



# Eucryphia

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Robertson Environment Protection Society – to promote the protection and enhancement of the Robertson environment.  
PO Box 3045, Robertson NSW 2577

[www.reps.org.au](http://www.reps.org.au)

## RAINFOREST WALK AT WHITE BIRCH FARM

Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> February at 10.00 am

In place of the usual meeting on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> February REPS has organised a visit to the property of Tony and Anna Williams at 19-21 Lemmons Road. This promises to be a most interesting and enjoyable event. The track is easy to walk and, happily, there are no leeches.



Anna, Daisy, and Tony

Anna and Tony wrote: When we accidentally discovered a property for sale in Robertson that included a 12 acre rainforest, the temptation to leave Sydney was too great. Anna had always had a yearning to be a custodian of a piece of Australian rainforest and this was too good an opportunity to pass up so we sold our Sydney beach house and moved into the fog.

The rainforest had a rudimentary track near the fringe, but the greater part had no tracks at all. We made numerous bush-bashing exploration sorties into the bush with a GPS unit and transferred all our waypoints and discoveries onto a Google map of the forest. From this map we worked out where we wanted a track to go. It took Tony three years of back-breaking work to create a path that circumnavigated the forest. As the forest floor was covered in a carpet of rocks, the track had to be created by kneeling on the ground and moving one rock at a time. More resistant rocks needed

a crow bar to extract the ‘tooth’ from the basalt soil. We wanted to have as little impact on the surrounding bush so made the track as natural as we could, yet comfortable and accessible.

The Wingecarribee Council gave us a grant to renew fences around the forest and remove any stray weeds.

Once the path had been completed we decided we would like to include information signs. Allan Stiles and Bob McInnes helped identify the plants and Anna researched background information. The 30 signs were made by Armsign and the Council made a donation towards the cost.

With the project completed, we invited our grandchildren to ‘cut the ribbon’ and take the first stroll through the forest, which takes 30 to 60 minutes, depending on one’s interest in reading the signs or just enjoying the bush.

The children decided to give us a Christmas present of an infrared surveillance camera to place in the forest, and with its help, we have discovered some of the inhabitants, including possums, wombats and swamp wallabies.



Track. Note Nestfern (*Asplenium australasicum*)

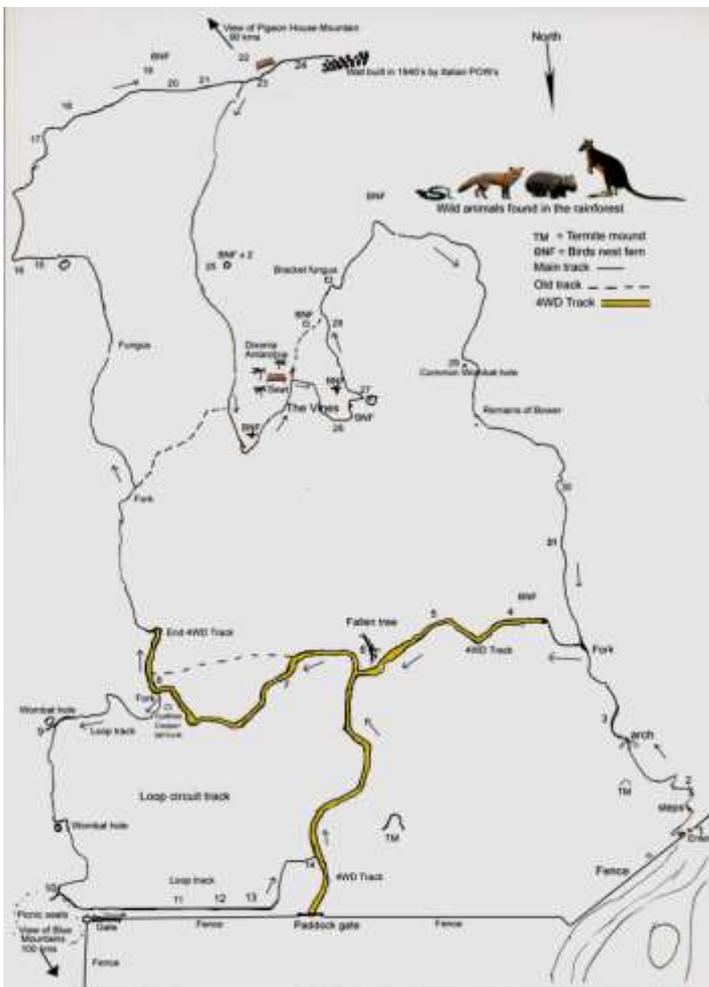
Upcoming Events – see Back Page



Tony and Daisy on a new track.



One of the signs.



Map



Tony with GPS discovers large Wonga Vine (*Pandorea pandorana*).

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome and Happy New Year to members for the first publication of *Eucryphia* in 2014. Your new committee has had its first meeting for the year in January and planning has begun for 2014. However we need your involvement and suggestions for REPS activities to engage the whole family, young and old.

One of the activities suggested by committee members was property and garden visits, and we would like some volunteers and suggestions here. Typically these would take place on the Saturday morning after the day scheduled for the Friday bi-monthly meeting. Whether it is as well as, or instead of, the normal Friday talk will depend on the activity and whether we have managed to find a speaker or not. Once again, if

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members have suggestions and contacts for Friday night speakers, we would like to hear about it. You might have friends and relatives who have some expertise bearing on the environment that can make an interesting talk. In our organisation, member involvement is vital in such matters.

On Friday night 14<sup>th</sup> February we are not planning to have a REPS talk at the Community Centre. Instead we will have an activity on Saturday morning 15<sup>th</sup> February from 10.00 till 11.00 am. Anna and Tony Williams have offered their place in Lemmons Road as a venue for a walk through their rainforest. Anna and Tony live on the high point of Lemmons Road on a 10ha property, number 19-21. Half their property is on the hill covered by remnant rainforest, and they have worked hard to build a pathway through the forest, with signs for all the points of interest and rainforest plants. They have produced a walk guide so we won't get lost. The grade varies, but is not so steep that you need special equipment. Dress as you would for a bushwalk. We hope you will all come to see the property and the rainforest. The area is around 5ha, and it doesn't take too long to get around. A leisurely walk is envisaged.

One of the reasons that we decided not to have a talk on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> February is that there is a distinguished speaker presenting a talk for CANWIN at the Henrietta Rose Room at Bowral Library on that night at 7:00pm. Details are on the back page of this edition. Professor Will Steffen is a well known scientist at the Australian National University and is speaking on carbon emissions and climate change. Many of our members may wish to attend this talk. However with the REPS event (the Saturday rainforest walk) and the CANWIN event on Friday at Bowral, the weekend will be quite full.

We are certainly having summer at the moment, with temperatures sometimes quite hot and many days long, bright, and sunny. We could do with a little more rain at night - nothing too violent. The grass is growing madly as it does this time of year and weeds can proliferate if left unchecked. As you know the basalt-derived soils of Robertson grow the most wonderful array of weeds. Stopping them seeding is an important summer activity. Our verges are full of such weeds and your committee is trying to work out a way of mapping infestations and proposing priorities for clearing them. We cannot ourselves do the physical work to clear big areas of weeds from verges, but we can provide information to assist those responsible to work effectively. Member's thoughts on this matter would be very welcome. What about your street? Are there noxious or environmental weeds that should not be there? Let committee members know or send an email

to [reps99@outlook.com](mailto:reps99@outlook.com), the REPS email address, or simply collar us at a meeting.

Could I request that members who have not renewed their membership for 2014 bring a completed form and payment to the next meeting? This would help enormously with our paperwork, in not having to remind people all the first half of the year. We do want your membership. In fact we are always looking for new members who would like to be involved in making sure that the Robertson district is the absolutely best place to live.

I would like to digress back to 2013 to let you know of the wrap up at the end of last year. Following our bushwalk in October in Barren Grounds, which was as lovely as usual, we had the AGM in November and the Christmas Social in December. The AGM was a little down in attendance numbers, but we managed to elect a reasonably full committee to manage REPS business for 2014. The new committee for 2014 is as follows:

President: David Mee,

Vice President: Dr Karen Guymer,

Minute Secretary: Lyndy Scott,

Treasurer: Anne Wilson,

Committee members:

Dr David Tranter OAM, Helen Tranter OAM, Dr Allan Stiles, Peter Glass, and Mike Meldrum.

Leon Hall has declined to be a committee member this year. He will be missed. We thank you, Leon, for your years of service to REPS and your continuing work on the Caalang Creek project. Newcomers to the committee are Lyndy Scott and Mike Meldrum, whom we welcome wholeheartedly.

Some specialist duties include Helen Tranter as Public Officer (who prepares the annual report to Fair Trading and assists Anne Wilson with membership activities), and Allan Stiles as editor of *Eucryphia*, working with Sheila McInnes and Peter Glass, who selects the poem. Duties that are currently unallocated are Publicity Officer and Talks Convenor. At the moment these are shared responsibilities of the committee, but we are looking for volunteers for these jobs. The Publicity Officer is responsible for putting notices on notice boards around Robertson, as well as providing copy to local newsletters and newspapers. The Talks Convenor organises and looks after speakers. The latter is also a job for the whole committee, but someone needs to take the initiative.

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After the AGM formal proceedings and election, ably chaired by Bob McInnes, there was a presentation by David Tranter, who described the main determinants of global climate and weather systems. He then called on various members to “play act” the main climate systems to illustrate and re-enforce the theory. The quote of the night sums it up neatly: *‘Climate is what you expect. Weather is what you get’*.

In December, the Christmas Social was held at my place in Lemmons Road. This christened our new sunroom after recent renovations. It was a very relaxed and happy affair, with plenty of delicious food and Christmas cheer, provided by members. In all, a pleasant end-of-year de-stressing. A little music and carols added a lovely Christmas touch.

The committee and I welcome all members back from the summer holidays and hope that this year we can all contribute to the preservation of our lovely Robertson environment.

David Mee

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## YELLOW-THROATED SCRUBWREN

When in the Nature Reserve recently Denis Wilson and the editor spotted more than one unoccupied pendant nest at about head-height. There were three eggs in one of the nests. On visiting the next morning, Denis had the good fortune to find one occupied by a Yellow-throated Scrubwren (*Sericornis citreogularis*), not the related Large-billed Scrubwren which he recorded there before.



*Birds in Backyards* reports that: “The Yellow-throated Scrubwren builds a long, bulky, domed nest with a hooded side entrance, suspended in tangled vines or from a branch about 1m to 10m from the ground. It is made of roots, vine tendrils, moss, and twigs, and is lined with feathers.”



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## NEWS FROM IAN FOSTER AND ANNE

We’ve done a lot of miles and seen a lot of tourist Tasmania including prospective homes. We have come to realise that it’s not such a small island when you investigate all the back roads and dead ends. However, our travels in search of Shangri-la have come to an end and we are settled in our new abode. We have been on our 18ac. farmlet for nearly eight months now and things seem to have eased off to a state of something resembling normality. Anne and I are enjoying living in this part of Tassie and can find almost everything we need within a small distance. Anne has taken up quilting and producing some great decor for the house. I’ve been planting as many trees as I can make protective cages for. The cute little pademelons eat any thing they can reach and are very clever at getting through fences.

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T. 03 6425 1553 E. ian.b.foster@gmail.com

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## AGAPANTHUS ALERT

Beautiful in flower, they are tough, drought tolerant, and need little care. Unfortunately this also means that they are perfect bushland, roadside, and waterway invaders, which is why this plant is on the local Environmental Weed List. Their many seeds are spread by wind and stormwater. Large infestations have established in the Blue Mountains National Park. **It is important that the flower heads are cut off as soon as possible after the flowers fade and before the seeds form.** If this is done the heads can be composted safely.

Helen Tranter

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## ***HELECIA GLABRIFLORA***

This is an uncommon plant in the cool temperate rainforests of Robertson. It has been recorded from this district in several places, but it is close to the southern end of its known range.

Recently I was approached by Toby Golson from the Australian National Botanic Gardens in Canberra (ANBG), to assist them with gathering some seeds and cutting materials for their collections; some to grow on in the Booderee Botanic Gardens (at Jervis Bay), some for their National Living Collection in the ANBG, some to go into the National Herbarium collection in Canberra, and some for the seed bank there.

I spoke with Allan Stiles of REPS about this proposal, and he thought that it sounded a reasonable request, coming as it does from a legitimate institution.

Toby had asked me to monitor the ripeness of any seeds I could find on the two trees I knew of.

Based upon my records from previous years, we scheduled a visit for the first week of January. However, when monitoring these plants, I realised there were ripe seeds available in mid-December. As these seeds are deep blue in colour, they are presumably attractive to Bowerbirds, so I collected a few seeds and sent them off to Canberra. I was concerned that this season's fruiting would be lost if I did not intervene. This was prior to a scheduled visit which Toby had already booked up.

In January Toby and an assistant came up and collected a few more ripe seeds and some nice vigorous shoots from one tree which had tipped over a few years back, and which was by then making healthy new growth on strong vertical stems. In my experience as a gardener, that looked like an excellent prospect for successful "cutting" material.

Shortly after his visit, Toby contacted me again to say they had commenced the raising of cuttings ("striking" them), but he also had some good news re the seeds I had sent in December. Several of them had already started to germinate. This greatly surprised me because these seeds are similar in form and genetics to the seeds of *Persoonias*, which are notoriously hard to germinate in a nursery environment. Toby attributed the successful germination to the freshness of the seeds.

Anyway, I wanted to record this exchange of plant material with the ANBG, and "get it all on the record". Hopefully we will have achieved establishing these "southern" plants in the National Botanical Collection and indeed have a group of these specimens established in Botanic Gardens as living plants, and as well have some in the ANBG Seedbank for posterity.

Denis Wilson



*Helicia glabriflora* – ripe fruit December 2013



*Helicia glabriflora* Flower stem – paired flowers in helical formation on stem.



*Helicia glabriflora* - paired flowers – close-up

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## WHAT A REMARKABLE YEAR!

In 2013 we were all delighted by a spectacular flowering of trees in our rainforests. Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*), Possumwood (*Quintinia sieberi*), Coachwood (*Ceratopetalum apetalum*), Scrub Beefwood (*Stenocarpus salignus*), and Lilly Pilly (*Acmena smithii*) were some that produced a wealth of colour. Was it because of those months of no rain? Thanks to Denis Wilson for these photos.



Coachwood from above



Coachwood fresh flower



Coachwood calyxes with four and five sepal lobes



Coachwood calyx with nut forming



*Stenocarpus salignus* flowers



*Stenocarpus* leaves and flowers

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## POETRY CORNER - selected by Peter Glass

Much is known about the exploits of the controversial Harry (Breaker) Morant. His death by a British firing squad on 27<sup>th</sup> February 1902 is still causing controversy today. Little is known about his poetry and verse. He was a regular contributor to *The Bulletin* in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. This is one of many. We will include some more in following issues.



### Station Songs and Droving Ditties

‘Station songs and droving ditties’!  
Strung together on the track  
Far away from coastal cities  
In the droving days—outback;

Some on distant water-courses  
‘Neath the blazing Northern sun,  
When returning with the horses  
To a far North-western run;

Some were fashioned in the gloaming  
While the morrow’s damper cooked;  
Some were penned by rivers roaming  
Where the wily fish was hooked;

Ere the midday ‘quart’ was ready  
And the hour was slow to pass  
Whilst the nags were feeding steady  
On the ripening Mitchell grass;

Or, when horse-bells chimed and tinkled  
Where the feed was drenched with dew,  
And the wintry white stars twinkled  
High above in heaven’s blue.

Then—of stockwhip’s ring and rattle  
In the range—some memory flashed;  
Or of night-rides after cattle  
When the gidya branches crashed.

And a rhyme perchance I’ve come by  
Recollecting some past ride—  
When we trapped the flying brumby  
On the Southern Queensland side.

\* \* \*

Jingles!—neither good nor clever—  
Just a rover’s random rhymes,  
But they’ll serve their turn if ever  
They recall the old bush times,

When a bushman, in his leisure,  
Reads them ‘neath the shady pine;  
Or they give a moment’s pleasure  
To some old bush mate o’ mine!

Breaker Morant

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### Chooks

Chooks give you funny looks  
But I do love their eggs  
I love the feathers on their heads  
But not their scaly legs.

Mrs Chris Robertson, Moss Vale

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### Haiku poems on climate

#### Albedo

Sand, snow and ice  
are all sunlit mirrors that  
cool the warming earth.

#### Atmosphere

- the fragile membrane  
that nourishes our planet,  
like a placenta.

#### Air Pressure

Like the sea below,  
the air has both mass and weight –  
that is termed “pressure”.

#### Carbon Dioxide

Park Jekyll, part Hyde,  
it keeps the Earth warm; too much  
leads to fever.

David Tranter

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If you have a poem we welcome your contribution.  
Please send to Peter Glass, 65 Vandenberg Road,  
Robertson 2577



### **REPS Meetings in 2014**

The dates for this year's public meetings are listed below. Each Friday meeting will be at 7.30 pm in the Community Hall and will include a talk that will be publicised in *Eucryphia*.

Saturday 15th February – see page 1.

Friday 11th April

Friday 13th June

Friday 8th August

Saturday 11th or 18th October - Bushwalk

Friday 14th November (Annual General Meeting)

### **Caalang Creek Working Bees**

Caalang Creek Working Bees are usually held on the last Saturday of each month from 9:30am onwards, subject to the weather. Please come and join us for as long as you are able. The next Working Bee will be on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February. 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**

1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of each month from 9:30am till noon. Please bring garden gloves. More volunteers would be greatly appreciated. Everyone is welcome. Details: Helen Tranter 4885 1394 or NPWS in business hours: 4887 8253.

### **Community Technology Centre News**

\* 11.00 am from Wednesday to Saturday –

“Community Coffee and a chat” – a place to meet friends.

\* Saturday, 1st March from dusk behind CTC – Village Bonfire. Gold coin donation to support our Rural Fire Service.

Many of you walk, ride or drive past the CTC daily, but not so many stop for a coffee, a chat, or to find out about and use the excellent facilities that we have. Currently your CTC is undergoing a number of changes, aimed at increasing our appeal and relevance. We see our role as being a focal

point for the village: supporting local artists, providing a space for musicians, serving as a cinema, offering computer training and support, as well as being a hub where we can meet and share all the things that make our village great. As Anthony Burgess wrote: “Without a sense of caring, there can be no sense of community.”

David Wallace - phone 4885 2665

### **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 Guymer, PO Box 3045, Robertson, NSW 2577 or President – David Mee on 4885 1483



### **CANWIN Meeting**

#### **Tracking Carbon: Exploring the Myths about Carbon Offsets**

Henrietta Rose Room, Bowral Library

Friday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2014 at 7pm.

Refreshments will be available at 6.30pm.

Professor Will Steffen - Councillor on the publicly-funded Climate Council of Australia and a global change researcher at the Australian National University (ANU).

Carbon offsets have long been proposed as part of the solution to the climate change challenge, such as planting trees to absorb carbon dioxide to offset the emission of carbon dioxide from the combustion of fossil fuels. This talk will describe the basic principles of the global carbon cycle, the ways in which human activities are modifying the cycle, and the conclusion that if we are to stabilize the climate system at the widely agreed 2°C target temperature level it is imperative to directly reduce emissions from burning fossil fuels both rapidly and deeply. Everyone is welcome.

Admission: \$5, Pensioners: \$2.

Articles for *Eucryphia* may be sent to the editor, Dr Allan Stiles, on [stilesaljen@bigpond.com](mailto:stilesaljen@bigpond.com).