

# GARDEN NOTES

## LAMBRIGG

### THARWA



#### LAMBRIGG HISTORY

Lambrigg was built between about 1891 to 1903 by William James Farrer, the famous wheat-breeder and experimentalist known as “the father of the Australian wheat industry”, and his wife Nina de Salis who came from the nearby property Cuppacumbalong. They had married in 1882 and received as a wedding gift from Nina’s father, Count Leopold de Salis, a parcel of land which had been part of his Cuppacumbalong property. They named their block of land Lambrigg. William and Nina lived at Cuppacumbalong, travelling back and forwards to Lambrigg until they could occupy the house in 1894. It is believed Farrer named Lambrigg, meaning “hill of lambs”, after his family’s home in north-west England. Lambrigg is situated in the beautiful countryside on the west bank of the Murrumbidgee River, just south of the Tuggeranong Valley.

It is a two-storey homestead cut into a hillside and built in stages, but substantially completed by 1894. The bottom floor is built on stone foundations with thick pise walls. Placed on top of this is a timber base of Oregon, imported from North America, which provides the platform for the top storey built of handmade bricks. William Farrer was also a surveyor and it is thought that this skill probably assisted the Farrers in choosing such a protected site for the Lambrigg house and garden, with splendid views of the hills and Murrumbidgee River. The house was designed to catch the morning sun and northerly winter sun with a wide verandah on three sides for summer shade.

The little cottage on the right as you approach Lambrigg was Farrer’s laboratory and was built a few years earlier than the homestead. It is built of pise with an iron roof and surrounding verandah. Farrer’s experimental paddock lay in front of the laboratory towards the house.

Farrer planted extensively around and in front of the house until his death in 1906. A large orchard and substantial vineyard were laid out between the house and the river. However, due to inadequate watering arrangements little of his plantings survived by the time the current family moved to Lambrigg in 1949. The three Himalayan Cedars at the front gate, a large pencil pine immediately in front of the house, an Arbutus in the rockery, an English Oak in the front paddock just outside the garden and a few Lebanese Cedars remain from Farrer’s time.

Henry (Jo) and Ruth Gullett purchased Lambrigg in 1949. Jo had grown up at Hill Station in Hume – his father Sir Henry Gullett was a Cabinet Minister and one of those who died in the Canberra Air Disaster in 1940. Jo and his father used to ride their horses to visit friends who lived at Tuggeranong Homestead and Lambrigg during their time at Hill Station. Jo served with distinction with the Australian Army and after his war service he was elected as a Member of the House of Representatives (1946-1955). Lambrigg was a home he remembered as a boy and presented the opportunity for a family base near Parliament.

## THE GARDEN

Jo and Ruth lovingly developed the gardens at Lambrigg and much of what can be seen today is the result of their work. The difficulties of establishing a garden on a steep slope were tackled by building a series of stone walls and creating a number of terraces. As the trees have matured they have provided cover for dogwoods, azaleas, rhododendrons, camellias and many other shrubs and plants.

The Pinoaks along the driveway and the beds on the southern side of the house were established first. Then the garden on the northern side was created and planted, and sometime later the rose garden by the front gate and the area below the tennis court. A mixture of conifers and deciduous trees provides a welcome escape from the summer heat, while allowing maximum sun into the house and garden in winter. Care has been taken when planting to preserve the lovely views of the Murrumbidgee River and to enhance the fine aspect so carefully chosen by the Farrers.

Over the last 33 years, under the care of Peter and Kate Gullet and their family of four, the Lambrigg garden has matured to become very much like a parkland with areas of cool shade and warm sunny spots in a calm, peaceful setting. Hedges of roses and lavender have replaced perennial beds. Tree planting is ongoing, as is improved garden infrastructure such as new stone walls, timber screens, the tennis court fence, ha ha walls and gates to replace stock fencing at the bottom of the garden, to name a few. Among the largest of the trees in the garden now are English Planes, Pinoaks, Gleditsias and an English Oak in the north western corner of the garden, planted by Peter as a boy from an acorn he grew!

As owners, it always gives us great pleasure to be able to make Lambrigg available for visitors to come and spend some time here and hopefully enjoy the ambience of Lambrigg.

## FEATURES

Three Himalayan Cedars planted by William Farrer and grown from seed. Two Lebanese Cedars just outside the garden on the western side, also planted by William Farrer. There are two other Lebanese Cedars growing down by the creek near the little cottage.

## GARDEN OWNERS

Peter and Kate Gullett