



*12 Yapunyah Street, O'Connor. Harry Seidler and Associates (1955; demolished 2007) (Zwar house)*

## Canberra's early mid-century modern houses

This article touches on a dozen mid-century houses designed or completed in Canberra before 1956.

The mid-century period for modernist architecture is usually regarded as spanning the period 1945 to 1970. In Canberra, however, modernist architecture was slower to take off and building activity after the war was hampered by a shortage of building materials.

Local architecture firm Moir + Sutherland Architects was responsible for some of the earliest modernist houses built in Canberra during the 1950s. The first was in Tennyson Crescent, Forrest, for Hans and Maria Meli of Meli and Eglitis Building Company. Construction was of concrete blockwork with a flat wooden roof covered with bituminous felt and aluminium foil. This was followed in 1953 by a simple, skillion roofed house on La Perouse Street in Griffith.

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*The National Trust of Australia (ACT) acknowledges the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional owners of the land where we live, learn and work.*

Harry Seidler's house in Deakin for young Department of External Territories cadet Ivor Bowden, designed in 1952 and completed in 1954, arguably marks the beginning of Canberra's mid-century period. The house is an early example of the post-war international style with its butterfly roof and spatial interplay with split level interior, open-riser steps, retaining walls extending into the landscape, contrasting textures of plain smooth and rough masonry wall surfaces, and large sheets of glass. While the house has been modified over the years, its structural fabric and butterfly roof remain. The original house was an excellent example of Seidler's early work in Australia and was probably his first commission outside the Sydney area. It is one of only two detached houses that Seidler designed in Canberra—the other was for young plant physiologist John Zwar in 1955.

The Zwar House in O'Connor (demolished in 2007) was based on a compact, square module influenced by Bauhaus aesthetics, with a mono-pitch roof and split-level planning to accommodate the slope of the site. Its simplicity had the benefit of reducing costs. John Zwar worked at the CSIRO, and it is the establishment of CSIRO and ANU that played an important role in bringing academics and scientists to Canberra, and with them fresh ideas about how to deal with their built environment. This phenomenon is explored in detail by Milton Cameron in his book *Experiments in Modern Living: Scientists' Houses in Canberra 1950-1970*.

Two important modernist houses were designed by Melbourne architect Robin Boyd for academics arriving at the newly established ANU: historian Manning Clark; and virologist Frank Fenner.

Robin Boyd was the first to articulate the idea of a Melbourne interpretation of modern architecture in his book *Victorian Modern* (1947), where he identified the early stages of a Melbourne regional style, seen in the work of Roy Grounds and in some outer suburban bush houses of the 1930s. These houses were typically narrow, linear, single-storey dwellings with a low-pitched gable or skillion roof, exposed rafters and wide eaves. Walls were generally bagged or painted brick, with large areas of glass and regularly spaced timber mullions.

The presence of the Melbourne regional style in Canberra is unusual. It came about first through the movement of Melbourne academics and public servants to Canberra in the 1950s, initially with the establishment of the ANU and then with the slow but eventual transfer of government departments to Canberra.

Melbourne émigrés often sought the services of Melbourne architects. The Manning Clark House, at 11 Tasmania Circle, Forrest, was designed by Robin Boyd in 1952 for Professor Manning Clark and his wife, the linguist and historian Dymphna Clark. The house is typical of the post-war Melbourne regional style and Boyd's 'Peninsula House Design', with its low-pitched gable roof, widely projecting eaves and large areas of timber framed glazing. Two separate parallel wings divide the living and sleeping areas, which are connected by a glass-walled passage and entrance. There are courtyards on both sides of this passage, one facing north and the other (the main entrance) facing south.

The Fenner House was designed by Boyd in 1952–53 for Professor Frank Fenner and his wife Bobbie, and built by Karl Schreiner in 1953–54. The house was one of Boyd's first commissions not built to a tight budget and remains one of Canberra's best examples of the post-war Melbourne regional style with its long unbroken roofline, widely projecting eaves and large areas of timber framed glazing. The building consists of two parallel, offset wings facing north-north-east, which represent two living zones: the bedrooms, bathrooms and study in the rear wing and the eating and entertainment areas in the front wing. The two wings are linked by an enclosed, glass-walled gallery.



8 Monaro Crescent, Red Hill. Robin Boyd (1952) (Fenner House)

The other early post-war Melbourne regional house Boyd designed in Canberra was in Deakin for Dr Hilary Roche. The house differs from the bi-nuclear planning employed in the Clark and Fenner houses although it, too, is typical of the post-war Melbourne regional style. The house is a good example of Boyd's more economical designs from the early 1950s—several of his suburban Melbourne



houses from this period were also linear, single-storey designs sited on narrow blocks.

Several other houses designed and built in the period from 1952–54 are worthy of note.

Little is known about Latvian émigré architect Janis Evalds Vitols, who designed a post-war international house in Torres Street, Red Hill, for a client named LE Mullett in the early 1950s. The large house is L-shaped, with large areas of glass, contrasting textures of smooth with random stone walls and opposing skillion roofs. It seems likely that Vitols also designed the house at 21 Robe Street, Deakin for Eric and Dorothy de Salis around this time.

James Birrell, later University of Queensland staff architect and RAI Gold Medal winner, was working in the Canberra office of the Department of Works for a year or so in 1952–53. While here he designed a modernist house on Gawler Crescent for young Treasury official Peter Leighton and his wife Clare.

A much-admired house at 8 Duffy Street in Ainslie remains something of a mystery. Built in 1954 by local building company TH O'Connor for one of its directors, Robert Kay, the house is clearly in the post-war international style. It shares some fenestration details with the firm's Turner Infants' School, built in 1951. In both cases the designer is unknown.

The last of our well known early mid-century modern houses is the Benjamin House, or Round House as it is also known, at 10 Gawler Crescent, Deakin. The house was designed by Alex Jelinek for Professor and Mrs Bruce Benjamin in 1956 and completed in 1957. Jelinek was a Czechoslovakian-educated architect who migrated to Australia in 1950 to work on the Snowy Mountains Scheme.



10 Gawler Crescent, Deakin. Alex Jelinek (1956) (*Benjamin or Round House*)

The house is an unusual circular example of the post-war international style with its large sheets of glass, expressed structural frame, cantilever and contrasting non-rectangular shape. It is an astonishing geometric design based on the Pythagorean spiral and was awarded 'House of the Year for 1958' by the editors of *Architecture and Arts* magazine.

It is possibly the only example of a complex geometric post-war international house in Australia. The radiating design that emanates from a central glass-walled pool, forming asymmetrically varying rooms, is a technically complex achievement that generates the play of forms and shapes in a geometric masterpiece.

[To be continued in the next issue of *Heritage in Trust*]

### Martin Miles and Justin Walsh

Author of [canberrahouse.com.au](http://canberrahouse.com.au), Martin Miles is now a researcher and deliverer of architecture tours. In a previous life Messrs Miles and Walsh worked together on various heritage programs in the Federal Government.

## ACT Trust News

### President's Update

Dear Members

Now we are (hopefully) through the worst of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Trust's program of activities is nearly back at full swing.

There really have been some marvellous walks and tours since I last wrote to you. One of the highlights was the visit to the historic Lambrigg property near Tharwa on 15



October, arranged jointly with the Australian Garden History Society. Pete and Kate Gullett made us all feel very welcome and, as expected, we were all most impressed with the beautiful homestead gardens adjacent to the spectacular Murrumbidgee River.

I also enjoyed the walking tour of the Straight Line Border a week later, despite the muddy conditions which we are getting used to with recent rains.

Just when I thought I knew most of what I needed to know about the inner north, I was surprised how many heritage gems are hidden away in Lyneham and

O'Connor north. These were revealed in our walking tour of the heritage trail in these suburbs conducted for us by the Lyneham Community Association on 24 July.

The role of Simmie and Co in building some of Canberra's most iconic structures (such as the Albert Hall and the Australian War Memorial) is not widely known and I commend to you the exhibition about their work at the National Capital Exhibition. We are delighted that Richard Simmie, a grandson of the founder, will be speaking to us about the company and its work at a talk on Thursday 24 November. Not to be missed!

I am pleased to advise that the Australian Council of National Trusts has elected Lachlan Molesworth as its new Chair. Thanks to retiring Chair Graham Goerke for steering the national body through some difficult times into calmer waters.

There is no shortage of heritage issues for the Trust to 'get its teeth into'. We have recently made submissions on such matters as the new National Capital Authority Heritage Strategy, York Park and West Block, the Australian-American War Memorial, the Braddon Place Development near Haig Park and the proposed demolition of an important 1930s home in Griffith.

We are watching closely the progression of Light Rail Stage 2A and have made several submissions in relation to these works. At some point the Environmental Impact Assessment for Stage 2B will be released. There are many heritage assets along this route, and we will ensure our views are presented strongly to the authorities.

We provided a submission to the ACT Government's draft new planning legislation and are studying closely the potential heritage impact (both good and bad) of the draft new District Strategies. The Trust has recently joined the Government's Planning and Environment Forum which provides us with 'a seat at the table' in learning about and discussing these and other planning matters relevant to heritage.

I hope to see as many of you as possible at our Annual General meeting to be held at Gorman House on Thursday, 17 November, and our Christmas party at the Namadgi Visitor's Centre on Sunday, 4 December. Please don't forget to book for both these events.

Best wishes.

**Gary Kent**  
**President**

## New Members

The National Trust (ACT) warmly welcomes the following new members since December 2021:

Miss Karen Alchin  
Dr Jennifer Atton  
Mr David Ault & Mrs Dawn Bartlett  
Mr Gavin Back & Ms Philippa Lynch  
Mr Robert & Mrs Corrinne Brown  
Mr Mark Butz  
Dr Lemerle Caroline  
Mr Kenneth & Mrs Susan Cassidy  
Mr Desmond Chin & Mrs Vanessa Baird-Gunning  
Miss Jan Conoplia  
Mr Robert Cox & Ms Susan La Peyre  
Mr Christopher Dale & Mrs Jacinta Dale  
Mrs Kamini Devenny & Mr Anthony Devenny  
Mrs Alison Egan & Mr Mark Egan  
Mr Keith Etchellso & Mr Chris Ryder  
Mrs Prue Fenning & Mr John Fenning  
Mr Stuart Graham & Mrs Evangeline Graham  
Ms Carole Grey  
Dr Ken Heffernan  
Mr Michael Hood & Elizabeth Hood  
Mr Ian Hotchkiss & Ms Andrea Hotchkiss  
Mrs Carolyn Hughes  
Mrs Cath Ingram  
Ms Elizabeth Jones  
Mr Michael Kelly  
Mr W & Mrs D Lewis  
Ms Patricia Lewis  
Ms Elizabeth Masters  
Ms Gwenda Matthews  
Ms Beverley McConnell  
Mr Gordon McCourt  
Ms Carolyn McLean  
Mrs Catherine Moore & Mr Steve Moore  
Ms Pam Mowtell  
Mrs Marina Muttukumar & Miss Caitlyn Skillicorn  
Mr Cameron Ong  
Ms Tara Parker & Mr Murray Badger  
Mr Graeme Petschack & Ms Rina Bhati  
Ms Heather Piddington & Mr G Piddington  
Mr Michael & Mrs Margaret Pope  
Miss Elle Richardson & Mr James Otton  
Ms Catherine & Mr David Rossiter  
Miss Kristen Russo  
Ms Georgina Sargison  
Mrs Valerie Scott  
Ms Alison Sewell & Mr John Madden  
Mr Steven Shaw & Mrs Judy Shaw

Ms Monica Stephens  
Mrs Margaret Verick  
Mr David Voss  
Ms Susan Walters

Mr Tom Willcock & Ms Harini Epa  
Ms Brigitta Wimmer  
Mr Robert Wood & Mrs Joyce Robinson

### Corporate Affairs Committee Report

The Corporate Affairs Committee continued to refine and coordinate work on the 2022-23 Work Plan and Annual Reports, required under the provisions of the ACT Heritage Special Grant, in cooperation with the other committees and the Manager, Trust office. Meetings were held with ACT Heritage in relation to drafts, and formal approval of the required documents is expected to be received this month. This will enable the next tranche of funding to be received. The measurement of outcomes against each initiative under the Work Plan and development of the following year Work Plan will be progressed.

The Committee meets on the fourth Wednesday of the month, currently online.

**Kerry Blackburn**  
Chair, Corporate Affairs Committee

### Report on INTO (International National Trust Organisation) Conference Dundee, Scotland 4-6 October 2022



The INTO conferences are usually held every second year but the 2019 face to face conference was cancelled and a smaller online one was held in which the ACT NT did not participate in. However, the 2022 conference was face to face but restricted to one delegate per organisation.

I attended on behalf of the ACT NT along with 74 other delegates. The venue was the V & A Centre which is a significant modern building that sits comfortably with the nearby nineteenth century civic buildings.

Keynote addresses were given by:

Bernard Donoghue, CEO, Association for Leading Visitor Attractions (ALVA), shared his insights into new developments in heritage visitation.

HRH Princess Dana Firas, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador and President of the Petra National Trust explored how organisations and institutions can better involve and engage with local communities and make our work accessible and integral to everyday life.

Cassander Titley-O'Neil shared insights on balancing the conservation of our precious natural resources with the business of running an INTO member organisation.

In addition, there were workshops on a range of topics, plenary sessions with a number of speakers and a full day site inspection of a nearby Scotland National Trust property.

- Responsible tourism is low carbon, supportive of communities inclusive, plus natural and cultural.
- Successful attractions have value, good visitor experience and attract volumes of people.
- Need to be bold and take risks sometimes to achieve best outcomes.
- Digital images and presentations do not replace the physical experience.
- Heritage places are recognised as social spaces.
- Heritage and culture is the number one reason people travel.
- Heritage now needs to be relevant to today's community.
- Heritage is expanding, evolving and empowering.
- Heritage should be about truth in story-telling and the layers that excel but not the trauma.
- Indigenous action plans, sustainable action plans are important.
- Heritage to build memories with communities.
- Places of cultural wars are the most difficult to present but there is a need to resolve tension.
- Truth in conservation which sometimes means the right conservation approach may not be the popular approach.

**Eric Martin, AM**





*The Palace & Palace gardens at the Falkland Palace in the Kingdom of Fife near Dundee*

## Heritage Happenings

### 33 Captain Cook Crescent

This is an isolated example of a 1938 house in Griffith that was only brought to the attention of the National Trust as a result of proposed development on the site. The house relates well to Lockyer Street with houses largely intact of the same period. In recognition of its concerns about the potential loss of the heritage values represented by this home, the National Trust has nominated it for Heritage listing and sought a stay on its demolition until this application is resolved.

There remain isolated houses from this period between the wars and post-World War II which are excellent examples of the period and style that need to be identified and considered for conservation. If the public knows of more houses of this type – good examples of a period currently not listed on any heritage register – then we are interested in learning of them.

### Lawson

This looms as a potential concern for a range of cultural values associated with the Former Naval Transmitter Station and natural values associated with endangered flora and fauna. The National Trust believes that most of the current underdeveloped area should remain, although pressure is building for development of the suburb.

### Ongoing issues

#### Kingston Powerhouse Arts Precinct

The precinct is moving very slowly with no firm proposal or a new masterplan prepared.

The National Trust remains interested and is a member of the reference group.

### Yarralumla Brickworks

The Brickworks proposal is being finalised and we look forward to what will be finally presented.

### Upcoming Issues

#### London Circuit

Raising London Circuit is now approved and will proceed. The related detailed proposal of Light Rail Stage 2A will generate issues on which we will need to respond in the near future.

#### Acton Waterfront Development

This will generate issues to comment on in the near future.

### NCA Heritage Strategy

The National Trust made a submission on this which was generally supportive and encourages wide participation and consultation on issues.

### ACT Planning Bill

The Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Planning Transport and City Services has commenced an enquiry into the Planning Bill 2022 which relates to consideration of planning for various areas of Canberra.

There is a concern re fragmentation and potential of not having a consistent overarching plan for conserving Canberra's Garden City, landscape and heritage. In this context the Trust will be focusing on the heritage impact of the proposed District Strategies.

### Eric Martin AM

## Heritage and Healing and the Click-clack of stilettos - 2022 Symposium Report



Minister for Heritage Rebecca Vassarotti MLA and Ngannawal man Bradley Mapiva Brown opened the symposium. (Photo E. Jans)

Ngannawal man Bradley Mapiva Brown welcomed us to his Country before Rebecca Vassarotti, Minister for Heritage, opened our annual symposium.

Her words 'if Country sick, people sick' resonated as the day unfolded with a good variety of speakers. At day's end we could agree that heritage is essential for contemporary and future wellbeing. If we do not care better for tangible and intangible heritage, human health will be negatively impacted.

Local examples, be they alpine huts, Tuggeranong Homestead, Tuggeranong Schoolhouse Museum, Reid, Old Parliament House or our Carillon, were easily identifiable and accessible. However, when we then add the stories of other carillons in Sydney and Bathurst then look overseas to China, New Orleans and Wales we extend our horizons and benefit from how heritage has helped in difficult times abroad.

Mark Butz challenged us asking why isn't heritage communication a field of study? Is there a need for some local active heritage champions? Simon Buckpitt (Kosciuszko Huts Assoc) said that our alpine huts in ACT, NSW and VIC are tangible assets for intangible values – the stories connected to those shelters, the timber skills needed and the practical consolation and refuge their existence still provides to high country adventurers.

The take-outs from Jennifer Horsfield of MOTH (Minders of Tuggeranong Homestead) were the battle to save the homestead from development and how during COVID

isolation and beyond it provided such a sanctuary to volunteers with their mental health by connecting and hence healing as people returned to care for the landscape at the site.

Newcomer to Canberra, Kate Clark, enlightened us with how cultural heritage is part of the solution for climate change. Although only a five-minute talk, we listened to how Wales has embedded heritage in its *Wellbeing of future Generations (Wales) Act*. Whether policies are about transport, environment, culture or business, heritage is in the framework for making decisions. Unbelievable!

The combination of physical activity with cultural heritage was optimised in Mary Johnston's talk about the National Trust's regular heritage walks. Participants' testimonies said it all, but it also provides purpose, joy and keeps the grey cells active for the guides!



Elizabeth Burness' case of clothes is taken to many seniors talks and the contents trigger memories through sight, sound and touch. Yolante Daly holds up the baby-doll nightie and the 1970s Safari jacket is on the chair. (Photo E. Jans)

The click-clack of stiletto heels, baby-doll nightie and a safari suit jacket were just some of Elizabeth Burness' delights emerging from her Globite case. Her time at nursing homes was so touching as she interacts with residents with dignity reminding them of a time when they were more active.

The last in the vignette series was Anne Claoue-Long's (Australian Garden History Society) presentation on gardens and the optimism and joy they bring – essential ingredients to healing. This may be simply visiting public gardens or the repetitive, almost meditative, act of connecting with nature with routine gardening.



With a ring of the bell the afternoon was opened by carillonneur Anna Wong. Our National Carillon on Queen Elizabeth II Island is well-loved but learning about other carillons at Sydney University and Bathurst revealed their roles in placemaking, healing and community connection. Built during the difficult depression years 1929-33 the Bathurst War Memorial Carillon is a remarkable structure drawing people together in memory of our wartime fallen.

Reid Garden City has much to teach us today about heritage and environmental values – from Gang Gangs and shady trees to early bureaucratic tendencies. Marianne Albury-Colless (Reid Residents Association) also brought along a treasured old book recording community meetings.

People responded with shock when the front doors of Old Parliament House were set ablaze on 29 December 2021. Lesley Thompson and Noel Lane, presented, are just two of the many staff, volunteers and contractors, who are working tirelessly to restore this much-loved building. Fire, soot and water damage has required \$5 million to rectify, to meet the highest standards of their Heritage Management Plan. Being able to help remove soot provided an outlet for healing for the personnel.

Floods have been all too prevalent. Alison Wain's talk started with personal heritage then 'flew' us to Louisiana USA, where massive damage saw demolition of many buildings and, with that, memories. Understanding that retention and reuse of building material, is not only sustainable, but in the face of debilitating catastrophe, provides empowerment to the locals. When materials were salvaged, most owners chose not to use them themselves but to donate them. This helped with their healing.

During Covid-19, isolation and hardship created opportunity in a western Chinese province. Yujie Zhu provided a fascinating example of how livestreaming intangible heritage saw children and their grandparents (as parents were away working in eastern cities), film traditional clothing, cuisine, skills, arts and crafts. This became such a phenomenal success that the challenge now is to keep this digital portrayal of intangible heritage authentic.



*The final session saw attendees brainstorm ideas on how heritage can have an input into the ACT Government's 12 wellbeing domains. (Photo J Willsher)*

Our final session saw the audience up and about adding their suggestions to how heritage can enhance the dozen [ACT Government's wellbeing domains](#).

Thank you to the organisers Australia ICOMOS, Canberra Archaeological Society, Canberra & District Historical Society and National Trust (ACT).

**Linda Roberts**  
**ACT Heritage**

## Walks and Tours

It's been quite a busy few months since the last issue of *Heritage in Trust*, with more tours and events to come before the end of the year.

In July, the Heritage Walk followed part of the Lyneham and North O'Connor heritage trail with the Lyneham Community Association. This was a great success and next year, we hope to do a second, different part of this new trail, developed by the Community Association with the help of an ACT Heritage Grant.



*Representatives of the National Trust (ACT) and Lyneham Community Association (photo provided by Gary Kent)*



There were two tours of exhibitions during winter – one way of staying out of the cold! At the National Archives of Australia, a small group was taken around the exhibition ‘*Reception this way*’ which featured motel experiences which I am sure many of us remember well. The second tour visited the special exhibition of works of Sidney Nolan at the Canberra Museum and Gallery where one of the curators gave us a great insight into the work of Nolan and the choice of pictures in this exhibition.

Our tour to Ballarat and Bendigo proceeded despite COVID and bad weather and is covered in a separate article by Kerin Cox.

Sadly, we first postponed the Sherwood walk from August until September, but wet weather and road conditions caused this year’s visit to see the daffodils to be cancelled but we will try again next year.

We did go to Nil Desperandum in Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve where we were grateful to be able to drive in, rather than walk 6 km there and back! See Wendy Whitham’s separate report for more on why the National Trust and the Australian Garden History Society (AGHS) were keen to visit.

Our visit to Lambrigg in October – another joint event with AGHS – was originally planned for this year’s Heritage Festival but weather intervened. This time we

managed a reasonably good day in a very wet spring. It was a great success with around 70 people spending time with the owners, exploring the garden and admiring the view of the Murrumbidgee rushing past! Lambrigg is interesting historically because of its connection with the work of William Farrer who developed rust-resistant wheat there and started the garden. AGHS provided a plan of the garden drawn in 1995 which enabled visitors to see the ongoing work of preserving and maintaining an extensive garden. Our thanks to the owners for allowing us to visit Lambrigg.



*Louise Gaudry (AGHS) thanking the owners (Photo Mary Johnston)*



*Gary Kent, President of the National Trust (ACT) welcoming visitors to Lambrigg (photo Mary Johnston)*



*View of the Murrumbidgee and sculptures in the garden at Lambrigg (Photo Richard Johnston)*

Despite very threatening weather, we went ahead with a shortened version of the Straight Line Border Heritage Walk! The rain held off and although the path was very muddy we learnt about the men who surveyed the border and we even tried out a theodolite at the end. Thanks to Ron Jarman for the fascinating insight into this work and to Linda for persevering with the walk despite the weather. One to try again when the weather is better!



*On the Straight Line Border Heritage Walk (Photos Peter Phillips)*

By the time *Heritage in Trust* is out, the second King Island and Yarra Valley tour will have returned but a report will have to wait until our next issue.

There are still a few more events before the end of the year. See table of events below.

For more information on these, check the website or the booking links given for each event.

The Tours and Events Committee organises a variety of activities for members and friends and welcomes suggestions and of course volunteers to help organise these. If you would like to get involved, contact us at [events@nationaltrustact.org.au](mailto:events@nationaltrustact.org.au).

### Tours and Events Committee



*Former ACT Deputy Surveyor-General brought theodolites along for us to look through*

AGM Speaker: Sally Barnes	Thursday 17 Nov	<a href="https://www.trybooking.com/CDDEX">https://www.trybooking.com/CDDEX</a>
Ginninderry Stories	Saturday 19 Nov	<a href="https://www.trybooking.com/CDCKR">https://www.trybooking.com/CDCKR</a>
Well Built: Simmie & Co Master Builders in Canberra 1926 - 1969 Speaker: Richard Simmie	Thursday 24 Nov	<a href="https://www.trybooking.com/CDSNW">https://www.trybooking.com/CDSNW</a>
A Victorian afternoon at Tuggeranong Schoolhouse Museum	Saturday 26 Nov	<a href="https://www.trybooking.com/CDCJC">https://www.trybooking.com/CDCJC</a>
Heritage Walk - Roses, Roses, Roses	Sunday 27 Nov	<a href="https://more-than-roses.eventbrite.com.au">https://more-than-roses.eventbrite.com.au</a>
Christmas Party at Namadgi Visitors Centre	Sunday 4 Dec (note change of date)	<a href="https://www.trybooking.com/CDQCH">https://www.trybooking.com/CDQCH</a>



### Ballarat and Bendigo Tour

Early September proved to be the perfect time of year to visit the great goldfields cities of Ballarat and Bendigo and other smaller towns and villages which owe their foundation to the discovery of gold in the mid-19th century. New spring growth in the paddocks of the Ovens valley was like a green velvet carpet, not blemished by tussocks or thistles and every farmhouse was wreathed in pink or white blossoms. Daffodils and jonquils were in profusion everywhere.



*Former prison in Beechworth*

We were also on the Kelly trail. Our first stop, Beechworth, escaped the modernisation of the 1960s. Buildings in the town centre, like the simple, elegant courthouse and gaol where Ned Kelly was imprisoned, remain untouched. The goldrush was short lived but the town was sustained by a prison and large mental hospital, now both de-commissioned. Sadly, the courthouse was closed but we visited the Burke Museum, a real cabinet of curiosities which included a bible and two saddlebags used by Robert O'Hara Burke on his ill-fated northern expedition. Burke was Senior Inspector of Police from 1854 to 1857, during the height of the goldrush. Another noted citizen of Beechworth, Sir Isaac Isaacs, was Australia's first native born Governor General.

On to Bright, close by Mount Buffalo and gateway to the snowfields, for an overnight stop. Alluvial gold was found here and the diggings have now been rehabilitated as parks and recreation grounds. Bright has found new gold in tourism.

Past Stringybark Creek, where three policemen were shot by Ned and over a stomach-churning road across the mountains to Mansfield, we drove, on what turned out to be the longest day of the tour.

Ballarat, where gold was discovered in 1851 starting a gold rush, was our home for the next two nights. It is a grand regional city with many imposing buildings in its city centre. One, the Ballarat Fine Art Gallery is the

oldest regional art gallery in Australia with a comprehensive collection. The city owes a great debt to its founding fathers who also established the Botanical Gardens at the height of the gold rush. Now the trees planted then have grown to massive proportions though sadly, some of the sequoias are showing the effects of prolonged drought and climate change. A highlight of the gardens, and our day, was the contemporary Robert Clark designed conservatory. Famous for its begonia displays later in the season we were not disappointed by the current show of ferns, cyclamen, primula and cascading sweet peas.



*Ballarat Botanic Gardens conservatory*

As we passed St Patrick's Cathedral, we saw that the railings outside had a myriad of coloured ribbons tied to them. These had been tied there by Ballarat citizens as a reminder of the abuse of children by Roman Catholic clergy and a plea that this should not happen again.

A trip to Sovereign Hill was a journey back to childhood for some. We rode the Cobb and Co coach, watched how raspberry lollies are made and visited many shops and businesses which have either been relocated here or built to recreate the 19th century feel. Strolling players set the scene and took us back to the days of Lola Montez and the wild times of the gold diggings.



*Coach ride at Sovereign Hill*

Castlemaine should have been a highlight of our tour but it rained. The Garden of St Erth, now part of the

Diggers Club, was once the site of a short lived goldrush, but it was too early in the season for the cool climate plants to be in flower.



*Garden of St Erth*

Some intrepid plant lovers braved the rain and again, at Buda, a 19<sup>th</sup> century home and garden gifted to the Castlemaine Gallery and Museum by the last surviving daughter of the Leviny family who had lived in the house for over 100 years. It is a fascinating example of family life over the last century.



*Buda*

On to the Gallery where we admired (in the rain) the Art Deco façade and frieze designed by Percy Meldrum. Inside we were welcomed and some curious art lovers managed a quick peep at the first gallery before a fire alarm sounded and we had to evacuate to the coach. A very embarrassed Director came on board to apologise and express her sadness at not being able to share the Gallery with us.

Bendigo is another city with imposing public buildings. The Central Deborah Mine, now a tourist site, and poppet heads here and there remind us that Bendigo

was once deemed the richest city in the world with more gold found here between 1850 and 1900 than anywhere in the world. The neo-Gothic Sacred Heart Cathedral dominates the town although its spire was not added until the 1970s. Entering through the transept we were surprised at how light it was inside. The windows in the sanctuary have plain yellow glass reminding us that Bendigo was founded on gold.



*Sacred Heart Cathedral*

The Bendigo Art Gallery also houses a strong collection of Australian art. We were impressed by prize winning works of contemporary drawing and another gallery showing contemporary art from China.

A visit to the Golden Dragon Museum was a real surprise. It is home to several of the dragons which come out every Easter to parade through the streets of Bendigo. We were also shown other displays about the role of the Chinese in the goldfields by our very enthusiastic, passionate guide. To sit peacefully in the adjacent garden was a welcome rest.

We remembered to exit with right foot forward in order to keep faith with the spirits. We had entered using our left foot first.



*Yin Yuan Gardens at the Golden Dragon Museum*

A stop for lunch at the Benalla Gallery reminded us again of the richness of Victoria's regional galleries.



Glenrowan was the site of Ned Kelly's last stand when he was finally captured by the police. Although the pub is no longer there 'Kate's Cottage' with a large collection of memorabilia reminds us of life at the time.



*Dows Pharmacy in Chiltern*

Chiltern is home to two National Trust properties: Dow's Pharmacy and Lake View House, once home to the novelist Henry Handel Richardson. Although she only lived here for a short time, the house is

immortalised in her book *The Fortunes of Richard Mahoney*. The Hume Highway bypassed Chiltern in the 1960s and the centre of town remains a reminder of times past.



*Lake View House*

**Kerin Cox**  
**(Tour participant)**  
**Photos: Mary Johnston**

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## Camellias in Tidbinbilla?



Yes, indeed, there are some camellias in Tidbinbilla. But they're well hidden and it takes some effort to find them.

I had the opportunity to see the camellias in September on an outing organised jointly by the National Trust and the Australian Garden History Society (AGHS). It's a 12 kilometre return walk to Nil Desperandum, so we were very fortunate to be allowed to drive there. We went in 4WD vehicles whose tyres had to be pressure-hosed at the Works Depot to remove any weeds, and we went in convoy, led by a ranger.

Our destination was one of the properties settled by Europeans in the century and a half before Tidbinbilla became a Nature Reserve. The property is called Nil Desperandum (which means "Don't Despair").

Anne Claoue-Long from AGHS spoke to us once we arrived at the house and gave us background to the European settlement of the Tidbinbilla area and about Nil Desperandum in particular. After a welcome morning tea (it was a cold day), we went for a walk on Eric and Elsie's Loop walk that's been put in by the ACT Parks and Conservation Service and has information boards provided by the ACT Government.



The house is surrounded by native forest and there is no clue that a grove of camellias is going to appear. We walked across the paddock near the house into the forest, down to a creek crossing, along the track, and suddenly there in front of us were the camellias, in full flower. An amazing sight in this otherwise very Australian setting.



So, how do the camellias come to be there? After being used for various purposes, Nil Desperandum was bought in 1978 by Phil Gilmour who with his horticulturist friend, Leon Horsnell, replaced the vegetable patch that had been developed by the former owners with a plantation of camellias, azaleas and rhododendrons. The idea was to sell the plants to residents of Canberra. There were 600 plants in the grove when the property was valued in 1985 in preparation for the Government taking over the land. The Government paid \$16,000 for them in 1988 and the Yarralumla Nursery removed the plants for sale. All the camellias are believed to be forms of *C. japonica*.

### 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 for nomination by members of the club. Club members, 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 [www.csc.com.au/rewards](http://www.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.



There are no azaleas or rhododendrons left, and the remaining 100 or so camellia bushes were nearly destroyed in the 2003 bushfires but they regenerated to what we saw in September. The plants are fenced off and cared for by the Friends of Tidbinbilla in recognition of their importance to the European cultural heritage of Tidbinbilla.



With thanks to Anne Claoue-Long, Geoff Puleston and the ACT Government Canberra Tracks signage.

**Wendy Whitham (this article appeared in the *Bulletin of the Horticultural Society of Canberra*)**

**Photos: Mary Johnston and Wendy Whitham**



## 2022 NATIONAL TRUST (ACT) AGM

Thursday, 17 November 2022,

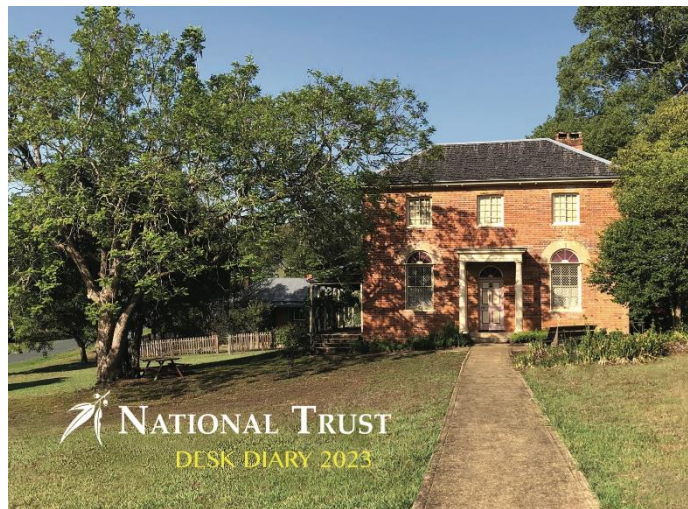
5:30 for 6:00pm at Gorman Main Hall, Gorman Arts Centre, Braddon.

Guest Speaker is Ms Sally Barnes, CEO of the National Capital Authority.

For catering purposes, please book a complimentary ticket through Trybooking if you wish to attend. Bookings are now open at <https://www.trybooking.com/CDDEX> and close on Thursday, 10 November.

Notice of meeting and further information available at:

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/event/annual-general-meeting-2022/> .



## 2023 NATIONAL TRUST DIARIES

### 'WITHIN OUR BORDERS'

*Enjoy Australia's built, natural, decorative and cultural heritage every week of the year with the 2023 National Trust Desk Diary.*

*Available for purchase from the office. Price is \$22.50 per diary (members' price), or \$25.00 (non-members' price). Please contact the office - [info@nationaltrustact.org.au](mailto:info@nationaltrustact.org.au) or call 02 6230 0533 to order a diary and arrange collection. They will also be available at the AGM (see above)*

### BEQUESTS - HELP CONSERVE OUR HERITAGE

Contact us, in confidence, to discuss options:

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

Telephone: 02 6230 0533

## Membership Rates

Joining fee	\$35
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Individual	\$75
Individual Senior	\$70
Individual Concession	\$55
Household	\$105
Household Senior	\$95
Household Concession	\$85
Life Membership	
Single	\$1,662.50
Household	\$1,837.50

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20 Genge St, Canberra ACT 2601

### Opening Times:

9.30am to 12.00pm Tuesday to Thursday

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

**President:** Gary Kent

**Secretary:** vacant

**Treasurer:** Scott McAlister

**Council:** Marianne Albury-Colless, Kerry Blackburn,  
Brad Fraser, Mary Johnston, Eric Martin, Linda  
Roberts, Pam Saunders, Rebecca Scouller

**Heritage Officer:** vacant

**Manager:** Gary Watkins

## Keeping up with the Trust

### E- news

To join our E-news list, email [info@nationaltrustact.org.au](mailto:info@nationaltrustact.org.au) with the subject heading of: Subscribe to E News

### Social Media

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To sign up and follow us on Facebook, simply go to <http://www.facebook.com> and enter your email and some personal details to get started, then navigate to <http://www.facebook.com/nationaltrustact> and click the like button near the top of the page.

For Twitter, go to <http://www.twitter.com> and enter your name and email, and choose a password to sign up and then navigate to [https://twitter.com/NatTrust\\_ACT](https://twitter.com/NatTrust_ACT) and click the follow button.

### Benefits for National Trust Members:

- + Reciprocal visiting arrangements within Australia, plus 19 NT organisations worldwide, including the UK and Scottish National Trusts.  
See: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/international-places/>
- + Member rates on shop items which are for sale online or through the ACT Office.
- + New members can attend one Heritage Walk or Trust Talk free.
- + Access to the *Friends of the NLA* lounge and discounts at the NLA bookshop.
- + Regular ACT E-magazines, invitations to participate in outings and tours.
- + 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.
- + Concessional 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 Mary Johnston, Margaret Smythe and Liz McMillan, assisted by 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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