



# STEP Inc. Newsletter

Community Based Environmental Conservation Since 1978. No.103 September 2000

## COMING EVENTS

**REMINDER -- Spring Bush Walk** -- Sunday 10th September, 2000, at 12.45pm for a 1.00pm start. From Forest Way turn into Morgan Rd., proceed for approx 1.2km then turn left into side road, which immediately divides. Take the right fork at the sign "Aberlene Stud" and drive a short distance to the locked gate. Bill Jones, just back from the wilds of Alaska, will lead the way along the "Slippery Dip" Walk. Good display of local wildflowers and you might hear Bill's stories Alaskan wilflowers.

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** -- STEP will hold its Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 18th October, 2000, at 8.00pm at St. Andrews Uniting Church Hall at the corner of Chisholm St. and Vernon St.. The formal proceedings will be kept as short as possible and will be followed by a talk, speaker and topic to be advised in the October Newsletter.

**MAP LAUNCH** -- The map of the walking tracks of the bushland of the Lane Cove Valley will be launched on Thursday 9th November, 2000, at Jenkins Hall in the Lane Cove National Park, Fullers Bridge.

The Committee has decided to make a special offer to members for the map at wholesale price prior to Christmas (or before 31/12/00) in conjunction with the launch. Membership renewal forms together with invitations to the launch will go out to all current members with the October Newsletter, at which time we will also advise regarding the format for the event and the official guest to perform the launch.

**WEEDBUSTERS WEEK** -- October 8th to 15th.

A fun national event that highlights the multi billion dollar impact of weeds on primary industries, the environment and human health. Information can be obtained from:

- Conservation Volunteers phone 1800 899 444 or
- email: [weedbusterweek@majordomo.nre.vic.gov.au](mailto:weedbusterweek@majordomo.nre.vic.gov.au) or
- Website: [www.weedbusterweek.info.au](http://www.weedbusterweek.info.au)

### New Map

The new map was on display for the first time at our stand at the Kuring-gai Wildflower Gardens last weekend during the Festival of Wildflowers.

It created a lot of interest from visitors and confirmed our view that it will find a ready market among bushwalkers, bushcare groups and casual bush lovers.

It is in full colour and carries photographs of typical scenery to be observed, as well as notes relating to specific features along the various tracks.

The tracks have all been verified by John Martyn and his band of volunteers and have been superimposed on the landform data provided by the Land Information Centre.

It is the most up to date and reliable information about the bushland in the Lane Cove Valley that is

available.

It now covers both the upper and the lower parts of the valley, from the Lane Cove River's source to the lower reaches near Hunters Hill and Linley Point where the Lane Cove tidal inlet merges with the larger waters of the Parramatta River.



### 7. Whale Rock

The eye-like feature on this well known sandstone outcrop has resulted from differential weathering of hard and soft concentric bands of iron oxide known as liesegang rings.

### Weedbusters

The weedbusters week is intended to be a fun way of raising national awareness of the costly impacts on primary industries and on the environment, which in turn can affect human health.

Government, industry, private and community organisations are working together to promote this awareness and to promote control activities.

In the past groups such as schools, landcare, scouts and guides, nurseries, Green Corps, coastcare, businesses and science societies have participated.

Individuals can also help in various ways.

This year's theme is "**don't hesitate, weeds won't wait**". NSW coordinator is Bob Trounce at email:

[bob.trounce@agric.nsw.gov.au](mailto:bob.trounce@agric.nsw.gov.au) or phone (02) 6391 3156.

The following is a detail from the new map

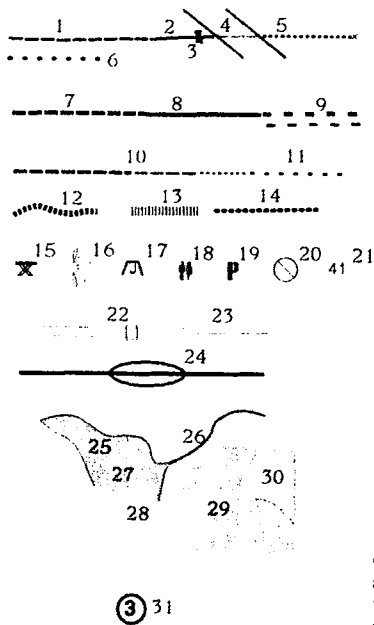
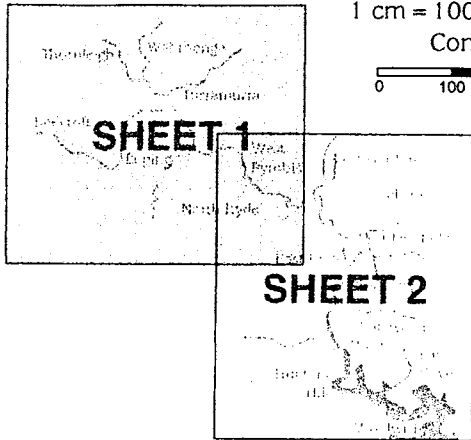
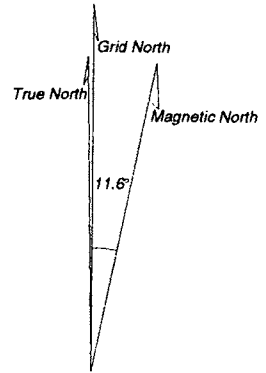
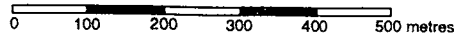
# LANE COVE VALLEY WALKING TRACKS

## Sheet 1. Upper Lane Cove Valley

SCALE 1:10,000

1 cm = 100 m. Grid squares are 1 km.

Contour interval is 4 m.



### LEGEND

1. Regular walking track, well used and in good condition at the time of compilation\*
2. Regular walking track with sealed surface, cycleway
3. Gate or barrier
4. Track passes beneath road bridge or overpass
5. Track in poor condition, eroded, overgrown, excessively steep and slippery, narrow or petering out
6. Route follows road or grassed area
7. Wide track or firetrail
8. Sealed firetrail, cycleway
9. Tracks closed or abandoned
10. Great North Walk
11. Great North Walk follows road or grassed area
12. Steps
13. Boardwalk, low-level footbridge
14. Historic road
15. Picnic spot
16. Scenic spot or viewpoint
17. Playground
18. Toilets
19. Off-road parking
20. No access at track head
21. Track starts next to house No.
22. Main powerline with pylon
23. Local powerline
24. Railway station
25. Pool, broadwater, inlet, tidal reach\*\*
26. Watercourse, creek, stream
27. Mangroves & saltmarsh
28. Bushland, including both public and private land\*\*\*
29. National Park bushland
30. Grassed or parkland areas, ovals, sports fields
31. Location of photo

\*Although all possible care has been taken in showing tracks on these maps, their condition may change with time and their representation is not an ongoing guarantee of access or safety.

\*\*Local advice should be sought before swimming. Most freshwater pools are polluted and unsafe.

\*\*\*The depiction of bushland areas on this map is not a guarantee of access or right of way, please stay on the tracks. Taking shortcuts can damage native vegetation, spread weeds and lead to erosion.

### IMPORTANT

THIS MAP IS PRODUCED ON THE AUSTRALIAN GEODETIC DATUM (AGD)

Your Satellite derived values are on WGS84 and could be up to 100m in error

For all practical purpose WGS84 and GDA94 (Geocentric Datum of Australia) are the same

#### DATUM CONVERSIONS (± 15 METRES)

| To convert                  | GDA94 to AGD66          | AGD66 to GDA94          |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Latitude (numerical value)  | Increase by 5.6 seconds | Decrease by 5.6 seconds |
| Longitude (numerical value) | Decrease by 4.2 seconds | Increase by 4.2 seconds |
| Northing                    | Decrease by 190 metres  | Increase by 190 metres  |
| Easting                     | Decrease by 105 metres  | Increase by 105 metres  |

Heights are based on Australian Height Datum (AHD), a mean sea level datum - To obtain AHD height, decrease WGS84 satellite derived height by 25 metres - To obtain WGS84 satellite height, increase AHD height from this map by 25 metres

## Mould City

Martyn Robinson is a naturalist at the Australian Museum, and his experiences of living in a damp bushy part of Sydney, like our own area, form the subject of a fascinating article by Stephanie Pain in *New Scientist* of July 29th. If you think your house is exceptionally prone to mould, but you don't like using chemicals, take heart. Martyn Robinson's solution is slugs, lots of them, at least in his bathroom.

They contentedly graze away on the mould of tile grouting and silicone strips in the shower recess and return to rest (do slugs sleep?) in a specially placed ceramic pot during the day.

The familiar leopard slug is good, but tends towards wanderlust. The little striped ones are best.

Most cockroaches don't make it past a phalanx of leaf-tailed geckoes in the Robinsons' house. While in this writer's experience the geckoes may leave their droppings in unfortunate places, apparently they love roaches. If any get through there are skinks (lounge lizards) behind the Robinsons' lounge suite to finish them off.

Then there is our worst household nightmare -- termites.

Well, did you know those little black ants that come into the kitchen at night love termites. They follow their burrows down into the nest to finish off both termites and eggs. However, we feel you would need an unusually strong faith in nature to rely on the ants alone when it comes to a creature as destructive as the termite.

Other insect pests provided the Robinsons with some interesting observations on local ecology. Spiders, especially golden orbs, are encouraged, trapping all sorts of pests, especially mosquitoes, which are also caught by frogs and fish in garden ponds.

But did you know that the larvae of those large mosquitoes, *Toxorhynchites*, with iridescent bodies and wings, actually eat the

larvae of other mosquitoes.

Presumably one has to find a way to stop the frogs and fish eating the *Toxorhynchites*.



Rainforest, Browns Field

## Bats in the Bushland Ecology

Nancy Pallin recently gave a STEP audience an interesting update about the role of bats in the bushland ecology.

Nancy is the author of an article published in *Ecological Management and Restoration* Vol 1, No 1., which traces the history of the Gordon Bat Colony and the bushland restoration project undertaken over the last fifteen years.

The talk was particularly relevant since the Melbourne Botanic Gardens initiated a bat culling project to try to alleviate the local damage being caused by Flying Foxes.

Nancy referred to recent research which indicated that the Grey-headed Flying Fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*) population along the East coast of Australia is actually a single genetic group which migrates and moves in synchronisation with the flowering cycles of various indigenous flora.

The latter may in turn depend on pollination by the bats. This has led naturalists to call for the suspension of the culling programme while further studies are conducted to gain better information about the role of bats in the

ecology.

Local damage may be the price for maintaining the integrity of native vegetation on a larger scale.

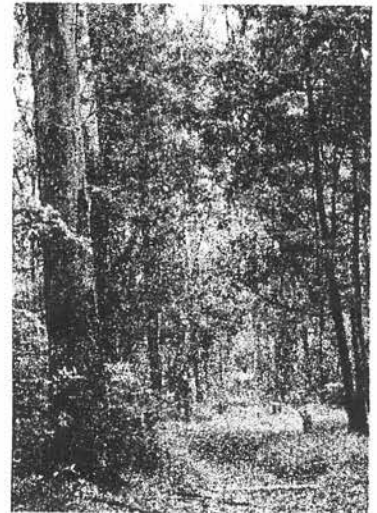
Camp site damage may be exacerbated due to the fact that they are concentrated in a small area because of habitat clearing. Under those circumstances insufficient trees are available for the bats to move about in their roost area thus not allowing trees to recuperate.

Flying Foxes may travel up to 100km in a night in search of food which they detect with their highly developed senses of smell and sight. They use more than twenty calls for communication, each producing a corresponding behavioural response.

The smell usually associated with bat roosts result from three sources: droppings, secretions from the males' scapular glands during mating and the individual odour which is used by the mother to identify her young.

Flying Fox populations have declined as a result of habitat clearing for agriculture and housing. A recent survey of the Grey-headed Flying Fox suggested that numbers have declined by one third over the last nine years.

Dwindling native food sources bring the animals into conflict with fruit growers, with unfortunate consequences for the growers and the animals.



6. Blue Gum High Forest, Sheldon Forest  
Fertile, shale-based soils support a remnant of tall open forest featuring Sydney blue gum and blackbutt, and numerous smaller plant species that are otherwise uncommon in the catchment.

The four most common flying foxes in Australia are the Little Red, the Grey-headed, the Black and the Spectacled Flying Foxes. Researchers are concerned about the reduction in numbers of the Spectacled Flying Fox in North Queensland as well as of the Grey-headed Flying Fox. They point out that flying foxes are as endangered as Koalas, which receive a great deal more attention and conservation efforts.



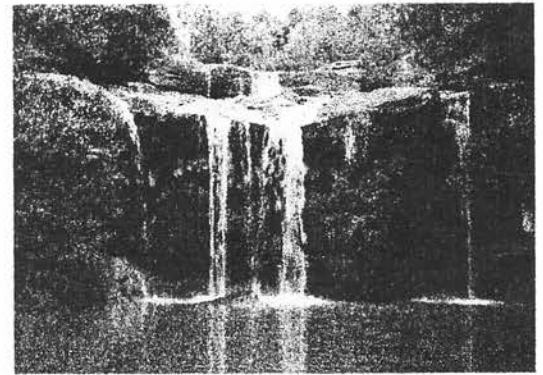
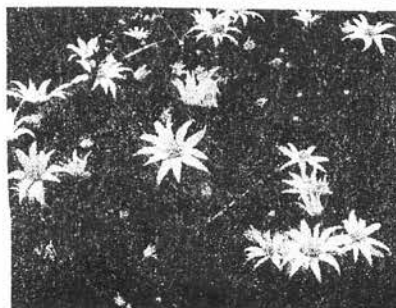
**Potholes in creek bed on STEP Track**

**Additions to National Park in the Lane Cove Valley**

Although STEP was not involved in the negotiations between the Greens and the Government for the inclusion of a small patch of bushland at Browns Waterhole STEP has welcomed this addition. It has been reported that NPWS is now negotiating with Ryde Council for the inclusion of the Barriwerri Reserve, bounded by Browns Waterhole, Terry's Creek and the motorway, and other small portions of bushland in that vicinity which are currently under Ryde Council's control. STEP would also welcome such additions. These additions will not be shown as National Park on the new map since their status still remains as Council Reserve until gazetted otherwise, which will be after the planned map publication date.

**SPECIAL TRIBUTE To Brian Darragh, 1935-1999**

In 1978 in Brian's front room STEP was born. The fore-runner to STEP was the South Turramurra Natural Bushland Conservation Society, formed in 1971 to fight Ku-ring-gai Council's plans for a garbage tip in the Lane Cove Valley between the ends of Canoan Rd. and Cove St. The STNBCS, of which Brian was a very active member, was an energetic bunch of people who managed to defeat the Council's plans. But, as conservationists have learnt, such destructive plans never seem to go away completely. They tend to 'morph' and turn up again at a later date in another reincarnation. In this case the tip plan was replaced by a plan for a complex of community halls, sports ovals and courts. But things really got serious in 1978, when the netball court proposal was launched. The same group of people, including Brian, plus others, assembled to form South Turramurra Environment Protection, which was later incorporated as STEP Inc. \*\*\*\*\*  
**To commemorate Brian's life and legacy a special tree planting ceremony will be held on Sunday 8th October at 2.00pm on the Kingsford Ave. Bushcare Site.** All members of STEP are invited to attend. For more information please contact Margaret Booth (phone 9449 3746)



**13. Blaxland's Waterfall**  
 Also known as Buckham Falls, this beautiful waterfall is difficult to reach since the construction of the M2. It has also suffered from repeated stormwater pollution from the industrial and residential catchment of Shrimpton's Creek

**The Southern Ocean and Climate Change**

Recently reported work by Dr. Matthew England and Dr. Stephen Rintoul indicates that a sudden warming of a wide mass of water circling the globe just north of the Antarctic Circumpolar Current is taking place. This mass of water is moving from west to east and undergoes a downward spiral motion due to wind effect and global rotation. At the same time movement of the ocean waters is complicated by the relationship between salinity and temperature. The currents and upwellings in the Southern ocean affect the productivity and hence the fisheries. England and Rintoul are searching for an explanation of the warming in order to improve the understanding of ocean behaviour and its impact on climate. They are quoted as saying at a recent conference that "... ocean behaviour can change quickly. Cold salty water might sink in an ocean for thousands of years, then, suddenly, it stops sinking with possibly drastic effects on global climate and nearby land masses.....Ordinarily we would expect more evaporation from this warmer water, which could mean more rain for Australia, but.....this extra energy might translate into more wind,.....or ... it could produce more upwelling of cold dense water--.....or a further sea surface temperature rise due to some other effect". (Engineering World, August/September edition)