

REVIEW

ERYLDENE HISTORIC HOUSE AND GARDEN

DECEMBER 2020



THE CAMELLIA PROJECT

What is possibly the largest rejuvenation of the Eryldene camellias is underway, thanks to a generous donation from Howard and Mary Tanner.

Although the camellias flower faithfully, year after year, the trees have been showing signs of age and stress and the density of the canopy now impedes light and sunshine. Climate change, too, is impacting on the garden.

So a project plan was established and pruning begun so that it would be completed before summer temperatures rise and risk burning new growth. The work, which needed approval from both the Heritage Council and Ku-ring-gai

Council, started in early October.

Three experts – Bill Parker and Luke Parker from Camellias-R-U's in Glenorie, and Craig Carroll from Carroll's Country Gardens Nursery at Mt Tomah have worked systematically through the large camellias, removing dead wood, reducing height and opening up the canopies to allow light penetration. This of course meant huge quantities of pruned branches which were dealt with by doughty volunteers who collected them, either for chipping or to be bundled on the nature strip for collecting by the Council.

Part two of the project involves re-tubbing

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some of the larger camellias, some of them in big tubs which need three or four men to handle.

Our experts are passionate about the conservation of the historic camellias at Eryldene – many of which are no longer commercially available in Australia, where quarantine laws forbid the importation of plants from overseas. So this collection – which contains some of the earliest varieties brought to the colony in the late 18th and 19th centuries, as well as those propagated by Professor Waterhouse or given to him as gifts – is one of the most important in Australia. It is vital it be preserved.

“My long association with Eryldene began in 1968 when I met Professor Waterhouse to discuss old Australian gardens and subsequently featured Eryldene in my book, *The Great Gardens of Australia*.

It has been a privilege for Mary and me to fund the program to revitalise Eryldene’s camellia collection and ensure its place as the pre-eminent camellia garden in Australia.

I hope others will be inspired to fund other aspects of the restoration of this remarkable design landscape, its plantings and ornamental features.”

Howard Tanner AM LFRAIA



KUR RING GAI COUNCIL'S SUPPORT

Locals walked past Eryldene many times during those first three months of Covid-19 lockdown. They peered over the fence, hoping for a chance to enter and enjoy the serenity of the garden, but it was only when Eryldene was fortunate enough to apply for and win a small grant from the Kur ring gai Council’s Covid-19 Community Organisations Assistance Program that the costs of reopening could be covered. A small committee of the Trust headed by Anne Galbraith, worked its way through the requirements of the Covid Safety Plans and in July, August and September when the garden was awash with a most splendid display of its camellias, and later, its azaleas, it was opened to the public. The weather was generally unkind, but the restorative power of the garden worked its wonders. A local café, Little Gem in Gordon, supplied refreshments.



THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS

The Eryldene Trust expresses particular thanks to David and Elizabeth Salkeld for their most generous and timely gift to keep Eryldene going during the Covid shutdown.

Thank you to all who supported the Appeal for the Garden:

Graham Atkins
S. Baker-Dekker
S. & A. Barrett
J. Bickersteth
R. Bird & L. Walker
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D. Waterhouse
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B. Waterhouse
J. Waterhouse
M. & A. Waterhouse
S. Waterhouse
M. Wheeler
A. White
E. Ziegler

The Eryldene Trust gratefully acknowledges the support of the Heritage Council of NSW.

SPONSORSHIP

Eryldene gratefully acknowledges the support of NEUTROG, whose products have improved soil quality throughout the garden. Our camellias and azaleas have particularly responded well to the special fertiliser Kahuna.



THE GEORGIAN LATTICE

How does a simple lattice become so problematic? The arched timber structure, designed by R. Keith Harris, a young member of Hardy Wilson's team at Wilson, Neave and Berry, was built in 1935, one of the last structures to be raised at Eryldene.

A car and garage had never been high on the Waterhouse agenda: the education of their four sons and the purchase and enjoyment of beautiful objects, works of art and good French claret well all of far higher priority.

But when EGW finally acquired a car – third hand – he left it to his sons to drive and refused to destroy the symmetry of the garden for a garage. Instead, he bought a sliver of land from his neighbour at No 15, sited the garage well behind the building line, installed a flagstone driveway and linked garage to house with the timber lattice, creating a sunny winter courtyard between the two.

The lattice is of restrained Georgian design: narrow horizontal slats overlaid with three diamond shapes which pick up the ventilation openings in the doors of the potting shed and the diamond mouldings above the fireplace in the sitting room.

Like other elements at Eryldene, it was badly damaged in last year's tornado and its repair and rebuilding presents a dilemma. In his later years, EGW – always intrigued by unusual plants – placed a rare, lemon-scented jasmine – *jasmine azoricum* – on the northern side of the lattice. It has grown vigorously, its trunk and branches so intertwined with the intricate timber work and damaging it that the conundrum is how to repair and repaint the lattice and keep the jasmine?



The answer is patience and an experimental approach. One thick trunk of jasmine has been cut close to the ground to see if it will shoot again with this year's wet spring. If it re-shoots, more will be cut to encourage regrowth. Helen Wallace and Juliet Muras are meanwhile cultivating cuttings and Craig Newman, our contract gardener, has folded back unattached tendrils onto stakes.

The jasmine may also be given an unobtrusive fine wire frame just in front of the lattice where it can spread its wings and be pruned away from the timber...

Repair and rebuilding of the lattice requires specialist craftsmanship. Matt Gatt has been commissioned to undertake this, working closely with our Hon Architect Robert Moore. Meanwhile the arch has been dismantled, and we look forward to celebrating its reinstatement and the delicate lattice repair early next year.

When craftsman Matt Gatt, working with honorary architect Robert Moore, has finished his work, we will celebrate its reinstatement early next year.



Photo by Cazneaux, c1940

SUNDAYS IN THE GARDEN

During November, while the jacaranda was dropping its deep blue trumpets throughout Sydney and over the garden at Eryldene, the front gate was opened again, bookings only, to local artists and musicians and to new and long term visitors. Each Sunday one of Kur ring gai's local artists set up an easel under the shade of the camellia near the front gate. Surrounded by fine red looping stakes the artist could paint and safely chat to onlookers about their work. Lucky visitors also enjoyed the sounds of strings under the jacarandas with music from the Rosemont Strings, the Bourbaki Ensemble, Ravenswood String Ensemble and the Ku ring gai Philharmonic Orchestra.

Right: Caroline Oesterheld, artist in the garden; the KPO Orchestra and their pop up performance under the jacarandas



PROFILE THE ERYLDENE TRUST

The Eryldene Trust was established in 1979, with Ku-ring-gai Mayor Richard Lennon as chair of the board, to raise funds to buy Eryldene from the Waterhouse family and ensure its conservation.

The present board elected at the August AGM continues that role under chair Sheridan Burke whose career has been in Australian and international heritage management. She was encouraged in this by her mother, Betty Burke, an early president of the Friends of Eryldene and baker of superb butterfly cakes, a feature of Sunday afternoon teas.

Our treasurer is Jonathan Karanakis, an accountant with the WSC Group and talented violist whose connections throughout the Sydney music scene have brought music to the garden during November. Judy Coombes and Penny Holden are both professionals in heritage conservation, Judy as Collections



The Board of the Eryldene Trust and specialist advisers, working with Chris Levins on the strategic plan.

Manager for the Powerhouse Museum and Penny from conservation planning in historic towns and suburbs. Wendy Sadler Moyes and Helen Wallace are local residents with experience in management and expertise in gardens and camellias. Ku-ring-gai Council is

represented by Cheryl Sztatow and the Camellia Research Society by Juliet Muras and Bruce Walker.

Eryldene attracts a much wider circle of admirers whose expert advice from their own professional fields ensures it receives the best decision-making in its preservation, presentation and interpretation, including from honorary architect Robert Moore, honorary conservator, Julian Bickersteth and honorary garden advisor, Colleen Morris.



BECOME A SUPPORTER

Here are ways you can become a valued supporter of Eryldene

Be a Trust Volunteer
Our volunteers play an essential role in delivering meaningful experiences to visitors of the house, garden and its collections. Their role is to nurture and share Eryldene as a beautiful and historic work of art. Eryldene has relied on a dedicated group of volunteers of all ages since 1977. Would you like to be part of the passionate and skilled group that looks after one of Australia's most important cultural properties open to the public? Whether you can make a regular commitment or prefer to help out every now and again, we welcome and value your involvement. Please contact Eryldene on 02 9498 2271, complete an application form or use the

contact form on our website www.eryldene.org.au/pages/display/volunteers

Become a Member
Members receive free entry to Eryldene, free entry to National Trust properties in Sydney, a regular Review, discounts at our shop and special offers. Single membership \$20; family \$40

Donate
A tax deductible donation will assist us in funding projects to maintain the house and garden. Just \$25 can help. A larger gift would be very welcome.

Make a Bequest
Remember Eryldene in your will. Your gift will be recorded in our permanent archives.

THANK YOU

During these very difficult income depleted times Eryldene has been grateful for the support of some very special people:

- Anne Galbraith
- David Salkeld and Elizabeth Salkeld
- Howard Tanner, AM and Mary Tanner
- The Copland Foundation
- Ku ring gai Council

And the gifts of time and expertise from Architect Robert Moore, Conservator Julian Bickersteth, Garden Adviser, Colleen Morris, Editor Geraldine O'Brien. We thank them all. Eryldene receives no ongoing funding from any government or other organisation. It only exists because of its supporters.

THE ERYLDENE TRUST

BOARD MEMBERS

Sheridan Burke Chair	Representative of the Camellia
Jonathan Karanikas Treasurer	Research Society
Judith Coombes	Hon Architect Robert Moore
Penelope Holden	Hon Conservator Julian Bickersteth
Wendy Sadler Moyes	Hon Editor Geraldine O'Brien
Helen Wallace	Hon Garden Adviser Colleen Morris
Cheryl Sztatow Representative of Ku ring gai Council	Acting Minute Secretary Anne Galbraith
Juliet Muras, Bruce Walker	Acting Manager Denise Tart



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The Eryldene Trust is a registered charity set up to conserve and maintain Eryldene Historic House and Garden. All proceeds from events, memberships and donations are used for this purpose.