



Eucryphia

ISSN 1037 - 2032

Number 52 - March 2001

Robertson Environment Protection Society Inc - to promote the protection and enhancement of the Robertson environment.

Next Meeting

**Friday 6 April 2001 at 7.30pm
at the
Robertson Community Centre.**

Our guest will be Nancy Pallin who will speak on:

Grey-headed flying-foxes - beneficial yet vulnerable.

Radio and satellite tracking have shown that these bats are amazing movers, adapted to the vagaries of eucalypt flowering. Yet scientists are alarmed at the decline in their numbers and the impact this may have on rainforest diversity and regeneration as well as reproduction in eucalypt forests and woodlands. Volunteers have joined scientists to estimate their population. What are the threats and how can we avoid a crash in their population.

This talk will explode some myths - 'a population explosion in flying-foxes', and 'flying-foxes defecate through their mouths'

You will have the opportunity to meet a live flying-fox called Mangoes, and to see wild flying-foxes in their daytime camp and while feeding at night via this illustrated talk. Nancy Pallin, a long time member of REPS, will speak on behalf of the Ku-ring-gai Bat Conservation Society Inc.

Admission to the talk will be by a small gold coin donation, which will go towards the KBCS education program.

All are welcome, please bring friends and family. A light supper will be provided.



Up-coming Events

Friday 30th March 2001

Centenary of Federation Tree Planting
at 10.30 am, at 'Pinkwood Park'

Sunday 8th April 2001

East Kangaloon Planting Day
10.30 am at East Kangaloon

June to December 2001

Roberston
The Robertson Rural Railway Project
Volunteers required

Committee News / Project Updates / Upcoming REPS Events

VALE Gordon Wilson

When REPS was founded ten years ago, Gordon Wilson became a foundation member. His friendly face, cheerful personality and positive outlook brightened many of our meetings. In recent years he was in poor health, but never in spirit. One week before he collapsed and died, he turned up at the Robertson History Day, prepared to do his bit. That was his way. Belonging, as he did, to many organisations in the district, he formed a kind of bridge between our Society and others, for which we are indebted. The society extends deepest sympathy to his wife Dawn and son Dean, and to other members of his family.

Farewell old companion, we shall not forget you.

Centenary of Federation Tree Planting

**Friday 30th March 2001 at 10.30 am,
at 'Pinkwood Park'**

Please come along and help the school children plant some native trees

Where is Pinkwood Park? – It is diagonally opposite the supermarket, between the Highway and the railway line

In 1996, Council agreed that this little triangular piece of land should become a park. Last year, REPS submitted a planting plan, suggesting it would be a good place for an event like this because the school children involved would be well away from the road.

The plan was generally accepted by Council last July and it was to go on public display for four weeks, however somehow that got put aside, no doubt for more urgent issues. But the plants do need to go in before the weather gets too cold and before the school holidays so the children can take part. The formal layout of the Park will have to come later.

Purchase of plants for this event is funded by a Federal Centenary of Federation Grant to the Shire. This Pinkwood Park planting will take less than half of the funds available for Robertson

— Helen Tranter

East Kangaloon Planting Day

**Sunday 8th April at 10.30 am
at East Kangaloon**

Come along for a day of riverside revegetation on the banks of the Nepean River, East Kangaloon.

REPS has kindly agreed to donate its resources (people power) to help with catchment management in the Upper Nepean Catchment.

The land involved is owned by the Sydney Catchment Authority and is a small area on the outer bank of the water course which drains to the Nepean Dam. Planting here started over a year ago and most trees are progressing well.

If you are interested in coming along and planting some trees to help the river-bank environment then come on down!

The plants, depending on availability, will include:
Eucalyptus fastigata (Brown Barrel)
Acacia melanoxylon (Blackwood or Sally Wattle)
Eucryphia moorei (Pinkwood)
Gahnia sieberiana (Red-fruited saw-sedge)
Poa labillardierii (a local tussock grass)
- And maybe others

Trees will also be guarded.

You may want to consider appropriate clothing, gumboots (protection from wet feet and snakes), gloves (some thistles) and a drink and maybe food if you need it. Half a day may do it.

Also of use to the project would be a watering can and maybe a hammer for stakes (tree-guards). If anyone has a Hamilton tree planter, it would also be very helpful. Even if you cannot attend, you may consider lending us one for the day.

Due to the fact that permission is needed to enter this land, please ring me if you are interested, for directions and organisational requirements. Thanks.
Leon Hall (Phone: 4888 2222) or ring Helen Tranter, (Phone: 4885 1394)

— Leon Hall

Committee News / Project Updates / Upcoming REPS Events

History of Robertson Day

The workshop on Saturday, 15th February, was a start to collecting history for the display to go into the Stationmaster's Office, as part of the Small Town Kick Start Project.

About 60 people took part and the information gathered will enable us to follow leads to other people and also through the collections of the Berrima District History Society. During the day there was a series of very interesting short talks.

The first talk was by Myfanwy Thompson, an oral historian who explained how oral history can add life and a feeling of personal emotion to history. Myf has kindly offered to interview people for our project.

Councillor Larry Whipper then outlined the Railway Station Project and introduced Mayor Phil Yeo, who spoke on the importance of keeping the history of a community - even though what we do today may seem a confusion of numerous events, it will, in time, be part of the pattern of history. The Mayor then declared the project open.

Nance Morrow, who has lived all her life in Robertson, told the audience about life here when she was young, before the railway came or there was electricity or cars and trucks; also, where the early buildings were located in the village and how many had to be moved to build the railway line.

Desmond Kennard gave an instructive talk on the various aspects we need to take into consideration when planning and putting together a history display. Hugh Bell, President of the Berrima District History Society, spoke about their Society, how their records could be accessed, and led a discussion on the way the material we gathered could be cared for in the History Society collections.

Roy Freere outlined the results of research he has done on the construction of concrete railway stations and the heritage significance of the Robertson Railway Station. He kindly photographed historical photos brought in on the day.

Thanks to Mike Riley, Principal of Robertson Public School, who lent some interesting framed photographs and a copy of the School Centenary Book. Special thanks to everyone else who helped.

We are interested to hear from members of REPS, or their friends who weren't able to be there on the day, and have stories to tell. Please get in touch with Helen Tranter (Phone: 4885-1394) or Roy Freere (Phone: 4885 1766).

— Helen Tranter

Caalang Creek Rehabilitation

Caalang Creek is an important feature of Robertson because it flows through the whole northern side of the village.

Last year, REPS obtained a Catchment Protection grant to enable adjacent landholders to produce a Rivercare Plan for Caalang Creek. Workshops and riverwalks were held and more are coming up. There are several problems to be solved but the creek, as yet, is not too degraded. An enlarged aerial photograph (1997) of Robertson has been purchased to help in drawing up this plan.

REPS members are helping with this and also with the project for the rehabilitation of Council land next to the creek. This project is receiving funds from the Council Environmental Levy and from Sydney Catchment Authority to provide trees, shrubs, tree-guards, weedmat etc.

Two work days have been held at the "Drainage Reserve" (can we have ideas for a better name, please?). A total of 150 plants have been planted in May Street and 250 at the end of Devonshire Road. We have been greatly assisted by Karen Elton of DLWC and by Sarah Dempster and Belinda Anderson, the Council's two bush regenerators.

Three other sites where work will be carried out are at North Street; Burrawang Street, downstream of the Caalong Street Bridge; and, eventually, at Main Street. This last site will be near a large stormwater detention basin being built to take the runoff from 39 houses to come in May Street, so we will have to work in with the timing for that.

All REPS members are welcome to take part in these projects. If you would like to know more, contact Helen Tranter (phone 4885-1394).

— Helen Tranter

The Robertson Rural Railway Project

A Not-for-Profit Community Initiative

In December 1998, Larry Whipper proposed that Wingecarribee Shire Council lease the Robertson Railway precinct from NSW Rail Estate for public use by the people of Robertson. In April 1999, Council agreed in principle to this proposal and in the course of 1999, Larry and Helen Tranter (REPS President) met with Rail Estate who appointed a leading Australian consultant on railway heritage, Desmond Kennard, to assist the Robertson community to develop a viable proposal.

In January 2000, Larry (now Councillor) Whipper convened a meeting of Robertson representatives to respond. A Steering Committee was formed which met regularly each fortnight throughout 2000 to develop a concept plan and lay sound foundations for a project likely to be acceptable to both Rail Estate and Council. A well-attended public meeting in the Community Centre on April 18th endorsed Steering Committee initiatives. However it soon became clear that the initial lead would have to be taken by the Robertson Environment Protection Society which was the only incorporated association in Robertson, with a large membership and a ten-year track record of conducting publicly funded projects.

Jan Giblin prepared a preliminary concept plan which was widely disseminated for public comment. Well attended working bees were held to tidy up the site. Rail Services Australia (RSA) moved in to upgrade the line with concrete sleepers and establish a graded batter on the southern side of the line topped by a dish drain. The Steering Committee liaised with RSA to rehabilitate the site after their work was done and received a donation of used sleepers and \$1000 to re-vegetate the slope opposite the station with shrubs and ground covers, including waratah, which will flower from October to January in a few years time.

On August 17th, the Committee met at Wingecarribee Shire Council to present a lease proposal to Rail Estate. Our submission was well received, however assurances were sought on several issues, including site security, public liability and sustainability. So the Committee set to work to secure public project funding and contributions from other sources to match "in kind" contributions (mainly volunteer labour) from the Robertson community. Invitations were sent to

all associations in the village to participate in the project planning and joint meetings were held with Robertson Business Association.

Rail Heritage offered verbal assurances of assistance with heritage-specific maintenance of the site. Applications were made to Mission Australia for Work-for-the-Dole assistance and to GROW (Growing Regional Opportunities for Work) for matching funds, applications timed to put labour, funds and lease all in place by the middle of the following year (2001) for an end of year project completion date. The costs of project development were met by generous donations from leading members of the community. Meanwhile, a grant of \$5000 was received under the Small Towns Kickstart Program (a NSW State and Regional Development initiative) to research the history of Robertson and the Unanderra to Moss Vale Railway preparatory to a public opening of the Railway Project in October 2001. The Committee met with the National Trust and Roy Freere prepared a proposal to register the station as a heritage building.

In December 2000, Rail Estate commenced lease discussions with Council and we expect the lease to be in place by the time the results of our funding applications are announced. Meanwhile, the Small Towns Kickstart Project is proceeding with a workshop on Saturday February 17th of all residents interested in Robertson history.

It seems likely, given widespread and generous support from the Robertson community, that we could soon have the resources in place to carry out a worthwhile community project which would transform the Robertson Railway precinct into a popular public facility, enhance the cultural life of the village, develop tourism-related business in the area and create permanent employment opportunities.

— David Tranter

Would you like to be part of this exciting new community project?

If so, turn to the next page for details and read on ...

What you can do for the Robertson Rural Railway Project

Railway Project Activities

From July to December this year, the Robertson Railway Precinct will be a hive of activity.

We expect to have a team of ten Work-for-the Dole labourers at our disposal, two days each week (Tuesdays and Wednesdays, or Wednesdays and Thursdays) to help us transform the railway station site into a beautiful "Village Common".

We expect the funds to be available to:

- Erect a security fence parallel to the railway line
- Back the security fence by plantings of flowering shrubs
- Establish a parking area between the security fence and the through road
- Protect the "Village Green" north of the through road with a vehicle barrier
- Build two shelter sheds adjacent to the Village Green
- Erect an outdoor seating alcove adjacent to the shelter sheds
- Link the shelter sheds with the station and Yarranga Street with a paved walkway
- Put in safe kerbing for tourist buses
- Repaint the "Fettler's Shed" in colours sympathetic to the Heritage Railway Station
- Renovate the interior of the Fettler's Shed to make a "Resource Centre"
- Install an exhibit of Robertson History in the Stationmaster's Office
- Establish an elevated garden at the station end of Yarranga Street
- Remove woody weeds from the site

Given broadly based support from REPS and other village organisations to help us supervise the team of labourers, the Railway Project can be completed by Christmas.

Need for Volunteers to Supervise the Work

Our aim is to have two village volunteer-supervisors on site each day of the 52 day (26 weeks x 2 days) work period.

This means:

- 104 volunteer supervisors, each for 1 day
- 52 volunteers, each for 2 days, OR
- 26 volunteers, each for 4 days, OR
- 13 volunteers, each for 8 days, OR
- 8 volunteers, each for 13 days, OR
- 4 volunteers each for 26 days,OR
- 2 volunteers each for 52 days (!!!!!)

Roster of Volunteers

If you can take part in this project, would you kindly take a look at your diary for the latter half of this year and let us know the week (or weeks) that you will be available:

Jun 19-21	Oct 2-4
Jun 26-28	Oct 9-11
Jul 31-Aug 2	Oct 16-18
Aug 7-9	Oct 23-25
Aug 14-16	Oct 30-Nov 1
Aug 21-23	Nov 6-8
Aug 28-30	Nov 13-15
Sep 4-6	Nov 20-22
Sep 11-13	Nov 27-29
Sep 18-20	Dec 4-6
Sep-25-27	Dec 11-13

**Contacts: David Tranter, Phone 4885 1394
Graham Carpenter, Phone 4885 1343**



News and Views

'News and Views' items are not necessarily endorsed by the REPS Committee, but please contribute to this forum if there is any event or issue you think will interest other members.

Bird Art Auction

Following the well-attended talk by Brendan Neilly, the new Warden at the Barren Grounds, members may be interested in the Bird Art Auction being held to raise funds for new education facilities to accommodate school groups at the Barren Grounds. Artists from all over the world have donated works including paintings and photographs. The auction will be accessible through the Birds Australia website

www.birdsaustralia.com.au from 1 April 2001. All the artworks will be on display and The Gallery, Darling Park from 19 – 24 April 2001.

Reducing Global Warming

A new booklet *Global Warming, Cool It!* on how to reduce greenhouse gases at home or on the road is available from the Commonwealth Government on 1300 130 606.

Or visit the website www.greenhouse.gov.au.

Carbon dioxide is one of the main greenhouse gases. A kilogram of carbon dioxide would fill a large family fridge. A tonne of carbon dioxide would fill a family home. An energy-efficient fridge may save seven tonnes of greenhouse gas over its life. Some of the information I gleaned from the *Global Warming Cool it!* — CG

For Browsers

Books, tapes CDs and websites of interest to REPS members. Read, heard or browsed anything interesting lately? Let us know.

Hearts & Minds

"Australians today feel far more keenly about the environment than they did thirty, twenty or even ten years ago - and this growing concern is largely because of the information and ideas they have received from a variety of sources. Literature and the other arts have also had an important role in forging our beliefs, and here for the first time this link between the creative arts and green consciousness is examined closely."

This is from the Preface of *Hearts and Minds*. This book examines Australian fiction, non-fiction, illustrated books, magazines, films, plays, songs, poetry and children's books.

Each chapter catalogues how many writers feel about the destruction of our ecology and what should be done. Authors include Judith Wright, Peter Garrett, Patrick White, Thea Astely, Tim Flannery, Dorothy Hewett and hundreds more. It discusses *Australian Geographic*, *Mad Max*, *Storm Boy* as well as classics such as *Poor Fellow My Country* and *A Million Wild Acres*.

A dense, 400 page paperback, I am looking forward to reading this one on my next holidays.

Hearts & Minds by Michael Pollack and Margaret McNabb. Hale & Ironmonger, Sydney 2000, \$34.95 — CG

Editor's Note

As the new editor I bring to the task enthusiasm and interest, but few contacts. I will be relying heavily on members for contributions, leads to contributors, suggestions for articles to publish, and illustrations. With the support of members and the committee I hope to keep up the high standard set by Steve Douglas and Alan Stiles.

Please send your contributions to: The Editor Eurcyphia, c/o REPS, PO Box 45, Robertson NSW 2577

— Christine Godden



Contact REPS

All who are interested in 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,
PO Box 45, Robertson
NSW 2577.
Phone (Secretary) 4885 1394