range currently infecting approximately 179 species from 41 genera or approximately 46% of known genera (Myrtaceae) in Australia. The pathogen infects young, actively growing, emerging leaves, buds, flowers, green stems, fruit and shoots of plants within the Myrtaceae family.
- Myrtle rust spores are believed to remain viable (under optimal conditions) for between 3 – 6 months and once it is on a leaf it only takes four days to reproduce itself.
- Also look at the NSW DPI Myrtle Rust in my backyard Fact sheet at: http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0003/370074/Myrtle-Rust-in-my-backyard.pdf

- [Look at this site for details of the family Myrtaceae:
http://www.dpiw.tas.gov.au/inter.nsf/Attachments/EKOE-8675BU/\\$FILE/Myrtaceae_genera.pdf](http://www.dpiw.tas.gov.au/inter.nsf/Attachments/EKOE-8675BU/$FILE/Myrtaceae_genera.pdf)

Information for this article is provided by the NSW DPI web site , the Australian Nursery Industry Myrtle Rust (*Uredo rangelii*) 2012 Management Plan and my own experience in my garden.

Jeff Howes NSW

BOOK REVIEWS

A new edition of *Australian Planting Design* by Paul Thompson is available from CSIRO PUBLISHING. Australian Planting Design focuses on how Australian plants may be used in gardens, whatever their size, function or site. It shows the way to use our plants to form a variety of satisfying, interesting and purposeful areas for both people and nature. As the availability of a much wider range of Australian plants grows, so too does our understanding of their qualities and habits. Our changing ecological attitudes and broader understanding of local habitats have brought the Australian landscape into sharper focus and we have gained a new appreciation of its value for design expression. We are beginning to develop an urban landscape that belongs to the land, and garden designs that are more suitable to the environment of tomorrow.

At last we have Australian plants for Australian places.

From APS St George NSW May 2012 newsletter

WEBSITE NEWS

Thought members might be interested in this site:<http://www.gardendrum.com/>

Jeff Howes NSW

MEETINGS & GARDEN VISITS

MELBOURNE

Report of Meeting 27/11/2011

Visit to home of Tony and Brenda Moore

The Melbourne Group visited the garden of Tony and Brenda Moore at Park Orchards. They have a large garden of about one acre with heavy clay soils. It is a very steep block with a south west slope. The drive is long and runs up the centre of the block and along the front of the house then sweeps up to the carport. The garden bed in front of the house is steep. They have used a small form of *Acacia cognata* as a feature amongst a large variety of plants to good effect in this bed.

There are two ponds further down that nestle into the landscape beautifully with surrounding garden beds set amongst the tall trees, lower down the drive they have used a lot of indigenous plants that are pruned to keep them small.

The back garden is terraced with paths leading across and up the block amongst tall indigenous trees with garden beds each side of the paths featuring a variety of hardy plants such as Pomaderris, Acacias, Phebaliums and many more. Around the side of the house are water tanks and nursery of small plants and orchids. Along the front veranda Brenda and Tony have many pots with special plants in them.

Brenda and Tony have achieved a well maintained, peaceful and lovely garden that it is a credit to their hard work.

The garden is a "Land for Wildlife" garden, there are nest boxes in some trees, plenty of bird baths and plants that are suitable to feed a large variety of birds.

Thanks for making us feel so welcome, Brenda and Tony.

Bev Fox Vic.

Report of Meeting 4/03/2012 at home of Bev and John Hanson

Meeting agenda and discussion

- Visiting Malcolm Freake's garden in Gisborne, Oct 28. All 12 members attending this meeting put their names down to attend.

- Discussion of GDSG involvement in the Fred Rogers Seminar. Report from Margaret James and Pam Yarra who had attended a meeting at the venue along with Brian and Diana Snape. The impossibility of really doing a display or showing pictures was discussed.

Tony Moore proposed that we investigate using a projector in the hall running appropriate slides. (Similar to the slide show at the Newcastle conference). The slides would run for e.g. 5 mins before the start of speakers (at start of day and after breaks). We all thought this was a great idea. It was then suggested that members submit slides to be used for this purpose. Slides would include promotion of the GDSG. Also suggested that perhaps Diana co-ordinate this and compile (with help)!

We also discussed the group developing a promotional flyer which could be in any show-bag, or just generally available. Many present thought a bookmark would be a good idea as it would more likely be used rather than thrown away. If not it was suggested a 1/3 of an A4 size would be large enough. The key information to be on a bookmark/flyer would be the logo and web address. All other names and phone numbers should not be published for privacy reasons and because this things may change at any time. Keith Buck – with links to RB Print in Moorabbin – maybe very helpful with respect to this.

- Margaret James said there had been some interesting developments with respect to an Ellis Stones memorial at Melbourne University. More on this at a later meeting.
- We discussed the possibility of making meetings alternate between Saturday and Sunday meeting days to enable people unable to come on a Sunday to attend. There was no foreseen problems from those present.
- Margaret James agreed to write up the visit to the garden in the sense that she has drafted a description of Bev's garden for the project to record significant gardens and she will use this. Her report will appear in the next newsletter but in addition the people at this meeting were set the task of making some written comment about the garden after walking around it for about 3/4hour. These comments will also form part of the report. We did not have time to share our thoughts in discussion which time allowing would have been a good idea.
- Those present were asked to comment on the last newsletter. Bev Fox said she had particularly enjoyed this newsletter. Time was spent talking about the article on photography which suggested we should move away from conventional ways of photographing gardens to pictures that include people

etc. From there a lot of different ideas of what could be in a photograph followed from children playing to people eating, reading, talking, pets and animals doing whatever and different light affects.

- We had a lovely afternoon tea and afterwards some of us went off to look at the Peace Garden at the local Uniting Church.

Chris Larkin Vic.

Report of Meeting 6/5/ 2012

The business part of the meeting followed visits to the gardens of Nicky Zanen and Bev Fox.

Visits to the gardens of Nicky Zanen and Bev Fox

Probably enjoying the opportunity to visit two gardens, 16 members attended this long and busy meeting. First we went to Nicky's small garden, last visited by the group in 2008 and now much more established. Her house is situated at the end of a long drive and, since this first visit, Nicky suffered some flooding when water ran down this drive through her entrance garden and entered the house.

She called for structural assistance from Michael Cook, who created a slightly raised, curved levee bank (using some beautiful rocks) to divert any future streams of water away from the building. No soil was introduced in the process. Nicky has planted out this low bank with a nice variety of small plants as an attractive entrance garden. There's a communal area on two sides of her house, providing a pleasant, grassed open space with one main shade tree. She hopes to gradually introduce more Australian plants along the fence of this communal area.

Michael also helped with re-landscaping in the back garden, creating slight changes of level to make what was a flat area a lot more interesting, as well as introducing different niches for plants. Here, Nicky had moved a clothesline from a direct line of sight from her living room to a separate utility area. Several suggestions were made about screening a fence that is still visible. One was to trunk up a light, small tree, then possibly under-plant it. Another was to use a selection of light creepers. A third was to espalier a shrub so that it is kept fairly flat against the fence.

Finally, Nicky had flagged numbered spots and gave out a questionnaire to get everyone's opinion on numbered questions about what she should do at each point. She'll report separately about the responses (see p.9). I thought this was a very good idea to get us to focus on particular issues. Then, working to a tight deadline, we left to drive to Bev Fox's place nearby.

We were again pushed for time at Bev's garden, which is currently being recorded by Chris Larkin. It looked as beautiful and felt as peaceful as ever, due in part to her sensitive and clever combinations of plants. There is repetition of some selected plants, eg conospermums in the front garden and *Acacia lasiocarpa* in the back. This acacia is a low, spreading plant that makes an excellent groundcover and copes well with shade.

It may still be called a 'small' garden but the back garden in particular is quite large, giving Bev more scope for a landscape feel and a greater range of plants. This area is completely screened from neighbours by trees and large shrubs and so has a very secluded, protected feel. This also means the shade somewhat restricts Bev's choice of plants but, on the other hand, the garden is protected from the western sun. Underplanting includes tufted plants, smaller shrubs and a range of groundcovers, many propagated by Bev, often selected forms not generally available.

An oval path leads round a central garden area in which, quite close to the house, there is an attractive small pond. Also near the house, quite a large number of pots contain special plants difficult to grow in a garden bed. Although she had recently lost a couple of large shrubs in the garden, this isn't noticeable as other plants can now have their day in the sun (almost literally).

A few quotes from individual comments made after the meeting are typical of peoples' reactions.

I enjoy being in Bev's garden because it shows that it is tended by someone who loves it. There is an air of tranquility and beauty. There are also many beautiful and unusual individual plants. Brian Snape

The best aspect of Bev's garden was the landscaping design of the backyard, with curved paths, providing a pleasing, natural visual effect. Pam Yarra

I thought Bev's rear garden had a lovely feeling of serenity about it. A great balance of open spaces and planted garden areas which looked perfect in the late afternoon sun. I wouldn't want to change any of it! Her plant selection, pot plants, pool and rocks fitted in very well in this beautiful garden. Wilma Garnham

Diana Snape Vic.

Memorial for Ellis Stones

Bev Hanson reported on the progress of the campaign she and others have run to establish a suitable memorial for Ellis Stones. (See her separate article in Design section.) Bev had thought this might be located at 'Elliston' in Rosanna, which he landscaped and where Margaret James now lives, but this idea unfortunately met with obstacles.

However it now seems that Melbourne University, where Ellis Stones designed one garden, will take up the project in consultation with the Ellis Stones Memorial group. First, this garden will be restored and/or re-landscaped in the spirit of the original garden. Original bronze plaques will be restored and students will be involved in preparing authentic designs. It is hoped a heritage overlay will be put on the rocks and garden.

Even more exciting, when the old Architecture building is pulled down and rebuilt, one of the courtyards or landscaped areas created will be named after Ellis Stones. The design of this should also be sympathetic to his work. (Therese Scales has connections to a member of the Board through her husband who is a professor at the university and Bev also has a contact there who is currently writing a book on a related topic.)

Bev wrote to Professor Glyn Davis, the Vice Chancellor, about the legacy of Ellis Stones. He replied saying that there was an Ellis Stones award for published research in Landscape Architecture and then describing these two proposed developments.

We all congratulated Bev for her commitment and persistence in achieving this excellent outcome. The GDSG look forward to visiting these sites in future years.

Set of digital slides for Fred Rogers Seminar

Following Tony Moore's suggestion at the last meeting, we are preparing a set of 60 digital slides as a power-point presentation to run for about 10 minutes before each session of the Seminar begins. The committee organizing the Seminar has agreed to this idea.

We decided that 5 seconds was the best time for each slide to be on screen, so each would show twice in a 10-minute period. I already have selected (more than!) this number of slides of Victorian gardens but would welcome slides submitted by other

members for consideration for inclusion (please send initially on low resolution, by email). The meeting agreed that Chris Larkin and I should make the final decision about which 60 slides to use.

Banner showing garden designs

APS Victoria already has two impressive banners with similar format, designed by the president, Cathy Powers. Each has a central (different) photo of *Eparis impressa*, our floral emblem. Around this, one shows close-ups of flowers, the other, members involved in APS activities. The name and details of APS Victoria are set out above and below this central area.

They want to fund a third banner for the Seminar showing examples of garden design in Victoria. Cathy and I worked together on this with garden photos that I provided. Cathy did the final design which involved cropping some photos, as garden photos generally tend to be horizontal (landscape) format and more vertical (portrait) photos are required than horizontal. The banner will belong to APS Victoria but the GDSG will be able to borrow the banner for its use.

I had understood that the GDSG logo would be included in the central panel, for the reasons listed below, but the committee involved voted against this (with no representation at all from the GDSG at that time). I put my objections strongly to Cathy and she agreed I should put them before the executive at their next meeting. The executive makes the final decision. My reasons are (in no particular order):

- I thought I had a tacit agreement with Cathy that it would be so when I worked with her on the banner.
- The GDSG supplied all the garden photos for the banner.
- Although APS Vic are paying for the banner, we would be very willing to contribute to the cost (in proportion to the small space our logo would occupy!).
- Study Groups are among the most important groups within APS because they research and record knowledge gathered on a particular topic and so it is a good opportunity for recognition of the work of our SG.
- I think the existence of the GDSG over the last 19 years has had a great influence in APS Victoria, raising awareness and improving the design of more gardens belonging to APS members.

GDSG bookmark

The meeting decided that a GDSG bookmark should be handed out to all enrolled at the Seminar, rather than an information leaflet. The bookmark should be made of

thick, good quality, shiny paper and be a simple design. It should have the logo, including the website address, possibly a (skinny) garden scene, and the motto suggested by Chris "creating beautiful gardens with Australian plants". Therese Scales has a son who is a graphic designer, so we're looking forward to seeing his suggestions.

GDSG logo

The meeting thought that the GDSG logo used in both the banner and the bookmark should be the old logo because of its more compact nature. Rather than having ANPSA below the central logo, it should have the GDSG website address. It could be 'transparent' and in colour (or white) instead of black. I contacted Jo who approved these variations if they would work best.

Booklet showing garden designs

Pam Yarra suggested looking again at the possibility of producing a small, inexpensive booklet showing examples of garden designs with appropriate plants, for sale wherever bookmarks were available. I had three examples produced by local Councils, *Gardens for Wildlife* (Knox), *Sustainable Gardening* (Stonnington) and *Backyard Biodiversity* (Booroondara), and there are booklets produced by other councils too. There is also the excellent booklet *It's Only Natural: water-wise gardening in north-east Victoria* produced by APS Wangaratta.

We agreed it was a good idea but talked about the difficulties of catering for a range of soils, climates, etc, in a small booklet. Even in a restricted area like Melbourne, there is much variation. Pam and Merele Webb volunteered to investigate how we could best produce such a booklet.

We thanked both Nicky and Bev for their hospitality and Pam for representing the Study Group on the committee for organizing the Fred Rogers Seminar. We also thanked members who had brought something for the scrumptious afternoon tea.

Next meeting on Saturday August 18 at Christine and Angelo Gaiardo's. Please come at 1pm with a picnic lunch or else 2pm for the meeting. Their address is 18 Wilkinson Way, Endeavour Hills, on the corner of Tasman Place (Melway 91C6). It's helpful if you let me know if you are coming (email or 9822 6992).

Please note change of date to an earlier day, a Saturday, due to an APS quarterly meeting on the original date.

Looking further ahead, please note these other dates:

September 1 & 2 - Tony & Brenda Moore's garden is open.

Sunday September 23 – We are joining APS Maroondah Group's visit to Chris Larkin's garden.

November 10 & 11 - The Fred Rogers Seminar on Garden Design will be held.

I'm sure there will be others to come.

Diana Snape Vic.

SYDNEY

Please RSVP to Jo Hambrett on 96511827.

Caroline Gunter has organised a northern beaches garden ramble for Sydney members.

When: Sunday 5th August 2012-05-30

Meet: 4 Winsome Ave. Nth Balgowlah (ph: 9949 3227)

A cup of tea or coffee at the Gunters before our walk / drive to the gardens, followed by a picnic (BYO) lunch.

North Balgowlah is a small suburb just across the Spit Bridge in the hills behind Manly; part of the gateway to the Northern Beaches. It's development was dependent on the crossing of waterways, first by boats to Manly in the mid 1800 hundreds followed by track and road making up the ridges. As Manly developed as a pleasure resort, the back blocks were developed as dairy farms, market gardens and orchards. The crossing of the Spit waterway, first by punt and later by the bridge in 1928 allowed the potential of the area to really expand. The market gardens and dairy farms were divided into housing allotments, often ex-service subdivisions in the 1920s, related industry housing (Manly Gasworks, bus and tram workers accommodation) and later Housing Commission after the 2nd WW. Quite úmble Sydney housing. All are relatively small blocks, except for some long holdings between difficult streets. These have since been subdivided. They are not particularly gracious sites but were surrounded by dense sandstone - clay subsoil vegetation and great rocky outcrops. Creeks wind through from the heights. Some of the oldest houses still exist, many have been altered to maintain the style of what they once were. But in the present stampede for sites like this so close to beaches and the city, many have been demolished and replaced with block filling exhibition homes. With standard garden styles to match. John and I exercise ourselves each morning up and down the slopes and observe the garden styles.

I thought we could gather here at ours, (old house, over grown and over planted garden, some tips for a compulsive over planter would be welcome!) and either walk or drive around the viewings. We could then go down to Manly Dam, a nice patch of the original bush or Stony Range at Dee Why for lunch. It could be an early introduction to the APS Northern Beaches Get Together for later in August.

Caroline Gunter NSW

Advance notice:

Sydney Region Christmas Gathering at Jeff Howes' place at Westleigh.

Dec. 2nd put it in your diary now !.....

more details next NL.

CANBERRA

Visit to Janet and Andy Russell's Garden, 6 Gidabal St., Aranda

13 /3/ 2012

On a sunny still morning 16 members of ANPS Canberra gathered in Aranda to visit the garden of Janet and Andy Russell. The Russells bought the house and garden in late 2000 and were happy with the basic layout and have changed it very little. They had 19 mature eucalypts on a block of 880 square metres. They have documented their garden very well, with a map to show the sections of the garden, a list of approximately 260 species of plants and a history of their efforts. Following is the story of their garden so far.

An introduction to the garden:

History

We bought the house and garden in late 2000. We were very happy with structure of the inner garden and its beds and paths. We have done little to change it except for widening certain beds and increasing the height of small rock walls that bound them. The outside garden was unstructured mainly consisting of eucalyptus and acacia trees, and native grasses. The nature of both gardens has given us scope to put our stamp on them. There were 19 mature eucalypt trees on the block which is 880 sq metres.

Early on we decided that we would only grow Australian plants. The inside garden was overgrown with mostly exotic shrubbery. There were plants such as bamboo, ivy, periwinkle, cotoneaster and couch grass, some of which were challenging to remove. The bamboo between the driveway and the path to the front door was particularly difficult for Andy. We still refer to this section as the bamboo garden. Ivy on the rock face bed was similarly hard to eradicate.

Most of the original shrubbery was removed, the exceptions being bottle brushes (*Callistemon sp*) and two long-leaved wax flowers (*Philotheca sp*). Initially our focus was on the courtyard area where we widened and raised some of the beds. We took advantage of the pergola and we planted a *Pandorea pandorana* that provides the dappled shade of a Monet painting. Together with the subdued sounds of gently falling water from the water feature makes it a delightful spot for lunch.

The paving connecting the service area and the courtyard was made continuous and widened. We learned from that experience that if you completely clear an area like this any birds that use the garden then desert it and it can be hard to tempt them back again. It has taken many years to bring back the birds.

We have had to remove some of the mature eucalyptus trees but still have 16 left on the block. We have had major infrastructure projects done in the last few years, some of which were well overdue. They included a new courtyard retaining wall and fence, and the installation of water tanks for use in the garden. These projects took a toll on the garden and the established plants but it also gave us an opportunity to renovate and renew.

For recording purposes we have divided the garden into sections, named them, and documented the plants that we have in each section to enable us to keep track of where they are planted as well as reminding us of their names. It also reminds us of the successes and failures. We have about 260 different species of plants growing and we keep the species and cultivation information that came with each of these plants. We water using an electronic drip system which is divided into six sections, three inside and three out. Not all plants are on the watering system.

Structure, function and managing the garden

The land on which the house is built is shaped like a pie segment and slopes from the back to the front which has a sweep of 50 metres to the road. The back of the house site is cut into a bank and the bank is supported by a rock retaining wall. There are small shrubs and ground covers on the bank and rock wall and the rest of the inside garden is planted with shrubs and trees.

The outside garden presented very different issues to us including how to come up with an effective design for such a large unstructured sloping space. We hand-weeded the garden in small sections and covered the ground in mulch as we went. We started to plant on this space without much of a plan. The first step towards developing a structure was the creation of terraces in the Cinerea garden which runs at the side of the footpath leading to the house. We then populated the terraces with small spreading species such as daisies.

Water retention became a major issue that we had to address. Rain ran straight off the block carrying mulch down to the road in its wake. Earlier on we predominately used coarse wood-chip mulch of various sorts but now use finer eucalypt mulch which breaks down more quickly adding carbon to the soil as well as allowing more moisture through when it rains.

More rock terraces have been built and we have dug out swales as well to slow the passage of water over the block. Rainfall collects in the swales as does the overflow from two of our water-tanks, allowing the collected water to filter down the block. This was started three years ago and we have made improvements over time, particularly to accommodate the more generous rainfall events we have had in in the past year. We have recently used rocks to reinforce the down-side bank of the lowest swale. The swales and terraces are now an integral part of the design.

Plantings

Like many people our ideas about our garden have changed over time. It started out as a specimen garden. We were delighted when we found new and interesting plants to put in. This included plants from all over Australia. We also wanted to ensure that we had some colour in the garden throughout the year.

Since then we both have developed an interest in plants of the Southern Tablelands (we refer to them as local plants) particularly the grasses, small herbs, lilies and other strappy plants. The outside garden did focus our minds about design as it is so visible to the passing public. We were aware that people often regard native gardens as gardens that are full of leggy and untidy shrubs. We wanted to show off the huge range of Australian plants as well as show them to their best advantage.

We started to plant more local herbaceous grassy woodland plants in what is now called the Grassy Woodland garden. Sometimes attempts to keep herbaceous plants alive over long hot summers on this western facing site have not always been successful even though the plants survive in quite harsh conditions in the wild.

This has made us focus on better preparing planting sites as well as increasing the carbon in the soil by adding compost to assist moisture retention. There are however some species (beside the grasses) that have become naturalised including *Rhodanthe anthemoides*, *Pelargonium rodneyanum*, *Leucochrysum albicans*, *Xerochrysum bracteatum*, *X. viscosum*, *Einadia nutans*, *Isotoma axillaris*, *Cymbonotus lawsonianus* and *Wahlenbergia spp.*

The seedlings do not of course respect our design and a bit of transplanting does go on. The *Leucochrysum albicans* that have colonised the gravel car-parking spot next to the drive to the house have been left in situ. They survive between the tyre tracks.

Janet and Andy Russell ACT

***** This is an excellent example of how (and why) gardeners should record their garden; by appearing in this newsletter (and therefore on the GDSG website) the garden lives on for years, providing information for both garden and social history in this country at this time as well as recording the types and use of Australian plants in garden design. It would be wonderful if more members could follow this example. ED.**

**Garden of Els Wynen and David Vanzetti,
3 Ramage Place, Flynn**

On the 10th of May 2012, a beautiful Canberra late-autumn day after a night-frost of -4C, 10 people came to see our garden in Flynn. The garden is on a quarter acre gently south-sloping block, south of the road of a cul-de-sac, with the house well down the block. This causes the front-garden (between the road and the back of the house) to be very large - with a frontage of 60 meters.

The house was built on the view, not the climate – so that the front faces south and looks out over the back-yard, and the Brindabellas.

The house was built in 1971 – on pasture land. This meant that the garden was mainly couch-grass when we bought it in 1981, with a very hard clay layer just under the surface. There were some young street trees in the front yard (*Eucalyptus nicholii*, *Pistachia chinensis*), and some trees and shrubs (such as *Cersis canadiensis* and *Betula pendula*) in beds with tanbark-on-plastic, as was the rage around that time. The back-yard showed some trees (including *Gleditsia triacanthos* and *Acacia bailyana* under the power lines), with the ubiquitous clothes line against the back-fence.

In the first five years in Flynn we grew mainly vegetables in part of the back garden at the side (east) of the house. We mowed the grass in the front and the back when it was (over) due. Watering happened almost exclusively in the vegetable patch. We planted Australian natives along the fence in the backyard (bottlebrush, *prostanthera*, *hakea*), some of which are still growing today.

When we returned to Canberra in the early 1990s, after 6 years of absence, we continued with that regime. Over the years we planted more Australian plants, especially along the back fence, including *westringias*, *grevilleas*, *correas*, and *banksias*.

Towards 2000 we had a good look at the garden. Because of the position of our house, the first winter sun we get in our living area is after midday, and the warmest place around our property in the morning is in the bottom of the backyard. That is the place where we already had constructed a patio, to have lovely sunny breakfast in late autumn and early spring. We decided that a pond would be a good idea around that area, and indulged in an approximately 10 meter long 'creek' snaking its way over the whole width of the backyard, delivering the water in the pond via three 'waterfalls'.

This became a big project, which required a big re-organisation, moving the clothes-line, and including defined beds and path-ways. Once that was done (a project which resulted in us thinking 'why didn't we do this 20 years ago?'), we started to have a good look at the front yard.

Not much had happened there since the early 1980s. Most of it was still couch-grass and tanbark-on plastic areas with some original plants. Over time, I had planted fruit trees and Australian native plants all over the front garden where there was space. However, around 2000 the fruit trees were chopped down and replaced in what has now become the 'orchard' – the area on the north-east corner in the front-yard, just north of the vegetable patch in the back-yard. The work on the front yard (north and west of the house) could begin.

Before we started, we decided on some main principles that would guide us. First of all we wanted a garden that we liked, and especially (for me) a garden where we could grow many different Australian plants. So a garden with repeat planting was never envisaged, but rather one that tended towards a mini-botanic garden. Recently I counted over 200 species that are still alive.

There was little conscious planning of the area – I did my course in landscape architecture after I had just about finished with the front garden! But decisions needed to be made when issues appeared. After I had bought quite a number of plants in one of the ANPS's plant sales, I decided that one part of the garden – the north side - would 'house' plants that had red, orange and yellow flowers, and on the west-side we would have those that tended towards pink, lilac and purple. Blue and white, and to a (much) lesser extent yellow, could go anywhere. We kept mainly to this pattern, but some plants did end up as 'foreigners' in their patch – especially if I planted them somewhere in a 'nursery' and then forgot about them for a few years. If, however, they flower at a time when they don't totally clash with their neighbour they may be allowed to stay.

By the way, I do move plants quite extensively, and find that, except for the acacias, it is mostly not a problem. Apart from some colour coordination I also decided that I wanted some privacy around the back of the house (i.e. the part facing the road). This is our second warmest spot in the early part of the day, with potential for a patio. So the plants near the road were mainly between 1.5 and 2 meters high, and decreasing in height towards the house – with exceptions to make the landscape more interesting.

A second principle was that, although I enjoy gardening, I wanted to consciously minimize the work we had to do. I decided that I'd rather prune than weed, so one tactic was to grow plants that wouldn't grow much bigger than the size I wanted. In that way, pruning would be kept to a minimum – mainly after the flowering stage.

Another tactic was to grow lots of groundcovers between the bushes and trees. For that purpose I use many different plants, but different grevilleas and *Myoporum parvifolium* are favorites. Others we include are: Ajuga; Brachiscome, Pelargonium; Dianella; Scaevola; Rhagodia; *Gastrolobium sericeum*; and Hibbertia. *Senecio linearifolius* I use as a 'filler': it grows fast, fills up an empty spot for the summer, dies down in the winter, and can easily be pulled out if the spot is needed for something else next year.

In the nature strip we have resorted to *Phyla nodiflora*, a plant I originally bought from the ANPS, but which is now thought to be one that came to Australia possibly with Chinese gold diggers in the 19th century. I say 'resorted to' because, though it grows quite well and looks acceptable even in droughts, I am very aware that we need to be vigilant against it growing into the rest of the garden. I am sure it could take over the garden 'while we are sleeping', so to speak.

A third tactic was to go for heavy mulching. We use between 15m³ to 25m³ of woodchips per year, sometimes spread once per year (15 m³ would be a minimum) and other years topped up with another 10m³ - 15m³ in the autumn.

If we are away over the whole of the winter returning in October, we mulch even more conscientiously than usually, as we don't want to be saddled with weeding for many years to come just because there were a few weeds that managed to get to seed in our absence. But in such a year we may not feel the need to mulch again in the spring.

The location of paths was decided over time, and located where we found ourselves generally walking from the back yard to the road, and from plant to plant. We have access to our front garden from the nature strip, of course, but have a path right next to the house, and one parallel to that and the road, and a few 'connections' between these parallel paths. The result was that we have reasonable access to plants, both for planting and maintenance and for enjoyment of the garden. All paths receive a darker mulch than the rest of the garden so that it is easy for visitors (e.g. meter readers) to see where to (not) walk.

A last important activity in our garden is the watering system. Although we have never watered much, we installed a reticulation system with drippers very early on. This was mainly used for small plants (one to two years old), when deemed to be needed – perhaps once per week in the summer.

Since 2007 we also have a system of gravity-fed watering with rainwater from the roof. We (David) dug 140 meters of a ditch, 30cmx30cm, which we filled with ag-pipe and gravel. The water goes from the roof to the top of the property courtesy of the law of communicating vessels, and is then split in two to move freely in two directions in our ditches.

It seems to be working well, though we have regretted not building in a way in which we can monitor the progress of the water over the distance.

And now, after 10 years we feel we have things sufficiently under control to not have to worry about the garden if/when we are away for a while, even in summer. The pruning is not that strenuous, mulching is manageable, and we can spend most of our time enjoying the beauty of all those terrific plants. We sold the lawn mower a few years ago.

Els Wynen ACT

TREASURER'S REPORT

Funds on hand 4 May 2012:

Cheque account: \$ 10,232.29

Term Deposit: \$ 22,896.00

While it is hard to believe that another year has passed, I would remind members that our fiscal year ends 30 June and that **subscriptions to the GDSG will be due in July**. Since a number of you have multiple year subscriptions, I will remind those who are due by letter in July if you get the Newsletter by mail or by email if you get it that way.

As always, if you have any questions please let me know.

Ben Walcott: email bwalcott@netspeed.com

10 Wickham Cres, Red Hill ACT 2603

