

# MARKREE



## MARKREE'S GARDEN

One of Hobart's hidden gems, Markree is an important 1926 house, garden and collection of furniture and decorative arts all reflecting the ethos of the Arts and Crafts Movement. Markree was the home of Cecil and Ruth Baldwin. Their son, Henry, bequeathed the property to the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.

Markree and adjacent Red Knights, built for Ruth Baldwin's sister, Hilda Maning, were designed by Hobart architect Bernard Ridley Walker (1884–1957). The two houses were designed to be complementary in terms of their sculptural brickwork, attractive roof scapes, and shingle-clad verandas. Both gardens were laid out by Cecil Baldwin (1887-1961) who had studied at the Burnley School of Horticulture in Melbourne with his brother Tom from 1904 to 1906. After leaving Burnley, Tom and Cecil worked as landscape gardeners until enlisting for service during World War I.

Burnley promoted the gardening style of British Arts and Crafts Movement garden designers such as Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932) whose influence on Markree's garden is evident in the contrasts between structure and naturalism, artifice and informality. Markree's layout is based on a central axial path with lattice screens dividing the flower garden, kitchen garden and compost heap. This formality is broken up by gravel paths with stone edgings and dense naturalistic plantings. A striking feature is the fountain in the form of a triton rising from a rustic pond with rockwork borders

The leading Australian garden designer, Edna Walling, (1895-1973) studied at Burnley approximately twelve years after Cecil Baldwin, hence their similar planting palettes. Walling's signature tree, the silver birch (*Betula pendula*) is represented by old and young specimens in Markree's garden. Cecil Baldwin and Edna Walling were probably acquainted through Walling's Tasmanian commissions at Sandy Bay and Fern Tree. Walling designed a mountain garden for her friend Eileen Bamford at Pillinger Drive, Fern Tree. The Baldwins had a house opposite at 25 Pillinger Drive, Fern Tree.

An album of views of the Markree garden c1930 shows that relatively little has changed. Cecil Baldwin selected plants that would provide colour and interest with the changing seasons as well as flowers for his wife Ruth to pick for the house. Garden historian, Ann Cripps, referenced the 1930s photographs when she carried out a gentle restoration of the garden in 2011, gently separating plants that had invaded from other beds to bring back a sense of 'light and shade'. A charming aspect of the relationship of Markree and Red Knights was the absence of a dividing fence. The present posts and chains replace a series of arches supporting roses. Rose arbours were a favoured motif of English Arts and Crafts garden designer, Gertrude Jekyll.

Markree is sheltered by stone walls that pre-date the house by almost a century. The land on which Markree stands was once part of Anglesea Barracks. In 1828 the slope of the hill between the newly laid out Hampden Road and Sandy Bay Road was subdivided for villas overlooking the town. Markree's front and eastern boundary walls were built using convict labour as the perimeter wall of Heathfield, the first of these villas to be completed. Heathfield, a verandah'd bungalow built in 1829 by Assistant Commissary General Affleck Moodie, may be seen from Markree's garden if you look west across the fountain. The figs espaliered against the stone wall on Markree's eastern boundary may be remnants of Heathfield's kitchen garden. The 160 year old Norfolk Island hibiscus (*Lagunaria patersonia*) is a reminder of Tasmania's early connections with Norfolk Island, commemorated in place names such as New Norfolk and the Norfolk Plains. The productive garden established by Cecil Baldwin contains old varieties of apricots (Moorpark), nectarines (Cardinal), apples (Granny Smith and Democrat), plums, raspberries and strawberries.

Roses are prolific at Markree and their varieties are testament to the age of the garden. Two of the earliest roses are the unidentified mauve damask rose and the white moss rose. Noted rose propagator Alister Clark's best known roses are in the Markree Garden – Sunny South (1918) and Lorraine Lee (1924). Clark (1864 – 1949) is best known as a resident of Victoria but spent his teen years in Hobart. In the spring of 2009, the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery planted the heritage rose, Prosperity, to commemorate the 90th anniversary of Henry Baldwin's birth.

For the young Henry Baldwin the Markree garden was a magical place in which to play. One of Henry's games was to hide in the fig tree from his Aunt Hilda Maning who lived next door. Hilda also played policeman when he rode his tricycle around the garden. As Henry grew older and his health deteriorated he loved to sit in the upstairs veranda and watch the changing seasons over the garden.

Markree's owners Cecil and Ruth Baldwin were clearly highly engaged in the design and beautification of their home – Cecil as garden designer and Ruth (1878-1969) as a craftswoman responsible for the timber desk, bookcase and frame carved with Australian floral motifs within the house. Markree, with its Edwardian garden and combination of Art Nouveau and Art Deco architectural elements, looks both backwards and forwards in terms of style. Ruth and Cecil Baldwin married late in life as a consequence of World War I and so Henry Baldwin (1919-2007) was an only child. Cecil Baldwin was injured during the war and so was unable to continue as a landscape gardener. He returned to work at the Repatriation General Department. As we commemorate the centenary of World War I, Markree is a place to contemplate its impacts on Tasmania's social fabric and built environment.

*The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery acknowledges Ann Cripps' valuable research into the history of Markree's garden and Gregg Chandler's work in identifying the roses.*

**Markree House Museum and Garden is open Saturdays from October to April 10:00 am – 4:30 pm. It is also open for bookings (essential) Tuesdays to Saturdays with tours at 10:30 am and 2:30 pm and Sunday tours at 2:30 pm. Closed Good Friday, ANZAC Day, Christmas Day and Boxing Day**

145 Hampden Road, Hobart  
(nearest cross street: Davey Street)  
(03) 6165 7000

[markree@tmag.tas.gov.au](mailto:markree@tmag.tas.gov.au)  
[www.tmag.tas.gov.au/markree](http://www.tmag.tas.gov.au/markree)

Enquire about our special group booking rate, school education programs and events.