

E. G. Waterhouse was nothing if not organised. Not long after his marriage proposal was accepted by Miss Janet Kellie in early 1912, the couple corresponded on many matters connected with their future – all rather romantically exchanged by sea mail. Among these matters was the question of where in Sydney they should live, and even the name they would give their new house. Before he had even visited the Kellie home Eryldene at Kilmarnock, he was suggesting that the name had a homely sound for him and it could be transplanted to Sydney.

The name is a combination of two words – the Celtic boy's name, Eryl, and "dene", an English word for a deep wooded valley.

Miss Kellie for her part romantically suggested that she preferred Bourg la Reine, the name of the French village



Eryldene, 73 Dundonald Rd, Kilmarnock 2017. Photograph by Robin Rodgers.

outside Paris where the couple had first met in 1908, at Mme Motte's School of Phonetics. But Waterhouse promptly responded that he preferred Eryldene and Eryldene it was.

Its namesake in Scotland is one of a long line of late Victorian stone villas lining both side of Dundonald Road, built in response to the rapid growth of manufacturing in this prosperous manufacturing town specialising in textiles, carpets and leather goods, the basis of Mr Kellie's shoe making business.

Like the other villas, Eryldene stands close to the Dundonald Road, with a long garden at the back where Mr and Mrs Waterhouse posed for their wedding photograph in 1912.

According to a Waterhouse granddaughter who visited the house a few years ago, the name Eryldene can still be made out, painted onto the stone wall beside the front door.



REVIEW

ERYLDENE HISTORIC HOUSE AND GARDEN

JUNE 2020

THE CALLITRIS HEDGE



In 1926, Professor Waterhouse gave an important address to the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, describing the garden as a setting for architecture.

"The garden exists for the home," he said, "and is rarely expressive unless fittingly enclosed." And he proceeded to elaborate on what constituted an appropriate enclosure: firstly, a fence, which he described as a necessary evil; next, a hedge; and then "a suitable line of trees, spaced at intervals and grown on the inner side behind the hedge. These will prove a source of unending delight; and if there is room, plant flowering shrubs behind the hedge and tree row."

And so it was at Eryldene, with its timber fence, its olive hedge, then the row of Lombardy poplars, and its substantial plantings of azaleas and camellias surrounding the open grass spaces "which act as a repose for the eye and [provide space] for the gambols of children".

Ian Waterhouse, the youngest of the four boys to grow up at Eryldene, remembered the rattle of the poplar leaf in autumn as



Above: The callitris hedge, 1969. Photo from the Eryldene Collection. Above left: Lombardy poplar hedge, 1927. Photography by Harold Cazneaux.

he fell asleep at night in the eastern loggia. And he also recalled that his father took down the poplars in the 1940s or 1950s because they were sapping too much goodness from the soil.

He replaced them with Callitris columellaris, a coniferous tree from the

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THANK YOU

Eryldene was fortunate to work with many contractors who responded to our needs on the day of the November 2019 storm and over many weeks afterwards. We wish to thank the following companies who helped the clean up and repairs after the storm.

- Newsclapes Australia
 - A J Superior Tree & Garden Service
 - Piers Laverty Professional Tree Services
 - Acacia Tree Service
 - North Shore Tree Services
 - Matt Gatt Builders
 - Heritage Slate Roofing
- Thank you also to Ku-ring-Gai Council for their assistance.



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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.

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.

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cypress family, native to most of Australia (and now naturalised in Hawaii and southern Florida).

Plans of the garden prepared in 1983 by Mary Davis show four Callitris inside the front hedge, two on either side of the pedestrian gate but those on the eastern side had to be removed in the 1990s and then a third came down from the western side in more recent years.

The last tree was regularly monitored as it gently took a lean toward the power lines. The tree moved significantly in the November 2019 storm, leaning dangerously over the front public footpath and powerlines. An arborist's assessment found it was structurally unsound due to its lean and condition, with a likelihood of failure of the whole tree.

Reluctantly, the Board resolved that the last of the Professor's enclosing line of Callitris would have to come down. Approvals were granted earlier this year from Heritage NSW and Ku-ring-gai Council, with Heritage NSW requiring the trees be replaced with the same species.

Council assisted with the stump removal and the ground is now ready for the new plantings. The wonderful gardening volunteers led by Helen Wallace, have successfully nurtured a clone from Waterhouse's last Callitris.



CHINESE BELLOWS RESTORATION

Professor Waterhouse, like his architect, Hardy Wilson, had an unquenchable love for Chinoiserie which extended even to the bellows for his fireplace.

The bellows – a pair of boards joined by flexible leather sides expanding to draw in air through a leather valve and force it out through a metal tube – were decorated in red lacquer with a rural scene of a woman, a boy and a flowering tree. They had deteriorated badly with the leather disintegrated, the lacquer dull and flaking, and active woodworm threatening what remained.

With a grant from the Copland Foundation of Victoria, and in the expert hands of International Conservation Services, the internal mechanism was reconditioned, new leather sides fitted, and the lacquer carefully cleaned and consolidated. The woodworm was effectively killed by freezing the bellows for a fortnight and areas of loss were inpainted. Finally a thin wax layer was applied to bring up the colour of the lacquer.

This delightful object is now back by the fireplace in the garden study where EGW would have appreciated them during his winter-time work there.

MILITARY CHEST

A cedar four-drawer military chest, owned by Professor Waterhouse and sold by him in 1942 to architect Brier Mills and his wife, Joyce, an artist and friend of Lloyd Rees, has now returned to Eryldene.

Joyce had always hoped the chest would go to an appreciative home and through the generosity of her beneficiary, Mrs Holmes Kanar, her executor, Robyn Mah, offered it to Eryldene in February. Following advice from our Honorary Conservator, Julian Bickersteth, it returned to Eryldene soon after.

With it is a hand-written letter from the Professor to Brier Mills in which he mentioned the chest could probably be dated to the 1840s, adding that it was "not easy to find such good pieces nowadays".

We have no evidence as to why he sold the chest.

CAMELLIA SOCIETY

In January, Eryldene hosted some special visitors – Anke Koschitz and Tony Curry, representatives of the International Camellia Society who were accompanied by Dr Stephen Utick of the NSW Camellia Research Society.

Like so many visitors – local and international – they had an emotional response to our beautiful Eryldene gardens and enjoyed a happy afternoon tea provided by Eryldene's Garden Committee.

We are anticipating that Eryldene will be nominated for an International Camellia Garden of Historical Significance at the International Congress in 2022.

When Covid 19 is under control the NSW Camellia Research Society will be meeting regularly again at the Baptist Church Hall, Park Avenue, Gordon on the third Monday of each month at 7.30.



ERYLDENE TORNADO

It was about 1pm on November 27 last year when a ferocious storm ripped through Gordon and up through the eastern side of the northern suburbs. Winds of up to 100 km per hour wreaked havoc, causing extensive damage at Eryldene.

In just 15 minutes, the tornado felled a large lilli pilli, destroyed a maple, flung major branches across the garden and back lane, breaking paling and chain link fences.

It tossed large branches onto the garden study, holing it in five places, and



damaged the potting shed and shade house. One very large limb was left suspended dangerously over the study. Garden tubs were broken and some camellias split.

The Chinese lions sitting atop the fountain wall must have used their protective powers because while heavy branches fell around them, the fountain, its wall and the lions remained unscathed.

Likewise, the fiery tongues of the four dragons in the roof of the tennis pavilion warded off the large lilli pilli and protected the newly completed gilding on the flagpoles.

Fortunately there was no injury to any of the staff and volunteers on the site, nor to our neighbours whose gardens also suffered damage.

Within days, our arborist had made all our trees safe. But torn limbs remain, new shoots are emerging and detailed pruning will be necessary to maintain the stability and shape of the trees.

Broken branches near the garden study. Inset: Torn limbs on the angophora. Below left: One of the Chinese Lions which survived on top of the walled fountain during the tornado. Photograph by Lindy Kerr.



REPAIR & REPAINT

During the shutdown valuable work has been able to be done to the house with repair and painting. With gifts from the Foundation the repair and repainting of outside windows has been completed and the ceilings in the sitting room, hallway and entrance hall repaired, washed and repainted. Further generous donations towards the general upkeep of Eryldene will be used to repair and repaint verandah balustrades and the peeling lapped timber walls on the front of the house.

Central hallway before work. Entrance hall, after work. Photograph by Chris Levins.



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.

