

What Local Native's Flowering?

Botanical name: *Acrotriche serrulata*
Common name: Honey-pots
Family: Epacridaceae

A low growing prostrate heath-like shrub (0.1-0.3 metres high by 0.5-1 metre wide) with very small, soft, narrow dark green leaves (1 cm long by 0.2 cm wide), arranged around the many erect branches.

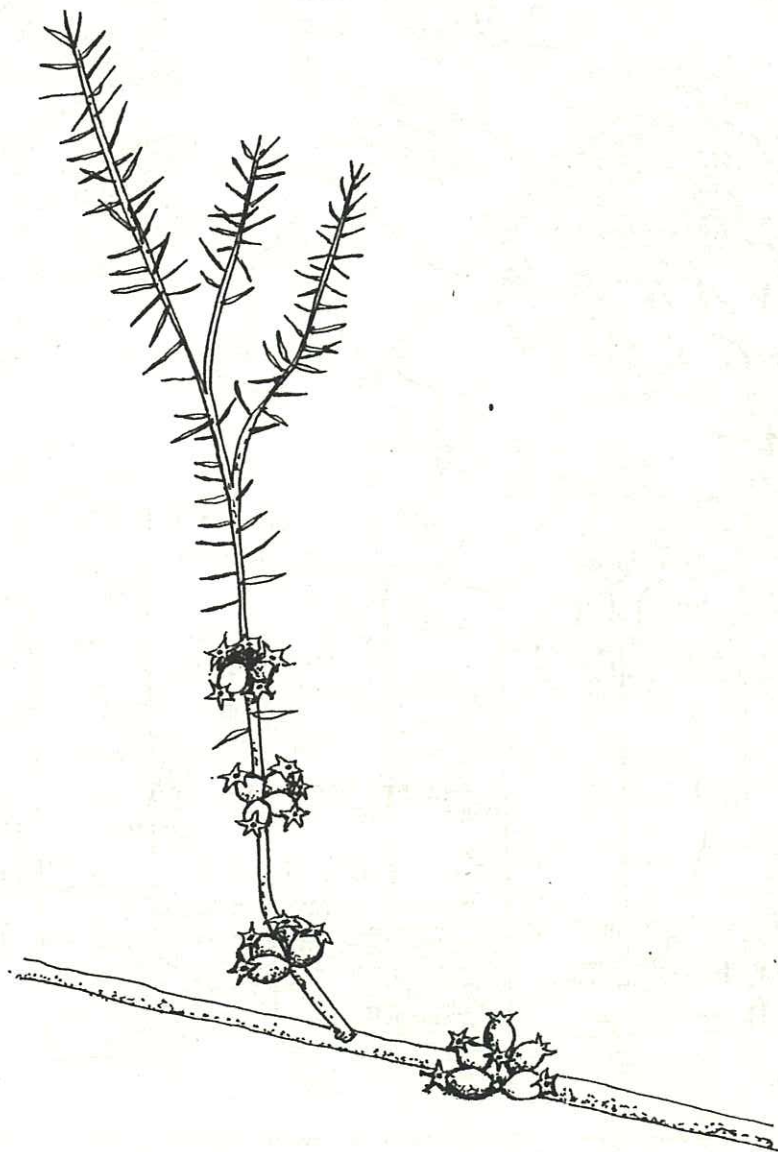
Flowers appear from May-August in round clusters on older wood towards the base of the plant, well hidden beneath the leaves. The numerous clusters consist of many small pale green, translucent bell-shaped flowers, closed at the throat, spreading out into five pointed hairy lobes each with a hair-tuft on the tip. These vase-shaped bells all point upwards and are full of nectar, giving the flowers a sweet honey scent - hence the common name of honey-pots. The copious supply of nectar is a good source of food for many birds (especially honeyeaters) and insects.

After flowering, small green berry-like fruits appear from August to October and when ripe the berries fall off the plant, providing many birds with another source of food.

Honey-pots is a good low shrub to plant as it will grow in a wide range of conditions - under the dappled light of trees, in heavy clay soils, and on dry and moist sites, as long as the position is well drained.

Propagation is difficult from seed. Cuttings from new growth are more successful and though it may take a while to establish, this compact and effective plant is well worth the effort.

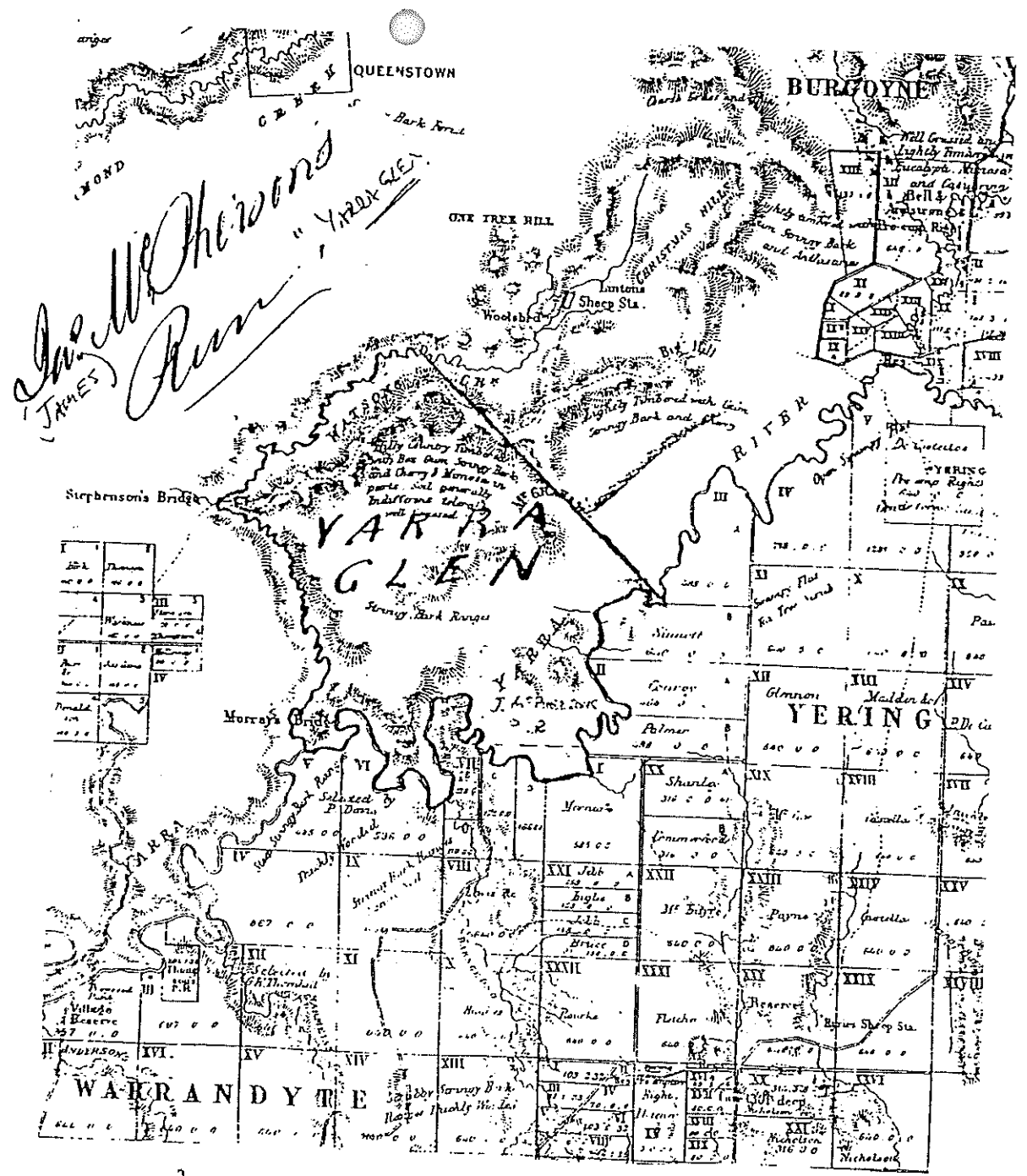
Cric Henry



MAP MYSTERY

The map titled "Jas. McPherson's Run" comes from Wendi Henderson. It almost certainly derives from an original lithograph produced by Robert Hoddle's Survey Branch between 17 March and 24 July 1849 when the license for the Christmas Hill Station was held by Andrew Linton. That original map incorporated the work of a number of earlier surveys. Included is that of the Yarra River itself, from Watson's Creek to present day Yarra Glen, carried out by Thomas Nutt in May 1839; that of the mile-square "Section" to the south of the river, a later Nutt survey; and the carve up of the Kangaroo Grounds around Donaldson's Section XIX by William Weston Howe in April 1848. The names of the selectors and farmers were then added to the map as the land was alienated from the Crown.

The most noticeable addition to the original is the name "Yarra Glen" in the southern part of the Christmas Hills. That name derives from the survey by Percy Bromfield of McPherson's Pre-emptive Right dated 29 September 1857. James McPherson was the second of the Squatters to occupy this district, the first being James Murray whose occupancy ran between the years 1840 - 1850. McPherson's Station was the stretch of country bounded by the Yarra, Watson's Creek, and the line drawn across the map near Mount Graham (the Sugarloaf). His Run was known as the Watson's Creek Station. The country to the north-east of it was taken up by Joseph Stevenson in October 1842. Stevenson's 9,600 acre Christmas Hill Station ran between the Yarra and the One Tree Hill Range.



Map Mystery

(CONT)

James McPherson and his young family arrived in the district in early February 1851. Their homestead was close by to the present day Henley Bridge across the Yarra, on a rise above the river flats visible today from the end of Henley Road. It would seem that the family named their homestead "Yarra Glen" because of the rocky gorge (Yering) a short distance upstream of the house, a locale which would have been very reminiscent to them of a homeland "highland glen". Thus the name "Yarra Glen" became attached to a home in the Christmas Hills some thirty-eight years before it was eventually assumed by the present day town upstream.

However, the label as it appears on the map is somewhat of a misnomer, certainly not placed there by the Survey Branch. Whereas the name of the homestead was well known as Yarra Glen, that of the Station itself was always officially given as the "Watson Creek Station".

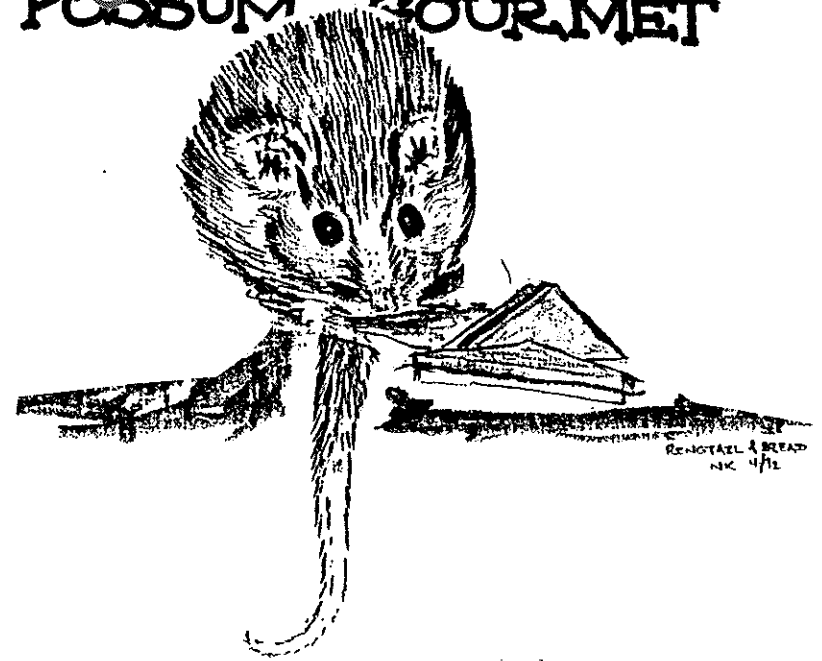
Also of interest on the map are the two bridges. Stevenson's Bridge (not Stephenson's), in the west of the Parish was built by Joseph Stevenson around 1842. The dotted line drawn from it marks the track pioneered by

Fiery Orie and his brothers in April 1838. It passed through the hills along a leading ridge (present day Ridge Road), and down to the river flats, via the "Breakneck", to each of the Ryrie Stations -- one at Yering, and the other near present day Lilydale. The second Bridge shown across Watson's Creek (near the present day Oxley Bridge), was built by James Murray in the early 1840's. The creek itself was named after another of the district's colourful squatter of the time by the name of James Watson.

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the name and occupation of the Christmas Hills by Joseph Stevenson. It will be commemorated by a weekend of events on the 10th and 11th of October. A Committee has been set up to organise the celebrations. For further details, contact Kevin Heeley on 730-1704 or Mick Woivod on 712-0563. Should anyone have any old photographs or documents of an historical nature, relevant to the district, please contact one of the above numbers so that they may be considered for inclusion in either an Historical Display on the weekend, or a history of the district, currently being prepared.

Mick Woivod

POSSUM GOURMET



A couple of weeks ago, in a wry piece describing the depredations of birds and animals who sometimes forget to be lovable, I owned up to paying a blackmailer. I confessed to bribing a possum to stay away from the veranda grapevines, by regular payments in the form of banana and peanut butter sandwiches. My correspondent writes:

"Your possum has obviously got you wrapped around his knucky little digit. I put leftover bread and bits of nasty uneatable banana out and let the little bastards make their OWN bloody sandwiches!"

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PETER RYAN, FROM 'AS I PLEASE'
IN THE AGE 25 JANUARY 1992.



Cup Day Report

On the fifth day on November last, a day commonly known as Melbourne Cup Day, the local Friends of the Christmas Hills Fire Brigade conducted an Auction of Skills at the South End fire station.

When this reporter arrived, a holiday atmosphere prevailed, helped not a little by the uncommonly fine weather and good attendance by local residents and their kin. The auction was preceded by a barbecue lunch supplied by the attendees, and this, and a certain amount of fine wine which was observed to be imbibed, ensured an atmosphere conducive to philanthropic endeavour.

An especial attraction was Miss Gaby's Tearoom, wherein delightful homemade cakes were available, along with a refreshing cup of tea or aromatic coffee, all for a small remuneration. At some point during the afternoon due homage was paid to the famous horse race at Flemington and the winners of the various sweeps, of which regretfully this reporter was not one, were awarded their prizemoney - prizemoney which would hopefully be spent on the forthcoming auction.

And at last that very event! Well known local wine connoisseur and bon-vivant Mr. Neil Harvey, officiating as auctioneer, began the proceedings with the first item. Bidding was slow to start, but Mr. Harvey cajoled the crowd into some enthusiastic, and in some cases seriously competitive, bidding.

The number and variety of skills on offer amazed this reporter - this is indeed an accomplished community. Ranging from items of a practical or professional nature to items involving hobbies, recreation, specialised knowledge, and even romance - in the form of a candlelit dinner for two, served in your own home, and offered by the energetic Mrs. Sheila Dixon. Several local ladies provided baskets of home grown produce, or home made preserves, and these were bid upon with great eagerness. Not to be outdone, however, one local gentleman offered his own excellent home made compost! But the prize for the most singular item on offer must go to the inimitable Mr. John McCallum, who undertook to do anything - provided it had nothing to do with children!

Mr. Harvey proved to be an energetic and entertaining auctioneer, able to elicit both mirth and money. The overwhelming number of items up for auction, however, took its toll and Mr. Harvey's voice was found to be wanting. Wine was called for to revive the gentleman, and he duly passed the hammer to his deputy Mr. Peter Gurney. Mr. Gurney was no less diligent in the pursuit of this excellent cause, and the day was proven to be a great success - as can be seen by the accompanying photogravure.

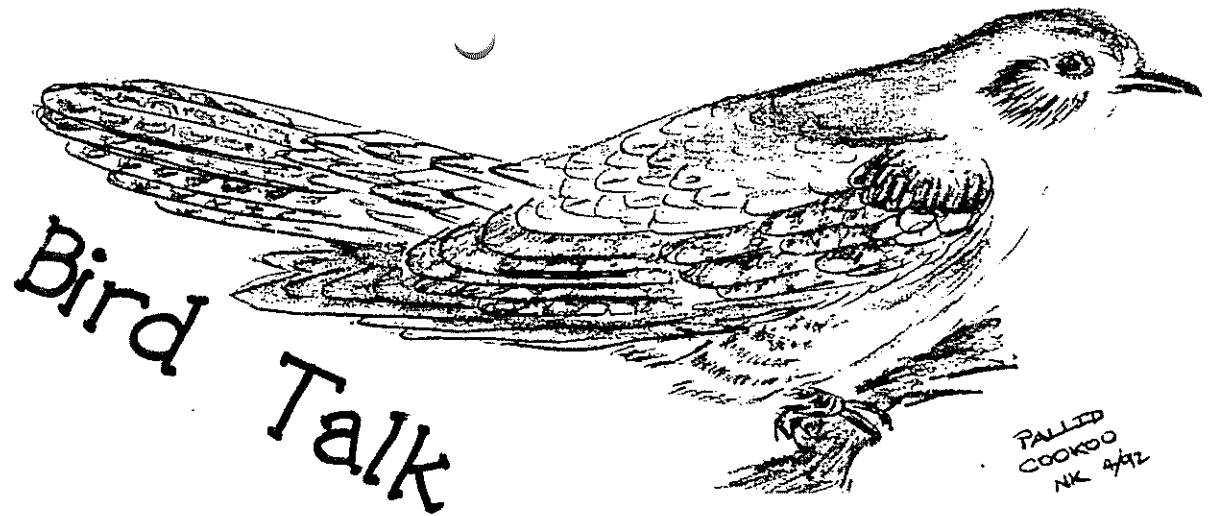
Your social reporter in earnest, Miss Elspeth Landsdowne-Zigeuner.



Way back at the end of January, I heard a very persistent chirping. I'd been hearing it all through breakfast so decided to track it down. The chirp was sitting on a dead branch nearby and looked rather large for a baby bird. It turned out to be a young pallid cuckoo and little was I to know I'd be living with this piteous sound for a long time yet. Knowing about their parasitism, I looked around for the foster parent and eventually saw a bellbird alight near it and begin feeding this demanding monster.

I went inside and looked up Pizzey to see if he mentioned anything about bellbirds and it seemed there would be about 100 species of Australian birds that have their nests parasitised, like honeyeaters, flycatchers and wrens etc. The general idea behind this habit of the cuckoos is that they lay their egg in the nest of an insectivorous bird and particularly one which is a very successful parent. As bellbirds practice communal nesting and feeding of their young, this obviously appealed to the parent of the cuckoo.

Over the next few weeks I have been able to watch the goings on between bellbirds and cuckoo in all its frantic detail. The bird itself is quite handsome and, of course, much larger than the foster parents. It's all grey, black and white with a long curving tail and beak, and from dawn to dusk chirps insistently. In the early days it appeared only to have one bellbird



at its side but after three weeks it seemed to have three. The cuckoo has developed a very nasty habit of pecking the foster parents after they have shoved something down its throat. One wonders if they will ever be so stupid again as to take on a similar orphan!

Apparently the food they like best of all is hairy caterpillars. Everyone to their own taste I suppose.... In fact, when the male is courting, he prepares and presents as many of these caterpillars that he can find to the female. Another trick he uses at this time is to be rather noisy and conspicuous in his behaviour and perhaps diverting attention away from the female's eyeing off a host nest.

As I said, its three weeks along now and the chirp is still there. The bird's habit of sitting on a dead branch and monotonously calling, remains in adult life. That upward scale on and on. No wonder it is sometimes called the semi-tone or brain-fever bird. Last week it made a few forays over to Barb's place. It gave up after it discovered that the bellbirds over there didn't harbour the same feelings as these poor worn-out creatures in my neck of the woods. Every now and again it collapses into the nest it was born in. In fact, I suspect it sleeps in there. I am keeping a nature diary this year so will be able to keep track of when it finally becomes independent. The other thing I shall be interested in is when it starts its adult song. Just think, that little page of DNA music is tucked away waiting for some trigger or other. It must work that way for how can they copy parents if they are not around?

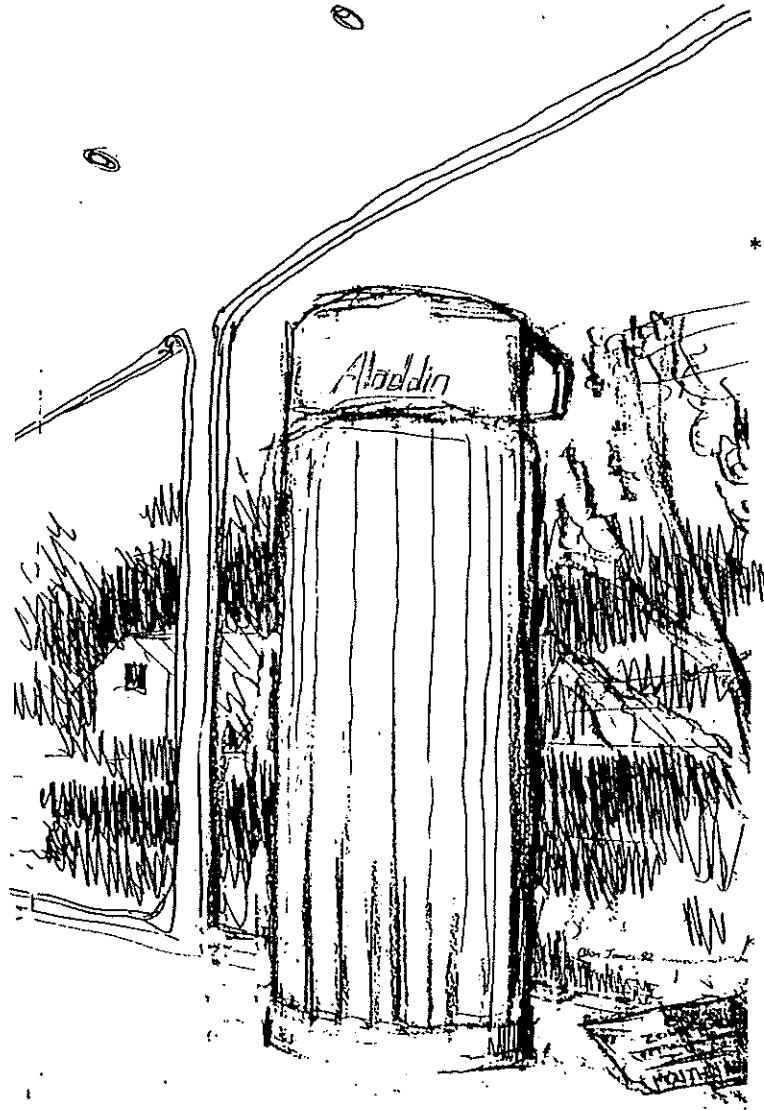
I bet those bellbirds have learnt a lesson!

Sheila Dixon

New Kids in the Bush

As a relatively new resident (Dec 1990) a short list of reasons why I enjoy living in the Bend of Islands.

- * The freedom to sit quietly in the sun listening to "Great Organ Works" full blast on the sound system, is a welcome relief from the confines of St Kilda apartment dwelling.
- * The magnificent crimson sunrise of the other morning, heralded by a pair of kookaburras very close to our bedroom window.
- * The peace and wonderful fresh air which restores my balance after a week of air-conditioned inertia.
- * A bonus of living in the area is that I have become a much better cook, though mostly of the sweet variety. Cakes and biscuits have become a specialty. This is to assuage our sweet tooth in the after dinner hours, the 30 minute plus return trip to Foodplus not being an attractive option.
- * Luxury for us is not to have to get in the car again on Saturday or Sunday after coming home late on a Friday night. It is lovely to pretend the rest of Melbourne does not exist as we



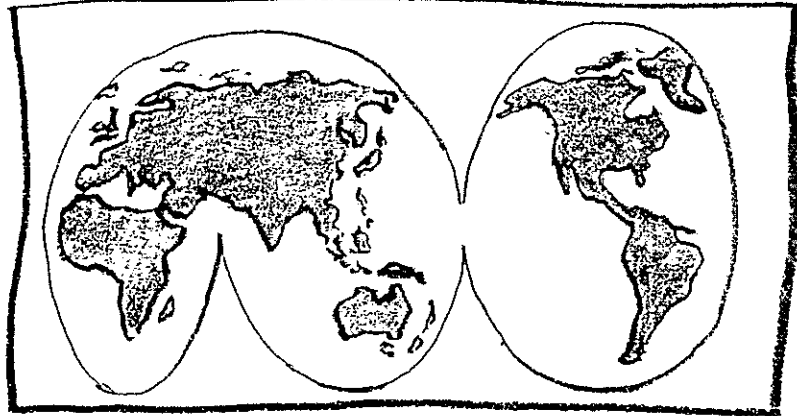
enjoy the serenity of the bush (though we still do have withdrawal problems if we don't read the Saturday Age and the Weekend Australian). We are still trying to convince some of our city friends that Kangaroo Ground is not that far away, and we are encouraging them to visit us rather than the other way around.

Another thing which I enjoy is the quaintness of the Hurstbridge line. It really is quite a bucolic landscape between Eltham and Wattle Glen. Of course the big advantage of catching the train at Wattle Glen is that we can drive to within 2 feet of the platform and make a swift exit from the car to be whisked away by the Met to the City Loop. Given the fact that Alan and I are always running just on time in the morning, we decided that we should take our cup of tea with us. So, when we are organised, we sit back with our thermos of tea and enjoy a leisurely breakfast on the way into the city.

The very tangible sense of community which is alive and flourishing in the area is a real plus, very different from "suburban separateness".

Jennifer Shepherd


World Conservation



The Conservation Issues Day held annually, will this year be a Bend of Islands display at the fire station on World Conservation Day, Saturday June 6. But it needs your contribution to be really personal and successful!

Any photos, bird nests, feathers, interesting rocks, native animal bones, pressed wildflowers, maps, aerial photographs or absolutely anything you have which is from our area, please deliver to Felicity Faris in Henley Road.

A photo competition is to be run in conjunction with the Day and entries will be displayed on the day. Subjects must be taken within the ELZ, with three categories in seniors and juniors: best black and white, best colour in both sections, plus Most Unusual for the seniors and Most Lovable for the juniors. Further info will follow but start taking those snaps. Contact Felicity on 712 0501.

Skiers Wanted  Skiers Wanted

I would like to inform residents of the ELZ about the Australian National Antarctic Expeditions (ANARE) Ski Club lodge at Mt Baw Baw.

The lodge is situated in the ski village adjacent to the Baw Baw National Park. Travelling time from the Bend of Islands is about 2 1/2 hours. The lodge has 16 beds (not double level bunks) and guests must supply their own bedding, pillow cases and food. The sleeping areas are communal with limited hanging space for clothing. Skiing clothing is hung in a large gas heated drying room adjacent to the foyer and ski storage area. The kitchen area of the pot belly heated sitting room has two gas cookers, two twin tub sinks and all necessary crockery, cutlery and pots and pans. There is a gas hot water service and two saver connected shower/toilets. 240 volt a.c. power comes from our diesel generator in an external engine shed.

All the above is available to guests for \$35 per two night weekend or \$14 per week night. Pre-school children are welcome and free while school age children are half price. We run the lodge on a non-profit basis and I believe the lodge to be the cheapest on the mountain. Non-member guests have to be accompanied by a member and I am offering myself for this service. How about getting together a party? Mid-weeks are great, being uncrowded but weekends are good too.

Bookings are open now and are secured by advance payment of fees. Ring me now on 712 0465 prior to 0900 or after 2100 hours.

Norm Linton-Smith
Treasurer/Booking Officer ANARE SKI CLUB INC

Jim Mattiske

Jim Mattiske, with Janet, Quentin and Simon, were attracted to our area back in 1980. From his love of the bush he believed he and his family could develop a richer lifestyle than was achievable in Blackburn. So they purchased ten beautiful acres on Henley Road and approached me to help them design a suitable home.

From the outset the special requirements reflected the Jim I remember. It had to have a billiard room - to cater for Jim's funloving partygiving. It had to have a music studio - a demonstration of Jim's dedication to the encouragement of his sons' talents and interests - in this case Simon and his guitar. But most importantly it had to reflect the bush and be the antithesis of their small, multi-roomed, well-ordered Blackburn house. The 8' ceilings there certainly looked low when you're 6'4" high. We ended up with a roomy, earthy thing 'flopping' down the slope like a slouch hat - the image of Jim. Like most owner built homes it took an age to complete but the spirit and goal of achievement never faded.

During the design and construction of the house and beyond, I got to know Jim very well. His warmth and humor made his company always a delight. With Jim's interest in all conservation issues, and with the flora and the fauna here, he was soon an active part of the community. However, his knowledge of and enthusiasm in the birdlife within the ELZ was remarkable. Jim set up a vibrant bird observers group who had regular walks and meetings to record and



tabulate the species and frequency of sightings of all the birds in the ELZ. From his efforts over 120 differing bird species were identified and the record remains a valuable resource in understanding our area.

But if one imagines a 'bird-o' as one with bifocals, a sensitive frail individual, this wasn't our Jim. Tall, with black-bearded Rasputin looks, he was a powerful and impressive figure. Apart from being physically robust and active he was just as interested in Peter Dinkov's knee, or the next B.B. King concert, or 1972 Grange Hermitage and again his depth of knowledge and bubbiness in each of these and many more interests ensured no-one ever spent a dull moment with Jim.

During the last 15 years of his life he was constantly reminded of his mortality. He had a skin disease related to leukemia. Drugs and radiotherapy stabilized things for many years during which he preferred not to burden his friends with his state of health but kept it to himself.

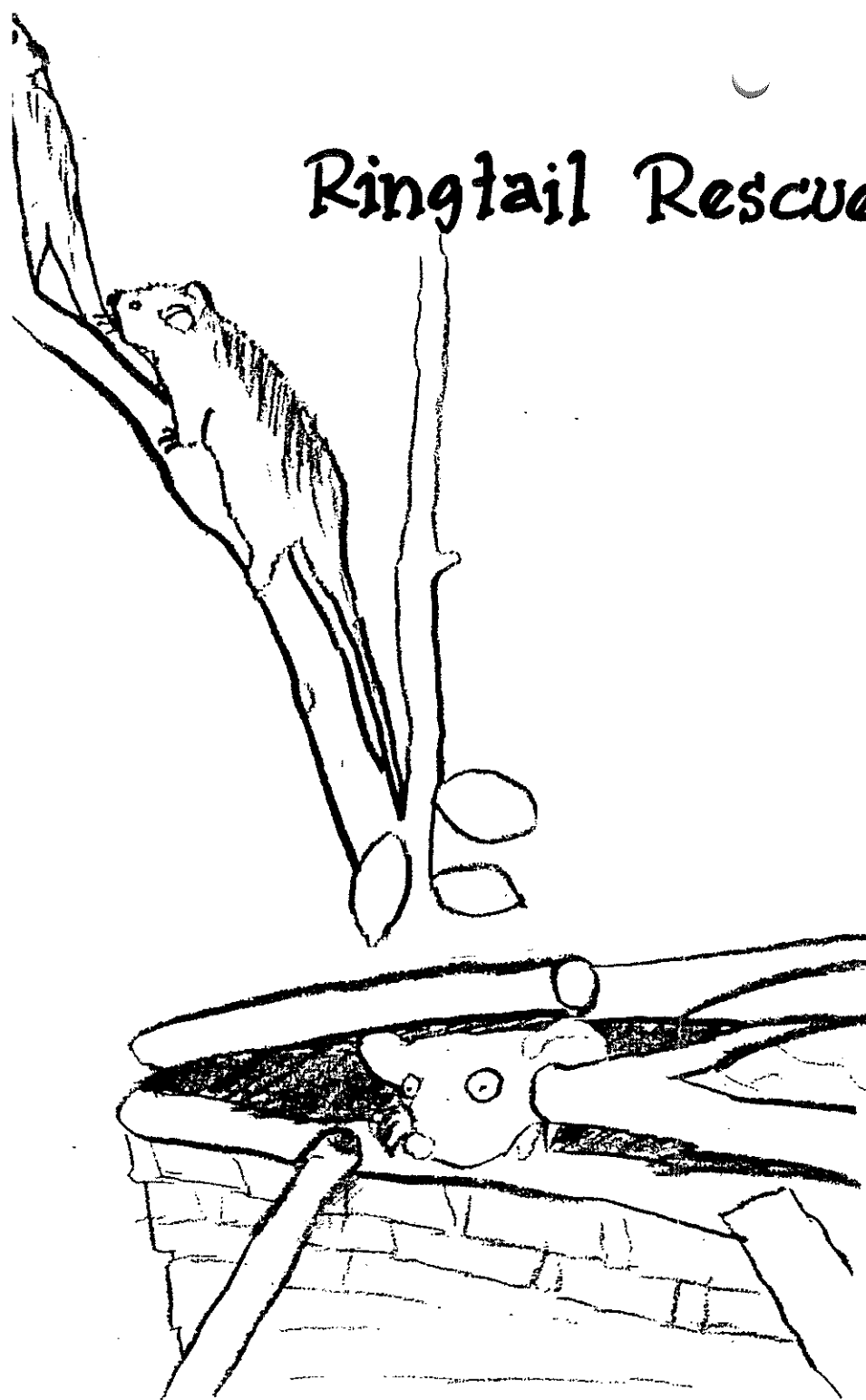
It eventually took his life last year.

He lived with the shadow over him but in spite of, or even perhaps, because of it, he bit life with vigor that enthused all around him.

I wish I could have spent more time with him.

Koss Henry

Ringtail Rescue



Three months ago, two weeks before the end of school, two baby ringtail possums were found on our property. We paid a visit to the local possum lady who suggested that we could look after the possums ourselves as they were old enough at two months not to need nightly feeds.

A third sickly possum was found which had an infected eye and was unwell. With a week of daily bathing and lots of care, this possum was soon well again and we put it back to live with the other two.

This is how you care for baby ringtail possums

You wake up early in the morning, heat up a mixture of half evaporated milk, half water and half a teaspoon of Glucodin. You then watch the possums in their cage slowly drink the mixture drop by drop from an eye dropper with a special tiny teat. After eating you have to help them urinate. They then go back into their nest in the large cage. You then quickly get ready for school.

In the afternoon you come home and go through the same procedure and again at night too. At around 8.30pm you cut up a big variety of fruit, vegetables and some kind of carbohydrate, and sometimes, a little bunch of mature gum leaves you have already collected.

The possums are now nearly ready for the night. Just make sure their water is clean and the cage has new newspapers on the floor and the nest is dry.

After a stay with Cara Gurney while we were away, the possums were a lot bigger, fatter and healthier and they were soon ready to be released back into the wild. But we had to prepare them first.

We reduced their milk feeds from three to once per day and did not handle them as much, although we kept giving them their fruit and vegetables each day with clean water. So, we gradually weaned them from the milk mixture and moved their cage outside under a gum tree. The possums got used to their outside environment and one evening we left the door of the cage open so they could explore.

For the first few nights, they explored their new surroundings but came back to sleep during the day inside the nest in the cage. After a few days, they found other sleeping spots including inside the house in the hanging egg basket!

Since then we see them each night when they come back for their evening meal but they are getting more and more independent and very healthy.

Krista Patterson Majoor

President's Report

I am happy to provide my first report since the election of the new committee at the Annual General Meeting held in November.

We are at full committee strength with 12 sub-committees including committee members and many other people from the community all involved in pursuing the issues that are regularly before us. Needless to say, all members are welcome to attend our monthly committee meetings held each first Friday evening of the month.

We warmly welcome new BICA members and residents to the ELZ and look forward to assisting you in any way, to enable you to benefit from our unique environment and its opportunities for rewarding community living and involvement.

To help with this aim the new 1992 BICA Directory has been issued to all members and the new residents information package has been updated.

I am also pleased to report the election of two life members of BICA - Janet Mattiske and John McCallum. These memberships were given as recognition of their major contributions to the area over many years, and their continuing interest and involvement.



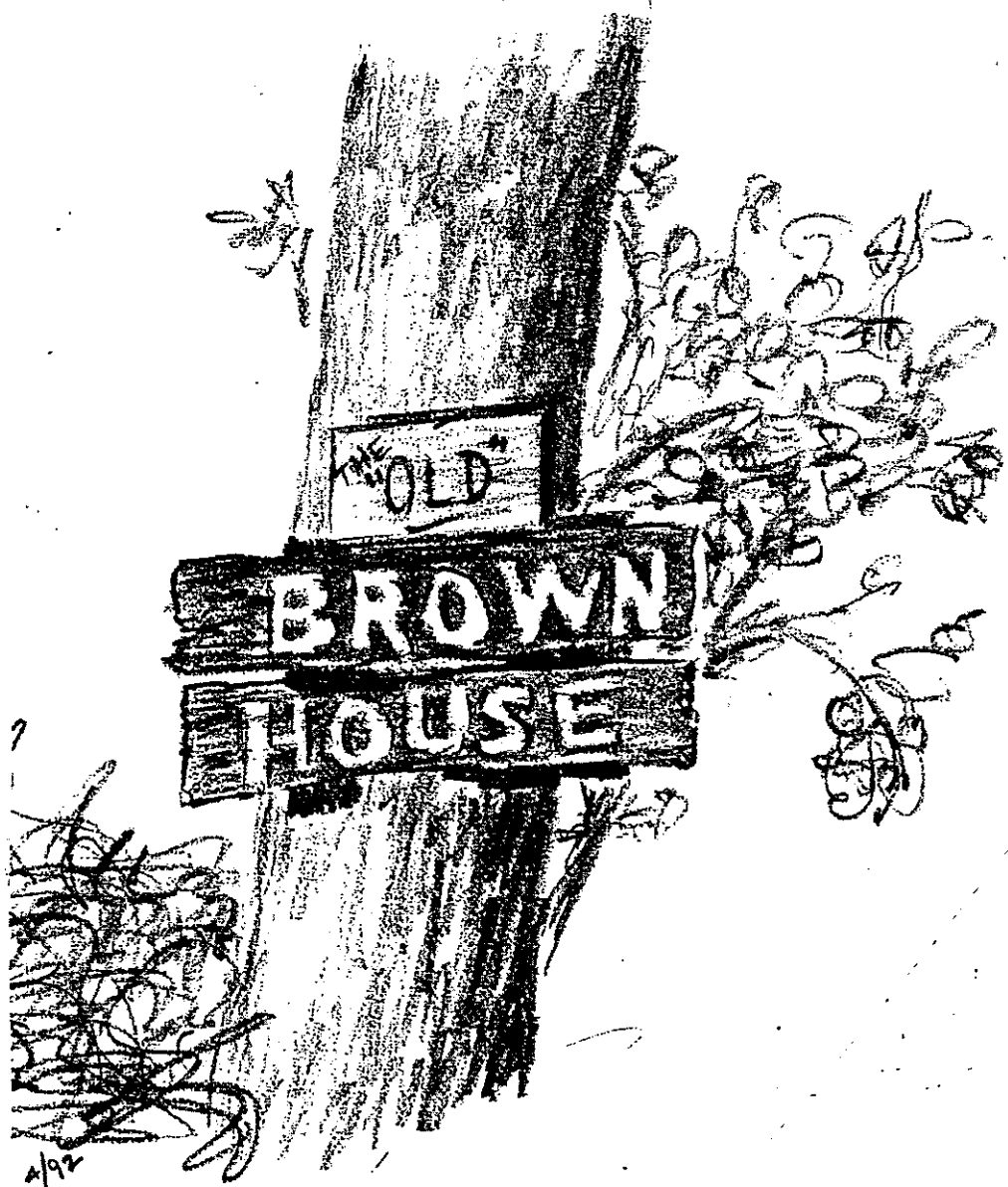
BICA supports a number of organisations involved with activities relating to the ELZ. One is the Kangaroo Ground Waste Management Group which is working toward the prevention of establishing rubbish tips in watercourse and gully areas. Another group being supported this year is the Christmas Hills Tree Committee involved in organising the annual celebration to make this significant date a time to remember within the Christmas Hills community.

The success of the recent SEC tree clearing conducted throughout the ELZ also shows the benefit of consultation with the SEC and the development of a unique policy which preserves as much as possible the amenity of the area.

Similarly, BICA, particularly through the previous committee, has been deeply involved in working with the Shire of Healesville with the development of its new planning scheme which has been signed by the Minister and will be gazetted and proclaimed within weeks.

Michael Pelling
President

New Kids in the Bush



"So, where do you live?" asked a work colleague.

"Christmas Hills" I replied.

"Oh, right." He smiled, nodded sagely.

Hasn't got a clue I thought.

"Out past Kangaroo Ground".

A blank.

Yep, I was right.

"Past Eltham?", I offered.

"Oh, right. Way out there. Hmm. Got much land out there?"

"About ten acres" I managed with exactly the right amount of nonchalance so as to suggest pride without pretence. A wry smile was beginning to form on my lips which I quickly suppressed.

"Nice" replied my colleague suitably impressed. "What do you run on it? Horses? Stock?"

"Its just bush actually"

"Bush? What do you mean?". Straight answers never were the forte of this particular colleague.

"You know, BUSH. Trees, that sort of stuff". Gotcha, I thought, this will be fun. Next question will be about what we are going to do with this bush.

" Oh, right. And what are going to do with it?"

Bingo, take ten points.

"Nothing" I replied.

This time it was too hard to keep the smile from curling to completion.

A perplexed look crossed the face of my colleague as he tried to visualise this "just bush" thing and nothing being done about it. Not an easy task in these times, especially if one is as suburbanised as so many are these days. The bush, to him, is a mythical place; non suburban; somewhere past Knox, and before you get to the outback; past the farms and such.

However, unlike my unfortunate colleague, we know where this "just bush" is and, hopefully, just what needs to be done to keep it just that way.

Neil Kamminga

Grandma's Garden PAGE 2

Here's to another garden of over fifty years ago. I often wonder these days how reliable the old long term memory is

This garden was probably in the vicinity of Claire's front paddock. It was a fenced off area (we had rabbits even then) and was divided into an orchard and vegetable garden. Then there was an ancient bungalow of canvas and oiled weatherboards which had belonged to one of the caretakers. The big thing about the bungalow was the festoons of spider webs and some tattered magazines dating from the thirties. Us kids found one of these had a photograph of a screen star called Heddy Lamarr floating naked in a swimming pool. As we all had these semi Victorian parents, our up bringing was pretty unadventurous to say the least and the sight of a naked body was enough to conjure forth the lurid thoughts and much sniggering. I seem to remember many little trips up from the beach just to check the magazine out again. How pathetic!

The fence was covered with gooseberry and raspberry canes and though I loved Grandmas gooseberry pies they were so prickly to harvest. The soil down there was good old sandy loam (the sort Claire says chews up

compost) and built up in heaped rows. Big white onions, asparagus and carrots. Cabbages practically flying away with white butterflies and giant pumpkins tearing all over the place ready to take over the world.

The watering of all this was by bucket while the fertilising was via the horse and pigs. The stables for the cart horse were nearby and a couple of large wooden barrels were hooked up to the roof drainage. Stable manure was chucked into the barrels and away she went. Without going into too much gory detail this mixture became pretty interesting after a while, we spent many happy moments poking at the surface with sticks to give the maggots a bit of hurry up. Yuk.....



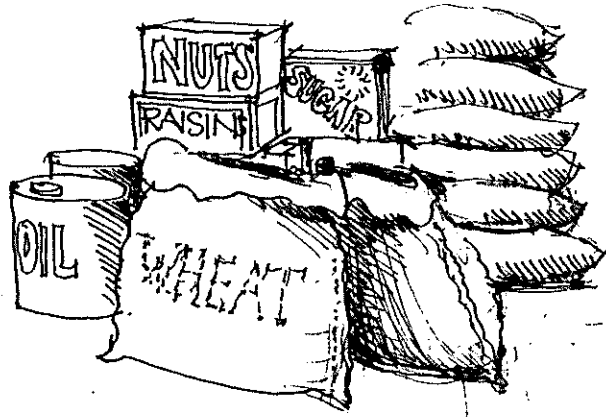
Various plum trees grew in the orchard and I especially remember the yellow ones as being my favourite. Why do they taste so watery these days? A quince, fig and pear tree were there too and I often wonder why the parrots didn't get all the fruit.

Prince the carthorse managed to get into the garden though every now and then and had a wonderful time among the cabbages, butterflies and all I suppose.

Oh and lastly there was a very environmentally unsound patch of English snowdrops near the stable. As far as I know they are still there, they haven't spread very much but have clung on to their bit of Oz ground through much adversity I would think.

Sheila Dixon

Food - Co-op



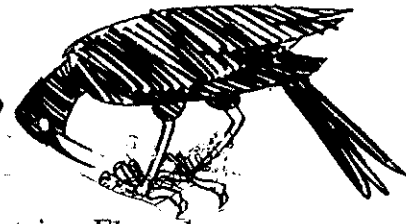
Not so many long years ago we Bend of Islanders had a flourishing food co-operative. Here's how it worked. A rotating pair of organisers took the orders quarterly and collected the goods from bulk food sources. Then members congregated at an organiser's home for a long, lovely weekend morning of socialising and weighing out their pre-ordered quantities of bulk flour, dried fruit, honey, oats and on and on, for their larder. Those were the days...and that's how it was done then.

Now there are lots of ways to organise a food co-op. We recently heard of a co-op maintaining its own central store of bulk goods with pre-paid deposits so that members could 'shop' at their convenience. Just another way a group has organised to suit its own needs.

If there are people interested in reviving the idea in some form, the precedent has been set and there's a substantial bank account to help get started. Shall the idea be taken up again by a new, energetic constituency, or shall the books be closed?

Contact Cric Henry 712 0547
or Carol Ann Fisher 712 0451

Chough Wars



Reprinted with permission from Gerry La Fontaine, Elwood

Letters to the Editor - The Age
Campsite notes on air wars of Hattah

I was camped at the Hattah-Kulkyne national park a few days ago and the birds, especially the white winged choughs, were so entertaining as they fossicked about the place that I had to write about it. My theory about the choughs is that they are pretend crows - they aspire to being lone hunters but haven't quite got the nerve. So they hang around together in their extended families like a lot of chooks, responding as one to anything that might occur. They are a strange type of crow.

Particularly amusing is the way they jump when there is a sudden movement, spread their wings and emit that wonderfully indignant squawk, as if to say, "Hey, what's the big idea? I'm not hassling you!" Come to think of it, they react in the same way to each other, which must create a lot of tensions in the extended family.

But by far the most entertaining habit they have is to fly in for a landing to join their family on the ground. Instead of slowing for a graceful three-pointer, they crash on to some random relative at more or less full speed. I may be wrong here, but I'm sure they do this just to annoy one another. Of course, the indignant squawk goes up immediately from everyone - let alone the unfortunate target. This is surely the most malicious landing procedure ever employed by an airborne object.

Together with that most disconcerting, cross-eyed look of a noisy minor (which is a pretty quiet little thing compared to an excited chough) and those noisy magpies, the white-winged choughs are great value at Lake Hattah.

Let's !!?

Wendy Bradley recently received two dozen eggs, two litres of goats milk and eight gift wrapped packets of handmade chocolates from total strangers for FREE. Syd Tunn is giving away his arts works. What's going on? They are among a small number of ELZ residents who have already begun trading in the Plenty Ranges LETS scheme, based around Kinglake.

LETS stands for Local Employment Trading System and is a simple system which gives each member all the advantages of a barter without the disadvantages of each person needing to find other people willing to match what they want.

A few of the goods and services listed recently in the LETS directories included cross-stitch lessons, panel beating, mud brick making, freshly ground biodynamic wholemeal flour, wood splitting, tutoring tertiary philosophy, naturopathic remedies for animals, face painting for children's parties, word processing, washing machine and dryer repairs.

However, you don't have to have an exotic skill. Everyone has something they can trade with. Greatest demand is for unskilled labour - for instance, owner/builders need help doing everything. And the directory can be used as a trading post to sell unwanted goods or find your desire - for Favours (the LETS 'currency') or money or a combination.

It works as simply as a member requiring goods or services from the LETS monthly updated listing simply rings the member advertising that service. Between themselves these two members can negotiate a mutually acceptable price, which can be in Favours, money or both. Once a deal has been agreed to, it is reported to LETS.

Most importantly, it is not necessary to wait until you have begun to earn Favours before you start trading. This is not like the money economy we are used to. People have to go into debt to get the LETS system operating. The initial debits also represent the initial creation of the trading currency which makes LETS successful.

Regarding taxation, the advice is that the taxation people are checking commercial companies who are using the barter system to evade tax on a large scale, but



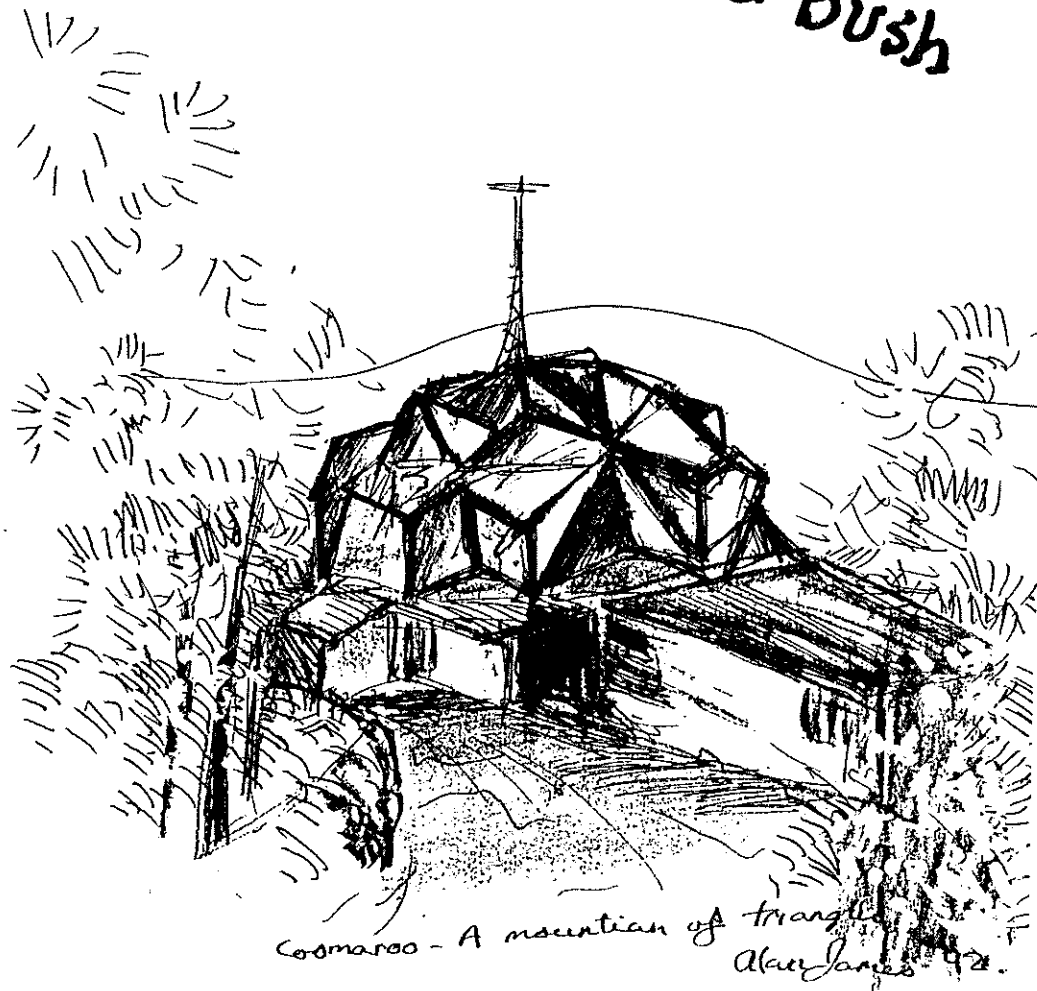
are not after ordinary people who are members of self-help, non-profit community groups such as LETS.

Interested? Before we can really establish a local LETS scheme we need more people to join Plenty Ranges and gain trading experience. Once more of us have this experience and there are people willing to administer the system, then the ELZ/Christmas Hills/Kangaroo Ground LETS can be begun. An information afternoon will be held soon: watch out for signs.

For further information now, or to join, contact Wendy Bradley 712 0396 or Chari Jolly (057) 97 8434.

Wendy Bradley

New Kids in the Bush



Once you get used to the spiders and their webs which appear as if by magic while your back is turned, the dust and insects, then you've made it!

Living a mere one hour and twenty minutes from the city and travelling in five, sometimes six days a week enables you to appreciate what we have out here. As I grew up in Terrey Hills (Sydney fringe) which is a drier, greyer bush, I haven't been put off by the noises in the night which can make Jennifer sit bolt upright in bed, the comparative stillness, the wildlife (with the exception of spiders, which I'll always hate) and the general views. During the year in which we have been residing under the dome at Cozmaroo, it has been a shock getting up at 6 am, as opposed to 8 am when we were living in St Kilda. Travelling along Henley Road with its pot holes, ruts and a high chance of some Macropodidate herbivorous marsupial appearing from nowhere and trying to head butt your car is an added thrill. On top of the daily awareness exercise, is the ritual of the tailgaters who overtake you with the maximum of reckless driving bravado if you should get in their way.

The main reasons we decided to move out here were the peace, quiet and the views. From my writing position at the ground floor window, one can see the bird table, the trees and beyond up along the river valley. The only houses than can be seen are just visible poking out through the trees.

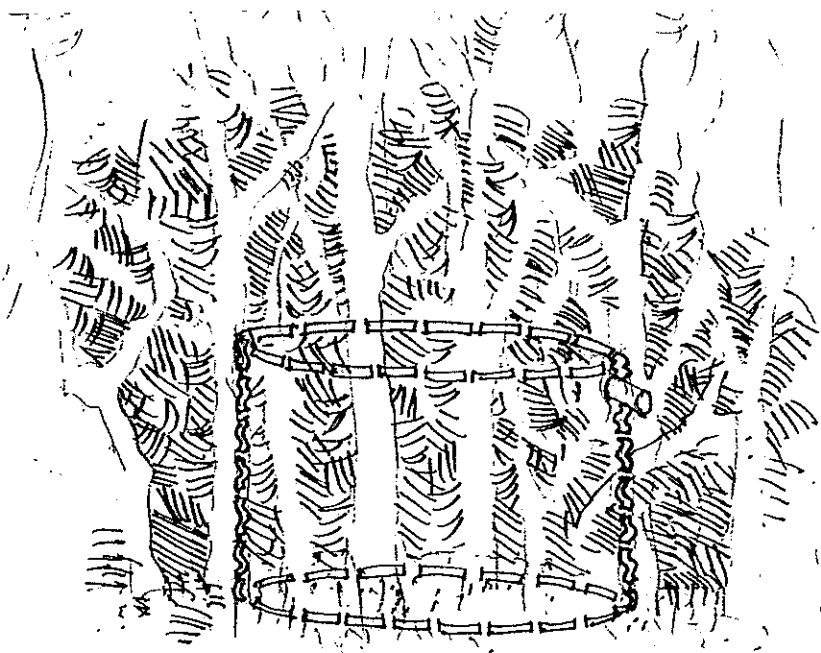
After having been here a year the main consideration is that I want to give up the ridiculous daily worship of earning a crust in the city and work from home here at Cozmaroo.

Alan James

Tim's Tips

Tank Brigade

Do you want to paint your Colorbond roof or your water tank? No time? Or perhaps a bad back? It is still not so hard or expensive. Ring Tim 712 0347 for information.



Wasps

WASPS ARE A FIRE HAZARD

The black mud building wasps that lay their eggs in little green spiders and then tuck them away in mud cocoons can be a menace.

- * They can completely clog up the cooling fins in your fire pump so it may overheat and seize up.
- * They can partly or completely fill up the exhaust, so either the motor won't start or if it does some mud can get through the exhaust valve and completely wreck the motor.
- * They will fill up hose nozzles or sprinkler systems unless they are protected with plastic cogs.

Rabbits

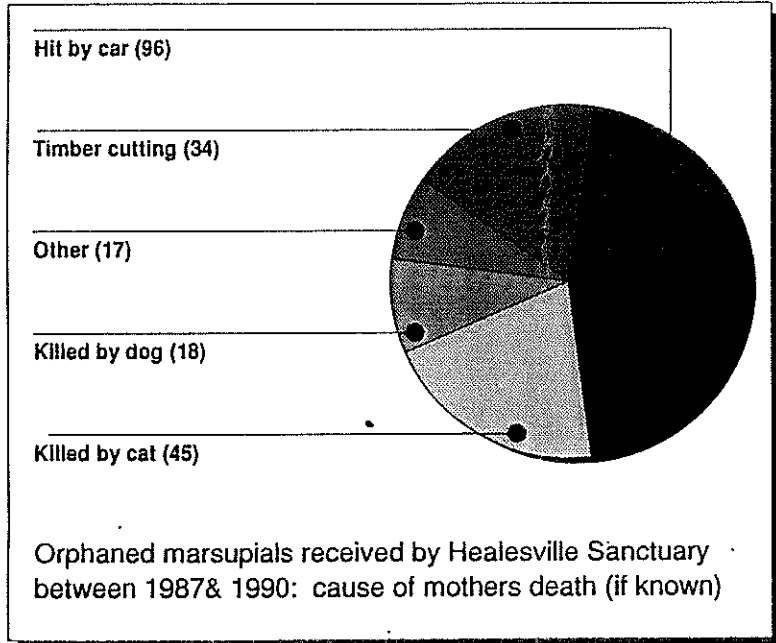


We have inoculated some rabbits with myxo. If you see a diseased rabbit, try to catch it and put it in a bag. Tim will use it to spread the disease quickly - call 712 0347.

Pines



Road Toll



Pine trees have been planted and spread throughout the Bend of Islands. Pine seeds have wings and according to forestry officers, may be blown by wind as far as 1 km. Seeds tend to germinate in disturbed soil or burnt areas but can grow anywhere. The main danger to the Bend of Islands is the subtle take over of the bush by fast growing and spreading pines. Also massive germinations after a fire is a major threat. Pines may grow five times as fast as regenerating native vegetation and pine needles smother native seedlings. Pine trees are therefore detrimental to the bush in the ELZ. They are classified by Healesville Shire as an environmental weed.

Peter Gurney and Tim Ealey are setting up a programme to remove pines but only where property owners agree. They will use techniques which will have minimum impact on vegetation and soil. It is likely the trees can be sold as sawlogs, treated poles, or pine mulch at about \$20 - \$30 per "wet tonne". The trees are of course the property of the landowners and so will be the proceeds. Peter and Tim will also cut for landowners merely wanting firewood or those who want other exotics removed such as Cootamundra Wattles. They are also happy to help replant areas from which pines have been removed.

Interested landowners should ring Peter, 712 0408 or Tim, 712 0347. We urgently need to know the number of pine trees over 10" (25cm) diameter near the base and how many under 10" so we can negotiate with timber contracts.

Volunteer "lumberjacks" willing to help with cutting, trimming and stacking should also ring Peter or Tim as well as those willing to use 4WD or winches to haul logs to roadsides.

