



GARDEN DESIGN STUDY GROUP

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Newsletter**February 2014****85****NEWSLETTER EDITOR**

Rosalind Walcott

10 Wickham Cres. Red Hill ACT 2603

ph: (02) 6161 2742

email: rwalcott@netspeed.com.au**STUDY GROUP LEADER AND TREASURER / MEMBERSHIP**

Benjamin Walcott

10 Wickham Cres. Red Hill, ACT 2603

ph: (02) 6161 2742

email: bwalcott@netspeed.com.auWebsite: [http:// anpsa.org.au/design](http://anpsa.org.au/design) or Google 'Garden Design Study Group'

Happy New Year and welcome to the first *Newsletter* of 2014.

I am pleased to tell you that we have again received a royalty cheque for sales of the book "The Australian Garden". The book was a product of the early work of the GDSG and the authors, Diana Snape, Jo Hambrett, Chris Larkin, Barbara Buchanan and Danie Ondinea, made the decision when it was first published that the royalties should go the Study Group. It was a very generous thing to do and has helped the finances of the Study Group greatly over the years enabling us to keep the subscription dues down and to generate some savings. Thank you to the generous authors!

Speaking of authors, we would again encourage you to send Ros, the *Newsletter* Editor, contributions for inclusion in the *Newsletter*. They can be short with a picture of two of something in your or another's garden that interests you. The *Newsletter* should be about the sharing of ideas and you never know when something seemingly simple can help someone. Also remember that we encourage reports on gardens, large or small, so that members can see what others are doing.

Ros and I had a wonderful visit to Melbourne in November and met so many GDSG members which was a great pleasure. First we visited Ros and Graeme Woods in their remarkable garden in Gisborne to feast our eyes on their array of hakeas, grevilleas and banksias. We wish we could grow *Banksia solandri* or Stirling Ranges Banksia as well as they can.



Banksia solandri in the garden of Ros and Graeme Woods

Diana and Brian Snape treated us to a tour of Maranoa Gardens very near their new apartment. What a gem this historic garden is with lots of mature trees and shrubs. It has many spaces comfortable to the eye with curving paths and an amazing variety of plants both old and new.



Shaded path at Maranoa Gardens



Jacksonia scoparia and *Banksia petiolaris* at Maranoa Gardens

We then went to Eleanor Hodges' house for lunch and a tour of her immaculate small garden which is beautifully maintained. Her garden contains a variety of choice plants grown really well as you can see in the photo below.



We walked across the road to the garden of Debbie and Michael Jankovic which has been designed by Bev Hanson (see page 11). This is a very new garden that already shows signs of maturity. Debbie and family have planted a range of diverse plants which are finding their feet in this challenging flat site.



Aussie icons to the fore at Debbie and Michael's garden

After admiring the garden (see photo below), we gathered for the November meeting of the GDSG Victoria in the dining room in front of a stunning picture window view over the garden (see photo on page 12). Diana has given an excellent summary of the meeting (page 23). We were happy to attend our first meeting of this group and also to partake in the gargantuan afternoon tea provided by Debbie and her daughter Nicki.



The next day, we were privileged to visit Chris Larkin's sophisticated and complex garden. Chris's garden has appeared in the *Newsletter* many times but it always seems fresh and new. It is a naturalistic garden with mulched paths and a wide array of unusual plants, as you can see in the photo below. Chris is always adding to her garden and is full of innovative plans for the future.

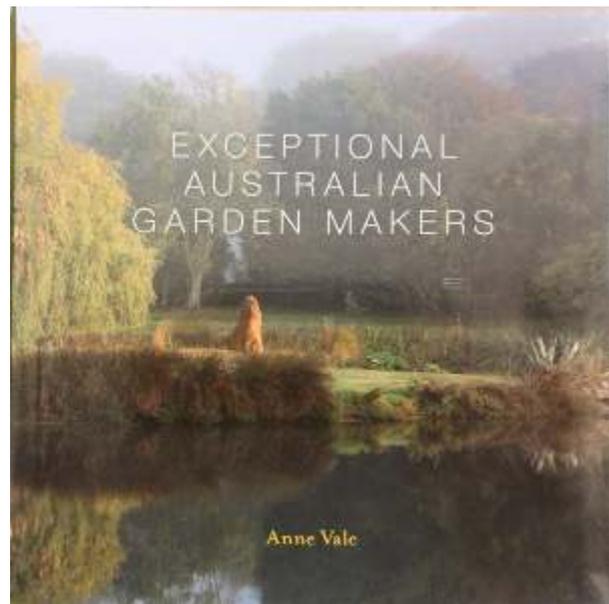
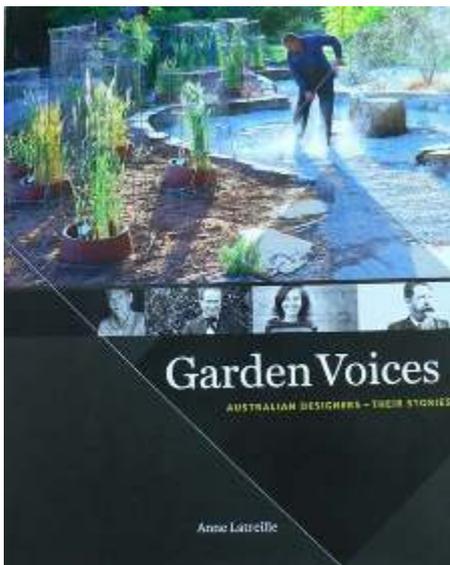


Chris then collected Bev Fox and we all went to the Bushland Flora nursery to pick up some bargain plants and then to the Paperbark Cafe at Kurunga Nursery for lunch. We then selected treasures from their collection of plants most of which are not available to us in

Walcott Garden in Garden Drum

In the December 15, 2013 edition of *Garden Drum* there is a positive write up of a visit to our garden by Catherine Stewart, Editor, *Garden Drum*. Catherine turned up at the last of our Open Days in October. If you search for Garden Drum Walcott Garden or go to <http://gardendrum.com/2013/12/15/walcott-garden-canberra/#.UrDj4eILLoQ.email> you will find an excellent series of photos as well.

Book Reviews



***Garden Voices: Australian Designers - Their Stories* by Anne Latreille, published by Bloominings Books**

***Exceptional Australian Garden Makers* by Anne Vale, Diana Snape, Vic**

In her latest book, Anne Latreille tells us about 23 designers who have contributed significant new ideas to Australian landscape or garden design. This includes two couples who work together, plus one trio, so there are actually 19 sections - I'll call them chapters - arranged in alphabetical rather than chronological order. This makes for interesting disjunctions when you can switch between States and centuries as you move between chapters.

I haven't quite finished reading the whole book (there are 248 pages) but I'm very impressed with it and think it is a major achievement. Most of the designers I already know, at least by name (particularly those from Victoria and NSW). However, it is great to meet half a dozen whose work is completely new to me. Even when I know some facts about a particular designer, I am familiar with only a fraction of their work. There is still so much to learn about their life histories as well as their work. Often a whole network of influences and contacts is revealed. The designers range in time from William Guilfoyle, Walter Burley Griffin and then Edna Walling to many who are practicing today. All States are represented (but neither of the two Territories), Victoria most strongly, followed by NSW and then Queensland. Some designers have designed large public landscapes, for example Bruce Mackenzie in New South Wales, while others have just been involved in the design of domestic gardens, for example Kitty Henry in Tasmania. I'm sure Anne would have liked to include more designers and it would have been very difficult to make the final selection.

Half a dozen designers use (or prefer to use) Australian plants almost exclusively, while another half dozen often include a high proportion of Australian plants in their projects. The former include Betty Maloney and Jean Walker in NSW. (noted for their significant first, small book *Designing Australian Bush Gardens*), Marion Blackwell in WA, David Leech in Queensland, and Bruce Mackenzie in NSW. Edna Walling too was pioneering in her use of Australian plants from the mid-1920s.

Kevin Taylor, Kate Cullity and Perry Lethlean in Victoria are included, with their outstanding achievement of designing the Australian Garden at Cranbourne. It's fascinating to compare this with the earlier achievement of William Guilfoyle and his wonderful design of the Royal Botanic Garden in Melbourne. It's inspiring to read the thoughts of designers such as Guilfoyle from years past, many so similar to those of ours today.

At the beginning of each chapter is a telling quote, such as "Gardens have their own life but you have to provide a framework" (Craig Burton), "I am more interested in invention than representation" (Vladimir Sitta), "Let the light dance and the shadows sing" (Viesturs Cielens) and "When the paperbarks are flowering, the stingray is fat" (Jim Sinatra and Phin Murphy). Each chapter then has the main headings: Life, Work, Message, with different, varying sub-headings in each chapter.

Garden Voices is beautifully illustrated and each chapter ends with a useful short summary of the main ideas emanating from it, under the heading "And in Australian gardens ...". These vary greatly. It would be interesting to put these summaries all together and see how much coherence there is between them - and how much contradiction. (I think I might try this.)

Anne's research is impeccable, with extensive sources and notes listed at the back. This is an extremely thorough treatment of a subject that is not very easy to write about and many intriguing details emerge for many of the designers. This scholarly book fills a large gap in our knowledge and understanding of the widespread development of garden design in Australia.

I would recommend this book to anyone interested in the ideas of those, past and present, who have not only thought deeply about garden design in Australia but have also put their ideas into action. They have influenced the lives and work of others by what they have achieved in practice and/or in their writings. If you don't have enough room on your bookshelves to buy it, then why not borrow it from your local library?

Anne Vale, *Exceptional Australian Garden Makers*, Lothian Custom Publishing, 2013
Rosalind Walcott, Canberra

Anne Vale is an author and lecturer with a passion for gardens and gardening. Over the last decade she has delved into Australian garden history and is currently the Chair of the Victorian branch of the Australian Garden History Society.

The book is an historical narrative, filled with the voices of garden makers in Australia from Charles Bogue Luffmann of the Burnley School of Horticulture to our own Diana Snape. The excerpts from pertinent writings are very well selected and quoted, but even better are the excerpts from interviews with modern garden makers, Kevin Heinze, Tom Garnett, Glen Wilson, Paul Thompson, Trevor Nottle, Diana Snape and Robert Boyle (see Quotes of the Season p.7). I could only wish Anna had interviewed even more of our modern garden makers and designers for their insights.

The story of gardens and gardening in Australia is demonstrated clearly by this step-by-step guide through the decades. The influence of social history on gardens is interwoven with the story.

The book is a large format paperback with lovely endpapers, 198 pages, copiously and beautifully illustrated, well set out, with an index.

I would heartily recommend this book to all those interested in Australian garden design.

Quotes of the Season

'the plant content is the main distinguishing feature between gardens. Gardens with exotic plants are European gardens in Australia. My belief is that there is not an apparent Australian Style that rises above the plants, as is the case with Mughal Gardens, the Japanese Garden or the English Pleasure Garden. As yet, we have not displayed the cultural underpinning from which a definable individual design-culture and style emerge. Australian Gardens are still seen as Bush Gardens, as described back in 1966 by Betty Maloney and Jean Walker. That type of garden usually has an informal, somewhat haphazard approach.' Paul Thompson interview quoted in ***Exceptional Australian Garden Makers***, p. 165, Anne Vale, 2013.

'From the very beginning of white settlement, people have been trying to replicate the gardens from 'home' and they still are! People tend to replicate their parents' gardens, generation after generation. It becomes an extraordinary thing, ignoring their environment and just staying with their cultural heritage. Psychology of landscapes, issues of tidiness, attractiveness, sophistication, also issues of council regulations stopping people from taking down native trees that have become too big or dangerous – this discourages people from planting any native trees in the first place.' Diana Snape interview quoted in ***Exceptional Australian Garden Makers***, p. 174, Anne Vale, 2013.

'He considers Ellis Stones as having a great influence on the work of Gordon Ford and in relation to his own work he notes that: Rocky influenced me with his rock outcrop work but I did my first rock outcrop work from Edna's books. Then I saw his work, because he did the rock outcrop work at Schuberts and the rock work was beautiful.' Glen Wilson interview quoted in ***Exceptional Australian Garden Makers***, p. 158, Anne Vale, 2013.

'I work as a conceptual developer rather than a down and dirty doer, which means that my commissions often go on for a long time. I develop the ideas and a way forward and leave it to my clients to implement with their own contractors as time and money allows'. Trevor Nottle interview quoted in ***Exceptional Australian Garden Makers***, p. 179, Anne Vale, 2013.

'The whole basis of our designs and the books was 'Naturalness with order', so let's start with the path. In the English garden, the path was meant for using to get from one place to another. Our bushland paths are meant for contemplation and meditation. One could turn around and there was peace and privacy from every aspect. Interview with Jean Walker by Kate Low, quoted in her book, p.46, ***Gardens and Works***, and cited in ***Exceptional Australian Garden Makers***, p. 113, Anne Vale, 2013.

Design, Memories - and Moods of a Garden

Pam Yarra, Vic

In the last *Newsletter*, "Quotes of the Season," Karen Hall, *Garden Drum* (February 2013) wrote about garden designers waiting to transfer your bare block into a horticultural masterpiece and questioned where the memories were? This quote raised several issues for me, firstly about garden designing and secondly about the feelings evoked by a garden, to link memories, and also the mood of the garden.

When considering design of a garden, a good designer will discuss what the owner envisages for their garden, in much the same way an architect designs a house for a client's specific needs, so gardens like houses develop over time to be an extension of the owner.

Garden design using Australian plants, including indigenous, is relatively young and still has a long way to go, for the majority of Australian gardens predominantly consist of exotic plants. Maybe because many gardeners cannot afford the cost of a professional designer and maybe they believe native plants are gums and wattles only and don't want a bush type garden. I was accused once of not having grass, but just mowing gum leaves, as well as growing weeds.

Most that was written in the 1960s was about designing bush gardens, with an emphasis on low or no maintenance, (Betty Maloney and Jean Walker). Interestingly Olive Mellor wrote about "planning a native Garden "in the 1940's (*Australian Gardening of Today*). She says that only twice in the years she has been making gardens has she been asked to plan a native garden. Garden design using native plants has moved on since then.

What is a native garden? Much has been written about types of gardens and designs using Australian plants, by Diana Snape and Paul Urquhart to name a couple. Does the word native bring to mind something free and restful, lacking formality? Does a particular style of garden hold memories, such as the relaxed mood created by the Australian bush recreated in a bush/natural type garden?

In May 2010 *GDSG Newsletter*, Nicky Zanen asked what created a feeling of peace and tranquillity in a garden and in August 2010, I asked, if partially lost by environmental changes, could peace and tranquillity be reclaimed? Gardens can be created with a sense of place and can connect us the natural world, a haven in which to escape the outside world. And yes, peace and tranquillity can be restored and has been successfully achieved in my garden. It took redesigning, with a clear plan of what needed to be achieved, both from a practical and emotional level.

Some styles of gardens lift the soul more than others and are based on individual personalities and reflect the area in which we want to live. Not only styles of gardens evoke memories, but also plants and pieces of art given by family and friends. It is an evolving process as garden and gardeners are not static entities.

Landscape becomes a garden when it becomes an extension of an owner functionally, aesthetically and emotionally.

Small Garden Spaces

Thanks to the three members below who responded to the request for photos and text on special small garden spaces. ED

A Composition in Green and White

Caroline Gunter, Sydney

This is a small area on the southern side of our house, heavily shaded through winter and buffeted by both winter southerlies and westerlies. The view is from our front deck, our summer outdoor room, definitely not used during winter. A large *Ficus rubiginosa* provides good protection on the street front shielding the *Baeckia brevifolia* allowing it to grow to 2m . Come the spring the stems grow in long drooping arches, full of buds, weighing it down to the lower level plantings. Here we've planted various *Lomandras*, *Livistona australis* (still quite juvenile), *Gymnostachis anceps* and naughtily, a *Monstera deliciosa* (regularly controlled) for a wee bit of contrast with all the strappy shapes. *Doodia aspera*, *Adiantum formosum* and *Asplenium australasicum* survive with the help of our teapot emptying and waste water donations. But the queen of this hardly ever watered survival patch are the *Crinum pedunculatum*. This shot was taken in November and there have been a succession of heads of flowers through December and January. I cut off and dispose of the the seed heads (too prolific) and I tell myself I regularly watch for lily bug invasion and spray with pyrethrum. But sometimes they surprise me and I crush them with a rather aggressive vengeance. The bit of vine across the bottom is *Pandorea* 'Lady Di ' on the rail to complete the green and white theme.

Photo by Caroline Gunter



Gardening in Small Places: Garden Pots Therese Scales, Vic

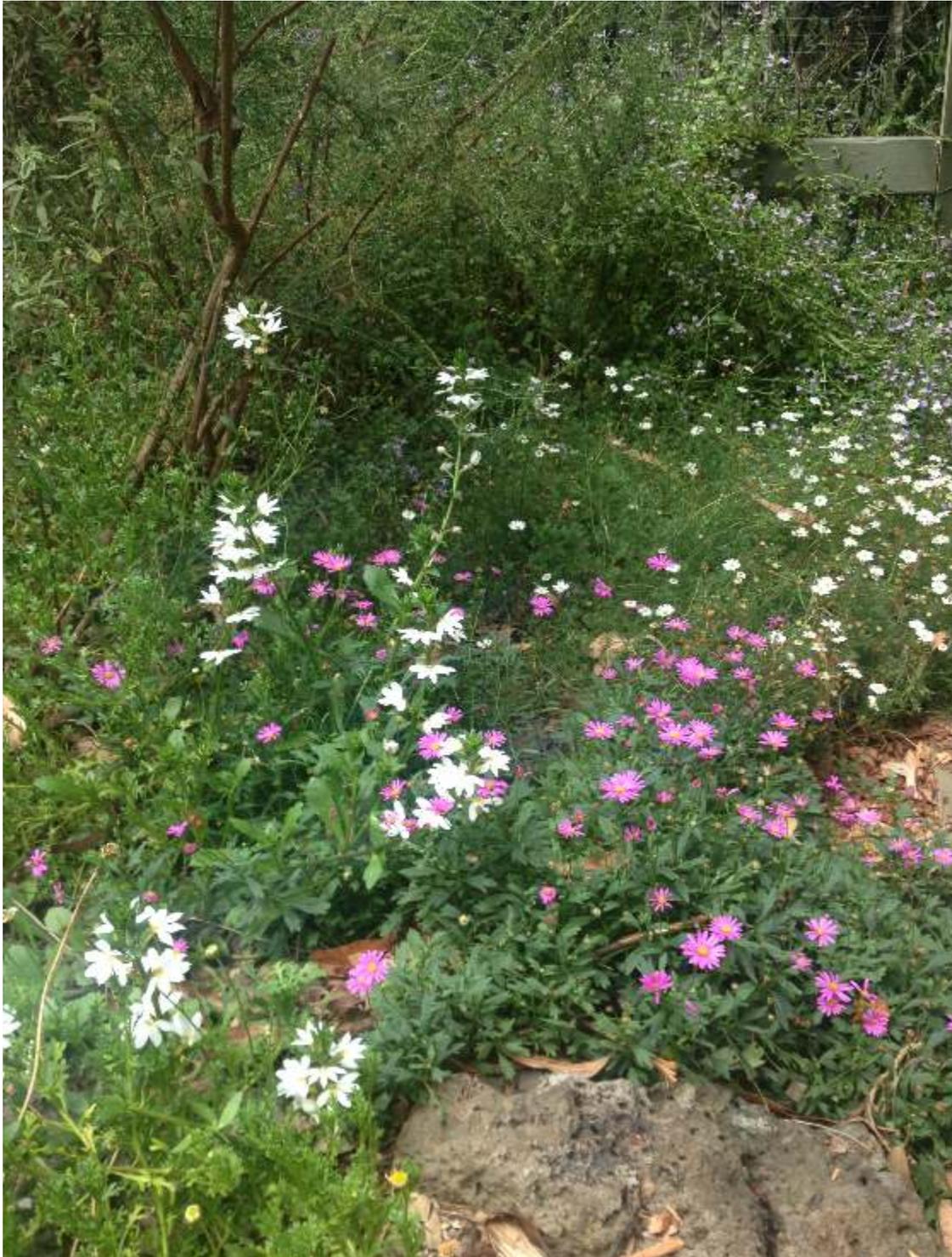
During a recent visit to the Cranbourne Botanic Gardens I was struck by a beautiful display of garden pots and containers.

The display is an arrangement of pots, which could easily lend itself to a home garden; in particular a courtyard or deck space.

The pots consist of rusted metal, and smooth charcoal coloured surfaces and are tapered, rectangle and squat shapes. Even the variation of height between the pots is an important design element. In this case a complementary balance is attained. To complete the arrangement there is a small bird bath, which gives a peaceful and cooling effect.



Photo by Therese Scales



A small corner of Pam Yarra's garden, photo taken January 2014, displaying live, healthy, flowering plants! The corner area is approximately 1.5mx 1.5m and is bounded on two sides by wire fencing (remains of a cat cage) and edging of raised bed next to pathway/decking at rear of house.

The flowers are L to R, white scaevola (large flower), probably *S. aemula*, *Brachyscome* 'Magenta Bliss', *Brachyscome multifida* (white) & *S.* 'Mauve Clusters', climbing up the wire fence.

The white flowers are grown from gifts from Shirley Carne's garden. She introduced me to the beauty of using white flowers.

Glen Iris Design

Bev Hanson, Vic
Photos by Bev Hanson

In early 2012 Debbie Jankovic made an appointment with me to design her front garden using Australian plants. Half of the area was laid out with crushed rock for car parking, the rest a lawn with a few exotics around the edge. The redesign allowed for driveway access and one car park with the remaining area to be mounded where garden was to be planted and paths meandering through. Large rocks were to be placed to look natural in retaining the mounded garden beds.

In April 2012 I spent one day supervising the garden construction with my skilful BobCat operator, who I have employed now for over 30 years, to place the rocks and shift soil etc. It was then over to Debbie to take on the planting. Long time member of the APS Eleanor Hodges, who lives opposite, was a great help with plant advice. Debbie also enrolled in the APS Short Course (5 sessions) run by the Maroondah group at the horticultural centre in Nunawading. This she said was invaluable in explaining her knowledge of Australian plants. Husband Michael and daughter Nicki now share Debbie's enthusiasm and agreed to transform the back garden also. The design incorporated a vinyl pond liner and waterfall beside the outdoor living area and again with mounding of garden beds and meandering crushed rock paths. In December 2012, again with BobCat, we dug out the pond and placed rocks. We created an interesting outlook from a large picture window with rock steps and associated small plants. All perimeter planting is designed to hide the boundary fences. The GDSG Melbourne visited the garden in November 2013 when the front was 18 months old and the back less than 12 months since planting. The growth in that time was amazing thanks to the family's care. They are thrilled to be accepted to participate in Open Gardens Australia in 2014 on the same weekend as their neighbour Eleanor Hodges.



Transformation in progress with trusty BobCat and daughter Nicki



Back garden before Bev



Back garden after Bev - what a transformation! Now a habitat for wildlife as well as so pleasing to the eye



Front garden before Bev



Front garden after Bev with a wide variety of native plants

Happy 80th birthday to John Brookes - influential garden and landscape designer

John Brookes is to garden design and landscape what Terence Conran was to household interiors – so major has his influence been on the way we have come to perceive the space outside our homes in the last 50 years. He has taught several generations of gardeners to explore and enjoy the concept of “The Room Outside” through his pioneering garden designs, his prolific writing and his teaching. John is 80 this week, but continues to work at a pace that leaves most of us standing!

John’s list of achievements is impressive – four times a Chelsea Gold Medal winner; awarded an MBE in 2004 for garden design and services to horticulture; more than 1200 garden designs for clients worldwide; a host of books and magazine articles; lectures and teaching assignments worldwide; and on a personal level, one of the most gentle, charming and entertaining figures in and out of the garden I’ve yet had the pleasure to meet. I rarely encounter anyone in the gardening world who’s not acquainted with John – even if not in person, but through his reputation.

He trained with Dame Sylvia Crowe and notable plantswoman, Brenda Colvin and then went on to study landscape design at University College London. By the middle of the sixties he had set up his own private practice. Since then he has never looked back and is known all over the world for his pioneering garden designs at both private houses and public gardens, including the English Walled Garden at The Chicago Botanic Garden, Samares Manor in Jersey, the College Garden at Westminster Abbey and Zespol Palace Park in Poland, to name just a few that are accessible to the public.

There are few garden designers who don’t own copies of his books, including the seminal “Room Outside” and “The Book of Garden Design”. And for a really interesting insight into his life, career and garden designs, it’s well worth reading Barbara Simms’s book, “John Brookes – Garden and Landscape Designer”.

Quoted from thegallopinggardener.blogspot.com

October 10, 2013

Garden Visits and Meetings

Combined Canberra GDSG and Sydney GDSG Visit to Blayney/Bathurst November 9-10, 2013 Rosalind Walcott, Canberra

Fifteen members of the GDSG gathered at Cloudy Hill, Fiona Johnson and Alex Kruczaj’s garden outside Blayney at noon on Saturday. The weather forecast for the weekend had not been promising, predicting rain on both days, but Saturday turned out to be a pleasantly cool and sunny day and the rain held off until we finished our visits on Sunday, so no complaints. Fiona and Alex provided us with a marvellous spread for lunch in their spacious (and very neat!) shed, then we set off to explore the garden. The house is situated just below the brow of a hill and the main part of the garden runs downhill from the house. Fiona has planted many interesting plants in an intensive series of beds, with contrasting sized plants. We all commented on how beautifully the leptospermums were flowering here. The gravel paths were edged with many different types of daisy. *Acacia falciformis* or Mountain Hickory was in full flower and a magnet for insects. Alex has built some really beautiful stone walls for the garden and also added some quirky metal artwork. Fiona has planted some tanks above the ground with indigenous plants to give them better drainage.



Leptospermum socparium 'Fantasia' growing beautifully. For the same plant in different weather conditions see page 24



Inviting seat amongst the plantings

We next visited Eva and Gerd Wolf's garden near Millthorpe. The Wolfs had built their own house into a hill to take advantage of passive solar benefits. The garden is wrapped tightly around the house and is also on the roof of the house. The palette of plants was restricted, but those planted were thriving. There were some very old eucalypts surrounding the house, one dated at about 350 years old. Gerd had added much to the ambiance of the garden with his metal creations of insects and reptiles, dragonflies, butterflies and lizards, some on long stakes buried in the gardens.



Up on the roof – please note Gerd's artwork



Steps to the roof



Gerd's delightful ants

Sunday morning we gathered at the home of Donna and Terry Rath at Mount Rankin, outside Bathurst. Donna is an enthusiastic booster of native plants and had recently opened her garden with the Bathurst Garden Club and welcomed over 300 visitors. Her garden slopes down from the road towards the house, with a very large swale above the house to catch any runoff and allow it to soak into the garden, rather than flood the house. The garden consisted of many interesting trees, including a magnificent Wollemi Pine (*Wollemia nobilis*) and a Queensland Bottle Tree (*Brachychiton rupestris*) and large island beds full of hakeas, banksias, native grasses and daisies. One bed was planted as a cottage garden and was filled with small colourful flowering natives. Stainless steel sculptures by Ulric Steiner are featured in this garden.



Sculpture by Ulric Steiner



Swale behind the house

The last garden we visited was that of Val and Colin Fenn in Duramana. This garden was really a bush garden, but with incredible additions of Colin's art in every part. Colin creates wood, metal and rock sculptures, pergolas, paths and everywhere your eye falls, there is a treasure load of art. The birds love this garden and were constantly flitting, bathing and singing everywhere. Colin showed us his workroom, which was a fascinating jumble of materials and tools. Fiona and Val provided us with a slap-up morning tea to send us on our way. This garden is full of wonderful eucalypts, acacias and the best stand of *Banksia robur* you could imagine. The stand was fortuitously in the runoff path to the dam and loved the extra water it received



Gathering around the workshop



Garden from the terrace



Colin's fantastical artwork

All these gardens were rural gardens, with space to spare and expansive views. It makes you realise how restricted we are in the city for garden space and how often we have cramped and tiny views (not that they are not precious!). All these gardens were filled with birds and artwork and felt relaxing with generous views and big skies.

Fourteen members of ANPS Canberra Region and Canberra GDSG gathered eagerly at Cranbourne early on Tuesday morning. For many of the group it was their first visit to Cranbourne. After wandering around some of the areas we met our efficient, knowledgeable and enthusiastic guide, Alexander Smart, at 11am and were still asking questions over two hours later. He certainly made the day for us by including in his discussions not only information about the plants, but the engineering and economic challenges which were overcome to create such a beautiful display place for our Australian flora. The gold medal that RBG Cranbourne won for garden design brought deserved world wide recognition. As it was quite a hot day we quickly noted that the garden needs time to mature and create more shaded areas. The future shaded areas are already underway, but naturally need more time to grow. While visitors wait for more shade there are numerous structures in the garden which can help. The area is large (15 hectares) and the concept is bold. There are endless ways of displaying plants on offer, with different treatments, different mulches, and different surrounds to the beds. One successful area is the Cultivar Garden, (see photo p. 22), which is a series of row gardens up a hill. Here new cultivars, grafted plants and experimental varieties are trialled for inclusion in the garden. These trial plants are well labelled and easy to examine. If I lived closer to Melbourne I would be visiting often to see how these new plants perform season by season. These rows form a colourful, interesting and dynamic display.

Melaleuca Splits represents Australia's coastal topography with espaliered melaleucas forming screens between areas of reeds and sand spits. I have not seen melaleucas used in this way before but it works well. It shows that Australian plants are adaptable to almost any form of garden treatment and we should not be afraid to try both old and new ways of displaying our flora.

The Gondwana Garden is more lush, representing Australia's past climate and geography. Tree ferns, Antarctic Beech and a variety of other ancient plants demonstrate the different conditions from today's Australia. Hexagonal basalt columns are used to edge many of the beds and look natural and effective. The signage is excellent here, as it is throughout the garden. Clear, well written and topical signs (visible even to my eyes) accompany each different garden. The history of Australia's climate is particularly clear and informative.



The Weird and Wonderful Garden is sure to be a hit with overseas visitors as well as Australians. It gathers together our sometimes very odd and dramatic flora such as bottle trees, Spear Lilies, cycads, *Flindersia*, *Livistona* and various forms of grass trees. Some of the grass trees are already very old and large and were salvaged (happily) from construction sites around the country. These majestic plants tower over the visitor. The garden also boasts the most southerly and easterly representative of that strange hemiparasite, *Nuytsia floribunda*, the West Australian Christmas tree. After much loving care and attention it seems to be flourishing in its unusual location high on Howson Hill with magnificent views all around.



One of the most visually pleasing gardens is the Scribbly Gum garden with white partitions in the garden in the shape of the 'scribbles' on various species of eucalypt bark. The plants in the garden are strappy plants, such as *Lomandra* and *Dianella* which wave in the breeze in a most attractive way creating shapes and contrasting foliage colours.

The Arbour Garden demonstrates a variety of strong climbers on huge walls of steel mesh. Once again, I have not seen a collection of climbers displayed in this way before but it forms a very different garden display. At this stage the climbers are only young and have not reached the rampant growth expected of them in the future, but it allows a method to evaluate a whole expanse of vine. We are so used to seeing walls surrounding gardens with climbers on them as background, but this display makes the climbers the main feature, front and centre.



Another innovative way of displaying Australian vines was by allowing them to climb up inside and outside tall steel mesh columns. A collection of these columns reminded me somewhat of the aboriginal burial columns at the Australian National Gallery.

Views from the hills in the garden, such as Gibson and Howson Hills, are spectacular and expansive. They show off the design features of the garden in a 360 degrees sweep of the eye. Water runs everywhere in this garden, most tellingly in a half dry river bed so representative of the continent's centre. The use of Australia's unique rocks adds much to the overall design of the garden.

We were excited by our visit to this magnificent garden and look forward to returning many times in the future to chart its development.



Report of Melbourne garden visits and meeting Sunday November 17

Diana Snape, Vic

Garden visits

We met at Eleanor Hodge's place at 12 noon on a fine, sunny day. Ben and Ros Walcott joined us for an early lunch, after a visit to Maranoa Garden in the morning. More members arrived at 1pm for our visit to Eleanor's small, lovingly tended garden, which was much admired. It has been in the Open Garden Scheme five times to date.

Eleanor, who is a Garden Ambassador at RBG Cranbourne, told us a little of her garden's history, including the removal of a huge oak tree that had previously dominated the front area. The variety of shrubs includes special forms of some plants, for example a pink form of *Alyogyne huegelii* and *Eucalyptus latens* 'Moon Lagoon' in a pot. The garden is immaculately maintained. There is now no space left anywhere in it, so when Eleanor can't resist buying a new plant it has to go in another pot. In addition to attractive pots, there are a number of garden ornaments, some decorating the walls. The photo on page 3 illustrates this delightful garden, with its skilful use of small spaces.

Then we moved to the garden of Debbie and Michael Jerkovic, just a little way along the street. Debbie was influenced by Eleanor's garden and has become an enthusiast for Australian plants. (She also attended one of the courses run by APS Maroondah Group.) Her garden was designed by Bev Hanson, who is writing a separate article about it for the *Newsletter* (see page 11). Although still very young and despite initial difficulties with the soil on the site, the garden promises to be beautiful. Debbie is particularly keen on plants for their foliage and the back garden includes a small pool.

Neither of the two gardens has a lawn. Eleanor's front garden has informal pathways between beds while Debbie's has more open space, surfaced with gravel, and two central beds. Growth of plants has been rapid and passers-by often comment favourably on the young garden.

Meeting

We welcomed Ben and Ros to our meeting. Ben spoke about the introduction of colour photos in the newsletter, an introduction I think was welcomed by everyone present. He also spoke of the importance of recording gardens, both formally and more informally, in words and photos. He said the functions of the GDSG included passing on information as widely as possible, involving all members in its activities and encouraging them to contribute to the work of the Study Group. He prefers the term Interest Group to Study Group, as he thinks people find the latter intimidating (Debbie agreed).

Ros spoke of the importance of information available on the internet, for example in the *Garden Drum*, to which a number of serious Australian garden writers contribute. This led to general discussion about the popularity of the web for information, especially for young people, rather than the written word in books. Debbie said she mostly went to the internet for her information. Rick Cameron referred to the Maroondah Group website and its popularity, cross-linking with other organisations. We also discussed the possible difficulty of identifying reliable information from the vast amount of unedited material available on the web.

In regard to dissemination of knowledge, Chris Larkin said she thinks there is still no unit in any Australian tertiary institution focussed on garden design with Australian plants. There may be a shortage of experts necessary to teach such a course but then where do you break the cycle? There is still such ignorance about growing Australian plants, let alone designing with them.

We talked about the importance of having Australian plant gardens in the OGA (Open Gardens Australia), so people can see their beauty and be influenced by it. However Ben and Ros said that, without publicity, visitor numbers are disappointing. Apparently media outlets in the ACT ignore press releases from the OGA headquarters in Victoria because, coming from interstate, they are thought to be not relevant locally.

I think that we of the older generation have a big challenge ahead of us as we come to terms with, and appropriate, the new digital media.

Meetings for next year

We agreed to keep having our meetings in February, May, August and November, though this could alter with particular circumstances (see below!). The following two dates are scheduled at this stage but no dates have yet been set for August or November (too early to try). Several suggestions were made for venues.

Sunday March 16 - at the garden of Michelle and David Gallant, 12 Mountain Crescent, Montrose. Please note that our February meeting has been postponed to March, to suit the owners. (Also the weather should be cooler by March.) Michael Cook was involved in the design of this garden. We'll meet there at 1pm for lunch, 2pm for the meeting.

Sunday May 25 - suggested venue, the garden at the zoo (which is supposed to be very good). I don't know how many Australian plants are used. I'll investigate.

We thanked Eleanor and Debbie for our visits and also those who contributed to a delicious afternoon tea, especially Debbie's daughter Nicki.

Photos of the Season



Leptospermum scoparium 'Fantasia' in different weather conditions with a Yellow Faced Honeyeater feeding



GDSG Canberra member Fiona Johnson putting out a fire thankfully not too near her garden in Blayney.

Treasurer's Report:

Cheque Account: \$ 9,018.03

Term Deposit: \$ 23,811.05

Total: \$ 32,829.08

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Grevillea petrophiloides in the Woods' garden.



Banksia caleyi in Maranoa Gardens