

STEP Inc. Newsletter

Community Based Environmental Conservation Since 1978. No. 84 June 1997

COMING EVENTS

25th June, 1997 *Urban Runoff in the Lane Cove River Valley -- what is it? where is it coming from? and why does it matter?*

A talk by **Dr. Steve Riley** on an issue which is vital to the welfare of our local bushland. All of the waste and rubbish that is on our streets is washed away, but where to? Unfortunately much of it in Ku-ring-gai, Ryde and Lane Cove areas ends up in the Lane Cove River, via our bushland. We now know that this pollution is much more than a visual problem -- the chemicals and nutrients directly affect the quality of our bushland and of the Lane Cove River. Given the amount of dog excrement hitting our streets, it is no wonder that swimming in the Lane Cove River is not recommended.

Dr. Riley is an Associate Professor in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, University of Western Sydney. He is an expert on hydrology and has spent more than a decade studying the Lane Cove River Valley and issues essential to its management, such as erosion and siltation, chemical pollution and weed invasion.

As urban development encroaches further onto our bushland, an understanding of these issues is vital.

The talk will commence at 8.00 pm on Wednesday 25 June, 1997, at the St. Andrews Uniting Church Hall, corner of Vernon St. and Chisholm St., South Turramurra.

14th August, 1997. A talk by **Aden Ridgway** from the NSW Aboriginal Land Council. We are joining with Ku-ring-gai Bushland and Environment Society for this event, which will commence at 8.00 pm at the Council Library Meeting Room at Gordon.

Look for the notices at your local shopping centre and in the local papers closer to the date.

INCORPORATION OF COUNCIL BUSHLAND INTO NATIONAL PARK

In our last Newsletter we listed some of the implications of the move to incorporate the bushland currently under Council control into the National Park system.

The debate is starting to gather momentum, but as usual it takes time for members of the community to focus on matters of this kind, due to the normal pressures of everyday life.

Further aspects which have been raised in discussion are:

- * What is to happen with the large number of volunteer bush regeneration groups, which are doing such excellent work under Council's umbrella and with Council support?
- * What is to happen with the expertise and experience of bushland management built up by Council staff?
- * How will the NPWS build up its management capabilities to cope

with the additional areas?

There seems to be general agreement that Council's capabilities in this respect, developed over the last decade is far superior to NPWS's for obvious reasons.

* This raises the question of whether Councils should retain this capability and NPWS outsource the work to the respective Councils?

* The question of financial responsibility follows closely on the above considerations.

The community needs to be vigilant to ensure that no financial duck-shoving between local Government and State Government occurs, which would reflect adversely on resources applied to bushland management.

These questions and potential problems should not be taken as arguments against the incorporation of bushland into National Park under the single authority of NPWS. The long term interests of our urban bushland as an asset to the community into the future, and to

maintain its intrinsic values will still be best served by incorporation into National Park.

But problems must be addressed and resolved to ensure a satisfactory outcome.



MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

As previously foreshadowed we will be conducting a membership drive via letterbox drops.

If you inadvertently receive our leaflet through your letterbox, please pass it on to someone you know, who may like to join.

WILDLIFE WATCH

Ku-ring-gai Council initiated the Wildlife Watch program in 1993, reviewed and modified it in 1996. It is designed to record fauna observations, locations and habitat in the Ku-ring-gai Municipal area. Anyone interested in wildlife can participate by collecting data. In turn Wildlife Watch provides community groups and residents with useful information. The data collected also helps Council in its management of the bushland. The Wildlife Watch database is compatible with the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service *Atlas of NSW Wildlife*. Therefore data can be



interchanged between both systems. The information gathered is also available to other wildlife management agencies and interested parties.

Accurate records over time are necessary for the proper management of fauna habitat, especially that of rare or endangered species. Even records of common species, native or introduced can be useful in assessing the status of our local ecosystem.

For more information contact the Council Bushland Technical Officer on 9498 0844.

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WALLALONG BUSHCARE

The "Wallalong Weeders" bushcare group, in conjunction with Ku-ring-gai Council, has obtained a grant for storm water amelioration and bushland restoration from the

Lane Cove Catchment Management Committee.

The group of volunteers is working along Congham Creek and the fire trail to Gloucester Ave. West Pymble.

As a first step two sediment and gross pollution traps have been constructed on Wallalong Cres. opposite Diana Ave.

Two days were spent, under the supervision of Council's Bushcare Supervisor, planting over 200 native plants, all local species donated by the Council nursery.

The group normally meets on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday morning of each month, and would welcome new volunteers. They can be contacted through Council's Bushcare Officer (9983 1915).

As part of the project West Pymble Public School pupils will be asked to monitor the creek for pollution, lizards, frogs and birds, and may also use the area for School projects.

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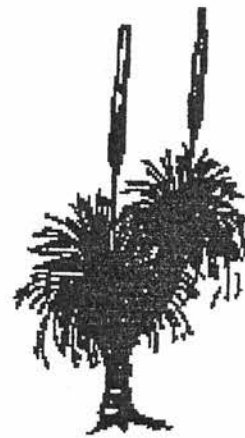
NEWSLETTER EDITOR

In the process of preparing for the handover to the new committee at the Annual General Meeting in October, 1997, we are looking for a new editor for our Newsletter.

We believe that putting out a Newsletter every second month, as well as preparing a column for the Ku-ring-gai Observer at monthly intervals, now requires a person of more journalistic experience and skill than the current team has been able to bring to the task.

We also believe that there is now an opportunity to upgrade the format and standard of the Newsletter, to ensure that we provide up to date and interesting articles for our readers. Consequently we would like to hear from any member, who would like to undertake the task. A retired person with press experience would find it a relatively simple task. Please contact Bruno (9449 1985).

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DIARY DATES

- # June 25 Talk by Steve Riley
- # June 13 to 29 Exhibition of paintings by Yvonne Langshaw
- # July 18 & 19 The Paddy Pallin Conference "National Parks: New Visions for a New Century" (NCC 9247 4206)
- # August 14 Talk by Aidan Ridgeway from the NSW Aboriginal Land Council.
- # August 23 & 24 Festival of Wildflowers at the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden.
- # September 14 Walk in the Muogamarra Nature Reserve.
- # September 21 Community Fair at Bicentennial Park.
- # October 15 STEP Annual General Meeting and talk on biodiversity in Ku-ring-gai.

MUOGAMARRA NATURE RESERVE

Muogamarra Nature Reserve is a uniquely beautiful, pristine bushland Reserve rich in Aboriginal and European history.

It boasts magnificent fauna and flora, but is only open to visitors for a limited period each year. There are various walks graded from Easy to Hard in the Reserve, with panoramic views.

STEP has picked September 14 for its walk, which should catch the wildflowers at their best.

We will probably take the Lloyds Trig Walk, which is Easy/Medium, but more details will be published in the next Newsletter.

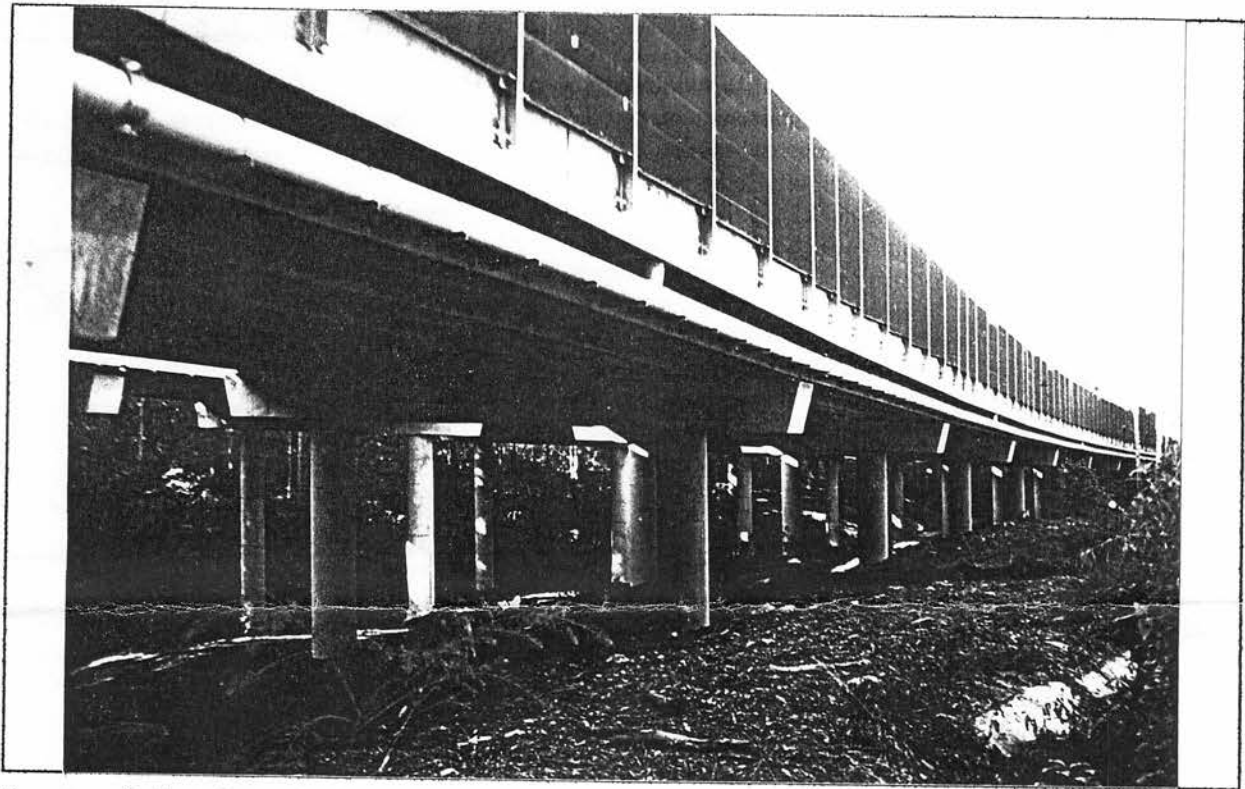


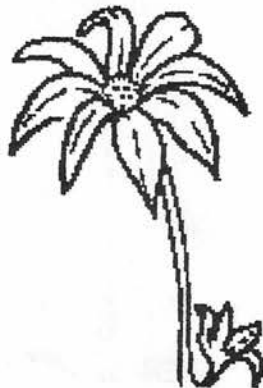
Image of the despoliation of the erstwhile tall forest in the Devlin's Creek valley, wrought by "progress" in the form of the M2 Motorway.

WALK IN THE DEVLIN'S CREEK VALLEY

Our autumn bushwalk on Sunday, 4th May, took us into the Devlin's Creek area of Beecroft, which was until recently regarded as having some of the best remnant tall forest in the North Metropolitan area. Jeni Lewis, a Beecroft bush regenerator and president of the Coalition of Transport Action Groups guided us on our walk starting from Welham St. The first leg led to the end of Austral Ave. where Sheila Woods, leader of a Bushcare group, showed us the results of their regeneration work, which was very impressive. Then Jeni led us up the creek, under the new M2 Motorway viaduct to the back of Lynbrae Ave. This served to show the destruction caused by the Motorway cutting a wide swathe through the previously magnificent stand of tall eucalypt forest. She showed the attempts being made to establish some vegetation in the shadow of the overhead structures. Jeni and her husband had spent years working in

the bushland, where the stark concrete structures have replaced the natural vegetation, a considerable portion of their labours destroyed. She had spent the last few years trying to defend the bushland against despoliation, unfortunately in vain. What we saw was a real eye opener and should strengthen the resolve to oppose such destructive developments.

At the end of the walk we enjoyed a cup of tea at the Scout Hut to finish off the afternoon. We are very grateful to Jeni and Sheila for their instructive commentary.



MAURITANIA

About thirty people attended the talk by John Martyn on 30th April. John showed us the rapidly assembled slides from his trip to Mauritania. He had only just received them back from the processors, but used them to good advantage to illustrate the points of interest which he wanted to get across to his audience.

With his usual scientific insight, John concentrated on showing the similarities in the geographic location of Mauritania, being roughly symmetrical with the Northwest of Western Australia, with the equator as the axis (except for longitudinal difference).

This implies similarity in weather patterns, borne out in reality, but serves to show the contrast in land use between Mauritania and the Australian counterpart. It also shows the results of differing land use over a few centuries of human habitation, acting as a warning. We thank John for his enthusiastic and interesting presentation.

EARTH'S PET ROCK

No, we are not talking about an executive toy.

The current edition of *Nature* carries a report from three reputable astronomers that, apart from the moon, Earth is dragging a 5-kilometer-wide rock around with it. This *Pet Rock* is not at all like an ordinary asteroid, but follows Earth around the Sun in a complicated, horseshoe-shaped orbit.

In 1772 French mathematician Joseph-Louis Lagrange showed that a planet, such as Earth, orbiting the sun is flanked by two points in space where a third object, like an asteroid, can sit comfortably in a stable orbit. These points lie a sixth of an orbit behind and a sixth of an orbit ahead on a planet's orbital path.

Much astronomical searching showed that Jupiter's Lagrange points swarmed with such asteroids. But nobody had found any on Earth's orbit, until Paul Wiegert, Kimmo Inmanen and Seppo Mikkola analysed the path of a seemingly unremarkable asteroid first spotted 11 years ago.

They found that this rock follows a circuit which takes it around one Lagrange point, then the long way around Earth's orbit to the other Lagrange point, around it and back again, repeating the cycle every 385 years.

Astronomers are delighted that this "mathematical abstraction" is now shown to be reflected in reality.

The complication is that it also seems to perform some fancy loops apart from the horseshoe path.

SENDER: STEP Inc
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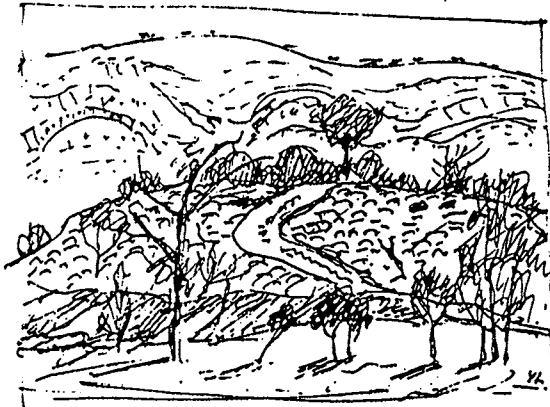
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PHIL HELMORE & HELEN WORTHAM

19 VERNON ST

TURRAMURRA 2074



LOOKOUT HILL - WEST MACDONNELL
NATIONAL PARK.

EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS
including recent works from
Central Australia
by
Yvonne Langshaw

Opening and champagne reception
at the Private Gallery
563 South Dowling Street
Surry Hills (9332 3223)

7 to 9 pm Friday 13 June, 1997.

Exhibition continues until 29 June
hours 11am to 5pm, 7 days

EVERYONE WELCOME