



NATIONAL TRUST

NATIONAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA

Heritage in Trust

MAY 2012



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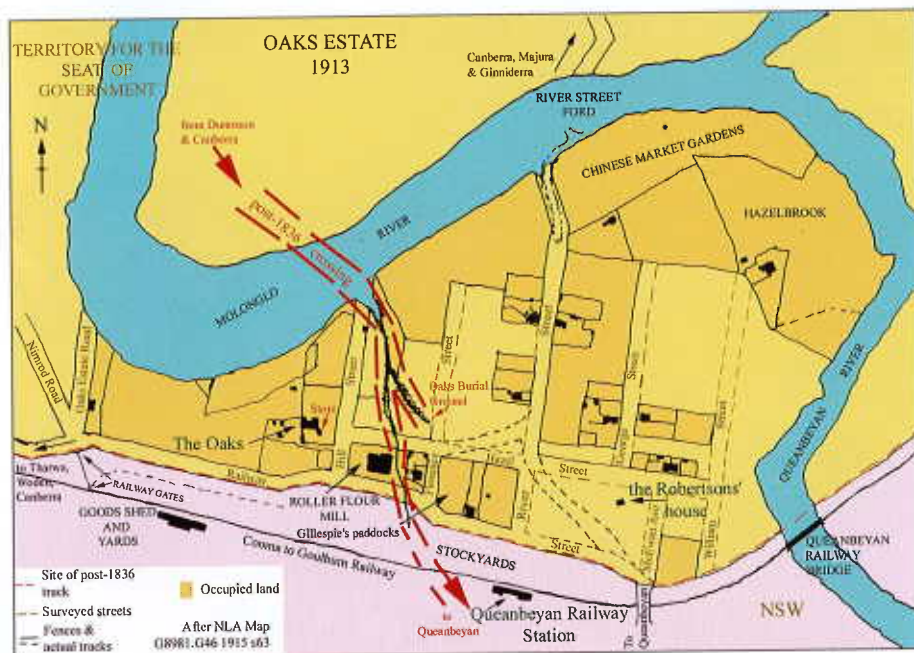
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The Oaks, the Queanbeyan Railway Station and the Robertsons' house:

The precinct of The Oaks, the Queanbeyan Railway Station and the Robertsons' house is situated on the edge of the present-day village/suburb of Oaks Estate. It also bounds the northern limits of Queanbeyan and straddles the ACT-NSW border. The precinct symbolises the most significant changes since the arrival of colonial explorers in the area of the junction of the Molonglo and Queanbeyan Rivers. To be understood as cornerstones in a changing Canberra/Queanbeyan region The Oaks, the Queanbeyan Railway Station and the Robertsons' house must first be understood as reference points for activity in and around the river junction.

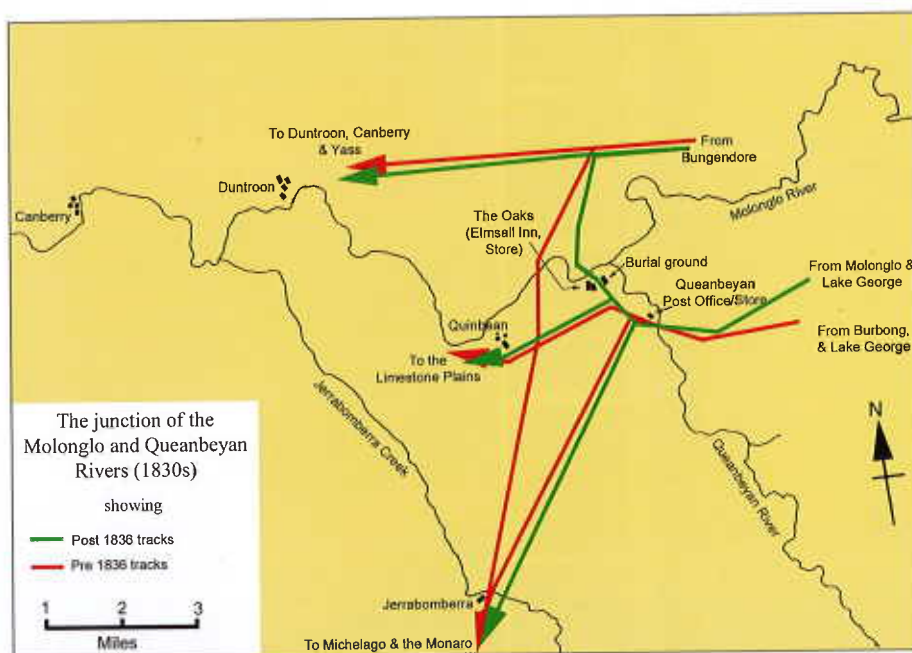


1. The Oaks Estate 1911 - 1913

The Oaks: the first cornerstone*

The Oaks, built on an eastern extension of Robert Campbell's Duntroon, was the first substantial stone dwelling in the Queanbeyan land district. It was built by the Campbells, probably for relatives who were planning to emigrate from England. Facing a river crossing on the junction and only just completed in 1836, The Oaks provided a cornerstone for its immediate area.

So prominent was the junction as a landmark for travellers that the Campbell family described Duntroon as actually being at the junction of the Molonglo and Queanbeyan Rivers. In 1834/1835 a track crossed through present-day Kowen Forest over the range from Bungendore, forking just east of the junction. One branch



2. Oaks Estate (The junction of Molonglo and Queanbeyan Rivers 1830s) showing pre and post 1836 tracks



The Oaks

went to *Duntroon*, Canberra and Yass. The other was the main track south to Michelago and the Monaro Plains (via Jerrabomberra and Lobbs Hole). By 1837 the track crossed the Molonglo at *The Oaks*, just downstream from the junction.

A minor track led to and from Timothy Beard's *Quinbean* which was two kilometres further downstream. Beard, following explorer Currie's path through this area, squatted at *Quinbean* shortly after 1823. "Quinbean" is an Aboriginal word for the meeting of the two rivers, signposting access to the reliable food and water resources that had provided for a long history of sheltered camping and corroboree grounds. *Quinbean* came to be part of *Jerrabomberra* estate and by 1838 the village name of Queanbeyan had evolved.

In 1837-1838 a store adjoined *The Oaks*, which was at that time licensed as the Elmsall Inn. A burial ground was close by (in present-day Florence Street) but it was mainly used before the opening of the Queanbeyan public cemetery. *The Oaks* crossing was directly in front of the inn. The track, now an eroded creek/storm water drain, passed between the buildings and the burial ground. However, after the 100 acre estate containing *The Oaks* (present-day Oaks Estate) was sold in 1840, the Elmsall Inn and store closed and the inn moved, eventually, to where the track from Molonglo and Lake George crossed the Queanbeyan River in the newly laid out village of Queanbeyan.

The Queanbeyan Railway Station: the second cornerstone

With *The Oaks* crossing having washed away in the 1874 flood, travellers crossed at what later became the River Street ford. This became part of a surveyed road (present-day River Street) formed in 1887. The road was designed to join the newly constructed railway station, stockyards and goods yards, and the proposed residential and business hub of Oaks Estate, directly to the main Yass-Queanbeyan Road. Thus encouraged, the town of Queanbeyan was expected to expand towards the new station complex.

The railway complex was built on land acquired from the southern portion of *The Oaks* estate. A syndicate of owners, most notably John Bull, Queanbeyan's second mayor, operated the estate at that time. As well as *The Oaks* (which reverted to being an inn during the construction of the railway complex), *Hazelbrook* fellmongery and the Chinese market garden that operated on *Hazelbrook* land, possibly from as early as the 1890s, the estate included a butcher shop, which Bull operated from his house on present-day Henderson Road, and a slaughteryard on the junction of Nimrod and Oaks Estate Roads. Each operation marked an estate boundary. The railway station was strategically situated at the apex of all of this activity, the estate overlapping the intersection of key stock routes from Majura, Ginninderra and Tharwa.

In 1911 the border of the Territory for the Seat of Government was drawn and Oaks Estate was severed from Queanbeyan, becoming part of the new federal

territory. Despite the new border, however, the presence of the railway complex at the intersection of key stock routes maintained connections between Queanbeyan and the new territory.

The Robertsons' house: the third cornerstone

The focus of rural industry on the railway complex, *The Oaks* and, from the 1890s, the Queanbeyan Roller Flour Mill influenced the trackways through Oaks Estate. Drovers driving their sheep and cattle to the stockyards watered them at the River Street crossing. From 1905 *The Oaks* was owned and occupied by the miller who was also part owner of the flourmill. The mill had been built on the road between the goods yard, *The Oaks* and the crossing. Wagons brought grain to the mill from outlying districts.

Having delivered their loads the wagon drivers camped overnight opposite the mill in Gillespie's paddocks (beside what is now Gillespie Park). Dick Robertson, who lived in the miller's house and probably worked as the mill's engine driver, would invite some of the drivers and drovers to dine with his family.

Dick had moved to Oaks Estate with his parents during the first Oaks Estate subdivision sale in 1887. Leaving the mill in 1911, he moved his own growing family to a temporary dwelling on a block adjacent to the main intersection of the roads between Queanbeyan, the station complex and the River Street crossing. The block was located between Railway and Hazel Streets and was originally described as 4 Railway Street. By 1912/1913 Dick started to build there permanently. The house was placed with its back door close to Hazel Street. The original block has since been divided in half and the portion on which the house stands is now referred to as 9 Hazel Street.

In 1914 Dick was employed at RMC Duntroon where he remained till 1921 when he left to work as a plumber on the construction of the Westlake workers' settlement. The Robertsons' focus had, like that of most Oaks Estate residents, shifted from Queanbeyan and rural industry to the construction of Canberra. Business being already poor, the mill was the last industrial employer in Queanbeyan.

The Robertsons' house, *The Oaks* and the Queanbeyan Railway Station provide three cornerstones in the development of Oaks Estate. Seen as a precinct at the junction of the Molonglo and Queanbeyan Rivers, they provide insight into the transition between the region's colonial and federal eras and the links between Canberra and Queanbeyan in that transition.

* Please note that *The Oaks* is private property and that the privacy of the occupants should be respected.

References:

- Queanbeyan Observer* 23 April 1895.
Kerr, J. and Falkus, H. 1982, *From Sydney Cove To Duntroon: A Family Album Of Early Life In Australia*, Hutchinson Group (Australia), Victoria, p22.
Lea-Scarlett, E. *The Old Monaro Road*, unpublished manuscript.
Williams, K. 1997, *Oaks Estate - No Man's Land*, Williams, Canberra.

Dr Karen Williams is a long-time resident of Oaks Estate with a passion for understanding landscape as a creative space/place of social, cultural and environmental interaction.

The Robertsons' House, Oaks Estate – A new lease of life?

In the 2010-2011 ACT Budget an allocation was given towards conservation works on several buildings assessed as having heritage significance or potential heritage significance. The Robertsons' house and land at 9 Hazel Street, Oaks Estate, was identified as one of the places to receive funding.

In 1895 Amelia Southwell received the title to two blocks in Oaks Estate. Some eighteen years later Walter Richard (Dick) and Mary Robertson acquired a lease of the land and began building their first house. The young Robertsons were not rich but were possessed of a strong determination and ability to make the best of what they had.

They did not have access to a wide range of building materials in the first decades of the 20th century. In 1914, just after they settled on the blocks, Australia entered the First World War and commercially manufactured building materials became even more inaccessible. The result was that a variety of makeshift materials were used. These were acquired from a number of sources and included packing cases, flat iron off-cuts from various construction jobs (including Parliament House), bricks and flattened kerosene tins. As their family grew (they raised eight children in the house) the Robertsons continued to work on their home through the post-war years, the Great Depression and into the Second World War using what materials were at hand and affordable.

They utilised their large yard by building a shed facing Hazel Street, a workshop and laundry next to the house, a vegetable patch and an orchard. They also built a brick chook house with a tiled roof. The chook house has the grand fame of being the first tiled roof structure in Oaks Estate. It still stands today. During the Second World War Dick dug out an air raid shelter next to the workshop. This was later filled in.

Following acquisition of the Oaks Estate land by the Commonwealth Government and the death of Dick and Mary their son, Les Robertson, held a lease on the property. Following his death the property was returned to the ACT Government and remained vacant for a number of years. Although it suffered structural deterioration and vandalism during this period it remained largely intact.

The house is classified by the National Trust. The statement of significance reads in part:

The house is a rare example in the ACT urban area of vernacular construction. It maintains a high degree of integrity. It represents a distinctive way of life during the establishment and growth of the Federal capital. The house has strong historic and social associations with the growth of Oaks Estate and Queanbeyan. The grounds of No 9 Hazel Street contain mature landscape elements of trees, shrubs, remnant fruit trees and fences, which reflect the historic development of the place.

Despite its identified heritage significance the house was in danger of deteriorating past the point of no return. In

From the President

A Case for the National Trust

I write this at a time of substantial debate about the future of the National Trust, its role in the 21st century, funding difficulties and trying to resolve a coordinated national function.

The National Trust's 2010 membership survey revealed that:

- less than 1% of members are 18 to 24 years old;
- 1% are 25 to 34 years old;
- 8% are 35 to 49 years old;
- 36% are 50 to 64 years old; and
- 54% are 65 years old or over.

On the reason for joining the National Trust:

- 9% joined to save money;
- 31% to keep heritage places;
- 25% to visit heritage places;
- 14% to travel overseas; and
- 21% for local heritage.

These figures do indicate a case for the National Trust in that more than 50% of members join to protect heritage places or for local heritage.

The ACT National Trust has established a strong force for ACT heritage in engaging with local communities, particularly when places of heritage value are threatened. This is illustrated by our role in recent activities such as assisting Friends of the Albert Hall in protecting and conserving it, our support for a survey to establish the social significance of Flynn Primary School designed by Enrico Taglietti, our voice in reinforcing the need to conserve and use the Kingston Fitters' Workshop in a manner consistent with the Conservation Plan, and working with Residents' Associations on ongoing threats to conservation areas and their integrity.

We are also a key contact on heritage issues for the ACT Planning Authority and Directorates and the National Capital Authority. We comment on issues before both levels of government, participate in consultation and are often invited into reference groups.

However these activities take time and effort. We rely on a number of volunteers but to be effective we need three office staff (Chris Wain ED, Bethany Lance, Research Officer, and Liz McMillan, Office Manager) to coordinate, prepare and manage our input.

The National Trust is in a rare position as contributions to the National Trust are tax-deductible. This has led to the establishment of conservation funds for three iconic Canberra churches (St Andrew's, St John's and All Saints) where we work with the church communities to conserve their valuable heritage assets. We are discussing opportunities to expand this activity with others.

In a city with two overlapping bureaucracies (ACT and Federal) the independence and community voice of the National Trust are critical to ensuring reasoned debate and due process in the protection of our heritage. We must expand our networks, work with other organisations, and maximise our output and impact with minimum resources if we are going to protect our past and heritage for our children.

As government funds become tighter and there is what appears to be greatly reduced attention for heritage, the

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National Trust role becomes more important to ensure that heritage issues are considered appropriately in all that occurs.

To this end the National Trust of Australia (ACT) is seeking new initiatives such as the Canberra 100 Rally, engagement with business, strategic alliances, an expanded tours program for members, more members' activities, a benefactor program, an expanded conservation funds program, an annual supporters' appeal, and working with the ACT Government on conserving some of Canberra's forgotten heritage which is slowly decaying.

I consider there is a vital role for the National Trust but it requires us all to work together and contribute.

I hope you share this vision.

Eric J. Martin, AM
President

CHARTER

At the National Trust of Australia (ACT) we see that:

- Our **Vision** is to be an independent and expert community leader in the conservation of our cultural and natural heritage.
- Our **Purpose** is to foster public knowledge about, and promote the conservation of, places and objects that are significant to our heritage.
- Our **Organisation** is a not-for-profit organisation of people interested in understanding and conserving heritage places and objects of local, national and international significance in the ACT region.

ACT and Region Annual Australian Heritage Partnership Symposium 2012

Valuing Heritage: Advocating for community attachment in planning

Date: Saturday 28th July 2012; time: 8.30 to 4.30.

Venue: Sir Roland Wilson Building Theatre, Bldg 120, ANU campus.

Cost: to be advised.

Themes:

- Community value and social attachment to places
- The value of archaeology, it's not just buried in the ground
- 40 years of World Heritage – has it helped us?
- Recession heritage, the changing economics of attachment to place

Call for Session Ideas, Leaders and Papers

You are invited to send ideas for session topics, including but not constrained to the above, and offer to lead a session.

Summaries of presentations are also invited; the anticipated time for each presentation is about 20 minutes.

Please send your ideas to sally.brockwell@anu.edu.au or phone on (02) 6125-2217.

Please send this message on to all your networks, colleagues, friends and acquaintances

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ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES

New Members \$35.00 Joining Fee

Individual	Annual	2 years	3 years
Standard	\$72.00	\$136.00	\$199.00
Concession	\$50.00	\$94.00	\$138.00

Household

Standard	\$105.00	\$199.00	\$292.00
Concession	\$83.00	\$157.00	\$230.00
Corporate	\$660.00		

Life Membership

Individual	\$825.00
Household	\$1320.00

New members and renewal payments can be made online, by post, telephone or in person at our city office.

Cash, cheque and all major credit cards are accepted.

Membership renewal reminders are generated one month before the anniversary of due dates.

The National Trust of Australia (ACT) is a non-profit, community-based organisation that aims to preserve Australia's heritage for future generations. Membership of the National Trust offers a number of benefits. Among them are:

- Free entry to National Trust properties around the world
- Complimentary copy of National Trust magazines quarterly
- Discount of up to 15% at National Trust shops
- An opportunity to participate in travel organised by the Trust
- Access to the National Trust's special events and activities
- An opportunity to help the Trust protect your local & cultural heritage

The Members page is an information page for all current and prospective members of the National Trust ACT. Our aim is to pass on any information that may be of assistance to members and also to notify members of activities that have been organised by the various committees of the ACT National Trust.

Novi Scripti

The National Trust (ACT) warmly welcomes the following new members:

Kay and John Beagle	Vicky Nyika
Ann Broughton	Joan Palmer
John and Catherine Busby	Glenda and John Richards
Valerie Carmody	Gregory Rigg
Judith Carr	Myra Rowling
Philip Clacher	John Stafford
Keren and Trevor Clement	Philip and Teresa Symonds
David Hobbs	Michael and Mary Tatchell
Dinah Irvine	Helen and Richard Tate
Airdrie Isbister	David Van Zetti
Jeanette and Colin Jeffery	Alastair Wilson
Jane Keogh	Els Wynen
Debbie and Bakar Mudin	Warwick Young

Trusted Recipes

Trust members are invited to share recipes through the magazine - please send your recipes to Liz at info@nationaltrustact.org.au. This recipe is from Trust Secretary, Jim Nockels.

Smoked trout pate

Ingredients

- 250 g smoked trout (about one trout)
- 125 g cream cheese
- 125 g butter
- 1 teaspoon horseradish cream
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- slurp Tabasco sauce

Method

Mix in blender. The pate will keep several days. It is best served at room temp (i.e. soft).

KEEP UP TO DATE

Are you up with the latest National Trust happenings? Maybe you have been missing out on our E News bulletins! Make sure you are on the E News list and are kept up to date with events, have access to National Trust media releases and opportunities to contribute to the valuable and important work of the Trust.

Email info@nationaltrustact.org.au with the subject heading of: Subscribe to E News

Member Events

A number of Member events are planned throughout the year, in May/June, August and November, and as usual the year will finish with the Christmas party and Volunteers' brunch. As with the April members' night, when Graeme Wilson enlightened us on Military History in the ACT, new members are invited free of charge, and other members and friends pay a small fee to cover catering and other costs. Drinks and nibbles are included.

The draft Calendar for 2012 is:

- New Members Evening proposed for May/June
- New Members Evening proposed for August
- New Members Evening Wednesday 21 November – The History and Heritage Values of the Causeway Hall at the Causeway Hall
- Christmas Party at Huntly – late November to early December
- Volunteers Brunch – Early to mid December

Proposed topics for events during the year include Oaks Estate, antique restoration, ACT winners of the National History Challenge, book launches and a glassworks demonstration.

Further information will be posted on the website and included in e-news, or you are welcome to contact the Trust office. New members will be specially invited but all members and friends are welcome.

LIMITED EDITION PRINTS

Federal Territory Sketch Map

As Canberra heads towards the 2013 Centenary celebrations, the National Trust (ACT) is producing limited edition copies of the Federal Territory A3 sketch map presented to the Prince of Wales on the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone in 1920.

The prints are available to buy from the office at a cost of \$25.00 for NT members and \$30.00 for non-members.

A great Centenary gift!

CORRECTION

Haig Park, Heritage in Trust, p14-15

The article on Haig Park in the February 2012 issue of *Heritage in Trust* attributed the following quotation to John Gray.

The dominant tree was Monterey Pine (Pinus radiata), of which he planted nearly 2000, reflecting Haig's desire to achieve quick results. Another tree heavily planted was Roman Cypress (Cupressus semperivens 'Stricta'), perhaps reflecting Haig's intention to pay tribute to the many Australians who had not turned from the war. In Western society this latter tree has been traditionally recognised as a symbol of death and immortality.

Footnotes to this quote identified an error indicating that the statements should have been attributed to Thomas Weston not Charles Haig.

Gray correctly cites these comments as being by Charles Weston in his original article. The error mentioned occurred in transcription of the quote into the Request for Tender (RFT).

We sincerely apologise for this and to John Gray for any implications arising from it.

Bronwynne Jones
Eric Martin & Associates.

Message from the Executive Director

Grants

A small Commonwealth Heritage Administration Grant of \$3,000 was received from the Commonwealth Government.

Canberra 100 Rally

A new Chairman has been appointed to the Committee charged with running the National Trust Canberra 100 Rally. Bill Lewis, a National Trust of Australia (ACT) member, Vice-President of the ACT Council of Motor Clubs and the ACT representative on the Australian Federation of Historic Vehicles, has agreed to chair the committee. He will bring a wealth of experience to manage this large scale historic event.

A special thanks to Alan Kerr for steering the committee through the many hurdles to get to this point. We look forward to Alan's continued support as a committee member. I would also like to thank Slater and Gordon for freely giving their time to finalise the Rally contract.

The Victorian National Trust has offered the heritage mansion Rippon Lea for the Melbourne starting point and with confirmation of many entries from other states it is fast becoming a national event.

Fundraising

Newspaper articles in March, while exaggerated in many cases, highlighted the difficult financial position the Trust movement is facing across Australia. This is due to changes in Commonwealth funding. The National Trust (ACT) will need to find additional funds to help make up the shortfall.

Fundraising initiatives are being developed by the Council. Further information is provided in the report from our Treasurer on page 8.

National Heritage Strategy

Mr Ray Tonkin (the former head of Victorian Heritage and consultant to the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities) recently briefed each of the State and Territory Trusts on the draft Australian Heritage Strategy Framework.

The Executive Directors of the Trusts were informed that the initial draft paper has seven objectives and 22 strategies with priorities and actions. These are focused on four key areas which include:

- Understanding and celebrating Australia's heritage
- Delivering sound heritage protection policies
- Leading and supporting heritage
- Investing in heritage (including incentives).

Mr Tonkin said that public consultation was likely to commence in the near future with the release of essays and a discussion paper. It was noted the Commonwealth Government is keen to produce a national heritage strategy in the near future.

ACT Heritage Council

Congratulations to Duncan Marshall on his well-deserved appointment as Chair of the ACT Heritage Council.

Chris Wain, CEO

Letters to the Editor

The Trust encourages robust discussion of heritage issues and welcomes letters to the Editors of Heritage in Trust including on the issues raised in the letter below. Letters should be sent to The Editor, Heritage in Trust, at info@nationaltrustact.org.au.

Dear Editor

I have just received the latest quarterly magazines of the National Trust. I note the listing of Lake Burley Griffin as one of the ten most at risk heritage sites in Australia. I find that listing quite remarkable and wonder if the National Trust has a formal statement agreed by the Trust which explains how the decision was arrived at.

One of my concerns is that if the National Trust truly thinks that Lake Burley Griffin is in fact the most endangered site in Australia, that this is as bad as it gets, a view I find truly remarkable, it sends a very strong message to the public that everything else of heritage significance in Australia is just hunky-dory.

Jon Stanhope
5 March 2012

PS I think the majority of the Lake Burley Griffin foreshore is a fairly barren boring wasteland and that a few more memorials here and there would be a good thing.

Following is a note from the National Heritage Officer, Australian Council of National Trusts, explaining how the national list of the top ten places for Heritage at Risk is put together:

The listing of the top ten places at risk throughout Australia is compiled from each State and Territory's nominated top places at risk, as assessed by the relevant Trust committees. From these lists each State and Territory has at least one of their nominated places on the national list.

The national list as a whole is not published in order of most at threat nationally, but either in a random order or, as it was last year, in alphabetical order by State and Territory. Last year Lake Burley Griffin by being in the Australian Capital Territory happened to be at the top of the national list of places at risk. There is no precedence in the top ten places at risk throughout Australia.

Peter Dowling

Volunteer with the Trust

Do you have some spare time? Interested in heritage? Do you have skills in administration, data entry or research, natural, indigenous or cultural heritage expertise, event and/or volunteer management? The ACT National Trust welcomes offers of assistance from members. Call Liz at the office on 02 6230 0533 or email info@nationaltrustact.org.au.

Obituary

It is with regret that we advise of the passing of Malcolm Hay. Malcolm was a long-time member of the ACT National Trust and supported us for many years. He was a regular participant on our tours and visits in and around the Canberra region. Malcolm often accompanied his good friend Dorothy Bates on these tours and both would regularly attend the Christmas get-togethers and the Members' Nights and our Annual General Meetings. The loss of Malcolm will be felt by many of us.

Dianne Dowling

Members may have seen the "Trust faces bankruptcy" article in The Canberra Times of 11 March 2012. The article, whilst perhaps inconveniently timed, was based on current financial information even if the heading was a bit misleading. Here is a link for those who missed it: <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/trust-faces-bankruptcy-20120310-1urum.html>

I would like to reassure members that the National Trust of Australia (ACT) (NTACT) is not facing insolvency in the near term. If there is no change to our current course then it is estimated that we have a minimum of three years left before our cash reserves drop to a level where the NTACT Council would be forced to consider a significant scaling down of operations to maintain solvency.

As an ASIC registered company, NTACT has acted responsibly for the benefit of both its members and the public by highlighting the fact that due to a significant reduction in Federal Government funding over recent years, the organisation is no longer able to rely solely on this source of income if it wishes to remain a vibrant and viable operation. NTACT is in a more precarious position than many of the state based Trusts since, until last year, it received very little State/Territory Government funding. It also does not have the benefit of a substantial property portfolio to underpin its operations like other state trusts. Having said this, an unrelated article in the Sydney Morning Herald of 10 March 2012 (<http://smh.domain.com.au/real-estate-news/national-trust-faces-closing-houses-as-it-seeks-funding-20120309-1upnz.html>) focussing on the NSW branch of the National Trust demonstrates that we are not alone in facing challenging financial times.

The NTACT Council has undertaken an extensive planning process, reduced operating expenses and developed new business and funding initiatives to make up the shortfall but as you will appreciate it takes time for these measures to have a positive effect on our bottom line. Our recent budget submission to the ACT Government, which was accessed by the Canberra Times, was one of these initiatives. In the Council's view, Territory funding is essential to assist us with this transition and NTACT is very grateful for the support the Government has shown in the 2011/12 financial year.

Another significant initiative is the Canberra 100 Rally in 2013 which has created great excitement amongst NTACT Councillors, volunteers and car clubs alike. Members will be pleased to know that the Rally has the support of each state branch of the National Trust and is in the process of being endorsed as a national event. Launches will be organised in state capitals with Victoria offering Rippon Lea/Tasma Terrace and a significant event at their starting point.

So, please be assured that it will be "business as usual" while your Council continues to work diligently behind the scenes to ensure that the NTACT remains a relevant and active organisation servicing the needs of both its membership and the wider community.

Scott McAlister
Treasurer

Life at the National Trust office is never dull; we continue to be involved in numerous projects and campaigns but are also taking part in some exciting new local and national endeavours.

We were pleased to see that after extensive public pressure the plan for the Rond Terrace memorials has been abandoned and the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Referral that was put in for the memorials has been withdrawn. Time will tell whether the Memorials Development Committee will propose new memorials in a different area. If this is the case we hope to see a more transparent process than the previous one, with ample opportunity for community input.

Other ACT heritage issues the Trust has commented on or been involved in lately include the National Capital Authority's Diplomatic Estate Study, the Majura Parkway Stakeholder Reference Group and a submission for the Draft Variation 308/Cooyong Street Urban Renewal Precinct. We have also provided a number of submissions for various Draft Development Control Plans to ensure that any heritage aspects included in these areas are being acknowledged and protected from development in the long term. A variety of objects and places have been nominated to the ACT Heritage Register over the last couple of months, ranging from Manuka Oval and Caretaker's Cottage in Griffith to the Starlight Drive-in Cinema Sign in Watson. It is a pleasure to see such a diverse range of sites being added to the Register and their heritage significance identified and officially acknowledged. The St Patrick's Church heritage listing saga continues, as a technical difficulty with the ACT Heritage website resulted in the site again being provisionally listed and open for comment. We continue to support the heritage nomination and have again written to the Heritage Council to confirm this.

I am also embarking on some exciting projects that will not only better inform our members but also help to widen the National Trust's audience and increase our online presence. After the successful launch of our Facebook page I am now investigating possible options for 'smart phone' applications. While this will be a long term project and is something we are considering for future grant funding, I am initially looking at having our self-guided tours available as an 'app' to make them easily accessible to people on the go. The options seem endless when creating 'apps', as can be seen from the Victorian National Trust's Tree Register App. This is an app which will soon be going national and hence will be available to people in the ACT. It allows people to locate and learn about historically significant trees in an interactive way. All National Trust branches are also about to undergo a complete website re-vamp to ensure the sites are consistent and to make each individual site more user-friendly. The new website will feature options for online purchases, bookings, tours and updated information. Jump online and check out the new website which is being launched mid-May. Any feedback or help with these new projects would be greatly appreciated.

Bethany Lance

University of Canberra

– Cultural Heritage and Conservation Studies

The University of Canberra has offered heritage and conservation degrees since the 1970s, but in 2009, in response to rising local demand for people skilled and knowledgeable in heritage management and the field of conservation, two new courses were developed: a Bachelor of Cultural Heritage and a Bachelor of Cultural Heritage Conservation.

These courses aim to provide students with the skills necessary to pursue a career in the cultural heritage field, either in heritage management and museums or in physical conservation. Both degrees offer students a better understanding and appreciation for cultural heritage in all its forms, while providing in-depth exposure to the specialised skills necessary in the two streams.

There are currently about 120 undergraduate and five PhD students studying across both streams. The first students graduated from the new cultural heritage degrees in March this year. For more information on the current courses see: <http://www.canberra.edu.au/faculties/arts-design/cultural-heritage>.

From 2013, the University of Canberra has decided to combine the Cultural Heritage and Cultural Heritage Conservation degrees into a single new course – Bachelor of Heritage Museums and Conservation. This will promote more cross-fertilisation between the fields of conservation, museum and heritage studies and ensure graduates have a holistic understanding of the cultural heritage sector.

The university is confident the new course will build on the solid foundation already established in the field of cultural heritage and allow the continued improvement and refinement of the undergraduate course. It also aims to increase the number of students in higher degrees, and continue the research work undertaken by the Donald Horne Institute for Cultural Heritage.

The institute, named in honour of the late author as recognition of his immense contribution to shaping thought and debate about life in Australia and his role as the Chancellor of the University of Canberra, promotes and undertakes research and public outreach activities.

Studying cultural heritage at the University of Canberra can lead to a wide variety of career opportunities. Many graduates from the new degrees are already working in art galleries, museums and other cultural institutions, both locally and around

Australia. Students also have the opportunity to undertake an internship as a part of their degree to gain some insight into the workforce. This semester the National Trust welcomed Kelly Plunkett as an intern and hopefully more of these collaborations will be possible in the future.

Kelly Plunkett, Undergraduate Student, Bachelor of Cultural Heritage, 2009-current

As I was growing up, my parents' work took me to live in a number of countries, where I mixed with different people and was immersed in a variety of cultures.

During the last of these postings, I was fortunate enough to complete my secondary education in Ireland, a country that does history and heritage in a big way. It seemed to me as I travelled around the country that there was something fascinating and worth preserving, almost every kilometre. I was also able to use Ireland as a base to travel to other parts of Europe where I visited museums, churches and sites of historical interest in a number of countries.

When the time came to choose a tertiary course, it is probably not surprising that I chose to study cultural heritage at the University of Canberra, particularly as the course outline described it as a 'course for the intellectually curious'. I think this aspect of the Bachelor of Cultural Heritage degree is its greatest strength. I have found the variety of courses offered in the degree provides both a solid introduction to the breadth and depth of the subject matter of cultural heritage, and stimulates curiosity and interest in looking deeper. The degree also offers a very good balance between the academic and the practical, and the many field trips we have undertaken have given life and meaning to the theoretical framework.

My time at the University of Canberra has also allowed me to indulge my passion for travel and experience university life in another culture. In January 2011, I had the opportunity to study overseas through the University of Canberra Study Abroad and Exchange Program, one of the first students from the Cultural Heritage course to be given this opportunity.

I spent a semester at the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada, where I was able to complete four elective courses that were not available in Canberra and for which I was granted credit towards my degree – adding even more depth and breadth to my study program. While in Canada, I explored as many art galleries and museums as possible in order, among other things, to get a better idea of how exhibition space can be most effectively organised. For example, I was very impressed by the Art

Gallery of Ontario (AGO) which has been cleverly designed to display and explain artefacts and events in an interesting way while allowing for a smooth flow of people through the exhibition spaces.

One of the absolute highlights of my Canadian experience was a visit to the historical district of Old Quebec, with its charming streets, impressive buildings and stunning churches. Despite the bitterly cold temperatures,



the thrill of exploring the streets of a UNESCO World Heritage Site was enough to keep me more than happy.

I am currently finishing the final semester of my degree, studying Introduction to Architectural History, Collections Management, and undertaking an internship with the National Trust ACT. The 10-week internship is allowing me to see firsthand the workings of an important organisation extensively involved in helping

to preserve our nation's cultural heritage. The internship once again underlines the strength of the Bachelor of Cultural Heritage degree – combining the practical with the theoretical in an interesting and constructive way.

See the next Heritage in Trust edition for more student biographies and insights into current heritage education opportunities and options as it is never too late to start your career in cultural heritage.

Growing up with Canberra – the Canberra Y turns 70

Since its establishment in 1941, the Canberra YMCA has been an integral part of the local community, its growth going hand in hand with the development of the city itself.

The immediate need for the Y in 1940s Canberra was to provide recreation and physical activity for the young male building workers brought in to construct the new city. Housed in hostels, these workers were much in need of diversion from their fairly primitive living conditions. At that time, the city itself had little in the way of recreation, sport or culture to offer.

The Y's initial programs were designed for these hostel dwellers, as well as for the servicemen who were a prominent part of Canberra's population during the war years and for young people seen to be at risk because of the lack of recreation and absence of extended family. After the war, the hostel dwellers included the "Jennings Germans", 150 carpenters recruited from Germany for the large-scale construction of government housing. The Y gave the "Jennings Germans" a way of integrating into the community. They enjoyed the Saturday night dances at the Causeway and Albert Hall, participated in the Y's health and physical fitness programs, pioneered a wide range of sports including skiing, basketball, table tennis and volleyball, helped out at boys' and youth clubs, and volunteered their skills to build Camp Sturt on the Murrumbidgee which, from 1948 until it was burned down in the 2003 bushfires, provided a bush camping experience for thousands of local and interstate school children.

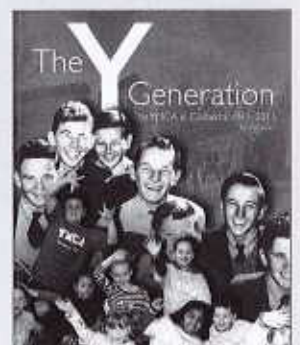
From its earliest days, the Y was fortunate in having among its strongest advocates leading figures in the development of both the city and the nation. The Prime Minister John Curtin officially launched the Y and for twenty years, until ACT self-government, the Governor-General was patron. Many senior public servants including a Commonwealth Crown Solicitor, Commissioner for Taxation, Director of National Development, Commonwealth Actuary, Chief of Hansard and Usher of the Black Rod served as directors of the fledgling organisation. Charles Daley, senior administrator of the ACT for several decades and a champion of the national capital, was the first president.

The location of Y activities shifted as Canberra expanded. Initially based in the city, in the Sydney Building and then for forty years in London Circuit, the Y has left a footprint in many parts of Canberra, from the Drill Hall in Acton and Corroboree Park in Ainslie to the satellite areas of Woden, Weston Creek, Belconnen and Tuggeranong. Two original Y sites are still used for their original purpose. The Kingston Auxiliary Stall established in 1962 as a base for fund-raising is still in its original location. So too is the YMCA Sailing Club on Yarralumla Bay, in use since 1966. Y sailors were among the first sailors on Lake Burley Griffin, moving back to Canberra in the "Year of the Lake", 1964, after sailing on Lake George for their first couple of years.

While the Y now runs a different range of activities including fitness programs for seniors, child care centres and before and after school care, the legacy of its early days remains in community traditions such as carols by candlelight, introduced by the Y in 1945, and a host of local sports associations which can trace their origins to the pioneering work of the Y.

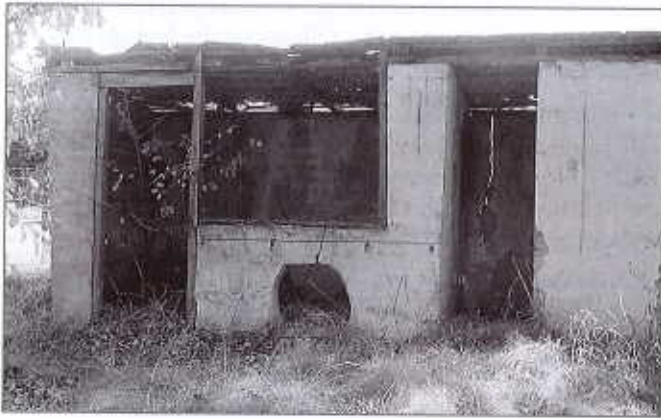
Helen Tracey

Helen Tracey is the author of The Y Generation: The YMCA in Canberra 1941-2011 which was published by the YMCA in Canberra in 2011. The book tells the 70 year history of the Canberra YMCA.



YMCA auxiliary stall at Kingston. Photo courtesy YMCA Canberra

fact, an architectural report on the house concluded that it had reached such a point and recommended that it be demolished along with the outbuildings (including the unique chook house).



The chook house. The oldest tiled building in Oaks Estate

Fortunately this report was not acted upon and subsequent assessments concluded that because of the very mixed fabrics used to construct the house it was worthy of saving. The reports also acknowledged the significance in its association with a family who, while not prominent in the development of Canberra, nevertheless epitomised a large proportion of the population who struggled through their early years of marriage, and endured the oppressive conditions of the First World War, the subsequent Great Depression and the Second World War while raising a family.

The funding from the ACT Government has now been put to good use. A set of conservation policies and a condition report were drawn up in early 2011 to guide conservation works. Work commenced in mid-2011. The work was done under the philosophy of doing as much work as necessary but replacing as little of the original fabric as possible. In this way the conservation work has now arrested the deterioration and given the house (and the chook house) a new lease of life. And this wonderful place, with its history written into its walls, has been saved.



Conservation works begin. The grounds have been cleared and the protective fence is being erected

But what now? While the structures have been conserved they will probably never be brought up to the statutory standards required for permanent occupation. The policies written for the conservation works recognized this and

recommended that an interpretation strategy for the use of the house should be developed. The strategy will provide for public understanding and appreciation of the site and its role and significance in the history of the ACT. The policies also encourage a partnership group to be developed which would act as a custodian for the place and develop ways in which the house and grounds could be presented to the public on specific occasions. The custodians would of course include representatives of Oaks Estate residents.

There is a future for the Robertsons' house but exactly what it will be is still largely to be determined.

Peter Dowling

Peter Dowling is the National Heritage Officer for the Australian Council of National Trusts. He was the author of the conservation policies for the Robertsons' house.



*A conserved building. Ready for a new future
(Photos courtesy of Dianne Dowling)*



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The border at the Old Coach Road, Mulligans Flat

On the afternoon of Sunday 19 February, Peter Dowling led a group of 15 members and friends on the first of several walks designed to highlight the original surveying of the northern border of the ACT.

After a brief introductory talk at our meeting place in Forde, and with a wary eye on the gathering storm clouds, we set out on our walk into the Mulligans Flat Nature Reserve. Although there are no longer buildings in evidence, Peter pointed out the location of the Mulligans Flat school, the first schoolhouse having been built on the site as early as 1896. It was made of wood slabs and had a bark roof. The school was finally closed in 1931 and later dismantled and removed.

Once through the predator-proof fence which protects the part of the Nature Reserve now known as the Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary, it wasn't long before we were walking on the original surface of the Old Coach Road. This was constructed in 1880 to link the rural settlements of the area with Bungendore. At one creek crossing Peter showed us where the coaches used to go off-road and make their own way across the creek if the road was washed out or too rough.

To give us a close-up view of the ACT/NSW border, Peter led us out of the Sanctuary at the Bustard Gate and up the hill on the track that leads into the neighbouring Goorooyarroo Nature Reserve. At the top of the hill, we reached the border which is marked by a wire mesh fence and an interpretive sign. Just over the fence on the NSW side is a lock spit, a line of rocks placed by labourers working with the original surveyors on 17 July 1911, to mark a change in the direction of the border. Many local landholders were affected by the placement of the border, with land on the ACT side being resumed

by the Commonwealth. Peter told us of the trials and tribulations of one such landholder, farmer Walter Ginn, whose land was severed in two by the border.

We then retraced our steps back into the Sanctuary and headed for the Woolshed where we were greeted with very welcome refreshments and a talk about the Nature Reserve by Ranger Peter Mills.

It's possible, of course, to do this walk on your own. The route we followed is described in the ACT National Trust's Northern Centenary Border Walks brochure (see the February 2012 edition of *Heritage in Trust*). It is walk number 4 in the brochure.

Wendy Whitham



*At the border.
Photo courtesy
of Dianne
Dowling.*



*In the
shearing
shed at
Mulligans.
Photo
courtesy
of Linda
Roberts.*



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Travels with the Trust

The Molonglo Mystery Tour

Sunday 20 May from 1-4.00pm

Author Alan Foskett will lead the tour through parts of Fyshwick industrial area which 90 years ago was the site of the Molonglo Internment Camp and the Molonglo Building Workers Settlement. We will look at where the watchtower, hospital, the internment camp's military unit and tenements were that housed and protected the internees. A gentle 5 – 10 minute walk will take us up Radio Hill to see the only tangible remains of this unique part of Canberra's history. Afternoon tea at nearby Pialligo will finish off the tour.

Meet: Top Molonglo Mall, Fyshwick (near interpretive sign)

Cost: \$25 members and \$30 non-members

Bookings essential: 6230 0533 or online at www.nationaltrustact.org.au – click on Bookings under Events and Meetings tab.

Coach Trip to Historic Goulburn

Sunday 10 June 8.00am to 6.15pm

Visit historic Goulburn, Australia's first inland city. This specially designed tour will be by comfortable chartered coach with a knowledgeable guide. We will commence with a tour of the city and then visit the historic Goulburn Waterworks (1885) with its fully operational steam engines (1883-86) which should be working on the day. We will have morning tea here. We next visit the magnificent St Saviour's Cathedral (1884) for a guided tour. Lunch will be at "Riversdale" (1830s), a beautiful National Trust historic house and garden, where we will also have a guided tour of the house. The coach will then take us to the location of the Towrang Stockade, the chief penal camp in NSW from 1833-43. Following a brief inspection of the site and the Lennox Bridge (1839), we will visit the historic home of "Garroorigang" (1857) which is still owned and lived in by descendants of Hamilton Hume. We will have a home-style afternoon tea here before our return journey to Canberra. There will be some walking on unpaved surfaces and participants will need to get on and off the coach throughout the day.

Meet: Car park behind the Deakin Fitness Centre, Deakin Shops

Cost: \$105 National Trust and U3A members and \$115 non-members

Bookings essential: 6230 0533 or online at www.nationaltrustact.org.au – click on Bookings under Events and Meetings tab.

Manning Clark House

Tuesday 17 July from 2-4.00pm

Manning and Dymphna Clark feature on the ACT Honour Walk. What do you know about them and their house designed in 1952 by Robin Boyd? Come along and listen to Sebastian Clark talk about his former family home complete with roof-top study, library, piano and Arthur Boyd's famous 1972 portrait of the historian. Enjoy a stroll in the garden and afternoon tea.

Meet: Manning Clark House, 11 Tasmania Circuit, Forrest.

Cost: \$25 members and \$30 non-members

Bookings essential: 6230 0533 or online at www.nationaltrustact.org.au – click on Bookings under Events and Meetings tab.

Tour of the National Museum of Australia

Wednesday 15 August from 1.30-3.30pm

The Museum Highlights tour provides National Trust members with an overall impression of each of the Museum's exhibitions. It offers an excellent general introduction to the National Museum of Australia. The tour will include the Open collections which is a part of the Gallery of First Australians that gives members a special 'behind the scenes' glimpse of more than 2000 objects from the National Museum of Australia's Indigenous collections. Followed by afternoon tea.

Meet: At information desk at NMA

Cost: \$25 members; \$35 non-members

Bookings essential: 6230 0533 or online at www.nationaltrustact.org.au – click on Bookings under Events and Meetings tab.

Booroomba, Braeside and Blythburn

Sunday 9 September

The National Trust Tours Committee is planning a trip to Tharwa to visit these three heritage-listed properties on Sunday 9th September. Further details of this proposed activity, when confirmed, will be available on the ACT Trust website www.nationaltrustact.org.au – click on Events and Meetings tab or from the Trust office.

Cost: TBA

Expressions of interest: to 6230 0533 or email info@nationaltrustact.org.au

World Heritage Tour of Italy & Sicily

15 September – 14 October 2012

This tour will experience the long history and archaeology of Italy by concentrating on many of the UNESCO listed World Heritage places dating from modern times back to the ancient past.

Draft Itinerary subject to change: Beginning in Rome the tour will take in the famous sites of the capital city including the mysterious Etruscan sites. Staying in beautiful Sorrento we will visit the famous archaeological sites of Pompeii and Herculaneum, take a day trip to Naples to visit the National Archaeology Museum, take a drive along the world famous Amalfi coast. Sicily is next where we will be exploring the history and culture of the island including Syracuse, Palermo and the archaeological area of Agrigento. After leaving Sicily, the tour will make its way north along the eastern regions of the mainland stopping to experience the sites of Alberobello, Assisi, Venice, Pisa, Florence, Sienna and the northern lakes area. While in the north we will visit the Valcamonica Cave art in the Alps. The tour will depart Italy from Milan.

Cost per person twin share: \$15,160 (includes air fares, hotels, breakfast daily and all touring)

Single supplement: \$1960

Bookings: Gay Boersma at Travelscene Canberra City 6247 6544

GOLD! GOLD! GOLD! And More!

22 – 27 October

Discover the riches of the Victorian goldfields. See the magnificent architecture, learn more about gold rush history at the region's landmark historic attractions and visit some of the best regional art galleries in Australia – including a special exhibition of 300 years of botanical art at the Ballarat Art Gallery. Sample some of the region's fine food and wine. The tour will include Beechworth, Ballarat and Bendigo. It will conclude with visits to some National Trust properties in Chiltern on our way back to Canberra.

Cost: TBA

Expressions of interest: to 6230 0533 or email info@nationaltrustact.org.au

Borobudur and Beyond

August 2013, 7-8 days

Jogjakarta is a quiet (by Indonesian standards) university town in the centre of the island of Java. It was the centre of ancient Buddhist and Hindu kingdoms and is the site of a number of world heritage listed ancient monuments, including Borobudur and Candi Prambanan.

It is envisaged that the tour would include:

- visits, with English speaking experts, to Borobudur, Candi Prambanan and other Hindu/Buddhist temple sites around Jogjakarta;
- an evening performance of the 'Ramayana' ballet at Candi Prambanan;
- a visit to the Sultan's palace and adjacent historical sites;

- an overnight tour into the hinterland around Jogjakarta, possibly to the Dieng plateau;
- batik shopping time;
- accommodation in a four star hotel/ cultural centre in a traditional Javanese village near Jogjakarta; and
- all fares, accommodation and meals.

Maximum number of participants:

20. Participants could, if they so wish, add on a stopover in Bali – the airfares would be covered by the Jogjakarta tour.

Cost: The total cost (subject to final booking confirmations) is expected to be around \$3,950 per person twin share. A single supplement of around \$500 would apply.

Expressions of interest: to 6230 0533 or email info@nationaltrustact.org.au



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Sicily – Come with us!

Around 8-10,000 years ago, as the world climate warmed, the people of Europe began to move into the newly developing environments. Sicily was becoming an island, cut off from the toe of the Italian peninsula by the rising sea level. Archaeology has shown us that the first settlements around this time, which we call the Neolithic, were along the coast of the island. This was a time of exploration, seafaring and island colonization. The people of Sicily clustered their settlements in areas where they could exploit the inland food resources but still maintain the familiar contacts with the sea. These people are known to us today as the Sicani. Following their arrival the history of Sicily shows that the island was of great interest to a host of other peoples including the Greeks, Romans, Vandals, Byzantines, Arabics and Normans.

Do you want to know more about Sicily, its archaeology, history and cultures? Then come with us on our World Heritage tour to Italy, leaving in September this year. We will travel the country and go back in time to these early people of Sicily as well as visiting the civilizations on the mainland which have influenced and formed the modern cultures of Italy today.

See the tours page, *Travels with the Trust*, for more details.



National History Challenge 2011 – ACT and National Young Historian

The February 2012 edition of *Heritage in Trust* included the essay by Abby Meadley who was the ACT winner of the 'Australian Heritage' section of the 2011 National History Challenge. This month we publish the essay by Ellen Trevanion from Narrabundah College in the ACT who won both the ACT and National Young Historian awards in the Challenge. Ellen's essay was entered in the category 'The Life and Times of John Curtin'.

The full text of Ellen's essay, including footnotes, bibliography and appendices is available on the Education page of the National Trust's website www.nationaltrustact.org.au.

For more information about the National History Challenge, and how to enter, click on to their website: www.historychallenge.org.au. Entries to the 2012 Challenge, on the theme of 'People and Consequences', close on 31 August.

John Curtin: Defining Moments?

Were the publication of John Curtin's article *The Task Ahead* and the "Cable Wars" defining moments in Australia's relationship with Great Britain?

With thanks to Hilary Brettell, a truly inspirational teacher

John Curtin is widely regarded as one of Australia's greatest Prime Ministers. In office from October, 1941, until his death in July, 1945, he led Australia through the darkest days of the Pacific War. Several of his decisions during this period are regarded as defining moments in Australia's relationship with Britain, particularly his decision to declare war on Japan independently, the publication of an article entitled *The Task Ahead* and his refusal to allow Australian troops to defend Burma rather than Australia. The historical evidence shows, however, that these events did not affect Anglo-Australian relations. Contrary to popular belief, Curtin's declaration was not the first independent declaration of war by an Australian government, *The Task Ahead* had no effect on Australian foreign policy with even Curtin stating it had been misinterpreted and the "Cable Wars" did not change

Curtin's opinion of Australia's place within the British Empire. These events did not, and do not, represent a defining moment in the history of Anglo-Australian relations.

On October 7th, 1941, John Curtin was sworn in as Prime Minister of Australia following the collapse of Menzies' UAP-Country Party coalition government. Two months later, Japanese forces attacked British Malaya and bombed Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, crippling a significant part of the United States' Pacific Fleet. On the 8th of December, Curtin announced that 'we are at war with Japan...because our vital interests are imperilled... We shall hold this country and keep it as a citadel for the British-speaking race'. A day later, on the 9th, the Governor-General, acting on behalf of the King, issued a formal declaration of war. The fact that Curtin declared war on Japan independently of Britain is sometimes described as a defining moment in Australian history. Contrary to popular belief, however, Australia's declaration of war against Japan was not the first it had made in its own right. A day before the formal declaration of war with Japan was signed, the Australian government declared war on Finland, Romania and Hungary on the advice of the British Secretary of State for the Dominions, Lord Cranborne. The British government had recommended an independent declaration and offered legal advice on how this could be done. Curtin's declaration of war also made it clear that Australia was a British nation and he appealed to Australia's British identity. This echoed the sentiments Robert Menzies had expressed on September 3rd, 1939, when he stated 'there can be no doubt that where Great Britain stands there stand the people of the entire British world'.

The first weeks of December brought a series of stunning Japanese successes, causing panic as Australians came to believe that they themselves would be threatened. On December 27th, Curtin published an article in *The Herald*, titled *The Task Ahead*. In a passage that is popularly regarded as a defining moment, he wrote:

'...we refuse to accept the dictum that the Pacific struggle must be treated as a subordinate segment of the general conflict....

'The Australian Government, therefore, regards the Pacific struggle as primarily one in which the United States and Australia must have the fullest say in the direction of the democracies' fighting plan.

'Without any inhibitions of any kind, I make it quite clear that Australia looks to America, free



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of any pangs as to our traditional links or kinship with the United Kingdom.

'We know the problems that the United Kingdom faces...but we know too, that Australia can go and Britain can still hold on'.

Many historians, such as W.F. Mandle and David Day, hold that this article represented a turning point in Australia's relationship with Britain, an idea that has gained wide acceptance. Day wrote in 2000 that Curtin's 'statement has since come to be regarded... as marking the point at which Australia came of age, breaking free of the historic bonds of empire to seek salvation with the Americans'. Curtin's article was not, however, the first assertion of Australian independence. On the contrary, two days later Curtin stated:

'There is no part of the Empire more steadfast in loyalty to the British way of living and British institutions than Australia. Our loyalty to His Majesty the King goes to the very core of our national life. It is part of our being...'

He also stated in private that close advisor Fred Shedden's suggestion, 'without any lessening of the bonds with the United Kingdom', would have been preferable to 'free of any pangs' and, much later, referred privately to the furore caused by his statement as a 'misunderstanding'. As Curtin himself made clear, both in public and in private, this article did not signify a dramatic, definitive change in Australian policy or in its relationship with Britain. Subsequent events also showed that, despite its portrayal as a turning point, the publication of *The Task Ahead* was not a defining moment in Australian history.

The "Cable Wars", fought over the deployment of Australian troops to Burma, are also popularly regarded as a defining moment in Australian history. The catalyst for the dispute was the fall of Singapore on February 15th, 1942, after a siege lasting fifteen days. The impregnable 'Fortress Singapore' had been the keystone of Australian defence policy since the 1920s and, with its fall, many in the Australian government believed that Australia's last defence against a Japanese invasion had been removed. On February 17th, two days after the surrender at Singapore, Curtin cabled Churchill to request that the Australian 6th and 7th Divisions in North Africa be returned to Australia to repel a potential Japanese invasion, rather than reinforce Java as the British High Command had originally intended. Archibald Wavell, the British commander in Java, cabled Churchill, advising that any reinforcements would come too late to make a difference. He recommended that the Australian troops be sent to Burma, which was under threat, or to Australia.

Late in the evening of February 17th, Richard Casey, the Australian Ambassador to the United States, asked if the diversion of 'two Australian divisions from Middle East... to India or Burma' would be possible. Very early the following morning, Page cabled Curtin, informing him that the Pacific War Council in London had concluded

that the 7th Australian Division, already embarked, should be sent to Burma 'until other troops are available from elsewhere', provided the Australian government agreed. He immediately followed this cable with another stating that, since

'the road for supplies to China must be kept open at all costs...[and] Australian troops...[are] the only body of troops that could possibly get to Burma in time...I stated that I would strongly recommend... that you should concur in this arrangement...'

Stanley Bruce, Australian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, also advised Curtin to agree to the proposal.

On February 19th, Curtin cabled London to inform Page that the Australian government would almost undoubtedly not consent to the planned diversion. He sent a confirmation on the 20th, irritated by Page's, and Lord Cranborne's, attempts to dissuade him and **suspicious that Page had not informed the British of the Australian government's opinion.** In response, Churchill, who had not yet appealed directly to Curtin, wrote:

'I suppose you realise that your leading division... is the only force that can reach Rangoon in time... you said that the evacuation of Singapore would be 'an inexcusable betrayal'... we therefore [put] the 18th Division and other important reinforcements into Singapore.... They were lost...

'Your greatest support in this hour of peril must be drawn from the United States... if you refuse to allow [the diversion]...a very grave effect will be produced upon the President...on whom you are so largely dependent. See especially the inclination of the United States to move major naval forces from Hawaii into the Anzac area'.

The cable was a clear attempt to coerce Curtin and the Australian government into agreeing to abide by the British government's decision. Churchill blatantly stated that a refusal to divert the 7th Division to Burma could result in the withdrawal of American support for Australia, a serious threat considering the perilous position the Australian government believed itself to be in.

Although Churchill had demanded an immediate answer, Curtin did not reply until the 22nd of February, two days after the receipt of Churchill's 'strongly worded request'. He reiterated his refusal, arguing that sending Australian troops to Burma would expose them to undue danger and that they were needed in Australia to repel a Japanese invasion. At 3:00pm that day, Curtin received a cable from Churchill, informing him:

'We could not contemplate that you would refuse our request and that of the President of the United States for the diversion...We therefore decided that the convoy should be temporarily diverted... [to Burma. There are]...a few days for the situation to develop and for you to review the position should you wish to do so...'

Bruce, who saw a copy of the cable in London, was furious that the troops had been diverted in spite of the Australian government's stated wishes, but counselled restraint, acknowledging that they were on the brink of 'a crisis in the relations between Australia and the United Kingdom...a first-class row'. Curtin replied, restating his main arguments and demanding the convoy be sent to Australia. Churchill backed down. A month later, Curtin allowed part of the 6th Division to garrison Colombo in Sri Lanka, which, following the loss of Burma, was under threat.

The "Cable Wars" were a remarkable episode in Anglo-Australian relations but their importance should not be overstated, particularly since they were not the first time Churchill and an Australian Prime Minister had argued over Australian troop deployments. Throughout the latter half of 1941, Churchill had tried to persuade first Menzies, then Fadden and finally Curtin to allow the 9th Division to remain in Tobruk. Like the argument over Tobruk, the "Cable Wars" did not change Curtin's opinion of the British Empire and Australia's place in it. In April 1942, barely two months after his dispute with Churchill, Curtin stated that 'Australia is a great bastion of Empire...Australia is proud of its sonship to the Motherland'. The dispute also had no effect on Australian foreign policy. In 1943, he stated that Australia needed 'the advantage of concerted Empire policy' in its future foreign policy and he appointed the Duke of Gloucester, the King's brother, to the post of Governor-General of Australia, an appointment that met with widespread public approval and outrage within his own party. The "Cable Wars" did not change Curtin's belief that Australia was British or that Britain should continue to play an integral part in shaping Australian foreign policy. They did not prompt serious discussions about the merits of separation or distancing from Britain and they were certainly not a defining moment in Australia's relationship with Britain.

The consistent nature of Australian policy with regard to Britain was made dramatically clear in 1944 when Curtin travelled to London for an Imperial Conference. On May 4th he stated in a speech: 'I am not afraid of being misjudged when I say that I am a supporter of, and believer in, the British Empire...'. More strikingly, he reflected that the war had 'heartened...our association, has strengthened...that association [the British Empire]... the greatest confraternity of governmental relations the world has yet witnessed', a statement that directly contradicts the modern belief that the Pacific War weakened Australia's relationship with Britain. At the conference in London, he proposed that there should be 'machinery...to provide for full and continuous consultation'. It is revealing that when Curtin gave his opinion on post-war international relations in a post-conference report to the Australian War Cabinet, he made no distinction between Australian foreign policy and the policy of the British Commonwealth as a whole, adding that Australia should be seen internationally as part of the British Empire.

Not only did Curtin intend to follow Imperial foreign policy, he also stated that 'the security of any part of the British Empire in the future will rest on...the system of collective security... [and] bilateral or multilateral planning'. This is clear evidence of his belief that, despite the events of 1941-2 and the fall of Singapore, the system of Imperial defence, and not an alliance with the United States, would remain a key part of Australian defence policy. Sir Ronald Cross, the British High Commissioner in Australia, cabled that he 'confidently...expect[ed] that cooperation in the future will be smoother, more sympathetic and pliant', adding that members of the press gallery had told him they considered Curtin 'as British as Churchill' and that Curtin's

'first act on resuming the reins of office was to... give them [the press gallery] a good drubbing on the ground that their papers gave insufficient publicity to the British share on the Western Front and gave too much space to the USA'.

The Imperial Conference, and subsequent events, clearly demonstrated that the disagreements between Churchill and Curtin in 1941 and 1942 did not cause a profound shift in Australia's relationship with Britain. On the contrary, Curtin believed that Australia should be internationally regarded as part of the British Empire and that the system of Imperial defence should be the foundation of post-war Australian defence, ideas identical to the policies of the Australian government throughout the inter-war period. John Curtin's advocacy of Imperial international policy and defence in 1944 demonstrates that neither his appeal to the United States or the "Cable Wars" were defining moments in Anglo-Australian relations.

John Curtin is remembered as one of Australia's greatest Prime Ministers and several of his decisions during the Pacific War are generally regarded as defining moments in the relationship between Australia and Great Britain. Particularly important are his decision to declare war on Japan independently of Britain, his article *The Task Ahead* and the argument with Churchill now known as the "Cable Wars". In reality, Australia declared war on Hungary, Romania and Finland on the advice of the British government before declaring war on Japan, *The Task Ahead* did not herald a change in Australia's relationship with Britain and the "Cable Wars" did not change Australia's commitment to Imperial defence or the British Empire. In 1944, Curtin advocated a post-war return to the policies Australia had followed in the years after the First World War. A staunch believer in the British Empire and the British way of life, John Curtin's term as Prime Minister did not change Australia's relationship with Britain. On the contrary, he, and many Australians, fought for the idea of a strong British Empire with Australia as 'a British land of one race and one tongue'.

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The next time you are in the South of England, more specifically Kent, you should get yourself off to Ightham Mote. It simply is the most romantic "English" building I have come across.

Described by the experts as "one of the most beautiful and interesting of English country houses", its construction began nearly 700 years ago. Between then and now the house has seen many changes and been owned by mediaeval knights, courtiers to Henry VIII and high-society Victorians. But it has always been a family home, not a great house or castle.

Tucked away, not far from Knole and Chartwell, I had not been aware of it until English friends told me it was a "must". So I headed off from London and in less than an hour I was at Sevenoaks travelling along narrow roads to Borough Green, then down a very narrow and picturesque lane. Suddenly I caught a glimpse of the house round a bend - there it was, floating in its moat, and lost in time.

All at once I was confronted with gothic windows, ragstone walls and Tudor ranges hanging over the water. It is an amazing concoction of 700 years of additions, extensions, renovations and re-stylings. It is quaintly English and you can imagine inhabitants fishing in the moat from overhanging windows, or emptying their slops, depending on how romantic you are.

Ightham Mote is a rare surviving example of a moated mediaeval manor house dating from the early part of the 14th century and said to be "the most complete small mediaeval manor house in the country". In the hands of the National Trust since 1985, it provides an amazing picture of architectural development over more than five centuries. Highlights include the picturesque courtyard, Great Hall, crypt, Tudor painted ceiling, and a Grade I listed dog kennel! Not only that, it is surrounded by peaceful gardens with an orchard, water features, lakes and woodland walks.

As you won't be starved for interest you also won't be starved for grub. There is a good Trust tearoom and plenty of shopping opportunities so do visit if you have a chance.



The National Trust (ACT) looks forward to hearing from Trust members who have visited overseas and Australian National Trust properties. Please send accounts and pictures (over 1MB as jpg or tiff) to Liz at info@nationaltrustact.org.au.

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