



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

Friday 10th October 2008, 7.30pm
Robertson Community Centre
Caalong Street, Robertson

Environmental ‘hot-spots’

A talk by Ian and Annette Stevens

Ian and Annette are self-confessed mad travellers. Over the past 24 years, they have regularly escaped from their day jobs (Annette is Marketing Manager at the Taronga Conservation Society, Ian is an Executive at IBM) to visit the world's special places, with an emphasis on those areas that are at risk of change in the not-too-far distant future.

In recent years, they've been fortunate to visit four environmental hot-spots; Franz-Josef Land in the Russian High-Arctic, Macquarie Island and the Ross Sea region of Antarctica, the Indian Ocean island of Madagascar and the small West-African country of Gabon.

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

In their talk, Ian and Annette will share their experiences of these four locations, focusing on the impact of climate change on our polar regions, the risks facing the breathtaking bio-diversity of Madagascar and the wonderful things being done by Government and NGO's to protect the Gabon wilderness. The talk will be informal and will be illustrated by plenty of photos of the landscape, fauna and historical sites.



Upcoming Events

- Fri 10th October** – REPS Public Meeting with talk, 7:30pm, Robertson Community Centre.(as above)
Tue 14th October - Sthn Hghlnds Landcarers, Tree Day, 9.30am, Bong Bong Common Reserve,(see p2)
Tue 4th November – NPA Southern Highlands Talk, 7.30 CWA Hall, Elizabeth St, Moss Vale (see p.4)
Fri 7th November – ‘Australia Pumping Empty’ - Film and presentation - Transition Towns. 7.00 pm Robertson CTC.
Fri 14th Nov – REPS AGM and Talk by David Ellyard ‘Our place in the universe – The Cosmic Context’
Fri 12th December – REPS Christmas Party. Details to be announced
NPA Bushwalks – see page 4

The Little Terns of Lake Wollumboola **By Leon Hall and John Dorman**

The August talk was well attended even though it was the opening night of the Olympics. Francis Bray gave us an insight into the lives of these small birds that travel long distances to breed at selected sites along the east coast. One of the most important sites is at Lake Wollumboola, which is near Culburra Beach on the south coast.

Francis Bray is President of the Lake Wollumboola Protection Association and is a Shorebird Volunteer at the lake. She has been observing and helping to conserve the Little Terns for many years and is part of an ongoing conservation program to help protect the birds at this site.

The excellent photographs complemented the informative and well presented talk which gave the audience an understanding of the bird's habits and its breeding habitat. The nest is a small depression in the sand and is vulnerable to disturbance and destruction.

Nests can be affected by extremes of weather e.g. king tides, large surf and storms, or by predation by foxes and dogs and some species of birds, and importantly nests can be destroyed by people. This can be unintentional due to the birds and eggs being well camouflaged in the sand due to their colour and small size. Climate change and potential development around the lake are also a concern.

The conservation program at the lake has led to an increase in successful nesting and involves a number of measures including fox baiting, temporary electric fences, sand bagging, monitoring and rescuing birds, and importantly by educating people who use the beach.

The Little Terns arrive in October to breed and leave around March which is also a popular time for beach goers so the more people aware of the Little Terns the better. Many fly back to south-east Asia but little is known of their locations there.

Francis and other volunteers have won a number of awards for their work with the Little Tern and she recently (2007) won the NSW Nature Conservation Council Dunphy Award for the best environmental effort by an individual.

Thank you, Francis, for enlightening us about this fascinating and endangered bird and for your work in helping to conserve this species.

Also, many thanks to David Tranter, for organising another excellent talk for REPS.

Tree Day is on again this Year

Let's Do Our Bit To Reduce Global Warming By Planting Local Trees.

Tuesday October 14th 9.30am - Till Lunch
Bong Bong Common Reserve Burradoo
Check below link for registered details.

<http://treeday.planetark.com/site/40380>

Lunch , Hats & T-shirt Give away.
See you there, Daniel.

Daniel Anderson, Community Support Officer,
HNCMA, Moss Vale, 4861-9014

Landholders Incentive Programs

Here is some information that members of REPS may be interested in, particularly those with cattle.

Sydney Catchment Authority are currently running an incentive program for landholders in the sub catchments of Upper Nepean, Wingecarribee Reservoir, Kelly's Creek, Fitzroy Falls, Barrengarry Creek, Brogers Creek and Kangaroo River. These drainage units include the towns of Robertson, Glenquarry, Burrawang, Kangaloon and Avoca.

Our program is aimed at preventing cattle accessing waterways through subsidised fencing (\$6.50 per metre) and alternative watering systems. We pay for the materials: the landholder pays for the installation.

There are also funds available for revegetation (\$3 per plant) and for minor erosion control works (up to \$20 000) carried out in conjunction with fencing activities. If you have further questions regarding the program, or would like the program guidelines and application form, contact:

Jacob Adams
Catchment Project Officer,
Burrawang Office, 0428 254 558 or 4886 942
jacob.adams@sca.nsw.gov.au

Wattle Flowers – up close and personal

Photos and Story by Denis Wilson

We generally think of wattle flowers as fluffy balls or rods of flower. The reality is somewhat more complicated. The wattle blossom is clearly seen here to be a composite flower head, made up by many different flowers grouped into a rounded "head", dominated by a spray of stamens, pollen grains covering the anthers (at the tip of each stamen).

A study of buds of the Blackwood Wattle, (*Acacia melanoxylon*)



What one does not normally notice are the tiny petals which rupture as the anthers mature, and push out to open. The botanists describe wattle flowers as having "valvate" petals, but with the stamens forming the conspicuous part of the inflorescence. Readers who receive Eucryphia by email will be able to make out the waxy petals splitting into 4 equal sections, as the stamens emerge.



There is a misconception that wattles are entirely Australian plants. "Wattles" or "Acacia" species have a world-wide distribution. Australia has some 993 formally defined species of 1381 species world

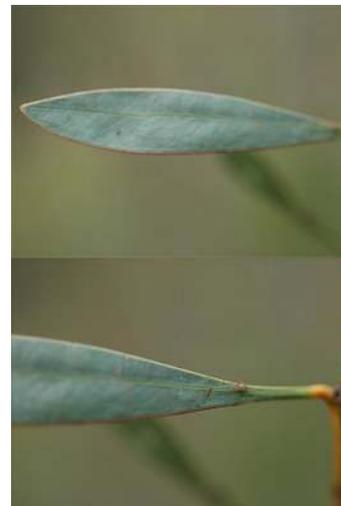
wide. That means 72 percent of all known species are found in Australia.

More significantly we have 975 species (out of 987 species worldwide) in the sub-genus "*Phyllodineae*" the group of wattles which have flat "false leaves" or "Phyllodes", as distinct from the "true leaved" species - the so-called "fern-leaved wattles".

Here is the leaf of one of the so-called fern-leaved wattles, *Acacia decurrens*.



Below is a close-up of a wattle phyllode - it is a flattened stem. The lower image shows the "gland" (a tiny notch on the side of the phyllode), the shape and location of which is diagnostic of each different species. Some are close to the base, as this one is; others are several centimetres along the blade of the phyllode. Have a close look at the next wattle phyllode you come across, to see this gland "in the flesh". There is a theory that these glands evolved to attract ants to the plants, in order to protect the plants from attack by insects. If that is true, it indicates that wattles must be relatively "modern" plants – to have adapted to the presence of insects and ants.



NPA Talk

7.30 pm Tuesday 4 November, 2008

CWA Hall, Elizabeth Street, Moss Vale

Dr. David Tranter:

“What are the forces that drive contemporary climate change?”

David will describe the natural and man-made forces that drive climate change on earth. He will identify the factors which lead climatologists to believe that contemporary global warming is almost certainly man-made.

He will deal with the causes of prehistoric ice-age cycles and the role of positive feedback mechanisms in amplifying mild variations in the earth's orbit around the sun to such an extent that the global climate has alternated between icehouse and greenhouse conditions for the past million years.

He will also describe how carbon dioxide is continuously recycled between one global reservoir and another, emphasizing the crucial role of the ocean in this regard and Antarctic sea-ice in particular.

Supper provided

Gold Coin donation

Living in a New World

By Kathy Biddlecombe

Transition Shire Wingecarribee (TSW) is part of one of the fastest growing community-scale initiatives in the world. Since the first (Totnes in Devon, England) was developed in 2006, about 100 official initiatives have emerged and several hundred communities are considering the idea.

Transition Initiative communities are committed to using less energy and mitigating climate change. The days of cheap and abundant oil are over and we need to discover some new – and rediscover some old – ways of responsibly meeting our needs. In our rush to globalisation, we have abandoned much of our local defence against external shocks. We need to reclaim it and the only way we can do that before peak oil really starts to pinch is by acting immediately *as a community*.

If someone in the community has an idea for a way to live in a more localised, low-energy way, they need only find willing helpers and develop that idea. Areas to be explored include transport, waste management, education, health, housing, food, energy and entertainment. If a resident feels that their village or town within the Wingecarribee Shire

could be a transition initiative, they can invite a few like-minded people over for tea and a chat and a change is born.

A Transition Initiative is more party than protest. It takes a holistic view and works as a catalyst for community members to find solutions. The imminent challenges are too great for individuals to face, but there is no end to our collective innovation and energy.

www.transitiontowns.org

National Parks Association Walks

4 Oct Sat Barren Grounds NR

Hard day walk, 20km, 50m asc, tracks.

Griffith's Trail Picnic Area-Natural Stone Bridge-Kangaroo Ridge Track-return via Saddleback Trig. A beautiful walk with heathland, wildflowers, birds plus grand views to the coast and Kangaroo Valley. Map: Kangaroo Valley.

5 Oct Sun Barren Grounds NR

Medium day walk, 14km, 150m asc,

Circuit walk with spectacular wild flowers and great views. Train connection & car pool available from Albion Park. Limit: 15.

11-12 Oct Sat-Sun Lake Yarrunga, Kangaroo River

Flat water paddle, 20km, overnight paddle on Lake Yarrunga from Bendeela to Tallowa Dam or reverse depending on the wind. All gear in canoes. Canoe hire available but paddling experience necessary. Beautiful scenery, swimming PFDs compulsory.

25 Oct Sat Mt Alexandra NR

Day walk, Boxvale Forty Foot Falls Circuit, 15km, 400m asc, 400m desc, on rough track, steps, and river crossings.

Medium-hard day. Walk commences from the Boxvale Picnic Area. Walk out on Boxvale track to 40 Foot Falls Track. Continue on 40 Foot Falls Track down to falls and along to the Nattai. Follow Nattai along to Boxvale Creek and ascend the very steep 400m old skip loading track. Map: 8929-2S Mittagong.

9 Nov Sun Morton NP

Medium day walk, 12km, 500m asc, 500m desc, tracks, offtrack, river crossings.

Long Point, Shoalhaven River, Badgery's Spur. Scenic, optional swims, (compulsory if river up). Short car shuffle Map: Caoura. Limit: 8.

Contact: Denis Wilson 4885 2725

Poetry Corner
Edited by Jonathan Persse

Birds charm and delight us. Here are five poems they have inspired in Australian writers, including two short ones by a REPS member and her grandson.

Please send me a poem on the environment – one that you have read and liked, or one that you have written.
Jonathan Persse, Sallyhill, Burrawang 2577.

Native Companions Dancing

On the blue plains in wintry days
 These stately birds move in the dance.
Keen eyes have they, and quaint old ways
On the blue plains in wintry days.
The Wind, their unseen Piper, plays,
 They strut, salute, retreat, advance;
On the blue plains, in wintry days,
 These stately birds move in the dance.

John Shaw Neilson

Black-Shouldered Kite

Carved out of strength, the furious kite
Shoulders off the wind's hate.
The black mark that bars his white
Is the pride and hunger of Cain.
Perfect, precise, and angry calm
Of his closed body, that snow-storm –
Of his still eye that threatens harm.
Hunger and force his beauty made
And turned a bird to a knife-blade.

Judith Wright

Night Birds

I wonder why
Birds sing by day, but at night they cry.

The curlews wail
As if they hope to find, but fail.

Oyster-catchers echo
Each other as if the beach were hollow.

The mopoke calls
How far away the darkness falls.

The railbird spills
Notes into a dam that never fills.

Only the magpie
By moonlight sings and does not cry.

Geoffrey Dutton

Hiding them,
 Aren't you
Black Hen
 In the bush.

Penny Osterhaus

Kite

Blue owl in the sky
Pulling to leave me below,
Bounce across the sun.

Jeht Shaw Janjic (13)



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 Bee will be on the 29th November

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

There are two public REPS meetings remaining this year. Each meeting includes a talk.

- Friday 10th October – Environmental ‘hot-spots’.
- Friday 14th November - AGM & Talk -see below.
- Friday 12 December – Christmas Party

Friday 14th November – AGM Make A Diary Note Now!

David Ellyard, well-known science communicator in radio, print and TV (including appearances as the TV weatherman) will present the November 14th 2008 REPS talk.

David will speak on ‘**Our place in the universe – The Cosmic Context**’. David is a highly experienced and engaging speaker so make a diary note to come along to this inspirational presentation!

Visit the REPS website
www.reps.org.au

Film Screening by Transition Shire Wingecarribee at Robertson CTC

TSW will give a short presentation outlining the principles guiding the Transition Initiative and ways in which people can participate.

On Friday 7th November *Australia Pumping Empty* (2008) will screen at the Robertson Community Technology Centre. It explores the real reason behind rising energy, food and fuel prices and features interviews with experts from a wide range of fields from urban research to oil refining. They explain the implications of peak oil for Australia and the efforts that we can make to reduce our oil dependence.

After the screening, audience members will have a chance to voice their concerns about peak oil and climate change and share ideas to increase community resilience. \$5.00 ENTRY.

Environmental www sites

I have found two really good sites with great links to environmental organisations.

- www.bfa.com.au
 - <http://earthdirectory.net/australia.htm>
- Beth

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.