



Visit to Bickleigh Vale

A SPECIAL INVITATION TO THE FRIENDS OF WBG

Date: 6th October 1999

Cost: \$50

Booking: Marie Ziebell 55611137

Mandy King 5562-0343

*Please see attached information and payment form.

BICKLEIGH VALE VILLAGE

Bickleigh Vale had its beginnings in 1920 when Edna Walling, a young graduate from Burnley Horticultural College, purchased farmland at Mooroolbark at the base of the Dandenongs. Three acres of grazing land with a few she-oaks were fenced to keep off marauding cattle.

On this land she built her first home, Sonning, a simple, rustic cottage utilising local stone and materials. Built as economically as possible it nevertheless met her standards of proportion and character.

A few years later eighteen acres surrounding Sonning came up for sale. Fearful of intrusion on her newly found tranquility Edna borrowed heavily to purchase the land and embarked upon a subdivision that was far ahead of its time. Her determination to create a unique village where little cottages nestled into the landscape surrounded by lovely foliaged trees and hedges of flowering shrubs, showed the calibre and foresight of this strong willed, free thinking, young woman.

Edna's involvement extended to the unusual practice of approving prospective purchasers who had to agree to a cottage and garden of her design. Trees and shrubs were supplied freely from her nursery at Sonning and personal interest was taken in the development of each garden. By the 1930's the original paddocks were acquiring the charm of an English village. Bickleigh Vale now comprised 16 cottages. It was a community of like-minded people who shared a love of gardening. Simple gates linked each garden adding to the fellowship of the village.

"It is desired that all the cottages will be screened and sheltered with trees and shrubs so that each will appear to be the only one on the landscape to those living within, except perhaps for a tiny peep of some distant stone chimney or a thread of blue smoke curving up from another." - Edna Walling - Home Beautiful

November 1930.

Edna Walling created a small world for herself and her friends in Bickleigh Vale Village at Mooroolbark. Although the cottages have been adapted to the needs of successive owners, and

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PLANTS IN OUR BOTANIC GARDEN

Texus baccata - English Yew

In our gardens planted down from the Curator's Cottage is a fine example of *Taxus baccata* 'Fastigiata' (Upright English Yew). Indigenous to Europe, North America and North Africa, this dense dark tree has had legendary and religious associations for centuries.

Trees in Scotland and England have lived for over 1,000 years. In Europe yews have long been associated with Christian churchyards partly as symbols of eternal life, but, more practically, it seems probable that they served as shelter and meeting places for early congregations who had not yet built a church. One churchyard yew at Fortingall, Perthshire, Scotland is believed to be 1,500 years old - which may be the oldest living tree in Europe.

Foliage can be eaten by stock when green but, when cut, dead foliage is poisonous to man and beast. Male trees bear clusters of creamy yellow flowers. Female trees have pinkish-red berries containing a seed which is very poisonous.

As you will see from our tree, the yew has very straight, strong branches and these were used in olden times for longbows. They were extremely durable and in fact when the galleon "Mary Rose" Henry VIII's warship shipwrecked off the coast of England some 400 years ago was salvaged, longbows were found in the wreck. Other uses for wood from the yew include decorative furniture and sculpture.

Marigold Curtis

DIARY DATES

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| <u>Membership Fees:</u> | 30th July 1999 |
| <u>Bowral Trip:</u> | 18th-22nd September |
| <u>Bickleigh Vale:</u> | 6th October |
| <u>Garden Lecture series:</u> | 21st October |
| Guy Cooper (Ballarat) | |
| <u>Masterclasses:</u> | 30th & 31st October |
| John Brookes (R.E.G.M) | |
| <u>20th Annual National Conference</u> | 5th - 7th Nov. |
| Australian Garden History Society. | |
| "The Changing Rural Landscape" | |
| Mount Gambier, S.A. | |
| Contact: Nicky Downer (08) 8370 8783 | |
| <u>Aust. Open Garden Scheme:</u> | 20th & 21st Nov |
| "Willaroo" Coleraine. - (Edna Walling Garden) | |
| Contact: Alison Rivett 5572 5785 | |

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Our news letter is published Spring, Summer
Autumn and Winter. If you would like to
contribute to our publication please forward
material to the above address.

Marigold Curtis Mandy King
24th August 1999

MEMBERS

There are still some outstanding fees due
Please contact Kathy or Judi

We are planning "a day in the gardens"
in March. Any potted plants etc. for the
plant stall would be appreciated, please
think of this while tending your garden.

Cont.
the growth of trees and shrubs inevitably has
changed the gardens, the village remains a su-
perb example of Edna's ability to create har-
mony
between buildings and landscape.

The village is on the register of the National
Estate, the inventory of the Australian Heritage
Commission and the National Trust lists it as a
"classified landscape" The Upper Yarra Valley
and Dandenong Ranges Authority designates the
village as being of "high regional historical
significance". A tree preservation Act now
covers the village and stringent covenants are in
force regarding any future development or al-
teration to topography and buildings.

Ultimately, however it is the residents
themselves who assume final responsibility for
its future, to keep alive the realisation of a
far-sighted dream of one of Australia's foremost
landscape designers.

Ref: Gardens in Time by Trisha Dixon &
Jennie Churchill
The Gardens of Edna Walling by Peter Watts

Marie Ziebell

BOTANIC GARDENS IN THE EAST

*The history of the Botanic Gardens in the East
can be traced back to the days of the spice trade.
Botanic Gardens were
established in the various British, Dutch and
Portuguese colonies, mainly to investigate and
cultivate spice-yielding plants of
commercial value.*

Penang Botanic Gardens (Brochure)

Singapore and Penang were part of the
Straits Settlements colonised by the British in the
late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.
Their early public buildings, like those of
Melbourne and Warrnambool reflect that colo-
nial influence, as do their fine botanical gardens.
While the plants they grow and the way they
work, provide a fascinating contrast with our
gardens, there are still interesting comparisons.

The Penang Botanic Gardens were set up
in 1884 on the site of an old quarry. They are
located below a waterfall and extend over 29
hectares of valley surrounded by jungle. Trees
and plants have been chosen to blend with the
natural landscape. The garden's aims are listed
as; botanical, horticultural, educational, recrea-
tional, touristic and services. The last refers to
provision of plant rentals and sales to govern-
ment, and provision of trees for roadside plant-
ing.

These beautiful gardens have impressive en-
trance gates beyond which is a spreading 75 year
old Rain Tree (*Enterolobium saman*) a native of
Central America. The curving roadway is lined
with the Cannon Ball tree (*Couroupita guianensis*)
This has fruit about the size and texture of

cannon balls, that grow close to the
trunk.

The lily pond has a notice forbid-
ding the release of tortoise in the pond.
There is a heavy fine for feeding the
monkeys which come in from the sur-
rounding forest and destroy plants and
harm visitors. Plant enclosures for
palms and other plants are necessary to
enable seeds and fruit to survive the
ravenous monkeys.

The extensive lawns are mown
by a squad of workers wielding whip-
per snippers. The gardens have a staff
of around fifty. They also have a
Friends Group. Penang is the sister
city of
Adelaide. Maybe they correspond.

Singapore's first 'Botanical
and Experimental Garden' was estab-
lished at Fort Canning in 1822 by Sir
Stanford Raffles. It closed seven
years later and it was not until 1859
that the present gardens were founded.
The Gardens have made a significant
contribution to agricultural research
and development from the introduction
of rubber trees (*Hevea brasiliensis*) in
1877 to the propagation of orchids. In
1981 Singapore chose an orchid,
Vanda Miss Joaquim, as its national
flower. The gardens are extensive with
three lakes, two Visitors Centres, the
National Orchid Garden, Herbarium,
School of Horticulture and National
Parks Headquarters. They have also
been able to retain a remnant of the
original rain forest. The built environ-
ment includes a band stand, sundial
and gazebo, and currently an extensive
sculpture exhibition. All are dwarfed
by the magnificent tropical trees.

Pat Varley
August 1999.

BOWRAL N.S.W.

Saturday 18th - Wednesday 22nd Sep.
Visiting three famous gardens.
Buskers End, Kennerton Green
and Milton Park, referred to in our coming
events News Letter.

The price of this tour which is
\$550 per person twin share, includes four
nights dinner, bed and breakfast at quality
motels, several morning and afternoon
teas, two lunches and all admittance and
coach travel.

The coach will pick up Warrnambool
people at 8.30 am Saturday.

For further information:
Joy Smith 5523-3940
Marigold Curtis 55676316