



Eucryphia

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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

Speaker: Frances Bray
Friday 8th August, 7.30pm
Robertson Community Centre
Caalong Street, Robertson

All welcome, informal discussion, light refreshments, gold coin donation

Will the Little Tern continue to return to Lake Wollumboola?

The Little Tern (*Sterna albifrons*), the smallest tern of all, migrates from east Asia to breed during the southern summer on selected beaches in New South Wales, Eastern Victoria and Tasmania. Laying its eggs on scrapes in the sand, such as the harsh, exposed environment of the Lake Wollumboola sand-bar, its continued survival is so threatened by climate change, rising sea levels and increased storminess that it is listed under the 1995 NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act as endangered.

In the mid 1980's the Little Tern population on the NSW coast was estimated to be about 110 breeding pairs, the sand bar at Lake Wollumboola southeast of Nowra being one of its most important and successful breeding sites. Careful management in accordance with the Little Tern Recovery Plan has enabled this little migratory bird to breed successfully and fledge its chicks on a busy, heavily used beach. This success is due to the NSW South Coast Shorebird Recovery Program, a co-ordinated effort by the Department of Environment and Climate Change, Shoalhaven City

Council and Shorebird Volunteers from the Culburra Beach community, with assistance from the Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority, for which they received the 2008 National Trust Conservation-Landscape Heritage Award.



Frances will describe the migrations, breeding cycles and behaviour of the Little Tern; what attracts it to Lake Wollumboola, the threats to its survival, both natural and introduced, and the conservation and community education measures undertaken to protect it. A Shorebird and Bushcare Volunteer at Lake Wollumboola, Frances lives at Culburra Beach and, as President of the Lake Wollumboola Protection Association, she has worked for the last 15 years to protect the Little Tern. Her contribution to the protection of Lake Wollumboola was recognized by the ACF by the 2000 Peter Rawlinson Award (jointly with Keith Campbell) and the 2007 NSW Nature Conservation Council Dunphy Award for the best environmental effort by an individual.

Upcoming Events

Tue 5th August – NPA Talk 'Kimberley Coast' by Allan Fox, 7.30pm CWA Hall, Elizabeth St, MV

Fri 8th August – REPS Talk 'Little Tern' by Frances Bray, 7:30pm, Robertson Community Centre

NPA Bushwalks – see page 7

Fri 22nd August – CANWIN Talk Ian Dunlop – researcher in policy responses to climate change, 7.30pm Mittagong Playhouse

With a lifelong passion for the environment, she is also a member of the NPWS South Coast Advisory Committee.

After graduating in Geography, History and Education (BA Dip Ed B Ed) from Melbourne and Monash Universities, Frances taught in high schools in Victoria and the UK followed by a career in the Commonwealth Public Service on Aboriginal Education Policy and Programs and the National Occupational Health and Safety Commission National Standards Program. In 1996, she was awarded the Public Service Medal for her contribution to the National Standard for users and operators of industrial equipment.

GROUNDWATER BOREFIELDS OFF THE AGENDA

By Leon Hall (President)

The NSW Minister for Water, Nathan Rees, announced, on 18 June 2008, that the State Government had decided to shelve construction of proposed borefields in the Southern Highlands (Kangaloon) and Western Sydney (Leonay and Wallacia).

This is welcome news but may just delay the borefield as the media release also mentions "Development at Kangaloon will be halted at the point where land acquisitions, planning approval and tender design are complete, to enable reactivation without delay in future emergencies" and "It can be quickly reactivated and produce water within 18 months if we ever find ourselves in extreme drought again in the future".

"But for now, it's off the agenda," Mr Rees said.

There was some confusion and concern at East Kangaloon because on the same day as the announcement some residents received a letter from the Sydney Catchment Authority (SCA) saying that 15 new test bores and 1 observation bore were to be constructed commencing in late June. This was confirmed by the SCA even in light of Nathan Rees' announcement but after 1 week the SCA had changed their minds and had dropped the plan to construct the 15 new test bores and will only drill the 1 monitoring bore.

A letter was also sent by Matt Brown MP (our local member), dated 18 June 2008, to people in the area. The letter says "I am writing to advise you the Minister for Water, Nathan Rees, has announced water harvesting from aquifers in the Southern Highlands will not go ahead." We hope he is right but maybe the letter should have said 'will not go ahead in the foreseeable future' as inferred by Mr Rees. The full media release will be posted on the REPS website for your perusal.

The planning approval process is still going ahead. There were over 130 submissions received in regard to the recent Environmental Assessment and the SCA is in the process of making a submissions' report for the Department of Planning. The NSW Minister for Planning or the Federal Minister for the Environment can still stop this proposal completely or request changes to it. Hopefully they will see commonsense (and the information) and stop this proposal completely.

Thank you to Nathan Rees for having the foresight to suspend this proposal indefinitely. It is a welcome reprieve for this valuable environment.

REPS and the UNGCRG (Upper Nepean Groundwater Community Reference Group) submissions will be posted on the REPS website.

University of Wollongong Website on the story of the Wingecarribee Swamp

If you are interested in the history and ecology of the Wingecarribee Wetland have a look at this comprehensive website which details the story of the swamp.

This website was commissioned by REPS with funding from Mori Gallery. It has been available online since 2001. There are possibly new members who were unaware of this project.

The following is an excerpt from the site. "Wingecarribee Wetland, in the Southern Highlands of NSW, was a unique swamp that was rich in flora and home to some endangered plants as well as the rare Giant Dragonfly. The swamp was some 10,000 years old and contained climatic, biological and heritage records."

<http://www.uow.edu.au/arts/sts/sbeder/wingecarribee/credits.html>. The site was produced by Professor Sharon Beder from the University of Wollongong.

REPS REGENERATION OF CAALANG CREEK BEARS RESULTS

By Denis Wilson

Members of REPS have spent several years planting Lomandras along Caalang Creek, near the bridge on Caalong Street, on the edge of Hampden Park. These are the rush-like plants which have grown well to produce dense groundcover beside the creek, adjacent to the Robertson Community Centre.

Recently I noticed as I walked to the Community Centre, on Caalong Street, that there was a Lewin's Rail (*Lewinia pectoralis*) browsing around the edge of these Lomandra plants. I have not previously seen these birds in Robertson, but it is not exactly surprising. They are a secretive wading bird - they love to hunt for insects in and around reeds and rushes, near wetlands. As I was going to the Garden Club meeting, I did not have my camera with me, unfortunately.



Lewin's Rail

Photo: Geoffrey Dabb, via COG Photo Gallery

The point of this story is this: **"If you build it, he will come"**. That is a line from a movie ["Field of Dreams"](#) (about Baseball - but that is not the point). REPS have helped build an environment, and now the Lewin's Rail has come to the middle of Robertson.

While this is not an unusual record for the district, it is worth noting. More to the point, it will give heart to the REPS volunteers that the birds are taking notice of their creek-side habitat regeneration work.

Where previously there were weeds, blackberries and some willows, now there is a creek bank with Lomandras and Tea-Tree Shrubs, plus now the Lewin's Rail. Keep an eye out for it, next time you are in Hampden Park. It is pretty sneaky, and will hide very easily.

From the Editor's Desk

ART OF THE ENVIRONMENT

For those with a budding artist in the family...

The Dymocks Golden Paw Award is an art prize for young people to highlight awareness of threatened species. Entries close 7 September, 2008. The competition is open to children between 4 and 12 years old in NSW and the ACT.

Dymocks will donate \$1 for each entry to the Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife to help save threatened Australian animals.

Let your kids get creative and win great prizes to help the Foundation save the animals. To enter visit the web-site at <http://fnpw.org.au/goldenpaw.htm> or call into the CTC and ask for a copy of the entry form (for the price of a photocopy).

The Wingecarribee Shire Resource Recovery Centre also has an inspired art competition called RevivArt, a junk art competition. Produce an artwork AND dispose of unwanted junk.

Entries can be in any form but must be made entirely from recycled waste materials. You need to register your intent to enter by September 30, 2008 and works need to be submitted on November 14, 2008.

You can pick up an entry form at Robertson CTC or contact Kate Cretney on 4868 0542 or email info@ecoexpo.org.au.

ROBERTSON VILLAGE WEBSITE

To keep up with all the latest happenings in Robertson don't forget to bookmark this site <http://www.robertson.nsw.au>. If you register as a user you can add events to the calendar, submit news stories, add a link to your blog, start a discussion in the chat room.....

Steam Loco 3642

Sunday August 17th Departing 8.00am
Travel on the “**Illawarra Highlander**”. A climb up the escarpment by 3642 to Robertson and Moss Vale. A choice of destinations is offered, namely, travel through to Moss Vale, alight at Ranelagh platform for a lunch at Fountaindale Grand Manor, alight at Robertson to explore the village’s attractions, or take the coach tour option to the Illawarra Fly.

For information on the spectacular Illawarra Fly visit www.illawarrafly.com.au

To book your seat contact the NSW Rail Transport Museum on <http://www.heritageexpress.com.au/>

National Parks Association Talk

5 August 2008

Moss Vale CWA Hall 7:30PM

Gold coin donation appreciated.

Allan Fox, one of NPA’s favourite inspired speakers, has agreed to give a talk on the Kimberley coast at our August meeting. It will be illustrated by his superb slides.

Allan was a geographer and teacher by training, and spent most of his working life employed, mainly at the administrative level, in the nature conservation area.

Allan says: “Here is a piece of country larger than France that was once a freely drifting sub-continent that collided with what was to become Australia some hundreds of millions of years ago. Its basic structure is sandstone ranging in age from 1600-1950 millions years. Into these have been injected vast sills of dolerite while there are limestone trimmings such as the Devonian coral reefs that make up the Napier Hills. The northern half is still relatively horizontal while the southern half is intensely deformed by folding and faulting. Ignoring the fact that this place has been occupied by Aborigines for 50,000 years it really is one of the world’s last great wildernesses recently saved from a major gas liquefaction industry but now threatened by BHP-Billiton’s move on an old bauxite lease near Mitchell Falls. This will be a very major industrial development that will require port development as well (Port Warrender).

In the spirit of widening the public interested in preserving and properly managing such areas I ask you to attend the NPA gathering at Moss Vale.”

Greenhood Orchids in the Rainforest By Denis Wilson

The Rainforest Greenhood Orchid, (*Pterostylis hildae*) grows on Macquarie Pass. This is the southern extension of its range, but it is also found in northern NSW and Queensland.

It is a lovely flower, beautifully proportioned and balanced (unlike some which resemble green prawn heads, with long beaks).



Pterostylis hildae

Photos: Denis Wilson

It grows amongst mosses and grass within clearings in the rainforest, and along the edges of tracks and firetrails. These flowers grow on short stalks, approximately 15 cm high, but the flowers themselves are relatively substantial, about 2.5 cm long. They are a light green with the front part of the hood a gentle honey-colour. Unlike some Greenhoods which also grow in this habitat, the “labellum” (tongue) within the plant is slightly rounded (like a mini-surfboard), with a brown strip underneath, and is held straight; (*P. curta* cheekily pokes its labellum to the side).

The Rainforest Greenhood comes into flower in mid July, which makes it an early flowerer amongst Greenhoods in the Southern Highlands region.

Keep a look out for small pale green hooded flowers in your rambles around the district, as there are many other species of Greenhood Orchids around. Some flower in spring, others over the summer and autumn. Their intricate construction, pollination processes, and beautiful design make it worthwhile to get down on your hands and knees to study a Greenhood Orchid up close and personal.

Denis Wilson regularly writes about local native Ground Orchids on his blog:

[The Nature of Robertson.](#)

Allen Powell's Talk

By Denis Wilson

At the June meeting, REPS was treated to an interesting and informal talk about the Cumberland Plains forest by Allen Powell. Allen spoke about the animal-plant relationships in the Cumberland Plains Woodland ecosystem (of southern and western Sydney). He works at the Mount Annan Botanic Gardens, as an education officer.

He spoke about the need to preserve old trees, which have hollows in them, for the various birds and animals which need hollows to roost or to nest in. Possums, Parrots, Bats, and vast numbers of insects depend upon old trees. Other things he talked about included weed infestation, particularly the Wild Olive which dominates the roadsides around Campbelltown, and which is steadily taking over the natural bushland of the Cumberland Plains. One of the difficulties with this plant is soil stabilization after shrubs have been removed. It is a real headache for councils and the RTA, as well as for landholders in the area.

Some of the display material which Allen brought along included art works by children who have obviously been through the Education Program run at Mt. Annan. He also makes a point of including information about Aboriginal traditional uses of plants in his education material.

In a world dominated by "doom and gloom" discussions of global warming it was good to see a cheerful, positive person in a key position of Education Officer at Mt Annan

Keeping Fireweed Under Control

Fireweed (*Senecio madagascariensis*) is native to South Africa. In Australia it has spread along the eastern seaboard from the Victorian border to southeast Queensland. Fireweed produces huge amounts of seed (30,000 per plant), which are easily dispersed by the wind.

Fireweed contains a poison (pyrrolizidine alkaloid) which can be toxic to cattle and horses. Sheep and goats have a higher tolerance. Cattle will avoid consumption of the plant. However, if the pasture is heavily infested with young plants or it has been made into hay or silage, consumption by stock cannot be avoided. The toxic alkaloid has a cumulative effect on the livers of cattle.

Like all weeds, early and complete eradication is the best method. For isolated outbreaks of Fireweed, hand pull plants then bag them, and leave them to dry, before burning the dried plants. In the Wingecarribee Shire it is an offence to dump Fireweed at the Council waste depot. Small infestations can be spot sprayed using Glyphosate and larger infestations by boom spraying with Bromoxynil or other registered herbicides. Improved pasture will also help keep Fireweed under control.

The information in this article was sourced from the Wingecarribee Shire Council website (<http://www.wsc.nsw.gov.au/environment/1180/1894.html>) and also from the Bega Valley Fireweed Association at www.fireweed.org.au.



Poetry Corner

Edited by Jonathan Persse

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

In these verses, and one complete poem, we are reminded how deep in our culture, in our souls, is the love of gardens.

The kiss of the sun for pardon,
The song of the birds for mirth,
One is nearer God's Heart in a garden
Than anywhere else on earth.

Dorothy Frances Gurney
(1858-1932)

What wond'rous life is this I lead!
Ripe apples drop about my head;
The luscious clusters of the vine
Upon my mouth do crush their wine;
The nectarine and curious peach,
Into my hands themselves do reach;
Stumbling on melons, as I pass,
Ensnar'd with flow'rs, I fall on grass.

Andrew Marvell
(1621-1678)

Down by the salley gardens my love and I did meet;
She passed the salley gardens with little snow-white feet.
She bid me take love easy, as the leaves grow on the tree;
But I, being young and foolish, with her would not agree.

William Butler Yeats
(1865-1939)

Ah, yet, e'er I descend to th' grave
May I a small house, and large garden have!
And a few friends, and many books, both true,
Both wise, and both delightful too!

Abraham Cowley
(1618-1667)

Not God! In gardens! When the eve is cool?
Nay, but I have a sign;
'Tis very sure God walks in mine.

Thomas Edward Brown
(1830-1897)

WATERLILY

Look, look, there is an angel in the fishpond,
It wakes its yellow wings above the water;
Or say the naked moon came down to bathe here
And dipped her toe in weeds and so we caught her;
Or say the sun fell in and sprang up yellow,
Or say that mud's in flower today – no matter:
All images and fancies coalesce and cancel
In mystery at last; it is an angel,
And moves its yellow wings above the water.

Douglas Stewart (1913-1981)

If you have a garden and a library you have everything you need. Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 B.C.)

NPA Bushwalks August/September 2008

The Great Australian Bushwalk is organised by the independent **National Parks Associations** and other leading bushwalking groups across Australia. From 1 August 2008 the web site will provide details of every walk, along with easy online registration. <http://www.greataustralianbushwalk.org.au/>

Our local walk will be:

Sunday 14 Sep Bungonia Gorge

2 Walks – One is easy; the other hard. Meet at 10 am. Bring lunch. BBQ facilities. For further details contact: Martin Mordy 4883 6057

For additional information on the walks below and on membership please call the NPA Office on (02) 9299 0000.

Non-members are welcome to take 1-2 introductory or trial walks before becoming a member. This offer is made on the understanding that non-members are not covered by NPA's personal injury insurance policy.

2 Aug Sat Moreton NP-Bundanoon

Medium hard day walk, 16km, 300m asc, moderate pace.

Walk to Erith Coal Mine, Tooths Lookout, Fairy Bower Falls, Amphitheatre, River View lookout, Glow Worm Glen. See tall trees, cool fern studded gullies and rain forest. Branch: Illawarra

9 Aug Sat Thirlmere Lakes and Nattai NPs

Day walk, 16km, 150m asc

The walk commences at the locked gate at the end of Thirlmere Lakes and follows the Blue Gum Creek through the very attractive Blue Gum Forest to the causeway at the Little River. Maps: Picton 9029-4S and Nattai 8929-1S. Branch: Southern Highlands.

17 Aug Sun Thirlmere Lakes and Nattai NP

Medium day walk 15km, 200m asc all on fire trails. Walk along Blue Gum creek to Little River through beautiful forests. Branch: Illawarra

17 Aug Sun Heathcote NP

Easy-medium day walk, 100m asc, 15km along tracks.

Waterfall, Heathcote Creek, Lake Eckersley, Engadine. A pleasant walk through some delightful heath and forest to the south of Sydney. Accessible by public transport. Map: Campbelltown. Branch: Southern Sydney

24 Aug Sun Morton NP (Budawang Wilderness)

Easy-medium day walk, 14km, 100m asc.

Little Forest Plateau, Mt Bushwalker, Gidara Point. Optional car camp / cabins. Lake Conjola Sat night. Quite easy walking, but some scratchy sections, great views. By far the easiest way to see wonderful panorama of Budawang Wilderness area. Map: Budawang sketch map. Limit: 15. Branch: Illawarra

30 Aug Sat Royal NP

Medium day walk, 320m asc, 13km, track: steps and a little off track.

Audley-Kangaroo Creek-Engadine Track-Karlool Pool-Uloola Falls-Gurrumboola Ridge-Audley. A nice little walk taking in some beautiful parts of Kangaroo Creek and heaps of wild flowers. Map: Port Hacking or The Royal NP Tourist Map. Branch: Sydney.

31 Aug Sun Royal NP

Medium-hard day walk, 25km, 300m asc, tracks. Otford, Burning Palms, Era, Garie, Curra Moors, Forest Island Path, Couranga Track, Waterfall. A lengthy day walk through some of the best the Royal has to offer. Accessible by public transport. Map: Otford. Branch: Southern Sydney

CYCLE / KAYAK

16 Aug Sat Shellharbour Area, Illawarra

Cycle 55km, moderate pace, some hills.

Cycle from Albion Park along the shores of Lake Illawarra, through Blackbutt Reserve and Shellharbour Village to Bass Point and return via Windang Beach. Beautiful views of the Illawarra coast. Mostly on cycle paths, some quiet roads. Branch: Illawarra

17 Aug Sun Woronora NP

Woronora Wonderland. Kayak trip. 4 hours on the water with lunch and breaks. Sheltered waterway. Sutherland Shire Canoe Club-Falls Creek-Woronora NP. Look out for the Sea Eagle on the way. Stop off at The Needles by a fresh water rock pool for lunch. We'll meander back and enjoy a coffee before heading home. Sheltered waterway. New Drifter 2s, with rudders and comfortable seats available for hire. Departs at 10.30am, finished by 3pm. Registration essential, don't just turn up on the day. (No registrations taken August 1 to 10). No under 15 yrs. Car pooling will be organized. Branch: Sydney



Caalang Creek Working Bees

Caalang Creek Working Bees are held on the last Saturday of each month from 9:00 am onwards subject to the weather. Please come and join us for as long as you are able.

The next Working Bees will be on the 30th August and the 27th September

Meet at the Community Centre. If in doubt due to inclement weather or for more details, please contact Sandy Morse on telephone 4885 1905. Please bring along a hat, gloves, shovels, watering cans etc.

Help Care for Our Nature Reserve

**1st Wednesday of each month
10:00am to noon**

All welcome. Please bring garden gloves. For further information, phone Helen: 4885-1394

REPS Meetings for 2008

The remaining REPS Public Meetings for this year are listed below.

Each meeting will include a talk that will be publicised in the Eucryphia prior to the meeting.

Friday 8th August
Friday 10th October
Friday 14th November (Annual General Meeting)

CANWIN TALK

**Friday August 22nd, 7.30pm
Mittagong Playhouse**

Ian Dunlop Fellow, Centre for Policy Development; formerly a senior oil, gas and coal industry executive; chaired the Australian Coal Association in 1987-88; chaired the AGO Experts Group on Emissions Trading in 1999-2000; CEO of the Australian Institute of Company Directors from 1997- 2001; currently researching policy responses to climate change; guest speaker at the CANA Conference on “Transforming Australia”.

Call For Volunteers

The Robertson Community Technology Centre currently needs volunteers. We have positions available in the café and in the IT room. There are also positions available for event co-ordinators for example school holiday activity co-ordinator. The CTC offers a great opportunity to get involved with the community and meet new people. The projects that can be taken on by the CTC are only limited by your imagination. If you have an interest in volunteering at the CTC you can find out more on the website at www.robertsonctc.org.au or just drop in and see Monica from Wednesday to Saturday. The CTC is located opposite Murray Tractors on the Illawarra Highway, Robertson.

ROBERTSON SEWERAGE SCHEME BACK ON EXHIBITION

The Environmental Impact Statement is on display until August 27th, 2008. The Robertson CTC has a paper copy available for viewing.

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. For further information and subscriptions please contact: The Secretary – Jill Keft
PO Box 45,
Robertson NSW 2577
or President – Leon Hall on 4888 2222

We are always looking for new contributions to Eucryphia. If you have an essay, article, poem or photograph that you would like to share with other REPS members please contact Monica Engel or Sheila McInnes
email: monicaengel@robertsonctc.org.au

All contributions will be most welcome.

Visit the REPS website
www.reps.org.au