



Victorian Heritage Register

# Bickleigh Vale

**Open 16 October 2005.  
Open Garden Scheme 2005-6**



*Badgers Wood, Bickleigh Vale*

Bickleigh Vale is a landscaped village of about 10ha created in the 1920s by leading Australian landscape gardener Edna Walling (1895 – 1973). Six Bickleigh Vale houses and cottages are opening their gardens this year on Sunday 16 October 2005.

All these buildings were designed or approved by Edna Walling in what she termed 'the English style'. Bickleigh Vale, which was named after the village in Devon where she grew up, centred on her house, Sonning (1921) and her studio, the Cabin. She lived in Sonning and then in The Barn for most of her working life, moving to Queensland finally in 1967.

The six gardens which are open this year are Badgers Wood, Devon Cottage, Downderry, Hurst, The Barn and The Shielan. They are all on the Heritage Register, which means that their unique significance to Victoria is protected by law (Heritage Act, 1995). The Victorian Heritage Council decides what goes on the Register, which currently includes just over 2,000 places of state-level heritage significance.

Bickleigh Vale is listed on the Victorian Heritage Register (H 2053) because of its aesthetic value as a landscape, its scientific value (horticultural), its historical importance and its architectural significance to the State of Victoria.

#### **Aesthetic significance**

Bickleigh Vale is of aesthetic (landscape) significance as the major work of its creator, the landscape designer Edna Walling. Walling received her certificate from Burnley Horticultural College at the end of World War One and was one of the first women to establish a successful garden design practice. Her reputation was enhanced by her regular gardening column in the *Australian Home Beautiful* which popularised her ideas about gardens and their designs.

Bickleigh Vale village survives as her largest single creation. It is significant for keeping much of the landscape character planned by Walling, and the survival of many cottages created or approved by Walling, as well as garden plantings inspired by Walling's writings and designs.

The aesthetic quality of the landscape includes the apparently casual nature of the internal lanes, the character of the mature plantings, the continuous nature of the landscaping which permits glimpses of carefully sited cottages, and the complementary relationship between exotic and Australian plants.



*The Barn, Bickleigh Vale*

#### **Scientific significance**

Bickleigh Vale is of scientific (horticultural) significance for its many outstanding trees and plantings, including stands of rare oaks and other deciduous varieties. Many plants at Bickleigh Vale were made popular by Edna Walling. Individual properties have plantings of horticultural and landscape value: these are listed on pages 2.

#### **Historical significance**

Bickleigh Vale is of historical significance for being conceived and developed some years before Walling gained recognition and achieved commercial success as a gardener. The subdivision plan which was influenced by Walling has largely survived. It is reflected in the arrangement and generally low density of residences, the major boundary plantings and fence lines, and the boundaries of roads and lanes. Bickleigh Vale attracted a small community of Edna Walling's female friends who lived at various times in the different cottages and houses. The Village is an extraordinary experiment in urban design and was an inspiration for her followers during and beyond her lifetime.

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**Architectural significance**

Bickleigh Vale is of architectural significance for the design of the cottages and houses, particularly for the harmonious combination of materials and design elements such as rustic stone on lower levels, dark stained shingles on upper gable ends, simple multi-paned casement windows, dormer windows, prominent stone chimneys, and French doors opening onto patios with attached stone and timber pergolas. Also of architectural significance are the hard landscape elements including ponds, stone walls, paving and other works which complement the design of the cottages. Together with the cottages, these exemplify Walling's individual and original approach to the ideal of a unified and integrated cottage-village design. Although many of the original cottages have been extended or altered, all retain significant Walling influence.



Badgers Wood, Bickleigh Vale

**Map showing which buildings are on the Victorian Heritage Register**



- B1 Hurst
- B2 The Sheilan
- B3 Glencairn
- B4 garage
- B5 Badgers Wood
- B6 Wimborne
- B7 112 Cardigan Road
- B8 Bena Lodge
- B9 Warty
- B10 Workshop
- B11 guest cottage
- B12 Braemark
- B13 The Cabin
- B14 Sonning
- B15 Devon Cottage
- B16 The Barn
- B17 shed
- B18 Lynton Lee
- B19 Cornerways
- B20 Mistover
- B21 Downtery

**Indigenous trees:**

The landscape retains

- Acacia melanoxylon* (indigenous Blackwood)
- Eucalyptus macrorhyncha*,
- E. rubida*
- E. goniocalyx*,

- E. melliodora*,
- E. obliqua*,
- E. ovata*,
- E. radiata*,
- E. cephalocarpa*
- E. viminalis*.

**Conifers**

Exotic plants were introduced into the remnant vegetation and include conifers, deciduous and evergreen trees, shrubs, perennials and bulbs, and many Australian natives that are a feature of Walling gardens. Of the larger growing trees there are numerous pines (Pinus), oaks (Quercus), cypress (Cupressus), cedar (Cedrus), elms (Ulmus), poplars (Populus), ash (Fraxinus) and gums (Eucalyptus and Corymbia). The earliest introduced plantings were pines, and numerous Monterey Pines (Pinus radiata) occur along Pine Road and Bickleigh Vale Road, and throughout the estate. Also along Bickleigh Vale Road are several uncommon Bishop's-cone Pine (Pinus muricata). Other conifers of contrasting form have been planted including Monterey Cypress (Cupressus macrocarpa), Golden Cypress (C. macrocarpa "Horizontalis Aurea"), Bhutan Cypress (C. torulosa), Mexican Cypress (C. lusitanica), Smooth-barked Arizona Cypress (C. glabra), with blue-green foliage, and the narrow crowned Italian Cypress (C. sempervirens).

The Walling 'signature' plants widely planted at Bickleigh Vale include:

- Acacia,
- Acer palmatum,
- Acmena,
- Abelia,
- Amelanchia,
- Arbutus,
- Betula,
- Berberis,
- Buddleja,
- Buxus,
- Camellia japonica,
- Camellia sasanqua,
- Carpinus,
- Catalpa,
- Chaenomeles,
- Chimonanthus,
- Choisya,
- Cornus,
- Cotinus,
- Cotoneaster,
- Crataegus,

- Diospyros,
- Duetzia,
- Eleaegnus,
- Enkianthus,
- Forsythia,
- Hydrangea,
- Jasminum,
- Kerria,
- Kolkwitzia,
- Laurus,
- Leptospermum,
- Ligustrum,
- Liquidambar,
- Liriodendron,
- Lonicera,
- Malus,
- Magnolia,
- Nandina,
- Osmanthus,
- Philadelphus,
- Photinia,
- Pittosporum,
- Populus,
- Prostanthera,

- Prunus,
- Prunus lusitanica,
- Pyracantha,
- Pyrus,
- Rhaphiolepis,
- Spiraea,
- Syringa,
- Viburnum,
- Wisteria; and
- Helleborus,
- Anemone,
- Agapanthus,
- Viola,
- rose cultivars and numerous bulbs, including
- Nerine,
- Ixia,
- Sparaxis,
- Narcissus,
- Hyacinthoides,
- Leucojum,
- Iris,
- Muscari.

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