

❖ EDNA WALLING ❖

BACKGROUND

Edna was born in the UK in 1895 and went to school in Devon, where she fell in love with the cottage gardens of English villages. Her family moved to New Zealand in 1912 and a couple of years later to Melbourne where Edna studied at the School of Horticulture, Burnley, gaining a certificate in 1917. By the early 1920s, she had developed a flourishing garden design business and was regarded as the leader in her field in Victoria. She had a regular gardening column in *Australian Home Beautiful* and contributed articles to other magazines. She also designed group-housing estates, the first and best known being Bickleigh Vale village, then on Melbourne's outskirts, where she lived and gathered around her like-minded people for whom she designed English-style cottages and gardens.



By the 1940s, she was well-known throughout Australia. By this time also, she had become more passionate about native plants and more active as a conservationist, joining battles to protect the natural environment. She visited Queensland in the 1950s and was particularly attracted to Buderim. After some time seeking a suitable property there, she bought 'Bendles', a cottage in Quiet Valley Crescent. A couple of years later, with the cottage renovated to her requirements, she became a Buderim resident in 1967.

LIFE ON BUDERIM

Edna kept working on her passions in her 'retirement' years in Buderim. She undertook garden design commissions and worked on her photography and manuscripts. 'Bendles' evolved as an expression of her general philosophy on garden design – an aesthetic unity between house and garden with the cottage theme reinforced by informal plantings predominated by green, with subtle blends of white and pastel-shade flowers.

Where garden design commissions required construction work like archways, dry-stone walls or random slate paving, Edna relied on Buderim building contractor Dave Crerar to do the work. He had done renovation work on 'Bendles' for Edna, including the construction of a dark-room and an English-style bay-window. He considered her a good friend and recalls her as one who knew what she wanted, a person with her definite ways.

Edna's last personal assistant recalls Edna as a charismatic and eccentric character who was also warm and charming – and outspoken. She lived simply, loved classical music, was interested in ideas, had little interest in the domestic side of life and was essentially down to earth. She had radical ideas and encouraged individualism.

Edna considered herself too busy to socialise in her retirement, but those who knew her found her a very sociable person. She loved Buderim and, while there are few remaining pockets of Walling-designed gardens in the area, her influence remains a more widespread and enduring legacy. Edna died in 1973 and her ashes were placed in the Buderim cemetery. The Edna Walling Memorial Garden in Quorn Close, Buderim, honours her memory and her connection with the local area.

The donor is the current owner of 'Bendles'. He has held Edna Walling's achievements in high regard for a long time, seeing their importance in global rather than just national terms. He values the cottage for its spirit of association with Edna.

Donor: Derek Trebilcock