



Eucryphia

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Robertson Environment Protection Society – to promote the protection and enhancement of the Robertson Environment

Next REPS Meeting

**Friday 11th April 2008 at 7:30pm
at the Robertson Community Centre**

My Place

Two ‘mini-talks’ by REPS members Chris and Lynn Stevenson, and David Mee. All are welcome to come along and hear about the exploits of these relatively new residents of Robertson detailing how they established their respective properties.

Chris and Lynn have lived in Robertson for two and a half years. Their talk will cover the trials and tribulations of building an energy efficient home, focusing on the design and installation of a self-sufficient solar and wind energy system. Chris will provide details of the set-up and electronic controls as well as comment on the efficiency of the system. Lynn will talk briefly on progress to date of native plantings on the property as well as plans for the future, including the anticipated regeneration of that part of Caalang Creek which transverses the property. Their talk will be accompanied by plenty of pictures. Questions (and well-meaning advice!) will be welcome.



David and Judith Mee have had their flower farm at Robertson for the past 9 years. Of the 25 acres, less than 5 are devoted to field-grown flowers of the Protea family and their relatives. Initially, all the flowers were picked weekly for collection and sale by others. The business has now changed so that they now do the sales as well, not only their own flowers, but those of other growers as well. Sales are mainly directly to florists in the Illawarra. Other activities on the property include regeneration and expansion of remnant rainforest patches, some surrounding a part of the Nepean Headwaters which flow through the north eastern part which is filled with ferns and other water-loving natives. This illustrated talk will discuss such topics as: what makes a good florist flower; and other garden activities, especially growing flora native to the Robertson environment.



**All Welcome - Gold Coin Donation - Light Supper
Please bring friends and family**

Upcoming Events

Thu. 3rd April – Australian Plant Society Talk by Anne Keys, 7:30pm, CWA Hall, Moss Vale

Sat 5th April – Global Warming and the Cosmos Talk, 1.30pm, Clubbe Hall, Mittagong

Fri 11th April – REPS Talk ‘Our Place’ a personal view of life in Robertson, 7:30pm, Community Centre

NPA Bushwalks – April 6, 13, 20, 27.

Sun 13th April – Rail Motor Rides – 10:00am at Fettle's Shed Gallery and Railway Station

Sat 26th April & Sat 31st May – Caalang Creek Working Bee – 9:30am, at Robertson Community Centre

Tue 6th May – NPA Talk by Kate Shearer ‘Nature Keepers and Biodiversity Studies’, CWA Hall, Moss Vale

BREAKING NEWS

By Leon Hall

The Kangaloon Borefield Proposal is going to public consultation, with the expected release date of the Environmental Assessment (EA), on 2 April. I urge everyone to 'have your say' as this will be the last chance before a decision is made.

The more submissions the better. As many people are not familiar with this process REPS will be updating our website www.reps.org.au with information and points to consider when having your say. If you would like a free copy of the EA (and supporting documents if needed) ring the Sydney Catchment Authority (SCA) on 1300 722 468.

The public exhibition period is to be between 2 April and 5 May according to the SCA. Please make your views heard during this period. For any further information contact me on 48882222 or check the website for updates from early April.

Potoroo Talk

Report by Jack & Lynette Skipper

An absorbing talk with a large enthusiastic audience was addressed by Melinda Norton an equally enthusiastic, and most knowledgeable Wild Life Project Officer from NSW Parks and Wildlife at Fitzroy Falls. Melinda entertained us with a well-prepared slide presentation with photographs and text at our last public meeting in February.

Melinda presented details of her study of the Potoroo which forms the principal part of her Master's research at the University of Wollongong.

As a bonus we were treated to details of her Department's work on the ecology and protection of the Brush Tailed Rock Wallaby - *Petrogale penicillata* - in nearby geographic areas.

One absorbing subject was detail of the threat-abatement activity against the fox, the number one enemy of both the Potoroo and the Rock Wallaby. The fox, together with loss of habitat, are the main reasons for decline as is fire and disease spread by cats (toxoplasmosis). The Rock Wallaby was nearly wiped out with indiscriminate shooting in the early 1900's.

Melinda mentioned the alarming fact that the Rock Wallaby population in Southern New South Wales has been reduced to 60 – 100 animals. With the comprehensive and well-disciplined fox abatement measures and captive breeding programmes at Waterfall Springs and Taronga Zoo, this sorry situation may be positively addressed. We were shown interesting photographs from strategically placed cameras recording the movements and the integration of a few introduced animals from the Pokolbin area in New South Wales.

The favoured terrain of the Rock Wallaby is very rocky, steep slopes with suitable crevices for safety. They like to bask in the sun therefore north-facing slopes are preferred. They feed on a wide variety of grasses as well as small herbs, leaves, flowers, fruits and bark. They are active between dawn and dusk.

They live in small groups of about four females to one male and breed continuously. The young joey stays in the pouch about 6 months. In ideal conditions the Rock Wallaby lives from 5 to 10 years.

The long nosed Potoroo – *Potorous tridactylus* - is listed as "vulnerable" in NSW. Found on the Eastern Seaboard from Queensland to Victoria and down to Tasmania, it inhabits coastal heaths and dry and wet sclerophyll forests and requires dense ground cover. It is a solitary, nocturnal animal mainly feeding on underground fungi, roots and tubers (look for the small conical holes similar to a bandicoot hole). It weighs around a kilo and is not related to the kangaroo. Its nose is much shorter than the bandicoot's but otherwise is similar although somewhat smaller in body.

There is a Potoroo protection (1080 fox control) programme in Barren Grounds and the Department conducts a fox monitoring programme twice a year. The Potoroos are regularly captured in traps for weighing, measuring and micro chipping. Melinda undertakes painstaking monitoring of their movements by attaching a cotton string to their backs and checking their paths of travel to shelter and food.

The monitoring and defence efforts, on behalf of these beautiful creatures, is in good hands and warrants our support and encouragement.

Poetry Corner

Edited by Jonathan Persse

Place, landscape, captures our imagination,
and can live in the memory. Here are poems
by two Australian writers.

MAY

by **John Shaw Neilson (1872 -1942)**

Shyly the silver-hatted mushrooms make
Soft entrance through,
And undelivered lovers, half awake,
Hear noises in the dew.

Yellow in all the earth and in the skies,
The world would seem
Faint as a widow mourning with soft eyes
And falling into dream.

Up the long hill I see the slow plough leave
Furrows of brown;
Dim is the day and beautiful; I grieve
To see the sun go down.

But there are suns a many for mine eyes
Day after day:
Delightful in grave greenery they rise,
Red oranges in May.

THE FARMER REMEMBERS THE SOMME

by **Vance Palmer (1885 – 1959)**

Will they never fade or pass!
The mud, and the misty figures endlessly coming
In file through the foul morass,
And the grey flood-water lipping the reeds and grass,
And the steel wings drumming.

The hills are bright in the sun:
There's nothing changed or marred in the well-known
places;
When work for the day is done
There's talk, and quiet laughter, and gleams of fun
On the old folks' faces.

I have returned to these:
The farm, and the kindly Bush, and the young calves
lowing;
But all that my mind sees
Is a quaking bog in a mist – stark, snapped trees,
And the dark Somme flowing.

Please send a poem on the environment,
written by yourself or another person, to
Jonathan Persse, Sallyhill, Burrawang 2577.

HORTICULTURAL WORKSHOPS

Illawarra Institute of TAFE NSW is offering a number of Horticultural Workshops at Goulburn and Moss Vale Campuses during 2008.

Workshops include:

PLANT PROPAGATION – CUTTINGS

Goulburn

Sunday 6 April 2008 (9am – 5pm) Cost: \$150

INTRODUCTION TO FARM FENCING

Goulburn

Friday 16 May 2008 (9am – 5 pm) Cost: \$150

PLANT GRAFTING

Moss Vale

Sunday 27 July 2008 (9am – 5pm) Cost: \$150

NATIVE PLANT RECOGNITION

Moss Vale

Sunday 26 October 2008 (9am – 4pm) Cost: \$120

Brochures will be available for perusal at the next REPS Meeting on Friday 11 April 2008. Copies of the Registration Form will be available also.

If you would like further information please contact the Business Development Unit at Goulburn TAFE on 4823 1910.

From the Editors Desk

Save the Mary River Campaign

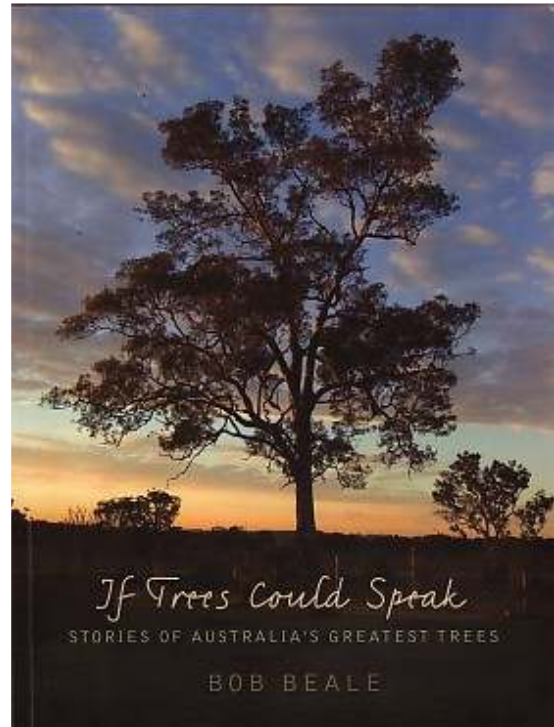
While we have our own concerns with the water issue in the Wingecarribee Shire other parts of Australia are also under pressure to become water catchment areas for major urban centres. I recently received an email from Cheryl Pearse with some information about the proposed Mary River Dam.

The Mary River is in Queensland. It is approximately three hours drive from Brisbane. Cheryl highlighted the issue for a small town called Kandanga, south of Gympie. It has a primary school with approximately 80 students. The town will be resumed if the dam is built. It is a rural area of rich fertile dairy flats. The dam will be shallow and huge in area - much water will be lost with evaporation.

Take some time to talk about it with friends and write letters/emails and register your protests. Have a look at the website www.savethemaryriver.com. Mark and Cheryl Pearse visited Kandanga while they were in Queensland to visit family.

Book Review

By Leon Hall



'If Trees Could Speak'

STORIES OF AUSTRALIA'S GREATEST TREES

by BOB BEALE

Allen & Unwin 2007

This recent book gives a fascinating insight into many of Australia's greatest individual trees. By being very well researched, the author also tells us the associated stories of pioneers, explorers, soldiers and indigenous people. This large soft cover book covers a broad range of species from all over Australia, both native and exotic. It is easy to read and engaging with many stunning pictures that are brought to life via the text.

I picked up a copy from Moss Vale Bookshop before Christmas but it should be available everywhere.
\$39.95 (245pages)

Global Warming & The Cosmos

The Royal Society of New South Wales presents two of the world's leading scientists in their fields with different ideas on Global Warming. Dr Eigil Friis-Christensen, Director of the Danish National Space Centre, and Dr Graeme Pearman, Former Head of the CSIRO Atmospheric Division and recent advisor to Al Gore, will each present a lecture.

Date: Saturday 5 April 2008

Time: 1.30 pm for 2.00 pm

Venue: Clubbe Hall, Frensham, Mittagong

Cost: Members \$25, Non-members \$50

(Price includes GST and printed copies of presentations. Afternoon tea will be served. For non-members: associate membership of The Royal Society of NSW for 1 year is included.)

Enquiries: 02 4860 2000

CTC@Robertson to turn 4 years old.

On 30 April the CTC will turn four years old. The CTC has recently renewed its printing facilities, and so we are better able to serve the community and local businesses. With Monica Engel as manager and a small group of volunteers, the Committee, chaired by Jenny Kena, is optimistic that our fifth year will be our best so far.

We have special events planned for Seniors Week (6-13 April) including **free** computer courses. And there will soon be a special local launch for Anni Heino's book "Talking to Kinky and Karlheinz". See the CTC website for more details of these and other events. <http://www.robertsonctc.org.au/>

The Tadpole Story

By Monica Engel

In late 2007 my son Tas caught some tadpoles in a cattle trough at his grandfather's farm in Burrawang. I agreed that he could keep some and raise them. We ended up with seven.

They were taken home and raised in a small aquarium using fresh water from Caalang Creek. One matured in early February. We think it was a Striped Marsh Frog – *Limnodynastes peronii*. Tas released him in the metamorph stage back in Burrawang in a neighbour's garden, not far from where he was captured. Those neighbours pay Tas

to bring in their bins so it was important to help them out when they said they would like to attract some frogs into their garden. I'm sure they already had some.

Next the lucky tadpoles got to visit Tas's class at Robertson Public School. He told the class we had been feeding them cooked lettuce, recently supplemented with fish food (after doing a little reading). The next six frogs all metamorphosed over the next month or so. They were all a type of tree frog with a very lovely green stripes. I thought we had the Alpine Tree Frog – *Litoria verreauxii alpina* – the markings and colouring seemed the closest match, even though it was geographically unlikely.

As the tadpoles metamorphosed they were captured and kept until the trip to Burrawang. One morning we had the lid off the container in order to observe the frog while we were having breakfast (better than reading the cereal packet). I forgot to put the lid back on and the little metamorph escaped. I spent over an hour trying to find him in our green painted house, I didn't find him.

There is a happy ending. A few weeks ago Tas was jubilant. He'd found the frog in our lounge room. No longer green, but shades of brown and fully grown. I wonder what he ate. Two people have told me that they think he's a Peron's Tree Frog – *Litoria peronii* – however, I'm not convinced so I'm asking for more opinions. In the reference book that I used Peron's Tree Frog is spottier and has a yellow colour on the inside of the thighs. Please let me know if you can identify our little friend.





Australian Plants Society

Thursday April 3rd at 7:30pm

CWA Hall, Moss Vale

Physiotherapist Anne Keys will talk and give advice on how to enjoy gardening safely and comfortably. Bring your native-plant flowers for display and discussion.

Light supper. All welcome.

Further information phone 48623343.

Sunday 13th April 9.30am – 4:00pm
At the Railway Station

Come for a Rail Motor Ride **“TIN HARE RETURNS TO ROBBO”**

A Rail Motor of the kind many Robertson residents know affectionately as the “Tin Hare” will be returning to Robbo for one day only on April 13, the day that vintage cars gather on the Railway Common and there is a Photographic Exhibition in the Fettle's Shed Gallery showing how changes in transport over the years have altered the character of Robertson Village. On this wonderful autumn day, the Tin Hare will run from the Heritage Railway Station eastward to Mount Murray, revealing panoramic views of the Illawarra Coast and Tasman Sea and westward to Wingecarribee Dam along the edge of the Swamp, the largest peatland on continental Australia. There will be Robbo Tour Guides on board. The Rail Motor takes 37 passengers; we expect it to be popular.

Come along and take a ride back into history!

Fare: \$10 per trip, Tickets from 9.30am at the Station

First Trip: 10.15am, Last Trip 3.15pm

For Bookings, phone 4885-1394 or 4885-2823

Welcome new REPS Members

A warm welcome to the following new members: Mr Ashley John Bullen, Richard and Susan Darke and Wendy Pratten.

Next REPS Working Bee

Saturday 26th April from 9:30am-noon

Saturday 31st May from 9.30am-noon

Meet at the Community Centre at 9:30am onwards. Don't forget water, hat and gloves. We now have tools available but if you can, bring your own.

National Parks Association Talk

Tuesday 6th May 7.30pm

CWA Hall Moss Vale

The speaker at this talk will be Kate Shearer. Her talk is titled "The Role of Nature Keepers and Biodiversity Studies"

NPA Walks

Saturday 5 April

Stockyard Creek, Nattai - New track from end of Westbreak Ridge to Black Falls. Rough track; Mod. with steep sections. Malcolm 4889 8661

Sunday 6 April

Robertson Loop Bicycle Tour - Distance: 23km on sealed public roads which rise and fall through a range of 170m. John 4683 1511

Sunday 13 April

Florabella Pass, Blue Mountains -

Warrimoo to Glenbrook Cr. Several steep sections, caves, cliff faces. Bus trip Kevin 4628 6974

Sunday 20 April

Tallong to Bungonia via Shoalhaven River & Bungonia Canyon - Longpoint L'out. to Bungonia Lookdown. Approx 9k. Steep climb out. Car shuffle. Map: Caoura. Shane Mob 0405810350

Sunday 27 April

Mt Kembla and Ring Track - Views, rainforest and cedar trees. Undulating with some steep sections, Mod. 10k. Chas 4872 2336

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

President – Leon Hall on 4888 2222

Editors – Monica Engel and Sheila McInnes on 4885 2665 or monicaengel@robertsonctc.org.au