

THE BUSHLAND BULLETIN[©]



No. 52, SPRING/SUMMER 2006.

**A publication of the Bankstown Bushland Society Incorporated
Reg. No. Y15576-12**

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The Editorial Committee, PO Box 210 Panania NSW 2213 | Telephone: 9785 2374

PRESIDENTS REPORT 2005-2006

By Pat Bell

The Bushland Society's efforts and work this year have been overshadowed by the passing in June of our friend and colleague, Irene Jones, who also worked tirelessly as Treasurer (see Bushland Bulletin No. 51 for tributes, etc.).

We continue to miss Irene and her good nature, tenacity, etc. however, memories of her sustain us to carry on in difficult circumstances. Sometimes we feel that the society's work is taken for granted in Bankstown. It is puzzling why the environment doesn't seem to be an important issue in this local government area when it is one of the top issues as far as Australians are concerned according to recent polls. It is especially hard to understand when Bankstown bushland has some of the most interesting and diverse vegetation in the Sydney basin and deserves to be appreciated and valued more than it is.

The Society has three Grants still operating at present although the Grant for Norfolk Reserve (Federal Government) is almost completed.

The other Grants still in operation are:

Bush regeneration in the Sydney Turpentine Ironbark forest at The Crest and Lansdowne, a second Grant we received for this particular community so as to maintain the good results we achieved with the original Grant.

It has been very satisfying to see how these two reserves have

responded so magnificently to the TLC they have received from the paid team and the small band of volunteers.

Dumping has been a big problem at both of these sites. We asked Council with the support of Tony Stewart, Member for Bankstown, to consider fencing part of The Crest to try to stop some of this dumping. We have recently been advised that Council has agreed to this request.

The other Grant still in operation is the rehabilitation work on Sandstone-Shale Transition Forest remnants along the Georges River. This project is also achieving great results for East Hills Park, Lambeth Park, Smith Park, Monash Reserve and Padstow Park.

During the year we also received a water testing kit from Landcare and sponsored by Dilmah Tea. So far because of the events which

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and Bush Regeneration Dates**

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have unfolded this year, we have been unable to arrange a day for the community to take part in making use of this kit, to learn how to use it, etc. it is our intention to invite members and the public to Milperra Wetlands for this purpose.

The Society is very disappointed with Council's treatment of some of its open space. In particular, it's decision to permit the relocation of the new SES headquarters to Manuka Reserve and then to vilify those who objected. Council should not be taking away open space from residents of Bankstown.

We also abhor Council's attitude to large trees in public areas, installing picnic tables then eliminating the trees that overhang them.

Another open space issue which has re-emerged after approximately 20 years is a proposed development in Milperra on the Georges River—the Riverlands Golf Course. The development of this site will destroy a significant part of the Georges River open space corridor, destroying important wetland and remnant bushland habitats, the loss of over 1,000 site-indigenous trees, the alienation of Deepwater Park by a major road intrusion.

It seems ludicrous that the State Government/Councils along the river, etc. have been working for many years, with some success, to clean up the Georges River only to contemplate this mega-development which will definitely increase pollution of the Georges River. I urge all members to become involved in

this important issue as it will affect lots more Bankstown residents than just the Milperra community which is, on the whole, very opposed to what is proposed.

Now, some well deserved thanks.

First and foremost to Colin, who writes up the Grant applications, oversees the projects and produces the reports on completion. A great deal of time, effort and knowledge goes into these tasks always professionally done and always unpaid. Congratulations to Colin also for this year having a rare plant he discovered in the Blue Mountains in 1982 named after him—*Haloragodendron gibsonii*.

To Darryl who edits the Bulletin, for his computer and photographic skills, his knowledge of fauna, his contribution to volunteer bush regeneration and, last but not least, providing the tea and biscuits at our meetings.

The Society also owes a big debt to John Gibson who stepped into the void when Irene passed away. John has made sure that our professional bush regeneration team have been paid and that other financial matters have been looked after. Having received assistance from a number of people we have been able to steady the ship financially. In particular, John Fowler has been of enormous help to us in balancing our books. He has been a godsend and we can't thank him enough.

SOCIETY'S NEW GRANT

Work is well underway on our new grant from the New South Wales Environmental Trust. The title of this grant is Repair of Cumberland Plain Woodland Ecotones in Lower Prospect Creek Catchment. It is a 3 year grant for \$63,701 which will enable us to continue rehabilitation work at the turpentine forest remnants at Lansdowne and The Crest and expand our activities to include a number of new woodland remnants such as Lot 5 at Riverlands Golf Course and Lake Gillawarna.

With the assistance of Bankstown Council and Earth Repair chainsaw operators we recently attacked a dense but localised privet infestation at Lot 5, a site we campaigned successfully to preserve in the early 1990's. We have also spent a day working in support of the Lansdowne Bushcare Group at the *Pimelea spicata* site near Lucinda Avenue at Georges Hall.

At the north end of Lansdowne we have been concentrating on African Love Grass eradication and at The Crest we are focussed on the removal of Ehrharta and Bridal Creeper in the habitat of the only population of *Typhonium brownie* known in the Sydney region.

Our most recent effort was at Lake Gillawarna where we attacked a corner of African Love Grass and nipped an infestation of privet in the bud. We look forward to continuing results with this grant well into 2007.

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ABOUT THE BUSH

PROPOSED ROUNDABOUT THREATENS ORCHID HOT-SPOT

By Colin Gibson

The proposed widening of Henry Lawson Drive in the vicinity of Webster Street at Milperra for the creation of a roundabout could have disastrous consequences for local biodiversity. Members of our group have been studying the vegetation in this vicinity for the past twenty years, and have accumulated a detailed knowledge of the species present that cannot be gained by an ecological consultant from a single, or even a few inspections, however qualified and competent they might be.

The area in question, particularly the vegetation lining Henry Lawson Drive from the corner of Webster Street back to the reedland near the Kelso Creek outflow, is truly one of Bankstown's biological hot-spots. It is part of a classified endangered habitat and is highly rich in species. For instance, six species of Greenhood Orchids (*Pterostylis* spp.) have been collected in this small strip of vegetation at Webster Street, among them *P. erecta*, for which this is one of only two very small Bankstown populations. In fact there are no other listings for this species in Western Sydney. (See Rare Bushland Plants of Western Sydney, James et al 1999). *P. curta* also occurs here, another very rare orchid in Bankstown, as well as *P. longifolia*, which is also rare locally. We know of no other locations anywhere there is such a concentration of Greenhood Orchids. Other orchids that has been collected here that are uncommon or rare in Western Sydney include

Acianthus pusillus, *Caladenia* sp. aff. *Catenata* and *Chiloglottis* sp.

Another rare plant that has been collected from the vicinity of Webster Street is an undescribed species of *Dianella*, given the manuscript name *D. sp. aff. caerulea* 'star flowers' Milperra, by Geoff Carr of Ecology Australia, based in Melbourne, who is undertaking revision of the genus. To date this plant has not been observed anywhere else and can be considered to be endemic to Bankstown.

The biological case for not destroying any of the vegetation adjacent Webster Street is strong. Even a relatively small strip of destroyed vegetation would be disastrous, given that so little of the original remains in the area and that endemic ecology cannot be re-created. For this reason the Society has urged a re-appraisal of the current plan to re-align Henry Lawson drive. We have suggested two possible alternatives: to either locate the roundabout at the Maxwell Avenue intersection, or if it must be installed at Webster Street, to confine all widening of Henry Lawson Drive to the opposite side, i.e., to the Kelso side of the road.

We received responses from Council and from then RTA, letters dated 15th and 16th May respectively. Council informed us that they had proposed a number of measures regarding the road widening which if instigated would eliminate the need to damage any bushland.

The RTA stated that there were in fact no plans to widen Henry Lawson Drive near Webster Street in the immediate future, and that our concerns will be taken into account before any further roadwork is considered for the area.

Overall, these responses are encouraging. If the roadworks are necessary they should be able to be completed without adversely affecting the bush. We will keep an eye out for future developments with regard to this issue.

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THE NANDA DEVI (WORLD EXPEDITIONS) TRIP, 4-26/10/2005

by Jean Klovdahl

Leader—Sue Fear: Members—Peter Blackband, Pam Campbell, Geoff Kelly, Owen Kimberley, Jeanne Klovdahl, Rosemary MacDougal, Cath Mullane, Michelle Powell, Jan Roberts, Marianne Watt.

India—what can I say about it. A few people I've talked to have asked how could it be summarised in a short statement. Sarah MacDonald, in her recent book 'Holy Cow', put it this way: "For anything you say, the opposite is also true. It's rich and poor, spiritual and material, cruel and kind, angry but peaceful, ugly and beautiful. It's all the extremes. India defies understanding... [it's] loud, intrusive [and] confronting" (pp. 110 & 168). I could only add that from the moment of arrival it's an assault on the senses—smorgasbord of sights, sounds and smells. Extreme poverty is evident everywhere, particularly in such places as roadways and train stations. Cattle and scrawny dogs wander at will, monkeys have free run of the streets and footpaths, human activity never ceases traffic is constant and make-do technology has to be seen to be believed. As someone commented after the trip, "You can't come back from India unchanged".

Our arrival at the Gandhi International airport on the evening of 4th October gave us a foretaste of impressions to come. The terminal was anything but sophisticated, especially compared to the one in Singapore. Its general appearance was somewhat down in the heels, procedures were inefficient and

delays frustrating. We had been warned: the pre-travel literature clearly stated, "Bring your sense of humour and leave your watch at home!"

We were put up in an elegant hotel, though 'Nikko' - right in Delhi's central Connaught Place. The next day an amiable guide named Sunil took the group on a tour of New and Old Delhi: Parliament House and other seat of Government buildings, India Gate (commemorating India's involvement in World War I). Purana Qila (old fort), Raj Ghat (memorial flame to Mahatma Gandhi), Jama Masjid (largest mosque in India), and finally an unannounced stop at a shop of Kahmir carpets—the latter not a sensible choice for a group of trekkers! That evening we were transferred to the Old Delhi train station—an experience in itself—were we took an overnight sleeper to Kathgodam (269kms from Delhi). We learned the next morning that a Canadian traveller in the next compartment had had his case stolen during the few minutes that he went to the loo.

By 6th October we were on our way to Almora by bus, some 86kms from Kathgodam. During the stops in villages along the way we observed, close up, goat carcasses hanging in butchers' shops, dozing cattle generally getting in the way of things, trades people stooped in cramped quarters, children going to school, all scrubbed up and impeccably dressed. When we reached Almora, some signs of affluence, such as electrical equipment in the shops, were in evidence. Compared to Australia,

there was a noticeable absence of pubs! Roadways by this time were becoming quite precipitous, and Peter, who was peering sideways out of the bus window, kept muttering "Struth!". The next day we went on to Munsiyari (223kms from Almora). The starting point of the trek. Accommodation there was decidedly simpler, to prepare us for tent living for the next sixteen days. By then some of us were beginning to feel the altitude difference, at just over 3200m.

Early Saturday morning on the 8th we started out in a misty, on a fairly short walk to Lila. We had nearly thirty porters with us, all from Munsiyari, plus four cooking staff: Indra, Arjan, Rahul and Guru (sp?). Two chooks, carried in a basket arrangement, were turned loose on arrival. Cath promptly named them Gertrude and Agnes, and we quietly wondered how long they'd be with us before the inevitable! We had a relaxing afternoon that day, but were in for a rude shock the next morning, to find that two tents had been slashed and three pairs of boots stolen—Sue's, Jan's and Owen's! our Indian guide Almas Kahn decided to walk all the way back to Munsiyari to report the loss, and that night all the porters arrived at the next campsite (Bogdwar) after dark, with most of our gear and all the cooking equipment. Also, one of our members had sustained an injury, so the start of the trip was rather shaky to say the least. Not to be defeated, however, the expedition continued, and most things did improve after that. That day, the

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9th, was actually one of the most memorable, because an entire village was moving down from a higher spot for the winter with their donkeys, ponies, cattle and goats carrying heavy loads of rice, potatoes, seeds, poultry in buckets, cement, kerosene, etc. most of the animals wore bells, and stepped obediently along, some with young ones at foot. People were very interesting, too—mostly quite dark and small with weathered faces, possibly off Tibetan and/or Nepalese descent. The woman, wearing bright colours, encouraged their children to say “Nameste” (a combined blessing and greeting), as we made our way past them on the narrow track. All the while the Gauri Ganga River rushed and churned far below us, and the animals’ loads were wide! Also, along the trackside were small Hindu temples, containing incense, ribbons with prayers, offerings and statues of the gods Brahma (creator), Vishnu (preserver) and Shiva (destroyer). What a change from our first impressions of India a few days earlier!

(to be continued in the next edition of the Bulletin)

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PROGRESS OF THE TRANSITION FOREST GRANT

Work is likely to continue on the Sandstone-Shale Transition Forest remnants grant into the new year. Lambeth Steps is looking amazing compared to the privet hole it was just three years ago. At Smith Park we have herded the weeds into the bottom corner and have shut the coral on them. Most of the recently transplanted *Microlaena* have taken in the planted area and follow-up weeding and spraying has kept us on top of the situation.

Padstow Park has been thoroughly worked for Ehrharta, paddys and a host of other weeds. 90% of the western side is now weed free and we are moving eastwards to add our strength to the area usually worked by the Bushcare team.

East Hills Park is in good shape with occasional visits and spot weeding still required, particularly in the recently bollard area where natural re-generation is taking place with our assistance.

Monash has been transformed by our persistence and we are now in a position to move across the creek to target some of the problems on the alluvial riverflat. Further removal of African Love Grass and Wandering Jew is intended.

There is plenty in store, both for our paid and our volunteer teams. Here’s looking forward to 2007.

ENVIRONMENT GROUPS SLAM RIVER DEVELOPMENT

A coalition of local groups has slammed developer’s plans to turn the Riverlands Golf Course into a gated-city. Bankstown Bushland Society, South West Enviro Centre and the Georges River Environmental Alliance believe that Bankstown City Council and the New South Wales Planning Department should reject the application and refuse to rezone the location.

This development would be disastrous for Milperra, Bankstown and the Georges River, according to Colin Gibson, Secretary of Bankstown Bushland Society. The development will destroy hundreds of original forest trees, annihilate the most significant natural wetland channel in Bankstown which is home to the rare Green and Gold Bell Frog (recorded here in 1993 by Dr. Arthur White). A proposed road extension through Deepwater Park would be the ruination of that valuable public reserve, destroying endangered Coastal Riverflat Forest, a known location for the rare Cumberland Plain Land Snail.

Local politicians and Bankstown City Council are well aware of the damage this development will do to the local environment and to the Georges River, yet remain mute. Their continued silence is a betrayal of the public interest. We call upon them to put the environment and the best interests of the people of the Georges River first and reject this proposal.

THOUGHTS of a WESTIE

by David West

Drought often causes us to wish that it would finally end, and drown!

Wouldn't it be nice to have a long steady succession of rainy days? I'm contemplating the great revival, the greening of the landscape that follows good solid soaking rain. Thinking back on times past, drought and floods were short and sharp when I was young, well so it seems looking back. I remember the "Don't waste Water" stickers on the wall over the sink, we were in a dry patch, it was wartime and I was 8 years old.

Floods at Maitland occurred on a regular basis, like clockwork, back then. The Georges River in full spate, chook shed and dead beasts carried along in it, as I stood on Liverpool Railway Station watching this mighty expression of nature on the move. I was about 14, and on the way to school at Hurlstone, Glenfield.

What about the stretch in the late 1970's I think it was, I was a building contractor and went through a bad patch, we all did, because it rained constantly for about 8 weeks.

I remember mention of flood water in the Colo River Gorge leaving a tide mark 70 feet, or more than 20 metres higher than the river, where did this finish up, into the Hawkesbury River.

The daunting possibility of major floods in the Nepean Hawkesbury River lives on; during the construction of Warragamba Dam a great flood caused considerable damage.

This massive concrete lump plugging the valley was only half built. It was subjected to sufficient force to be pushed downstream 8mm and a new design was required to anchor the dam more firmly to deep bedrock. Later, similar events forced a rethink and we now have an additional emergency overflow and spillway. Will this be sufficient to protect the dam and those lowlands downstream? Who knows! I suspect old and tried technology, like a bath plug, could have been a safer alternative.

Not so long ago the coastal escarpment near Wollongong was subjected to a deluge of some 400mm in a matter of hours. Our coast and inshore ocean waters certainly cop most of the available rainfall; maybe we should consider floating dams, anchored off the coast.

The following news item demonstrates the benefit of foresight to be gained from recorded history.

The Daily Telegraph, 29th April, 2004.
Weatherwatch, with Don White.

Extract:

But the longest record in the pre- 1859 years was at the South Head signal station with data continuously available from April 1840 to the end of 1855. It was during this time that two of the most significant rain events in Sydney's history occurred.

The first occurred on this day

(date) in 1840 when an amazing 511 mm of rain fell in 24 hours. Again in October 1844, more than 500 mm was recorded in one 24 hour period.

These events still stand as the only recorded occurrences of +500 mm of rain in 24 hours in the Sydney metropolitan area.

Bloody rain, when will it end?



Photo by Darryl McKay
Milperra Wetlands

bull dog ants, genus *Myrmecia*
Common in Bankstown's bushland

Bullants perform a similar function to earthworms in improving soil conditions by opening the soil and improving plant growth when they excavate their nests. Ants also play an important role in keeping the forest floor clean by collecting unhealthy, dead and exhausted insects.




ATTENTION

If anyone has interesting sightings of birds, frogs, reptiles or mammals in the Bankstown district or needs identification assistance, I would be happy to hear from you.

Please call Darryl on 9708-5283
e-mail: sternaalbifrons@unwired.com.au




BANKSTOWN BUSHLAND SOCIETY MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES

Bankstown Bushland Society meetings are held at Padstow Progress Hall (annex), Ryan Road, Padstow.
3rd Wednesday of every month. In annex at the rear. Time: 7.30 pm
Tea and biscuits provided. All welcome.
Further inquiries please ring : 9785 2374

Bush regeneration is an interesting and rewarding way to connect with our local flora and fauna and to learn the basics of practical bushland restoration.
Interested nature loving persons are most welcome to spend a morning, or an hour or two, with us in any of our programmed regeneration sites.

BANKSTOWN BUSHLAND SOCIETY BUSH REGENERATION PROGRAM August to December 2006

NB: All activities commence at 9.30am.
Telephone contacts: Pat 9785 2374, Colin 9788 6232

MONTH:

1st MONDAY:3rd SUNDAY

FEBRUARY	5th: Smith park: Transition Forest. Meet in tennis courts carpark, Lehn Road, East Hills.	17th: The Crest: Turpentine Brushforest. Meet in the Athletics Complex carpark via McLeans Street, Bass Hill.
MARCH	5th: East Hills Park: Transition Forest. Meet in carpark at the end of Cooks Crescent, East Hills.	18th: Padstow Park: Ironbark Forest. Meet at Padstow Park, Banks Street, Padstow.
APRIL	2nd: Monash Reserve: Remnant on Tertiary Alluvium. Meet in carpark off Henry Lawson Drive, East Hills.	15th: Lambeth Park: Follow-up work at The Steps. Meet in carpark at Lambeth Park off Henry Lawson drive, Picnic Point.
MAY	7th: Lansdowne Reserve: Cumberland Plain Woodland. Meet in carpark on Lansdowne Parade, off Hume Highway, Lansdowne.	20th: Yeramba Lagoon: Sandstone Woodland. Meet at the end of Kennedy Street, Picnic Point.
JUNE	4th: Lambeth Park: The Steps. Meet in carpark at Lambeth Park off Henry Lawson drive, Picnic Point.	17th: Smith Park: Transition Forest. Meet in tennis courts carpark, Lehn Road, East Hills.

WHY NOT JOIN THE SOCIETY ?



The Bankstown Bushland Society is an incorporated association under the Associations Incorporation Act (NSW) 1984.

We are Bankstown's only incorporated association dedicated to protecting our City's environment.

The Society's objects are:

- To protect the environment of Bankstown
- To assist other persons in the protection of the environment in Bankstown
- To foster better community awareness of environmental issues
- To lobby through Government, commercial and other persons for the maintenance of a high quality of life through the progressive improvement of the environment

If you are concerned about the local environment, then consider joining our Society. As a member, you receive one year's subscription to this newsletter, and can participate as a voting member in the direction and decisions of the Society.

✂

Yes, I wish to join the
Bankstown Bushland Society Inc:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Suburb: _____ Postcode _____

Telephone Number: _____

Membership fees
 Family - \$20
 Ordinary - \$15
 Concession - \$10
 "student/unwaged/pensioner"

Attached please find my payment of:
 (\$.00) _____
 (amount in words)

Send this coupon with payment to:
The Secretary,
Bankstown Bushland Society Inc.
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