

Banksia Bend

When we came to Lubra Bend in 2000 (now called Banksia Bend), we found a beautiful Guilford Bell house (1964) and an established surround (garden) of camellias, magnolias and roses. The previous chatelaine was Margaret Stokes, who was a wise plantswoman and experienced gardener.

Straight away we dismantled the very large and rambling vegetable area, an ageing orchard and a large rose garden which had fallen into disrepair, cutting a path down the left hand side and steps to access the croquet lawn. Where the rose garden had been we installed a swimming pool which is still surrounded by a marvellous japonica hedge grown by Margaret Stokes. All the oak trees were planted by her, as well as the substantial cypress hedge to conquer the wind.

A new vegetable garden was established on the way down to the old stable and a 'Seville' orange walk leads from the downstairs door to the lower parts of the garden.

Recently we have strengthened the windbreak with japonica and an escallonia double hedge and 'Lamarque' rose over the pergola. New fruit trees have been introduced and an olive grove established.

In 2007 it was necessary for all the electrical wiring to be put underground. Also our road had become busy with a cafe next door so new gates were installed with an escallonia hedge.

Philip Johnson of Greenmark Landscapes undertook a contract to create a dry garden on the top level with rocks to a pool, which saves all the rainwater off the house roof. No watering has been done in this garden. A new approach to the house and a mighty rock offers a full stop to the large round boulder and the long flat rock on the top level.

In 2008 we extended the cascade and dry creek bed down to the old tennis court site and levelled the whole terrace with Dromana gravel. We added two pools outside the downstairs bedrooms. Where the tennis court was, is now a wetland absorbing all the run off from the house and drive, finishing with a wide stairway down to the Yarra River.



GARDEN NOTES

In 2009 our property was entirely burnt out in the February bushfires. We lost a cottage, a shed with tractor and horse float, 10km of fencing, 22 gates, and 3,000 old pines and cypress trees. These all had to be grubbed out, burnt or mulched. So the remainder of the year was one of reconstruction and replanting. A new cottage (the gatehouse) and stable were built, and 100 melaleucas, 100 *Acacia melanoxylon* and 20 various pines were planted.

In January 2010 Greenmark completed Stage 4, with the cascade deviating to a small billabong and winding down to the Yarra River.

These notes can be downloaded from the Open Gardens Victoria website:

www.opengardensvictoria.org.au