



Eucryphia

ISSN 1037 – 2032

Number 94 – January 2008

Robertson Environment Protection Society – to promote the protection and enhancement of the Robertson Environment
PO Box 45, Robertson NSW 2577 www.reps.org.au

REPS Meeting Friday 8th February at 7:00pm at the Robertson Community Centre

Please note the earlier commencement
time for this meeting only.

The Potoroo

At short notice, Melinda Norton, Wildlife Project Officer, NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service, Fitzroy Falls, will address REPS on the ecology of the Long-nosed Potoroo (“Rat Kangaroo”) a denizen of thick coral-fern habitats in the Southern Highlands, their strange food source (underground fungi) and how they manage to outwit and evade their main predator, the fox.

Melinda's studies on the Potoroo form the main part of her Master's research at the University of Wollongong. She will also tell us something about her work on the ecology of the Rock Wallaby in this area.

All are welcome – please bring friends and family. A light supper will be provided.



Potorous tridactylus
Long-nosed Potoroo

www.anbg.gov.au/.../potorous-tridactylus-300.gif

Entry with a gold coin donation.

Upcoming Events

- Tue. 5th February – CanWIN Public Forum including talk by Ted Trainer 8pm, Bowral Uniting Centre.
- Wed. 6th February – Public Meeting re Sale of 2.5ha Mt Gibraltar Reserve, Bowral Memorial Hall 5-8pm
- Thu. 7th February – Public Meeting re Sale of part of Hampden Park 6pm, School of Arts.
- Fri. 8th February – REPS Public Meeting including “The Potoroo” Talk by Melinda Norton 7pm, Robertson Community Centre
- Sat 22nd February – Calaang Creek Working Bee – 9:00am Calaang Creek.
- NPA Bushwalks – 9,24 February, 12, 26 March, 12 April.

Mine Subsidence Talk and Conference

Recently, subsidence from longwall mining has been highlighted due to the Southern Coalfields Enquiry (REPS made a submission) and also partly due to a high profile in the Sydney Morning Herald "Mines blamed for threat to water supply" (5 Nov 2007).

At REPS AGM on 9 November 2007 we were shown the film "Rivers of Shame" along with more recent pictures of longwall mining induced subsidence. The main focus was on riverbed cracking, stream water loss and associated pollution. Caroline Graham and Julie Sheppard from Rivers SOS were our guest speakers. They described the longwall coal mining process well and the associated effects on the landscape. These effects were dramatically shown with pictures of lost pools, river bed cracking and iron oxide leakage. One area of recent concern is the Waratah Rivulet which drains to the Woronora Reservoir.

It was therefore timely that the Mine Subsidence Technological Society and the Australian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy, Wollongong branch, were holding a joint two-day conference entitled 'Mine Subsidence: A Community Issue' at the University of Wollongong on 26 and 27 November 2007. REPS decided to investigate further. Lynn Stevenson attended day 1 and Leon Hall attended day 2 of the conference on behalf of REPS.

26 November day 1 (Lynn Stevenson)

The keynote address, 'Mine Subsidence: A Community Perspective', was delivered by Greg Cole-Clark, Chairman, Mine Subsidence Technological Society. Greg Cole-Clark stressed that data and information on subsidence be available to all interested parties. He maintained that communication with the community will be facilitated by improved consultancy and transparency. He outlined, from a management perspective, current and proposed future legislative processes that require Mine Subsidence Management Plans to address increasing concerns regarding the effect of subsidence on both built structures and the environment. Further information can be found at <http://www.minesub.nsw.gov.au>

The second speaker, Margaret MacDonald-Hill has been employed as a facilitator of mining consultative committees for a number of years. She provided an insight into the communication mechanisms between

mine management and the community, local councils and other stakeholders.

The papers that followed focused on recent research into a variety of technologies used to predict, model and monitor subsidence, and on the development of sophisticated mathematical and statistical analysis methodologies. Case studies provided practical examples of the use of these technologies. One example was the innovative use of optical fibres to monitor mining-induced strains in a road pavement. Another highlighted the role of high-resolution remote sensing and geographical information systems (GIS) as monitoring tools in broad acre agricultural environments.

Overall, the first day of the conference focused on the use and accuracy of monitoring and prediction tools. Most examples given were on the effects of subsidence on built structures with less emphasis on the actual outcomes on natural features and the environment.

Mine Subsidence Technological Society (a voluntary group) - At the conclusion of Day 1, Lynn Stevenson was invited to attend the AGM of the Board of the Mine Subsidence Technological Society. The value of community involvement was raised at this meeting, and subsequently Lynn, as a representative of REPS, was elected to the Board of the society. The REPS committee hopes that this involvement will provide a communication channel to discuss environmental issues.

27 November day 2 (Leon Hall)

Day 2 had more of a focus on the effects of mining subsidence on the natural environment. The papers presented were very technical and cannot be done justice here.

The first talk was on a case study at Waratah Rivulet on the environmental costs and benefits of underground longwall mining. The economic and social benefits were weighed up against the environmental costs. The speaker (R. Gillespie) was basically saying, that to avoid the predicted subsidence effects on Waratah Rivulet would involve forgoing \$270M of economic (and social) benefit. (It would be interesting to compare this to the Kangaloon Borefield proposal where there appears to be negligible economic or social benefit with associated environmental costs.) Minimising the effects, improving remediation, or the

contribution of coal to global warming was not part of the framework nor was conserving some of a resource for the future.

Morning presentations also covered risk assessment with dams and stored water, using local geology to reduce subsidence (at Mandalong), stress assessment of buried pipelines, upsidence and closure movements, impacts on river channels and the opportunities for control. Speakers mainly talked about the structural changes to the environment which helped to inform me about the subsidence process and effects.

After lunch it was good to hear from a botanist after all the geology. 'The Ecology of Subsidence - Upland Swamps in the Southern Coalfield' by M. Richardson, D Ryan (Biosis Research). Upland Swamps that had been mined beneath were compared with ones that had not, using vegetation monitoring, (part of a larger survey including a frog survey). This study of vegetation supports the idea that upland swamps are not likely to be characteristically altered by mine subsidence in the short to medium term.

This may be good news, but should be taken in context, as it was also mentioned that this paper represents the results of the first such attempt of this type of study within the Southern Coalfields, (an ecological monitoring program specifically designed to determine if mine subsidence is likely to result in vegetation changes within Upland Swamps).

The study also supports the need for long-term monitoring of ecological values in relation to subsidence and the value of an interdisciplinary approach to ecological monitoring projects. It was also noted that there was a great need for baseline information and that "its (the subsidence) potential to affect ecological values, is unique to each longwall or series of longwalls. Therefore it is necessary to consider the effects of subsidence on ecological values on a case by case basis."

It was also informative to hear two papers presented by the Sydney Catchment Authority. These were "Changes of Water Quality in a Stream Impacted by Longwall Mining Subsidence" and "Surface Water - Groundwater Interactions in a Catchment Impacted by Longwall Mining" both by J. Jankowski.

These papers highlighted the concerns of the Sydney Catchment Authority about subsidence effects on the water catchment area with examples shown from the Waratah Rivulet. These concerns relate to the potential to lose water from the surface water system (this is a 'grey area'; a previous study has shown that subsidence at the Metropolitan Colliery has not affected flows into the Woronora Reservoir) and the deterioration of water quality.

The increased water/rock interaction on the newly exposed rock mobilises chemical elements from the rock mass which in turn increases the salinity of surface water, brings more metals into the surface waterways, and results in the deterioration of water quality.

Overall the conference was well worth attending to get a broader picture of the subsidence issue. Lynn and I also found it useful talking to conference attendees including consultants and academics. This mine subsidence conference is held every 3 years. REPS has a copy of the proceedings.

Kangaloon Borefield Proposal Update

The pumping test at Stockyard Swamp (just north of Mt Murray) is now nearing completion. The Sydney Catchment Authority (SCA) has lodged their Environmental Assessment (EA) of the whole borefield proposal to the Department of Planning (DoP).

The DoP will place the EA on public exhibition for 30 days and will invite submissions (comments). The timing of the public exhibition will be decided by the DoP but it is anticipated (by the SCA) that the EA may be exhibited from mid February or March 2008.

The Upper Nepean Groundwater Community Reference Group has started preparing a submission and REPS will also lodge a submission. This will be the last public exhibition before a decision is made about the Kangaloon borefield proposal.

● Please get a free copy of the Environmental Assessment when it is available and have your say during the 30 day exhibition period. People should be notified by the SCA of the exhibition period by mail etc.

Any queries contact Leon Hall ph. 48 882222.

Draft Wingecarribee Shire Local Environment Plan(LEP)

A reminder to members to make their submissions to Council by 22nd February.

Unfortunately the exhibition of the Plan finishes on Friday 1st February and many may not have been able to get to the information day at Robertson on 15th January. We can have some material for people to look at after the talk on 8th February. Of concern for Robertson residents is the proposed rezoning and sale of part of Hampden Park which Council has decided is “surplus”. Many other parks across the Shire, including Mt Gibraltar, will also have pieces of land converted to “residential” and sold to fund the Leisure Centre.

Submissions are also being called for up till the 25th February for the proposed Leisure Centre. Members may like to stress to the Council not only the importance of retaining all the proposed energy and water saving features but also suggesting the addition of photovoltaic roof panels or other measures not only to reduce cost but to reduce carbon emissions.

Proposed Sale of Council Land

A public meeting about the rezoning and selling of a part of **Hampden Park** is scheduled for Thursday 7th February from 6-8pm at the School of Arts, Robertson.

The opinions expressed at this meeting will become part of the recommendations that the independent consultant will present to council. It is important that we have a large attendance to show that the community is not happy with the sale of this public land, and spending of the resulting money out of the village.

Written submissions can be sent to council either before or after the meeting and must be included by council in their application to the State Government for rezoning of the land. The more submissions the better the chance of stopping the sale!

Mount Gibraltar Reserve

There is also another public meeting being held regarding the potential sale of 2 blocks of land (2.5 hectares), currently within the Mt. Gibraltar Reserve.

This meeting is on Wednesday 6 February at Bowral Memorial Hall, Bowral, between 5pm-8pm.

A Simpler Way to Survive

A David-and-Goliath battle is on. On his side, Goliath has globalisation, marked in China and India by 1,000+ new automobiles a day and in the West by mountains of electronic consumer goods from Asia. Both sides are facing the prospect of peak oil. Against these odds, who can prevail?

One man who believes all of us can prevail is Ted Trainer. Ted argues that our consumer society is so grossly unsustainable that only a transition to a simpler way can solve our planet’s alarming global problems. His simpler way means we must achieve huge and radical change toward local economies using local resources and under local control, not driven by market forces. It means cooperative and participatory value systems that reject competitive acquisitiveness. It means zero economic growth.

Ted will suggest how we can make the necessary changes to survive the serious petroleum shortages that will impact rural areas such as the Southern Highlands especially hard.

Ted Trainer is a Visiting Fellow in the School of Social Work, UNSW. His interests are global problems, sustainability, radical critiques of the economy, and the transition to alternative social forms. He has written numerous books and articles, including his most recent book, *Renewable Energy Cannot Sustain a Consumer Society*. He is also developing an alternative lifestyle education site, Pigface Point, near Sydney.

**Hear Ted Trainer 8.00 p.m.
Tuesday 5 February, Bowral Uniting Centre, cnr
Bendooley & Boolwey, Bowral.
Refreshments, gold coin donation.**

A public forum sponsored by CanWIN, the Bowral Uniting Church Eco-Justice Ministry, and NPA Southern Highlands.

For more information:
Sandra Menteith 0403 790 777

Scribbly Gum Moth and “Old Tom” Greaves

The Scribbly Gums of Tourist Road, Kangaloon have led me to a discovery about an old acquaintance of mine, from Canberra days – Mr. Tom Greaves.

The mysterious scribbles on the Scribbly Gum were written about by the famous Australian poet, Judith Wright.

The gum-tree stands by the spring,
I peeled its splitting bark
and found the written track
of a life I could not read.

(From: “A Human Pattern”: Selected Poems by Judith Wright.)

I learnt recently that the mystery of the scribbles on the Scribbly Gums was first solved by a CSIRO scientist, Mr. Tom Greaves, back in the 1930s. The Latin name Ogmograptis scribula was ascribed to the first specimen identified. The name means the "Scribe who writes".

This information is very personal, to me, because I have just realised that I knew Tom Greaves, in his retirement, in Canberra. I knew him as Canberra’s local expert ‘Vegie Gardener’ – not as a famous entomologist (although the connection is obvious if you have ever tried to grow Cabbages, and deal with the devastation inflicted by caterpillars of the Cabbage White Butterfly). "Old Tom" (as he was known affectionately in the neighbourhood) was renowned for giving away the surplus vegetables which he grew in his highly productive backyard vegetable garden. His wife was allowed to grow flowers in the front yard, but the backyard was Tom’s. He delighted in showing it to visitors, and I had the honour of being shown around it by "Old Tom" himself. His compost heap was his pride and joy.

Post script: "Old Tom" died one day, probably in the early 1990s, in a neighbour's kitchen - where he had gone to share some of his vegetables. "Old Tom" was thoroughly respectable, but you will not be surprised to learn that tongues wagged for weeks, in the neighbourhood. Personally I always thought that it was the ultimate way for an old “Vegie Gardener” to go - sharing his surplus produce with friends.

Tom Greaves’ discovery: The life cycle of the Scribbly Gum Moth

The scribbles on the Scribbly Gums are the work of the larvae of tiny moths in the Ogmograptis genus. The larvae hatch from eggs laid in crevices in the bark of certain species of Eucalypt trees. The larvae burrow under the outer layer of bark, and eat their way around underneath that layer of bark, leaving their tracks as tiny scars on the inner layer of bark. This is only apparent when, in the next season, the old bark is shed.

There is always a certain pattern to the marks left by the moth larvae. It starts out as a very thin line, (see the lowest part of the photo above). Then the line suddenly appears to get much fatter. In fact, if you follow the line along its original course, you will find a loop (at top-right, in this image). At this point the moth larva turns around, and retraces its path, coming back beside its original line. It is that which makes the track appear fatter than at first. Half-way back the thick track stops.



That is where the tiny moth caterpillar has reached its maturity (and is ready to pupate). It eats its way out of the protective covering of outer bark, and escapes to the outside world, drops to the ground, and pupates amongst the piles of old bark underneath the Scribbly Gum tree. Eventually a tiny silvery white moth emerges. Female moths will lay their eggs on the bark of their favourite species of Eucalypt tree - and thus the cycle repeats.



I remember Old Tom as a wonderful generous soul, a Vegetable Gardener par excellence, and now, as Tom Greaves, the discoverer of the lifecycle of the Scribbly Gum Moth – which as Judy Wright’s poem bears witness, was one of the great mysteries of the Australian Bush.

Denis Wilson

These poems come from two issues of 'Youth Writes', the anthology of creative writing of boys and girls at secondary school.

If you have a poem on the environment, written by yourself or by another person, please send it to Jonathan Persse, Sallyhill, Burrawang 2577.

Our Family of Forests

Our forests were like one big family,
all happily bunched together,
clothed and fed well.
Then one day all of their luxuries
disappeared!

Now they are stripped of their clothes.
The ground on which they live
is torn up before them.

They are left there,
the destroyers' work is done.
They stand there humiliated, powerless,
naked from head to toe.

Most of their family was taken,
taken away from them.
Who knows where, who knows why.
Only a few still stand living.

Why has this damage been done to them?
They have always helped our world
and the people who live in it.
What have they done?

Let us help this now small, sad family grow,
grow to be large and glorious once again,
so again they can help the world
and the people who share it.

For if the family of forests don't survive,
neither will the family of man.

Isra Constantine
(aged 14; Youth Writes No. 10)

Twenty-One Eucalyptus Trees

The big majestic eucalyptus trees stand
upright, rigid and tall;
Their leaves swing and sway in the late
autumn breeze;
Oh how many times have they seen their
neighbours fall?

Spiders spin webs and rosellas cheerfully call.
Planes thunder in the sky above and trains
charge along down below, ruining the peace of
the serene bush.
While all the while the sun darts in and out of
trees, twenty-one now left in all.

The oldest trees remember when there was not
a single brick wall,
When there were wild wallabies sipping at a
stream and koalas contently munching their
leaves.
Now they recall how much all this is being
replaced by a huge, big shopping mall.

The big majestic eucalyptus trees stand
upright, rigid and tall;
Their leaves swing and sway in the late
autumn breeze;
Oh how many more times will they see their
neighbours fall?

Georgie Hamilton
(aged 14; Youth Writes No. 12)

Southern Highlands Branch of the National Parks Association

Walks-February to April 2008

Saturday 9 February Morton National Park

8 km on track, some steep gullies, book with Joan Lowe 02 48612996 by Thursday 7th.

Glow Worm Glen, Buchanan's Lookout, Ellsmore's Lookout. On track through forest and leafy gullies to Lookouts with views over Bundanoon Creek

Map: 8928-1-S Bundanoon

Sunday 24 February Manning's Lookout Walk (Southern Highlands)

Gentle, 4km walk. Allow 4 hours. Track might be slippery in places. Bring morning tea and lunch. 10:00am start. Limit 15 people. Please book in advance.

Contact: Denis Wilson - 4885 2725,
Mob: 0413 056 431

Walk along the escarpment tops (not going down the escarpment). Numerous lookout points. Cross below interesting small waterfall, in a rainforest gully. Varied vegetation types, from sandstone heathland, tall Eucalypt forest, rainforest gully (Coachwood, Callicoma and Eucryphia), patches of "mallee" habitat on exposed lookout points. Excellent lookout points over Kangaroo Valley and Barrengarry Creek. Photographer's delight.

Directions: From Fitzroy Falls, go 3 Km east towards Kangaroo Valley. (From Robertson, turn left from Myra Vale Road, towards Kangaroo Valley). Cross the SCA aqueduct, then further 300 metres, turn left (north) on Manning's Lookout road. Proceed to NPWS parking area (end of the road), approx 1.5 Km off Kangaroo Valley Road.

Wednesday 12 March Bundanoon Creek, Morton National Park

Steep asc/desc. (approx. 500 m). Approx. 3 km. Book with Liz Thompson by Monday 10 March on 02 48691483 or email ethompson5@vtown.com.au

We will follow the track down a very steep incline (past the Fairy Bower Falls turn-off) to Bundanoon Creek. Bring swimmers and you can cool off in the creek before the steep climb back.

Map: 8928-1-S Bundanoon

Wednesday 26 March Orchid Ramble and easy walk

4 km through bush and open ground. Prior booking essential, numbers limited to 20. Denis Wilson 4885 2725, peonyden@bigpond.com

A walk for those interested in the tiny details of seldom seen plants and other 'small things'. Southern Highlands spring ground orchids and other wildflowers should still be in flower. Bring camera and magnifying glass. Wear long trousers and boots

Saturday 12 April Starlight's Track, Nattai NP

Day Walk 19km medium. 510m descent/ascent. Book with Joan Lowe on 0248612996 by Thursday 10th

Walk out on Nattai Ridge Road from the locked gate and descend to the Nattai down a disused fire trail. A short walk along the Nattai to McArthurs Flat for a break before ascending Starlights Track which joins the Nattai Ridge Road to return to the cars.

Map: Hilltop 1:25 000



REPS Membership Renewals now overdue

If you have received another REPS Membership renewal form with this Eucryphia, our records show that your REPS Membership fees are now overdue.

● Please complete this form as soon as possible and return it with your membership fees to:

REPS
PO Box 45,
Robertson NSW 2577

Please note that for simplicity, REPS Membership runs from November to November.

Your ongoing membership and support of this organisation is really appreciated.

Caalang Creek Working Bee Saturday 22nd February 9:00am - onwards

This working bee will commence at 9:00am subject to the weather.

If in any doubt or for more details, please contact Sandy Morse on telephone 4885 1905

Don't forget to bring a hat, gloves, shovels, watering cans and any other tree planting gear.

Thank You Sandy

Our thanks to Sandy Morse for organizing our Christmas outing to Fitzroy Falls. A pleasant shared meal in the large picnic shed was followed, after dark, by a fascinating walk along the East Rim Track. The weather was just right and the sky full of stars. Enjoyed by all.

CTC Robertson

The new CTC Training Brochure is now available at the Robertson CTC for January-April 2008.

Ph: 4885 2665

www.robertsonctc.org.au

REPS Meetings for 2008

Please make a note in your diary of the following dates for this year's REPS Public Meetings.

These meetings will include a talk that will be publicised in the Eucryphia prior to each meeting.

Friday 8th February

Friday 11th April

Friday 13th June

Friday 8th August

Friday 10^h October

Friday 14th November (Annual General Meeting)

Friday 12th December (Christmas Party)

REPS Committee List 2008

President – Leon Hall

Vice President – Lynn Stevenson

Secretary – Jill Keft

Treasurer – Anne Wilson

Committee Members – Beth Boughton,

Denis Wilson, Helen Tranter, Joe Petre, David Mee, Peter Glass

Talks Convenor – David Tranter

Eucryphia Editors – Sheila McInnes and Monica Engel

Supper Convenor – Jane Maxwell

Contact REPS

All those who are interested in supporting our aim are welcome to join REPS. Our aim is to promote the preservation and enhancement of the Robertson environment. We welcome contact with individuals and other community groups.

Please contact The Secretary – Jill Keft

PO Box 45, Robertson NSW 2577

or President – Leon Hall on 4888 2222

Also, we are always looking for new contributions to Eucryphia. If you have an essay, article, poem or photograph that you want to share with other REPS members please contact Monica Engel.

Telephone: 4885 2665

Or email: monicaengel@robertsonctc.org.au

All contributions will be most welcome.