



*Stone tools in the paddocks (Photograph S Churchill 2019)*

### **Hidden in Plain Sight: Mugga Mugga Cottage and the forgotten history of Canberra**

This paper arose from an internship project undertaken with ACT Historic Places to extend the interpretation of Mugga Mugga cottage beyond the Curley family, the last family to occupy the cottage. Tracing the stories of the people who lived in this cottage from its earliest days reflected not only the history of the cottage but also of a district of successive identities - resource rich Aboriginal Country, a rural agricultural district and the site of the Federal Capital City.

Mugga Mugga Cottage (henceforth 'Mugga') is a stone cottage built by the Campbell family in about 1838. Robert Campbell took a selection on the Limestone Plains, now Canberra, in 1825. He and his descendants added to their land with successive grants and built cottages for their workers; Mugga cottage is one of these. Originally two-roomed, then four, a detached kitchen added at the rear and a slab skillion room on the side, this cottage grew according to the needs of the families who lived there.

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Figure 4: Map of Canberra c1845

*Limestone Plains ca. 1845 (Cropped from Baker's Australian County Atlas)*

Before Europeans occupied the land, the Limestone Plains were an attractive site rich in food and water resources for the Aboriginal inhabitants - stone flakes and tools can be found in the Mugga paddocks. Although European occupation had a devastating effect on the Aboriginal population, many remained on Country, caring for it while negotiating a vastly changed life. 'Queen Nellie', a local elder, noted in the early 1900s,

"Your law, I no think much of your law. You come here and take my land, kill my possum, my kangaroo, leave me starve. Only give me rotten blanket. Me take sheep or calf, you shoot me or put me in jail."

It is difficult to get more than brief biographical details for the earliest occupants of the cottage. The Campbell records are believed to be among the many rural occupation documents destroyed in the Garden Palace fire in Sydney in 1882 and written history focuses largely on the landowners. Also, oral histories can be contradictory - Samuel Shumack (from another Canberra settler family) places Richard Shumack there at a time when Sylvia Curley says the McPhersons lived there. It is entirely likely that more families lived at Mugga cottage than have been traceable so far. The first three families known to occupy the cottage (between 1838-1866) were from Scotland, sponsored by the Campbells as shepherds for the estate.

Records from the ship 'Asia' show that Ewan (Hugh) McPherson with his wife Isabella and at least three children, arrived from Ross and Cromarty in 1839. The McPhersons later moved to Ginninderra, where legend says he offered tobacco to a local Aboriginal man to stay away from his wife while he was away. They were followed at Mugga by the McLaughlin family, whose daughter Mary Anne was born there in 1844. One of the McLaughlin children was swept away in the Molonglo river in 1862; his body was located by an Aboriginal man who knew the river well. The McDonalds had a child born at Mugga, in 1845. The Campbells sponsored the immigration of between 60 and 70 Highland shepherds, such that until the late 1860s it was possible for a child in the district to reach the age of 12 speaking exclusively Gaelic.

The duties of shepherds were to keep the sheep in sight all day and enclose them overnight in pens. They also had to care for the lambs and, at shearing time, keep the sheep clean for delivery to the Duntroon woolshed. A shepherd's wages in 1841 were £30 per year (any son able to help with the sheep received £10). Rations included 7-10lb meat, 10lb flour, 2oz tea and 1lb sugar per week. Each shepherd could also keep a cow and cultivate two acres of land.



*The living area in the cottage (Photograph S Churchill 2019)*

According to Sylvia Curley, Charles Masters, John McPherson, Lachlan McPherson (not related) and Patrick Curley occupied the cottage between 1866-1880, at which time the two back rooms were added. Lachlan's teenage sister Kitty kept house, cooking in the main cottage as the kitchen was not yet built. These were the last shepherds in the cottage as fencing in the area was completed by 1880. It seems pertinent to note that the number of Missions and Reserves for Aboriginal people rose with the number of fences completed.

Joseph Mayo, a boundary rider, and his wife Elizabeth moved to Mugga in 1880 from Stonyhurst, in Mugga Lane. They had eight children, some of whom were born at Mugga. There is a family story that Elizabeth set up a rope between the newly built kitchen and the cottage to pull on and rock the baby's cradle.

Joseph Mayo died in 1895 as the result of an accident on his way back from dropping off a mob of sheep at Queanbeyan Railway Station. Samuel Shumack implied that a visit to the pub had taken place but the Curley family disputed this and a rift grew between them. The Campbells moved Elizabeth Mayo and her five living children to the Duntroon dairy, and Fred and Alice Warwick (Elizabeth Mayo's sister) moved with their children from the dairy to Mugga.

Fred and Alice's daughter Edith left an oral history in which she lamented that "Dad wouldn't let us take the horses to school." So they walked, first over Mt Mugga to Long Gully School and later to the Crossroads school, in Manuka. The Warwicks were very sociable, holding dances in the kitchen which was then one large room. The '1902' on the door was most likely carved by the Warwick family.

Arthur Wilden, the Campbell's coachman, and his family were the last Duntroon workers to live at Mugga. Their daughter Iris wrote about life in the cottage so we know that when the girls collected sticks each morning to light the bread oven they would see the Cooma mail train steaming down the valley, and that when it rained the girls walked to school barefoot, keeping their shoes dry

in their schoolbags. The oral histories of Edith Warwick, Iris Wilden and Sylvia Curley are rich sources and it seems poetic in such a vernacular site that so much information should come from the people who lived there.



*The view (East) from the front door (Photograph S Churchill 2019)*

Federation and the *Seat of Government Acceptance Act 1909* led to major change in the district, with Canberra being proclaimed the Federal Capital in 1913. Canberra has often been accused of being a 'city without a soul' as people see only the young capital city; Mugga Mugga Cottage shows otherwise, reflecting the rural and Aboriginal past over which the city was built.

### Susannah Churchill

If readers wish to visit or to follow up on Mugga Mugga Cottage today the website page can be found at <http://www.historicplaces.com.au/mugga-mugga-cottage>

#### BEQUESTS - HELP CONSERVE OUR HERITAGE

A bequest to National Trust of Australia (ACT) will help to safeguard and preserve our heritage for future generations.

We sincerely hope that you consider making a bequest to the NT(ACT).

#### Contact

Email: [info@nationaltrustact.org.au](mailto:info@nationaltrustact.org.au)

Telephone: 6230 0533

Your support for the Trust is deeply appreciated.

All information will be treated as "Private and Personal In Confidence"

## ACT Trust News

### President's Update

Dear Members

How the world has changed since my last report just a few short months ago! In common with most organisations, the coronavirus COVID-19 has had an enormous impact on the operations of the National Trust, and this seems likely to continue for a while yet.



Very sadly, we had to abandon temporarily our popular program of talks, walks and tours. At the time of writing we are looking at how we can resume these activities as soon as possible while ensuring participants' safety.

The Trust office has been closed during the crisis and we are looking at opening it up again gradually, consistent with government requirements.

The Council and its committees have continued to meet regularly, and we have all come to appreciate the convenience of video conferencing. We are looking to redevelop the Trust website to make it more accessible and interactive. Stay tuned for further developments.

Despite the difficulties caused by the virus, the work of the Trust in promoting the preservation of our priceless heritage goes on. In a recent submission to the National Capital Authority, the Trust affirmed its long-standing opposition to the proposed West Basin development, which, if it proceeds, will see a despoliation of the magnificent and serene foreshore of Lake Burley Griffin with the construction of thousands of apartments.

We are monitoring closely a number of other local developments which appear to threaten key aspects of Canberra's heritage. These include: an apartment complex at the base of Mt Ainslie which may impact a site with significant indigenous heritage values, and possible removal of Cargill's Dairy Cottage in Fyshwick.

Meanwhile, we are still awaiting a decision on the heritage listing of Canberra, which has now been under assessment for nearly a decade. The results of the review of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* are expected shortly and we hope it will recommend significant enhancements to the current legislation, which has failed us from a heritage perspective.

On a positive note, we have been gratified by the very warm public response to our nomination for heritage listing of Canberra's first aerodrome at Dickson. Thank you to the many individuals who assisted in the preparation of the nomination, especially Council members Jane Goffman and John Tucker, and the 3 Squadron Royal Australian Air Force Association.

The ACT Assembly elections are rapidly approaching, and Council is finalising its election 'wish list'. Our key priorities will include creation of a new heritage listing category of local heritage significance, a resumption of financial assistance to support the operations of the Trust, and more resources to clear up the enormous backlog of heritage assessments.

The Trust AGM will be held on 5 November 2020 at the Albert Hall, see details elsewhere in this edition of *Heritage in Trust*. I hope to see as many of you there as possible, subject to any virus-related restrictions in place at the time.

Finally, on behalf of the members of Council I express my thanks to Ian Oliver who has recently retired as ACTNT Vice President. He will be sorely missed in this role but I am pleased that he has indicated he will continue to be an active contributor to the Trust.

Kind regards

**Gary Kent**

### Business Development Committee Report

The Business Development Committee continues to explore and develop opportunities for the Trust to increase its revenue, in support of the Strategic Plan. On the Strategic Plan, Council authorised a minor update to the document recently to delay later phases of it, and a copy of the updated plan is available on our website.

Since the last *Heritage in Trust*, the Trust has received its first donation from the Canberra Southern Cross Club as part of its membership of the Community Rewards Program. While it was only a small donation, we would like to thank the Club and those members and supporters of the Trust who have signed up to the program, nominated the Trust, and then used the Club's facilities, which generates the donation. Our application for the 2021 financial year has been successful and we are pleased that we can continue to participate, particularly as COVID-19 restrictions ease. Our participation in the Southern Cross Club's Community

Rewards Program was based on a suggestion from committee member Andrew Freeman – thanks Andrew!

The Committee is actively working on a number of other initiatives to raise our revenue. Our focus areas for the 2021 financial year include:

- Growing the membership of the Trust (both individual and corporate)
- Engaging the corporate sector to determine suitable approaches for increased value exchange, including via donations, sponsorships or other programs
- Investigating the potential growth of using our tax deductibility status to create tax deductibility trusts for conservation of our heritage
- Other suitable projects to increase the Trust's revenue.

Any member or supporter of the Trust with ideas or initiatives that support the Committee's purpose is invited to contact the Chair of the Committee, Gary Watkins, who is also the Trust's Secretary ([secretary@nationaltrustact.org.au](mailto:secretary@nationaltrustact.org.au)).

**Gary Watkins**  
**Chair Business Development Committee**

### New members

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

Ms Jennifer Barnett  
Mr Aaron Dinnage  
Ms Helen Dowsett  
Miss Kerryn Roder & Dr Greg Fealy  
Ms Jodie Hadlow  
Mr Scott Pagan & Ms Maxine James  
Mrs Sarah & Mr Matthew Johnston  
Mr Andrew Langford  
Mrs Lorelle D'Arcy & Mr Michael Parsons  
Mrs Kaye Paterson  
Mr Michael & Mrs Heather Rosenberg  
Mr Timothy Stewart & Ms Monica Van Wensveen

### In Memoriam

**Robin Setchell** - 1940-1 Mar 2020. Wife of Garth (Hon Life Member). A National Trust ACT member since 1980, Robin assisted Garth on many tours and events for the National Trust (ACT) and U3A (ACT).

**Eddie Vestjens** - 1954-10 Apr 2020. Husband of Leonie Turner. Eddie and Leonie, long-term members of the Trust, have both volunteered and supported the Trust over many years.

## Recipient of the National Trust ACT University of Canberra Prize 2019 – Lisa Russ



Some of my first memories for a love of heritage were between the ages of 3 and 5. I was captivated by the land and remnants of old log buildings on the property my parents had bought in eastern Ontario, and by my first visit to the McMichael Canadian Art Gallery. The art of the Group of Seven captured the spirit of a land I distinctly

identified with the property I grew up on, with Canada, and with something wholly internal within me.

The farm is no longer in the family and I'm a long way from the nation of my birth, but no matter where I am, that spark of the tangible and intangible invoking the spirit of a land, nation and my place within it has remained salient.

When I moved away from Canada, I lost a part of myself. Finding my way in Australia played a large role in bringing me into the world of heritage conservation. Volunteering in museums, enrolling in the Bachelor of Heritage, Museums and Conservation at the University of Canberra, and taking as many internships as I could within the ACT's heritage institutions, helped give me back a sense of purpose and identity, making Australia equally my home.

My interest in heritage conservation is varied. I have worked on paintings, textiles and a variety of small items made up of several materials such as metal and plastic. I love the variety of materials, the challenges each brings, and the human stories that the objects hold. I also love the ability to play a part in the continuation of the object and the telling of its story to the next generation.

In 2019, my honours research focused on a busy business-based archive containing a carpet collection in need of care. There were concerns the collection was deteriorating under the need for handling and access, making it vulnerable to deterioration from the environment and stakeholders. This directly affected the collection's ability to do its job in communicating the

archive's needs in the procurement process for new carpets. To address these concerns required identifying both the collection's and archive's needs through object reports on a subsection of the object collection and interviews with staff. This informed a risk management assessment and the creation of a sample enclosure system that worked to improve/balance carpet preservation needs with the needs of stakeholders. My honours research assisted me in seeing the broader context of my work as a conservator beyond both the lab and heritage sector and how my work can make a difference to both the objects and those handling them.

In my PhD I am investigating the presence of triphenyl phosphate (TPP) in heritage collections and the risks to those entrusted with their care. TPP is a chemical with many advantageous uses, including acting as a lubricant, plasticiser and fire retardant in a variety of materials,

especially plastics. These plastics have found their way into heritage collections. However, there are questions being raised around TPP's role in collection deterioration as well as its potential environmental and health effects.

Receiving the *National Trust of Australia (ACT) Prize 2019*, plays an important part in supporting my PhD research. It will assist in the purchase of materials needed for testing for TPP. In researching the chemicals that are detected within our heritage collections, I hope to contribute to conservation within Australia through both the ongoing care and maintenance of our heritage collections and the health and safety of heritage professionals.

**Lisa Russ**

## Heritage Happenings

Planning applications and heritage issues continue despite the close down of many industries and businesses. Recent issues that the National Trust has been involved with include:

### **Canberra's First Aerodrome**

After substantial research a nomination to the ACT Heritage Register for the first aerodrome for Canberra (in Dickson) was prepared by Jane Goffman with support from John Tucker and others. There is some evidence likely to remain of the aerodrome, which was also the site of an air crash.

### **Dickson Common Ground**

A DA is currently being considered for an ACT Common Ground development where a concrete marker for the aerodrome is believed to have been located. The need to locate the marker and conserve it has been emphasized by the NT.

### **West Basin Development**

This is being driven by the City to Lake proposed development which will see an infill of residential development. The main concerns from the NT view has been to prepare an updated heritage assessment of the specific area so all heritage issues are identified and considered before planning is finalized. The key issues were: the views of the Brindabellas over the lake from Commonwealth Avenue identified in a 2009 survey by the NT as one of the significant views in Canberra, the area of the Golden Sun Moth near City Hill, and the

possibility of Aboriginal and geological evidence in the area but not recently investigated.

### **Giles Street Development Kingston**

An eight-storey apartment building is proposed in Giles St. adjacent to the heritage nominated former Kingston Post Office. It would appear that two planning controls exist for the area, with the Kingston Precinct Plan restricting height to four storeys, but the Territory Plan permitting more.

### **Setting for heritage places**

The Kingston Development above and the proposed DV368 (Northbourne Avenue) raise a major concern with urban planning and an appropriate urban context for heritage places. While places can be listed on the ACT Heritage Register, the controls under the ACT *Heritage Act 2004* are restricted to the boundaries of the listed site. This means what can go next to a heritage place is only controlled by general planning controls. We already have multi-storey buildings beside low rise heritage buildings, which often results in poor urban design and heritage outcomes. There needs to be better consideration for the urban design and setting around heritage places.

### **Cargill's Dairy Cottage Causeway**

Although not heritage listed, it is an important part of ACT history and should be retained as part of urban renewal and adaptive reuse. The future of it is under threat with the possible redevelopment of the causeway.

## Gold Creek Homestead

It is pleasing to see that the retention and adaptive reuse of Gold Creek Homestead is part of the proposed tender to redevelop the site. This site went through an effective community consultation and is a good outcome.

## Canberra Brickworks and Kingston Powerhouse Precinct

These have been slowly evolving and we await

outcomes. We hope heritage will be respected and integrated into urban design.

## Australian War Memorial

This is now with the Parliamentary Works Committee and the NT has expressed concern with the proposed demolition of the award winning and significant Anzac Hall and the proposed changes in front of the main entry.

Eric Martin AM

## Walks, Talks and Tours

There is not a lot to report in this issue of Heritage in Trust for the obvious reason that we have not been able to offer any tours, talks and walks due to the COVID-19 situation. Unfortunately, we had to cancel several Heritage Walks from March onwards as well as the coach tour to Old Graham. The Canberra and Region Heritage Festival was cancelled including several events we had planned. Now that the restrictions have started to ease, we will monitor the situation very carefully and recommence activities as soon as possible.



*Social distancing in Jerrabomberra Wetlands (Photograph Mary Johnston)*

**Heritage Walks** will be the first activity to start. Numbers on the walks will be limited and other measures will be taken to ensure we are all COVID-19 safe. With the co-operation of our guides, we will initially run walks twice, with a limit on bookings of 15 people on each, so that we can maintain good physical distancing, even while listening to the guide. See our COVID-19 safety message for Heritage Walks below.

Meanwhile, we have been sending out a monthly Heritage Walks Update to over 400 people. These have included ideas and directions for 'do-it-yourself' walks, such as Jerrabomberra Wetlands and along the ACT/NSW border. If you would like to receive the monthly Update, email [heritagewalksact@gmail.com](mailto:heritagewalksact@gmail.com).

Did you know that the Trust has produced tour brochures of many areas of Canberra for DIY walks and drives? You can access these at <https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/heritage-tour-brochures/> and explore your local area.

**Other tours and talks** are on hold for the present. We do not believe that coach tours will be feasible for some time. Many of our members are in the higher risk category for COVID-19 and may not be comfortable travelling with a busload of others for a few hours. We may opt to run some self-drive tours to suitable destinations once the weather warms up. We will also look at holding some talks again later in the year, noting that this will depend on the availability of suitable venues where physical distancing can be maintained.

Looking ahead, we invited expressions of interest for a six-day tour to **King Island and the Yarra Valley** in February 2021 in the hope that the situation will have improved by then. We received such a good response that we have managed to organise a second tour to run from 28 January to 3 February. Those who have already expressed interest will have the option of joining either tour. If there are still places available, we will advertise again for further expressions of interest.

Thank you to those who have submitted photos for possible inclusion in next year's National Trust desk diary. I understand that some of those from the ACT will be included in the diary so please consider purchasing one! See page 13 for more information about the 2021 diary.

We have been fortunate in the ACT, to have managed the COVID-19 situation with a small number of infections and very few deaths. Let us hope we can soon resume some of our usual activities.

Stay safe!

**Mary Johnston**  
Chair, Tours and Events Committee

## COVID-19 safety for Heritage Walks

Please check the current ACT health guidelines on protecting yourself and others before booking on a walk. Please note that you must cancel if you are unwell (a refund will be provided on request); you should maintain physical distancing of 1.5 metres from other people during the walk and observe good hygiene to prevent the spread of germs. If required, your contact details will be provided to health authorities. Hand sanitiser will be available before and during the walk.

### The Virus and the Volcano – a self-guided walk

It took an easing of the coronavirus restrictions recently for a friend and I to visit an extinct volcanic site in Canberra for the first time, only a short distance from my home. I have lived in Canberra for 60 years and in all that time it had remained as good as unknown to me. Had the virus not come amongst us we, or at least I, may never have visited this wonderful site.

The site is Mount Painter, on the southern edge of Cook.



*Black Mountain, the Lake and the Parliamentary triangle (Mary Johnston)*

Mount Painter is one of a number of extinct volcanoes which rumbled in south-eastern Australia some 450-500 million years ago, before being swamped by the sea. The mountain's detritus helped make the Canberra region the fertile basin it is; the developing forests which comprise the National Arboretum sit on the mountain's southern flanks and benefit especially.

The Ngunnawal people inhabited the heavily forested area long before Europeans arrived, but since the mid-1800s, tree felling and grazing resulted in the mountain becoming known as Round, and later, Bald Hill. In the 1870s its slopes were grazed by cattle and sheep. Today, even though the area has been part of Canberra's Nature Park since 1996, and excellent rehabilitation work has been done by the Friends of Mount Painter, it remains very much an open area with scattered endangered trees, plants and grasses.



*Mt Painter trig station, Black Mountain and the Lake (Mary Johnston)*

Mount Painter is 732m high and is a great 20 minute uphill climb from the dirt car park off Coulter Drive in Belconnen. Some parts of the climb are quite steep and there are three "false" summits, and cleverly placed huge water tanks, before one arrives at a stunning 360° view overlooking the south-western sweep of the ACT. On the brilliantly clear but windy day we were there, the magnificent Brindabella mountain spine commanded nearly half the horizon: a truly awesome panoramic view, well worth the climb. Even in these days of unbelievable events it was impossible to imagine that most of it was once under the ocean!



*The Molonglo Valley and Brindabellas (Mary Johnston)*

Some 100 or so other happy visitors were also enjoying, as we were, a volcanic escape from the virus shutdown restrictions.

On returning, as a bonus, two slab-sided buildings, Rosebud Cottage and Bells Cottage, some outbuildings



and old machinery and appliances - the remains of the original apiary and orchard/farm associated with Mount Painter - can be viewed in nearby Skinner Street in Cook.

Mount Painter may be approached from a number of directions. The National Trust (ACT) features the mountain in its heritage walks.

## A contented National Trust member

You can find more information on National Trust (ACT) heritage walks here:

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/heritage-tour-brochures/> and more information on Rosebud Cottage here: <https://www.canberratracks.act.gov.au/heritage-trails/track-6-belconnen/rosebud-cottage>

## NSW National Trust properties

All National Trust properties have been closed for several months because of COVID-19. However, if you are venturing away from Canberra, you may soon be able to visit some National Trust properties in other States and Territories. NSW has just announced the following:

“As of Friday 3 July 2020, you can visit the following National Trust properties:

- [S.H. Ervin Gallery.](#)
- [Everglades House & Gardens.](#)
- [Norman Lindsay Gallery.](#)
- [Old Government House.](#)

At the moment, the rest of our properties remain closed until further notice.

[Some things have changed.](#) We are asking our visitors to pre-purchase tickets for timed entry via Eventbrite, which will help us ensure we maintain a safe physical distance for everyone exploring our heritage places. We're also asking you to share your contact information with us when you visit so we can do our bit for tracing. You can read all the details of our reopening including our Terms & Conditions of Entry [here.](#)”

If you are travelling interstate, check the National Trust website ([www.nationaltrust.org.au](http://www.nationaltrust.org.au)) and check each state for information on places that are open to visit.

## Heritage Diary July to November 2020

A selection of heritage-related events that may be of interest to members (only one at time of print!)

Date and time	Event and location	Organiser	Contact
Tuesday 29 September	<b>Exhibition Opening: 'Out of this World: Australia in the space age'</b> From mid-century fashion and flying saucer societies to early satellites and rocket playgrounds ... how did the space age capture the imagination of a nation and its people?	NAA	For more details, go to <a href="https://www.naa.gov.au/visit-us/events-and-exhibitions">https://www.naa.gov.au/visit-us/events-and-exhibitions</a>

Note: NAA is the National Archives of Australia. Information on events run by organisations other than the National Trust (ACT) is provided in good faith, but readers should check dates and times with the contacts indicated above.

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**The 45th Annual General Meeting of the National Trust of Australia (ACT) will be held on Thursday 5 November 2020, 5.30pm for 6.00pm (TBC)**

**Venue: Albert Hall**

Formal notice of the AGM will follow closer to the event once details are finalised.

Two matters are brought to the attention of members:

- As per the current Constitution, half of the Council will retire but each person is eligible for renomination. Members are invited to nominate persons for election to Council. Nominations must be made and seconded in writing and signed by current members of the Trust accompanied by signed consent from the nominee. Nomination forms can be obtained from the Trust office, phone 02 6230 0533 or email [info@nationaltrustact.org.au](mailto:info@nationaltrustact.org.au), or online and must reach the office 30 days before the AGM.
- It is proposed that an updated constitution be put to members for acceptance at the meeting. More details will be provided with the formal notice of meeting which will follow closer to the event.

#### Guest speaker is to be advised

Further information at [www.nationaltrust.org.au/act](http://www.nationaltrust.org.au/act)

## Support your Trust through the Canberra Southern Cross Club's Community Rewards Program.

The Trust is pleased to advise members and the community at large that it has been successful in an application to join the Canberra Southern Cross Club's Community Rewards Program. Under the program, Southern Cross Club members have 7.5% of their spend on food and drink at the club donated to a community group of their choosing.

The Trust is now available as a selection for members of the club to choose. Members of the club, who need not be members of the Trust, may sign up and nominate the Trust through this link.

<https://cscmarketing.wufoo.com/forms/zgrb75p0q1gjqj/>

Additional information on the program is available at [csc.com.au/rewards](https://csc.com.au/rewards).

Members and the community at large are encouraged to sign up to the program and nominate the National Trust of Australia (ACT) in the knowledge that when they visit the club, they are also supporting the Trust.

## New ACT Heritage Protection Laws

All of us will be aware of the tragic losses of priceless heritage assets due to neglect, natural disaster or other mishap, but it is especially distressing when the destruction of our heritage is the result of deliberate human action. The most recent and galling example of this is the obliteration of ancient Aboriginal sites in Western Australia's Jukaan Gorge by a mining company: needless, tragic and utterly unacceptable.



Scarred tree (Photograph Jon Rhodes)

Here in the ACT we are not immune from nefarious activities which damage or forever remove our heritage. A notorious and egregious case was the deliberate chopping down in 2017 and 2018 of two of a cluster of seventeen old growth European trees in Tuggeranong. They bore the scarring of deliberate bark removal by Aboriginal people to build shelters and other items for use in their daily lives.

The cluster, identified in 1991 by a team of archaeologists, was on the ACT Heritage Places Register. In the words of Peter Dowling, who was part of the 1991 investigative team, and Nick Swain,

President of the Canberra and District Historical Society, the trees were 'the physical evidence of this cultural practice which, with the settlement by Europeans, now no longer exists.' A Government inquiry did not identify the culprits and concluded that the felling was likely the result of 'genuine and unintentional administrative error'. Nevertheless, it provided clear evidence of weaknesses in ACT heritage laws. Again, in the words of Dowling and Swain:

*The removal of the trees is of serious concern to local indigenous groups as well as the National Trust (ACT) and the Canberra and District Historical Society. The unauthorised removal of these heritage trees raises serious issues about the adequacy of existing administrative mechanisms - clearly these mechanisms have failed, and the heritage loss has been significant. This situation could be seen as part of a wider malaise in heritage protection - poor and under-resourced administration which, through lack of capacity and/or will to enforce heritage protections, results in the loss of the community's heritage. Much improved practical and fail-safe protections are needed, and it is the government's responsibility to implement such protections.*



Scarred tree (Photograph Jon Rhodes)

Thankfully, the ACT Government listened to the public outcry following this destruction of an important part of our local heritage and introduced a Heritage

Amendment Bill which passed through the Assembly and took effect on 26 February this year.

The new provisions, as described by the Government, provide 'a more flexible and responsive system of heritage directions and compliance notifications to better protect our heritage'. They strengthen 'the way damage to heritage places and objects can be dealt with to both deter people from doing damage and to make them responsible for repairing it'. They expand 'the range of tools and processes available to tackle minor and moderate damage, as well as more serious harm.'

Key provisions of the new legislation confer new powers on the ACT Heritage Council to:

- direct people (including owners, occupiers and tradespeople) to repair any damage if it can be repaired
- give the owner, occupier or a person whose work affects a heritage place or object a heritage direction when there is a serious and imminent threat to the heritage significance of a place or object.

In addition, a new infringement notice scheme enables authorised ACT Government officers to issue immediate fines of \$1,000 to an individual or \$5,000 to a corporation for damage to heritage places or objects or Aboriginal places or objects, regardless of whether they can be repaired.

In the future, the Government promises that a heritage compliance policy will be released 'to guide the Heritage Council and compliance officers when to use which compliance tool - a direction, infringement notice and/or prosecution - or whether to use more than one.'



The 'Spook Tree' (Photograph Jon Rhodes)

While the passage of these laws is too late to save Tuggeranong's heritage trees, they are a very welcome

step to helping ensure that the Territory's heritage assets are given statutory protection, and wanton or negligent acts of destruction will no longer go unpunished and, where possible, any damage must be repaired.

The National Trust welcomes these laws but recognises that their ultimately successful administration will depend on adequate resourcing. Also, as before, public vigilance is essential to ensure episodes of heritage vandalism are brought to Government attention.

**Gary Kent**

## Joint Heritage Nomination: Original Canberra Aerodrome at Dickson

In June, the Trust and 3 Squadron RAAF Association jointly nominated the archaeological remains of three historic landing ground structures at the original Canberra Aerodrome in Dickson for heritage listing.

The story of the first official purpose-built aviation facility in the ACT, which operated between 1924 and 1926, is tinged with tragedy. On 11 February 1926 a plane went down, killing its two occupants in Canberra's first fatal air crash.



Diagram of Canberra Aerodrome and crash site based on the digitised 1926 FCC survey (ACTmapi Historic Plans) and photos taken of the crash by W J Mildenhall

The aerodrome first appears on Walter Burley Griffin's final plan and blueprint, drawn in 1918. It stretched from Dickson Library to the western half of Dickson playing fields, and the library bears a plaque that "marks the site of Canberra's first aerodrome". In 1923, the Department of Defence commandeered the site from Edward Shumack, taking over the southern section of the soldier settlement block granted to him on returning from the Western Front in 1919. By 1924, the land was leased, fenced and marked out.



*Observer and ground crew winding the propeller of a RAAF De Havilland DH9 at Canberra Aerodrome in 1925 (NAA A3560, 1519)*

When the aerodrome was operating - on what is now the community precinct that includes Dickson Pool next to Antill Street - aircraft were guided by an 18-metre, whitewashed concrete ring in the centre of the landing ground, with whitewashed concrete markers made up of two 7m arms at each of the four corners. These tangible remnants form the link to the aerodrome's historic use, and research points to the existence of three significant items on unleased land: the central ring, plus the two easternmost lockspits, which warrant urgent investigation.



*1925 RAAF De Havilland DH9 at the original Canberra Aerodrome in Dickson, with the old Yass Road in the background (NAA A3560, 1526)*

After a relatively slow year in 1924, when the aerodrome acted as the entry point for visiting dignitaries and was an emergency landing site for the first commercial passenger flights between Sydney and

Adelaide, the aerodrome became a busy launching pad for aerial photography used for mapping and essential aerial surveying by the Federal Capital Commission. RAAF flights were dispatched from Richmond in NSW to do this.

Sadly, one of these flights crashed on Thursday, 11 February 1926 on a mission to survey the Murrumbidgee. It was piloted by Duntroon's champion athlete, Philip Mackenzie Pitt, with William Edward Callander as his observer and aerial photographer. The plane stalled while executing a turn over the northwest corner of the aerodrome to enter its final approach. Pitt was killed on impact, but Callander was taken to Canberra Hospital at Acton with fatal injuries, dying the same night. Callander's grave at St John's has now been marked, but Pitt's grave remains unadorned.



*1920 Graduation photo of Philip Mackenzie Pitt (RMC Army Museum, Duntroon)*

The main artefact of the crash is a brass frame, the bombsight of the DH9, which ended up in the hands of Harry Aldridge, a groom at Duntroon. It was made into the frame of a portrait he gave to the Redpaths at Christmas that year, which appears to contain his picture and was inscribed on the back. The frame is on display at Curtin, at the Canberra & District Historical Society's premises.

(continues next page...)



*1926 Crash of RAAF De Havilland DH9 at Canberra Aerodrome, photo by W J Mildenhall (NAA A3560, 439)*

The detailed survey of the aerodrome was discovered in the National Archives in 2018, and digitised to high resolution, together with the Mildenhall photos of the crash. The wealth of information discovered has made it possible to locate the remnants of the aerodrome with a high degree of confidence. Aerial photographs taken in 1950 and 1958 confirm that roughly half of the ring was still intact at the time that Dickson's stormwater channel was being built. Together with the history of land use and development for the area, recent finds, such as scattered surface fragments and visible portions of the southeast lockspit near Dickson Wetlands, give us reason to believe that ground penetrating radar will yield incontrovertible evidence of tangible remnants of the three main landing ground structures we know were there.

Provisional registration by the ACT Heritage Council should make that next step possible.

Jane Goffman

## National Trust of Australia (ACT) Heritage Awards 2020

The Awards Presentation Night will be held later in the year.

Venue and date to be advised

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/news/national-trust-of-australia-act-heritage-awards-2020/>

## 'ODE TO THE BUSH'



The 2021 National Trust Desk Diary is a celebration of the Australian Bush - in all its meaning and diversity, its stories and contradictions, its resilience and its fragility. From transcendental beauty to rugged harshness. Here is a collection of images and stories from across the country - from the National Trust in each state, from the generous contributions of private individuals and artists comes this unique collection that is our 'Ode to the Bush'. Old images and new, from National Park to farm land, from coast to mountain, from desert to rainforest, from wild life to the wide open skies, this is a uniquely Australian collection to interest and inspire.

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*When visiting the National Library don't forget to take your membership card! National Trust ACT members can access the Friends of the National Library lounge and receive a 10% discount in the NLA Bookshop!*



## Membership Rates as at 1 January 2019

Joining fee	\$35
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Household	\$105
Household Senior	\$95
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<b>Life Membership</b>	
Single	\$1,662.50
Household	\$1,837.50

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### Normal Opening Times:

9.30am to 3.00pm Tuesday to Thursday

**Patron:** The Hon. Margaret Reid AO

**President:** Gary Kent

**Secretary:** Gary Watkins

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**Council:** Linda Roberts, Graham Carter, John Tucker, Eric Martin, Trevor Wilson, Jane Goffman, Marianne Albury-Colless, Peter Dowling

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### Benefits for National Trust Members:

- + Reciprocal visiting arrangements within Australia, plus 19 NT organisations worldwide, including the UK and Scottish National Trusts. See [www.nationaltrust.org.au/international-places/](http://www.nationaltrust.org.au/international-places/)
- + Member rates on shop items which are for sale online or through the ACT Office.
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- + Access to the *Friends of the NLA* lounge and discounts at the NLA bookshop.
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- + Access to archival information held in the Trust office.
- + Access to events and other benefits arising from collaboration with organisations having similar interests to the Trust.
- + Concession entry to ACT Historic Places and 10% discount at Lanyon Homestead shop.

## About *Heritage in Trust*

*Heritage in Trust* ISSN 2206-4958 is published three times a year, in March, July and November, as an electronic magazine specifically for ACT members. This edition was produced and edited by Garry Richards and Liz McMillan, assisted by Mary Johnston, Linda Roberts and Karen Moore.

The editor invites articles and letters from Trust members with an interest in the heritage of the ACT and these should be addressed to The Editor, *Heritage in Trust*, at [info@nationaltrustact.org.au](mailto:info@nationaltrustact.org.au).

### Deadlines for copy

- mid February (for March issue)
- mid June (for July issue)
- mid October (for November issue)

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