



Eucryphia

ISSN 1037 – 2032

Number 126– August 2013

Robertson Environment Protection Society – to promote the protection and enhancement of the Robertson Environment
PO Box 3045, Robertson NSW 2577 www.reps.org.au

Next REPS Meeting

Friday 9th August 2013 at 7.30pm
Community Centre
Caalong Street, Robertson

Speaker: William Gemmell

A Brief History of Nuclear Energy from 1941 to the present - Is there a place for Nuclear Energy in Australia today?

William studied mathematics and natural philosophy (ie physics) at Glasgow at the end of WW2, and essentially spent all his working life studying the physics of reactors. He joined AAEC (Australian Atomic Energy Commission) in 1962, having spent 10 years with the UK AEA (Atomic Energy Authority), Harwell and Dounreay, and with Argonne National Laboratory (Chicago and Idaho Falls). He retired in 1986.

Bill will give us a historical perspective (which includes Thorium reactors) of the development of nuclear reactors leading in to the current situation and possible developments.



Dounreay Fast Reactor, North of Scotland

From weapons to powering submarines to powering our homes, and more concepts in between.

The aim will be to remove several misconceptions, but plenty of time will be left to discuss the issues you have with nuclear energy (ie. proliferation, safety and waste).

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

Upcoming Events

Wed 7th August – Working bee, Robertson Nature Reserve, pg 8.

Fri 9th August – REPS Talk *A Brief History of Nuclear Energy...* William Gemmell, 7.30pm, pg 1.

Sat 10th August – Working bee in Pinkwood Park, from 9.30am, pg 6.

Sat 17th August – Science Week, free documentary screening *Critters* 2pm at CTC@Robertson, pg 6.

Sun 18th August – CTC Cinema Series *Homage to Dave Brubeck* 2pm, pg 8.

Wed 21st August – NPA Talk *The Aboriginal Art Movement* Prof. Ian McLean, Fitzroy Falls Visitors Centre, 2:00pm, pg 4.

Sat 24th August – Australian Plants Society gathering 10am morning tea, garden tours, talk on the Connections Garden by Dan Bishop, Mount Annan Botanic Garden, pg 8.

Tue 27th August – Friends of the Library, Talk by Jane Lemann OAM - Passionate Conservator of Mount Gibraltar, 10:30am Henrietta Rose Room, pg 5.

Sat 31st August & 28th September – REPS Caalang Creek working bees from 9.30am, pg 8.

President's Report

Dear REPS Members,

We are more than half way through winter, the days are getting noticeably longer, and the temperature colder. Yesterday started with a monster frost covering the fields and the valley around my place. The cold winds add to the chill factor. But if you can find a place by the fire, or in the sun out of the winds, winter is not so bad. At least the grass does not need to be mown. Have you noticed the sassafras trees smothered in white flowers? The traditional wattle day of August 1 is close and spring is just around the corner, bringing its explosion of annual grasses and weeds. Why would you want to live anywhere else?

Your committee has been working on a couple of difficult issues, one being the damage made to the bed and banks of Caalong Creek by the sewer system pipe crossings, which were trenched, not under-bored as initially promised. As you know REPS has made a project of Caalong Creek over many years, keeping it weed free and encouraging indigenous native plantings, and it is a great disappointment to see it treated the way it has been.

The rich basalt-derived soil and high rainfall of the Robertson environment encourages weeds. Now is a good time to suppress them before they get out of hand. This is especially so on the road verges. Members have pointed out specific weed problems on certain streets, and your committee is considering a plan of action, but it has to start with member's vigilance in reporting the problems and residents taking some action to not let it get out of hand (ed. see also article on page 4). Many thanks to those REPS champions who participate in weeding in the rainforest reserve and along Caalong Creek and other places of beauty in our environment.

I hope you can all come to the August meeting where our speaker is a local resident who spent his career in the Australian Nuclear Industry and has a perspective on nuclear energy that few of us have. There may be strong feelings on this issue, but the burning of fossil fuels has so many environmental negatives that the subject does need to be revisited. Come with an open mind and plenty of questions. The talk and discussion may be aided by a new public address system which your committee decided to purchase. This will allow a speaker lapel microphone and another for the questioners. Your cooperation in using the equipment and feedback on its effectiveness is encouraged. DavidMee

Talk Report – June Meeting

by David Mee

Presentation by Brendhan Waters, Robertson Fire Brigade Captain, and David Bartlett, Inspector of Operational Services of the Rural Fire Service entitled "Bush Fire in Robertson – how likely is it?"

Brendhan's two sons assisted with the technology and so the presentation began with a video of aspects of the Victorian bushfires of 2009. This extremely sad disaster was to remind all of us who live on this continent that our country is very prone to fire. Following this Brendhan outlined some of the fires closer to home, including those at Carrington Falls in 2001, the Burke River fire in 2002 (between Tourist Road and Picton Road), the Wingello fire in 2009 where 1100 hectares were burnt and a small fire in Lemmons Road in 1970.

Brendhan said that the main danger to Robertson is not necessarily from a fire starting in Robertson, but from ember attacks from fires that start in the Bundanoon sandstone country and then are driven by westerly winds and approach from the south or north. The fire dries out the vegetation in front of it. In catastrophic conditions, embers can be driven up to 20 km ahead of the fire front. For example, in the Victorian Kilmore East fire, where the front was originally moving at 2.5 kph, it spotted up to 20-40km in front as the wind speed increased. A map of fire potential around the Wingecarribee shire was shown, and printed copies were available. Fire danger ratings were discussed. The three alert levels were described:

1. advice
2. watch and act
3. emergency warning

A fire in 1939 was stopped by the local fire brigade at Vandenberg Road. In 1965 a huge fire starting in the drier Wingello-Tallong area burnt out a path to Fitzroy Falls; parallels from the Victorian bushfires could be drawn for Robertson from this situation.

Brendhan showed an old photo of a view of Robertson from the top of the rise in Caalong Street, around 1900, where there was very little vegetation, and a photo from a similar point as it exists today, where there is much more vegetation in people's gardens. This was to illustrate that today, with bigger and better gardens, there is far more potential fuel for fires.

Fire management and plans were discussed, with multi-agency coordination. A smart phone app is

available called *Fires Near Me*, which uses the location of the phone to present relevant information.

In questions, David Tranter asked about the coordination and management of controlled burning. The reply was that recommendations are worked out depending on the type of vegetation. For example, dry sclerophyll bush has a 7 year burning cycle, wetter forest 25 years, and rainforest not at all. If there is a problem with management, the landowner/agency concerned (eg National Parks) should be contacted first.

A video about the Wingecarribee Swamp peat fire was shown, and the problems of peat fires were discussed. These can burn underground for years without any visible indication, and then re-activate on the surface.

At the conclusion of the presentation, David Tranter proposed a vote of thanks to the speakers, warmly endorsed by the audience. A gift of flowers was presented to both speakers. Donations from the meeting were presented to Brendhan for the Robertson Fire Brigade.

Can Vegetation Shape Climate?

by David Tranter

“I think that I shall never see

A poem lovely as a tree” (Joyce Kilmer)

Trees are in again - the only tried and tested Carbon Capture and Storage system ever invented. Trees (and their algal predecessors) decarbonised the primal atmosphere, releasing oxygen as a by-product, creating an atmosphere fit for life. Some got buried in the bowels of the earth and transformed into coal, which is now being dug up and burnt at rates much faster than it was first formed to release energy for human use.

Nowadays tree descendants are being called upon to decarbonise an atmosphere that has been over-carbonised by the fossil fuel energy industry. Can re-vegetation achieve within the next 10 years (before global warming becomes irreversible) what once took their forbears billions of years? And without prejudice to food production for an over-populated world? “Aye”, as Hamlet said, “there’s the rub!”

Last week an answer came from an Australian research group of plant specialists and system scientists including ANU Professor Will Steffen of the Climate Commission and a local plant ecologist Sandra Berry, namely:

“Untangling the confusion around land carbon science and climate change mitigation policy – Perspective.”

The answer is “No”. Now, as they say “Nothing is sure in life but death and taxes”. But life doesn’t work on certainty, it works on practicalities. As the author of “The Ant and the Ferrari” puts it, what really matters is “certain for all practical purposes” (as one assumes when crossing a busy street).

The crux of their answer is as follows:

1. During the past million years, when alternating warm and cold limit cycles prevailed, atmospheric carbon dioxide never exceeded 275 ppm, even during a warm phase like now.
2. The current carbon dioxide concentration in the atmosphere is 400ppm and rising in synch with fossil fuel emissions.
3. If the whole world was revegetated as it once was before the agrarian and agricultural revolutions, it would reduce the (over-carbonised) carbon dioxide concentration in the atmosphere by no more than 1ppm per year until 2100 (the end of the current century).
4. By contrast, if the current fossil fuel emission trend is maintained until 2100, the atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration would increase by about 9ppm per year.

So, if the world was a bath tub with an inflow-outflow regime like that, it would soon overflow. No revegetation regime could possibly halt the current warming trend induced by burning carbon capital long buried in the vaults of the earth; much better to live on the renewable energy interest. Trees may be beautiful - some of my best friends are trees - but they can only do so much.

That’s not to say the dedicated Landcare/Bushcare work should be halted. Trees also have emotional, aesthetic and scientific value, such as desalination, soil conditioning, shelter, and windbreak and, above all, wildlife habitat. But to call on them for immediate carbon capture and storage is a pipe dream of fairies at the bottom of the garden.

Re-vegetation should be seen for what it is – a 20th century tactic to continue a subsidised fossil fuel industry that passes the cost of its irresponsible practices on to you and me to benefit its shareholders in the guise that their renewable energy competitors are “uncompetitive”.

At least, that’s what I think; how about you?

Banana Passionfruit on Vandenberg Road

Article and photos Denis Wilson

Dr Kevin Mills (well known to REPS members) publishes an e-newsletter on plants of the Illawarra region. It is called *Budawangia*, named after a rare native plant found in the Budawang Ranges. In the 12th edition in March 2013 he wrote about the Banana Passionfruit:

An increasing weed on the Robertson Plateau

"The Banana Passionfruit *Passiflora tarminiana*, mentioned in *Budawangia* (number 6), is becoming increasingly common on the Robertson Plateau. There has been an infestation in the Vandenberg Road – Jamberoo Mountain Road area for many years. It does seem to be expanding its range and turning up further afield. An attractive flower belies its nasty habit of smothering rainforest trees and other natives. This species is still at a stage where eradication from the plateau is possible." (K. Mills).

In the March edition of *Budawangia*, Dr. Kevin Mills gave a good "hint" about the infestation of Banana Passionfruit on Vandenberg Road.

I have personally weeded these plants from around the rare *Helicia* on Vandenberg Road, when the Passionfruit plants seemed to be threatening to engulf that particular rare plant.



Is there any interest among members of REPS to form a working group to help tackle this problem? Vandenberg Road is relatively easy to work along (as it is relatively low in traffic flows). The Jamberoo Mountain Road has the other main infestation. Of course, there are traffic issues to be

addressed if there was to be a working party along that road.

The Bundanoon community have been supported by Wingecarribee Shire Council to do "risky" work in the Bundanoon area, requiring hi-vis costumes and traffic controllers (flag operators).

It seems to me that this could be a project in two parts. An informal "get in and do it" approach on Vandenberg Road, and a formal assessment /submission to Council for a professional weed eradication program along Jamberoo Mountain Road (between low end of Vandenberg Road and the crest of the hill).



Helicia glabriflora, on Vandenberg Road, which was being swamped by rampant Banana Passionfruit. It is on its southern-most distribution here. It is widely distributed north from here, into Queensland, in rainforest patches. But there are very few plants of this species around here. Some are known from Minnamurra.

NPA Talk

The Aboriginal art movement

The talk will provide an overview of the Aboriginal art movement, tracing the development from its early acceptance into the art-world of contemporary art in the 1980s, changes that occurred during its rapid rise in popularity in the 1990s, to current issues in the movement. Art from remote and urban centres and its impact on non-Aboriginal art will be discussed.

Ian McLean is Professor of Contemporary art at the University of Wollongong and has written extensively on Aboriginal art.

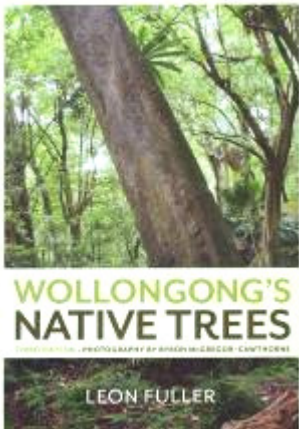
Wednesday 21st August

Fitzroy Falls NPWS Visitors Centre, 2:00pm.

Lunch will be available at the cafeteria.

Book Review

by Allan Stiles



WOLLONGONG'S NATIVE TREES

Third edition.

Leon Fuller, with
photography by Bryon
McGregor-Cawthorne,
Big Bean Books,
Wollongong, 2011

This complete revision of
the 1980 and 1982
editions features excellent

colour photographs, descriptions, and distribution maps for 160 species, 92 of which are in the rainforests. For many species there are photos of leaves, flowers, fruits, as well as bark.

Introductory chapters discuss history, landforms, geology, climate, distribution patterns, and trees in other roles such as with birds and in gardens. The glossary has clear and uncomplicated definitions. There is a substantial list of titles recommended for further reading. While there is no dichotomous key to aid identification, this is well facilitated by browsing the splendid illustrations.

Of particular interest to Robertson district readers is that many of our local trees are included as they are also found in the Wollongong district, with the exception of certain cool-temperate rainforest species such as our Black Oliveberry (*Elaeocarpus holopetalus*) and Pinkwood (*Eucryphia moorei*), at its northern limit, because the region discussed lies one kilometre west of the escarpment edge. Lists of trees found in community groups include those in warm-temperate rainforest in plateau gullies and the comparison with the smaller number found on the Robertson plateau is interesting, probably explained by our higher altitude.

The dedicatee is the late Anders Bofeldt, well known to many of us for his impressive knowledge and enthusiasm for local flora, rightly acknowledged with the words: "whose tireless field work over twenty years has produced such detail to include some fifteen rare species and to form a much clearer picture of the distribution of many species."

Removal of *Lleylandii* on Jamberoo Mountain Road

by Peter Glass



The members of REPS would like to acknowledge landowner Mr. Andrew Kennard for removing a substantial row of *Leylandii* cypress trees on his property fronting Jamberoo Mountain Road. Whereas, before the removal, motorists, riders and walkers saw only a wall of conifers, they can now see the natural beauty of a magnificent Robertson rural landscape and a view all the way south to the escarpment overlooking Kangaroo Valley and beyond.

Jane Lemann OAM - Passionate Conservator of Mount Gibraltar

Presented by the Friends of the Wingecarribee
Libraries



Tuesday 27th August 10:30am - 12:00pm

Ivy & shrub weeds had completely taken over native plants on The Gib as a result of 100 years of

quarrying. This year marks 20 years of bush regeneration by a dedicated team led by Jane. The Gib's environment is now vastly different as a result of their efforts & is listed on the National Register. Come & listen to the stories behind the story.

DATE: Tuesday August 27th

TIME: 10.30 for 11.00am

VENUE: Henrietta Rose Room, Bendooley St, Bowral

COST: Members \$10 Non-Members \$15

BOOKING & PAYMENT OPTIONS:

- At Bowral Library
- By cheque, The Treasurer, PO Box 375, Bowral 2576
- Online (incl. full name as reference)
- Account name: Friends of Wingecarribee Libraries Inc.
- BSB: 641-800 Account: 200256114

All proceeds assist our libraries.

Pinkwood Park

by David Tranter

On the last Working Bee, we planted 11 waratah (*Telopea speciosissima*) of several varieties along the northern slope of Pinkwood Park, two metres inside the vehicle barrier; between piles of woodchip, and we caged them against marauding mowers. All that remains to be done now is to mulch the intermediate spaces to avoid the need for any mowing (or spraying) whatsoever. That means, by my count, 24 barrows of woodchip which we have aplenty - a job that can be done in a single sunny morning in August with half a dozen volunteers.

So, would you please mark the following date in your diary:

Saturday August 10, 9.30am
(the morning after the next talk)



There will probably not be another Pinkwood Park Working Bee until spring (October or November), when we will prepare planting sites for the waratah hybrid Corroboree (*speciosissima x mongaensis*) which you will see in full flower at the Railway Station during the course of October. In contrast

with *speciosissima*, which has few flowers on long stems, Corroboree has multitudes of flowers on short stems.

Because waratah need well drained soil to avoid root-rot (Phytophthora), we will probably plant those in the upper (eastern) part of the Park, so suggestions of appropriate planting patterns would be welcome.

Science Week at CTC@Robertson

National Science Week, August 10-18 is an annual celebration of all things science in Australia. Join us at CTC@Robertson to explore the wonders and benefits of Science. CTC@Robertson is kicking off Science Week 2013 with a screening from the Scinema film program.



Critters - Saturday August 17 at 2pm.

CTC@Robertson, 58-60 Hoddle Street, Robertson
Free Event | Café Open | Bookings recommended
info@robertsonctc.org.au | www.robertsonctc.org.au
4885 2665

This event is brought to you by CSIRO, National Science Week, CTC@Robertson and other sponsors.

Clouded Leopard Kill (Australia, 8mins,
Dir: Howard Jackson)

Wonders of Life: Size Matters (UK, 43mins, Prod:
Paul Olding)

Professor Brian Cox takes us on an incredible journey.

Monsters in the Outback (Australia, 43mins, Prod:
Harriet Pike)

Many millions of years ago, before our ancestors walked the Earth, there were dinosaurs.

<http://www.csiro.au/scinema/>

Further screenings of the other exciting programs will follow in September, October and November.

Poetry Corner

Edited by Jonathan Persse

A tribute to **Kenneth Slessor** (1901 – 1971), a keen and loving observer of the environment, and one of Australia's finest lyric poets.

William Street, stanzas 1,3 and 4

The red globes of light, the liquor-green,
The pulsing arrows and the running fire
Spilt on the stones, go deeper than a stream;
You find this ugly, I find it lovely.

Smells rich and rasping, smoke and fat and fish
And puffs of paraffin that crimp the nose,
Or grease that blesses onions with a hiss;
You find it ugly, I find it lovely.

The dips and molls, with flip and shiny gaze
(Death at their elbows, hunger at their heels)
Ranging the pavements of their pasturage;
You find it ugly, I find it lovely.

Wild Grapes

The old orchard, full of smoking air,
Full or sour marsh and broken boughs, is there,
But kept no more by vanished Mulligans,
Or Hartigans, long drowned in earth themselves,
Who gave this bitter fruit their care.

Here's where the cherries grew that birds forgot,
And apples bright as dogstars; now there is not
An apple or a cherry; only grapes,
But wild ones, Isabella grapes they're called,
Small, pointed, black, like boughs of musket-shot.

Eating their flesh, half-savage with black fur.
Acid and gipsy-sweet, I thought of her,
Isabella, the dead girl, who has lingered on
Defiantly when all have gone away,
In an old orchard where swallows never stir.

Isabella grapes, outlaws of a strange bough,
That in their harsh sweetness reminds me somehow
Of dark hair swinging and silver pins,
A girl half-fierce, half-melting, as these grapes,
Kissed here- or killed here- but who remembers now?

Crow Country, stanza 1

Gutted of station, noise alone,
The crow's voice trembles down the sky
As if this nitrous flange of stone
Wept suddenly with such a cry;
As if the rock found lips to sigh,
The riven earth a mouth to moan;
But we that hear them, stumbling by,
Confuse their torments with our own.

Country Towns

Country towns, with your willows and squares,
And farmers bouncing on barrel mares
To public-houses of yellow wood
With "1860" over their doors,
And that mysterious race of Hogans
Which always keeps General Stores. . . .

At the School of Arts, a broadsheet lies
Sprayed with the sarcasm of flies:
"The Great Golightly Family
Of Entertainers Here To-night"—
Dated a year and a half ago,
But left there, less from carelessness
Than from a wish to seem polite.

Verandahs baked with musky sleep,
Mulberry faces dozing deep,
And dogs that lick the sunlight up
Like paste of gold—or, roused in vain
By far, mysterious buggy-wheels,
Lower their ears, and drowse again. . . .

Country towns with your schooner bees,
And locusts burnt in the pepper-trees,
Drown me with syrups, arch your boughs,
Find me a bench, and let me snore,
Till, charged with ale and unconcern,
I'll think it's noon at half-past four!

The Night-Ride

Gas flaring on the yellow platform; voices running up and down;
Milk-tins in cold dented silver; half-awake I stare,
Pull up the blind, blink out—all sounds are drugged;
The slow blowing of passengers asleep;
Engines yawning; water in heavy drips;
Black, sinister travellers, lumbering up the station,
One moment in the window, hooked over bags;
Hurrying, unknown faces—boxes with strange labels—
All groping clumsily to mysterious ends,
Out of the gaslight, dragged by private Fates.
Their echoes die. The dark train shakes and plunges;
Bells cry out; the night-ride starts again.
Soon I shall look out into nothing but blackness,
Pale, windy fields. The old roar and knock of the rails
Melts in dull fury. Pull down the blind. Sleep. Sleep.
Nothing but grey, rushing rivers of bush outside.
Gaslight and milk-cans. Of Rapptown I recall nothing else.

This is my 42nd and last Poetry Corner as editor. I hope someone would like to take it on: do please discuss this with the editors of *Eucryphia*. Jonathan Persse



Caalang Creek Working Bees

Saturday 31st August & 28th September

The Caalang Creek Working Bees have been going for a number of years, on the last Saturday of each month from 9:30am onwards subject to the weather. The Shire Council contributes greatly by controlling woody weeds and the ever-recurring blackberries. Please come and join us for as long as you are able (planting, mulching, weeding etc).

Meet at the footbridge in Hampden Park. Don't forget water, hat and gloves. We now have tools available, but bring your own if you can.

Queries to Steve Douglas 4271 4957 or Leon Hall 4888 2222.

Help Care for Our Nature Reserve

1st Wednesday of each month 9:30am to noon

Everyone welcome; please bring garden gloves; work sites are chosen according to the weather; stay only as long as you choose.

Details: Helen Tranter 4885 1394 or Ford Kristo (NPWS) business hours 4887 8244.

Australian Plants Society (APS)

APS NSW August Gathering and Talk

Saturday, 24 August 2013 from 10 am to 3 pm

The Australian Botanic Garden, Mount Annan

APS Quarterly Gathering at Mt. Annan will begin at 10:00 am with morning tea at the Garden Centre, followed by garden tours to 12 noon. Mr Dan Bishop, head horticulturist at Mt. Annan, will speak about the 'Connections Garden'.

A plant sale will be conducted by the 'Friends of the Gardens'.

CTC Sunday cinema series: Homage to Dave Brubeck

Sunday 18 August at 2pm

Dave Brubeck, one of the world's great improvisational jazz pianists, died in 2012 at age 91. Tony Williams was a friend of Brubeck's and will present this homage. Tony has dug up some great footage of the Dave Brubeck Quartet in performance. He will also screen excerpts from Brubeck's classical work *To Hope! A Celebration, for orchestra and jazz quartet*. This Moscow performance has insights into rehearsals where Russian musicians confront jazz for the first time.

Adults \$10 children \$5 (CTC fundraiser).

Café opens at 1.30pm. Tea & coffee available.

Bookings recommended.

REPS Meetings for 2013

The remaining REPS Public Meetings for this year are listed below. Talks will be publicised in the *Eucryphia* prior to the meeting.

Friday 9th August

October Spring Walk – 19th October – see below

Friday 8th November Talk & AGM

December TBA

REPS Annual Wildflower Walk

The REPS annual wildflower walk will be on Saturday 19th October at Barren Grounds. This is a week later than usual so as not to clash with the Robertson Open Garden weekend. What sort of walk do members want? A short morning walk or a longer walk taking lunch? There could be two groups. If you can't join the discussion at the August meeting, phone Helen (4885 1394) and let her know your ideas

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 – Karen Guymmer

PO Box 3045,

Robertson NSW 2577

or President – David Mee 4885 1483

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.

www.reps.org.au