



AGHS Sydney Branch

Illustrated talk by Janine Kitson

***Sydney's Cosmopolitan Conservationists of the
1920s and 1930s***

**Wednesday, 20 September, 6pm for 7pm - 8.30pm,
Annie Wyatt Room, National Trust Centre, Observatory Hill.**

The talk's aim is to raise awareness of this network, and their work to protect and conserve significant natural landscapes particularly those around the lower and upper north shore. Based on a book by Dr Peggy James, ***Cosmopolitan Conservationists, Greening Modern Sydney*** (2013), the talk will focus on two of its principal characters, the activities of Annie Wyatt and David Stead. It will discuss their professional and social networks, how they shaped many government initiatives, policies, and legislative reforms to create a beautiful modern Sydney.

Janine Kitson BA Dip Ed, M Ed, Dip TEFL, MA, M Ed (Hons)

Janine has had a career as a teacher, writer and consultant for the NSW Department of Education. During that time, she was an active volunteer for many of NSW's key environmental groups, including the National Parks Association of NSW, Friends of Kuring-gai Environment (FOKE), Nature Conservation Council of NSW, the Colong Foundation for Wilderness, the David G. Stead Memorial Wild Life Research Foundation of Australia, and the National Trust of Australia (NSW). Through these groups, Janine has developed a passion for the history of the environment movement. Since 2015 she has written and taught courses on Australian environmental history at the Workers Educational Association, Sydney.

Cost: Members \$20, guests \$30, students \$5, includes light refreshments. Bookings essential.

Online Bookings: <https://www.trybooking.com/RNKG>

Enquiries for all events David Low 0407 464 876 or 02 9943 1456 email aghssydney@gmail.com

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www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au

Image: Dalrymple Hay Forest Ku ring gai Council Facebook Page 2017

Peggy James' *Cosmopolitan Conservationists, Greening Modern Sydney* (2013) provides excellent insights into the network of Sydney conservationists including David George Stead (1877–1957), Annie Forsyth Wyatt (1885–1961), Walter Burley Griffin (1876–1968), Charles Bean (1879–1968), Thistle Yolette Harris Stead (1902–1990), Norman Weekes (1884–1972), Marie Byles (1900–1979) and Myles Dunphy (1891–1985).

The Author:

Peggy James writes about these interwar Sydney conservationists who, with their professional and social networks, shaped many government initiatives, policies, and legislative reforms to create a beautiful modern Sydney. These Sydney cosmopolitan conservationists called for 'green belts' to protect Sydney's bushland and open spaces; something later to unravel. Their networking, joint actions and shared campaigns provided an alternative to the dominant counterforce of 'progress'. Many of these early 20th Century conservationists were well off, well educated, well connected. Often, they had influence with politicians, the legal profession, public servants and the media. Often, they had interstate and international connections. Often, they embraced social justice issues such as women's rights, prison reform, peace, alternative spiritualities and the recognition of Indigenous peoples. Two influential conservationists were David George Stead, founder of the Wildlife Preservation Society (1909) and Annie Forsyth Wyatt, founder of the NSW National Trust of Australia (1945).

The People:

David G. Stead was one of Australia's most significant early 20th Century conservationist. He was a self-educated naturalist and marine scientist who led the NSW Department of Fisheries for many years. He grew up in North Sydney in the 1880s and roamed its bushland and its harbour foreshores. There he witnessed the sewerage and industrial pollution of Sydney Harbour that contributed to the 1900s plague. Not only did David Stead play an influential role in the Wildlife Preservation Society for many years but he was also extraordinarily active in many other learned societies such as the Aquarium, the Naturalists', the Geographical, the Australian Forest League, the Town Planning Association, the Gould League of Bird Lovers, and the Royal Zoological Society of NSW. The Wildlife Preservation Society as one of Australia's first conservation groups campaigned for legislative reforms to end the hunting and poisoning of birds and wildlife and was pivotal in ending the massive koala hunting culls of the 1920s.

Annie Forsyth Wyatt was passionate about Australian heritage as well as being an unashamed 'ardent tree lover'. She grew up in Rooty Hill in the 1890s where she witnessed the 'wanton destruction' of its bushland and fine colonial houses. This profoundly distressed her for the rest of her life.

Annie Wyatt played a prominent role in protecting Balls Head Reserve, on Sydney Harbour (1931), and a reserve, overlooking Palm Beach (1938) that is named in her honour and the Dalrymple Hay Forest, St Ives, one of Sydney's most significant forests. Annie was instrumental in founding the National Trust in Australia based on the English National Trust that was established in 1892.

Some of Sydney's Cosmopolitan Conservationists

	Institutional & Campaigning Legacy	Legacy
David G. Stead 1877-1957	Founder of one of Australia's first professional, national conservation groups - the Wildlife Preservation Society [WPS] in 1909 that focused on legislative reforms to protect wildlife. His books <i>Crustaceans: Ancient, Modern and Mythical</i>; <i>Fishes of Australia</i> and <i>The Edible Fishes of NSW, Sharks & Rays of Australian Seas</i> lay the groundwork for modern marine conservation. Involved in the Forest League that laid groundwork for forest conservation. His memorial, Wirrimbirra Sanctuary, Bargo, established by his wife Thistle Harris, became a National Trust (NSW) property in 1965.	Famous for saving the koala from massive hunting culls during 1920s Mount Warning Dorrigo
Walter Burley Griffin 1876-1968	Australia's National Capital Canberra. Architect for Stella James House, Avalon, now a National Trust (NSW) property. Walter Burley Griffin Society continues his work today.	Castlecrag Bushland at Middle Harbour
Charles Bean 1879-1968	WW1 historian who celebrated the Gallipoli Legacy. Established War Memorial at Canberra. Parks & Playground Movement that promoted the value of parks and playgrounds for a healthy nation.	Up until the 1960s, healthy, intact, healthy bushland existed close to Sydney. Garigal National Park
Marie Byles 1900-1979	First practicing woman lawyer who provided the legal advice to many conservation groups. Built 'Ahimsa', that became a property of National Trust (NSW).	Bouddi National Park
Myles Dunphy 1891-1985	Elite bushwalker and wilderness campaigner. Patron of the Colong Caves Committee that became the Colong Foundation for Wilderness. Founding member of National Parks Association of NSW that campaigned for the 1967 National Parks & Wildlife Service.	Greater Blue Mountains National Park
Annie Wyatt 1885-1961	Founder of the Ku-ring-gai Tree Lovers' Civic League. Founder of the National Trust of Australia (NSW) in 1945.	Macquarie Street's colonial buildings Balls Head, Sydney Harbour Dalrymple Hay Forest, St Ives

Upcoming WEA Talks by tutor Janine Kitson

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Calls for a Nuclear Free World

Thursday 2 November, 2017 6-8pm \$36

The Australian Red Cross continues to call for a nuclear free world. Along with 132 states, it supported the United Nations Prohibition and Elimination of Nuclear Weapons Conference in Nagasaki in April 2017. How is this call a continuation of work from such people as Albert Einstein (1879-1955) and Rachel Carson (1907-1964) who both spoke fearlessly about the dangers of science and the need to make peace with the planet.

Where Have all the Koalas Gone?

Monday 6 November, 2017 [12:15pm - 1:15pm](#) \$16

Will today's children ever see a koala in the wild? When the last Tasmanian Tiger died in Hobart Zoo in 1936 it heralded in its extinction. What now awaits the fate of Australia's wildlife – such as our iconic koala – as governments unwind 'green tape'? Will we soon have to confront our children's question – "Where have all the koalas gone?"

Possums, Power & the Protection of the Australian Environment PART 1

Saturday 11 November, 2017 10am-12noon \$36

Why is it so rare to hear about Australia's biodiversity crisis? Learn about some of Australia's threatened species including the Sydney's Pygmy Possum, Victoria's Leadbeater Possum and Kosciusko's Mountain Pygmy Possum? How did the power of ideas, science, art, and conservation groups successfully argue for the protection of Australia's environment?

People, Passion & the Protection of the Australian Environment PART 2

Saturday 18 November, 2017 10am-12 noon \$36

Who are the people who argued for the protection of the Australian environment? What made them so passionate? What were their interests, concerns and motivations? What have been the key environment campaigns of the 19th and 20th Centuries? What are today's issues facing the Australian environment?

Alexander von Humboldt – Lost Hero of Science

Thursday 23 November, 2017 6-8pm \$36

This book study - *The Invention of Nature, The Adventures of Alexander von Humboldt, the Lost Hero of Science* by Andrea Wulf (2015) examines the life of Humboldt (1769–1859), a genius in articulating why Nature had to be understood from both a scientific and artistic perspective and was indeed a 'web of life'.