



ISSUE 8

PORT MACQUARIE LANDCARE GROUP INC.

JUNE 2013

A Shed for Landcare



The need for a shed for Landcare became critical after the acquisition of the Working Bee Van and in 2013 we explored possibilities for funding. Then Julie Ho found the Colorbond "Shed for a Mate" competition and applied. As is almost always the case, she was successful and we were awarded a grant of \$15,000 to cover the cost of acquiring and erecting a shed. Colorbond national sales manager, Mark Eckerman presented the cheque to Landcare at a lively ceremony at Town Green that was written up in the local news.

It then became incumbent on us to find a suitable site for the shed. Discussions with Thor Aaso at Council commenced at the beginning of January and after a false start and with the intervention of our Mayor Peter Besseling, a home for it was found. Currently the site is being prepared from the ground up with contractor Matt Atkins doing the excavating and Rob Gribble from Ranbuild in Port Macquarie steering the project to completion. At this time we don't have a completion date but it won't be far away.

Soon all those wonderful Landcarers who have been storing and tripping over our "stuff" will be able to move it to the shed, making access to our tools and equipment much less time consuming. A big thank you to Colorbond and to Julie for obtaining these funds for us.

- Estelle Gough



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Rob Gribble - Linking Landcare and Colorbond



Our new shed is not the only interesting link between Landcare and Colorbond. The shed story starts with BlueScope which owns Lysaght Building Solutions that produces 'Colorbond', the sheeting material that the shed is made from. In turn, Lysaght Building Solutions owns Ranbuild. Hastings Carports and Sheds is an Accredited Dealership of Ranbuild, owned for 4 years by Robert Gribble. Prior to taking on the dealership Rob worked on a property and constructed sheds.

In his previous life Rob started the Woolbrook-Walcha Road Landcare Group which was responsible for the restoration and protection of 17.5 kilometres of connected corridors along the Macdonald River under his leadership. Rob was chairperson of this group for 4 years and served on the committee of Southern New England Landcare Group for 2 years. This group is equivalent of Hastings Landcare.

- Estelle Gough



Something Missing from Timber Ridge?

There is now a lot of open space at the private road on top of Timber Ridge and Pacific Drive, following the removal of the stand of Coral Trees on this site. Four were removed in September 2012, but removal of the remainder could not be contemplated until we knew what money would be left over at the end of the EnviroTrust funding period in 2018.

Then we had a stroke of luck, with Council roads department doing some work in the area that required removal of the remaining trees. The Maintenance Engineer Malin Toft arranged for Peter Berecny to remove and mulch the trees on site, leaving an enormous gap in the vegetation (that resulted in complaints from some neighbours). Subsequently the roads department spread the mulch on the reshaped road embankment and put in a spoon drain to finish the roadwork. We now have an area that needs planting ASAP so again with the assistance of the roads department 750 plants will be going into this area to restore it to Subtropical Rainforest while ensuring there is access for the protection of people's homes.

- Estelle Gough



*Peter Berecny and his team from Port Tree Fella
Photos by Roz Anderson*



*Recent mulching and planting in progress
by our dedicated volunteers*



Yarranabee BBQ



Saturday 27th April 2013 - Yarranabee Site

What a great day it was with the sun shining, the birds singing and the leeches sucking.

Our President Estelle welcomed everyone to the site and introduced Uncle Bill O'Brien from the Birpai people who gave the "Welcome to Country" address.

Then Bill Peel, our Council Ecologist, gave us some insight into the rainforest before us. He explained the importance of our Landcare group's work and how the local neighbourhood can help by planting natives in their gardens.

We started our bush walk around the site with the first stop being to listen to the birds. Noisy Miners chatted on the edge of the trees to warn all others that we were there. Honey Eaters and Lorikeets moved in and out of the treetops, distributing seeds and pollen to help the regeneration. One of the neighbours told of how he had seen the return of the Noisy Pita, a very shy bird, which hops on the forest floor throwing leaves aside with its bill. This highlights the importance of local knowledge. Our next stop was out on the street to gain an understanding of what the birds see when flying out of the bush. Here the importance of native trees in our gardens was explained - they help the birds move across the landscape by providing places to rest. We watched a Small Wattle Bird fly from a Eucalypt to a Banksia then into the rainforest.

The next stop was in the palm grove. Bill explained how the canopy in this low-lying part of the reserve created good shade, reducing the number of weeds in this area compared to the area in full sun in the stormwater drain we had passed. There were leeches everywhere! We made our way out and conducted a "leech inspection" on each other before returning to the BBQ area where Pieter "de Chef" was hard at work, assisted by Leni and Bruno.

After lunch, Estelle introduced Peter Besseling, the Mayor of Port Macquarie Hastings Council. Peter thanked Landcare volunteers and the neighbours who attended and was most impressed by what we've achieved at this site. It's great to have this pocket of rainforest tucked away in urban Port Macquarie!

Estelle then gave Peter Besseling the Presentation Reports of Landcare's involvement at Absalom, Rushcutter and Timber Ridge prior to them being handed back to Council for follow up maintenance. The reports were also given to the volunteers who have been involved on the sites and are available at the Library.

- Bronwyn Newton

President's Report



Attendance at the April 'thank you' BBQ was the best ever, with 56 attendees. It was great to have representation

from all Landcare sites and committees and so satisfying for me to be able to thank everyone for the great work they do. Our Mayor, Peter Besseling was a welcome guest and involved himself in the activities for the duration of the day so everyone had an opportunity to talk to him. Bill Peel's tour was a big hit,

everyone learning from his vast store of environmental knowledge.

The timeframe I had allowed for erection of the Landcare Shed (till the end of the year) was way out, with Council finding us a home in record time. It will be a very welcome addition to our infrastructure and a busy day when we move in! Many items will need to be collected from volunteers' homes, shelving erected and all equipment stored and labelled. Committee, are you up for this task? We will make it a weekend for a maximum turnout.

We have passed our first reporting period for the EnviroTrust Project with flying colours and can now focus on next financial year's instalment of money and

tasks. We hope to have a visit in September/October from Steve Hardy, Grants Administrator (Bush Regeneration), Environmental Trust. I have asked him to make sure he has plenty of time to see over our sites. The effort going into this project from both Council and ourselves is enormous and the results are very impressive.

- Estelle Gough

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Ghost Crabs



Ocypode cordimanus

Despite their common name, these crabs are real and not apparitions. The name derives from their nocturnal behaviour and their reflective colouration.

Anyone who has ever fished or taken a walk on a beach at

night has seen these small, pearly-white crustaceans whizzing over the sand as they go about their business. At the end of a torch beam they do look a little spooky or ghostly. Trying to catch them requires a lot of energy or perhaps a football team.

Ghost Crab habitat is the strip of sand from high water mark to approximately 100 metres into the adjacent dunes. They construct burrows which in the dune sand can be over a metre deep. They can be seen as a hole in the sand about a twenty cent piece in diameter. Tiny tracks are often present leading to and from the burrow.

These crabs are scavengers and will seek out dead marine organisms and shoreline animals or a fisherman's bait if the opportunity presents.

The range of the local Ghost Crabs *cypode cordimanus* covers the north coast of NSW and southern Queensland. Ghost Crabs of the Family *Ocypodidae* are numerous and found around the world. Fiddler Crabs, who favour muddier habitats, also belong to this genus.

Ghost Crabs are not responsible for hauntings and any fisho who claims they are has probably put away too much rum on a cold winter's night.

- Steve Ho

Ghost Crabs as an Indicator of Environmental Change

Sandy beaches are an important coastal resource, delivering crucial ecosystem services and economic benefits to mankind. They are vulnerable to both natural and human disturbances that often go unrecognised. A crucial step in monitoring the impacts of these disturbances is to identify biological indicators. An indicator species must be practicable (easy to identify, abundant and widespread) and sensitive to the stresses that are of concern, such as the human impacts of high beach use, driving on dunes and beach cleaning techniques.

Ghost Crabs have been shown to be useful for this purpose. They are not too difficult to identify and they are widespread and abundant along much of the Australian tropical to warm-temperate coasts. Further, there is now a solid body of evidence to show that Ghost Crabs are indeed sensitive to a wide range of habitat modifications and direct pressures (e.g. cars crushing them) which makes them ideal candidates to measure human impacts on our shores over a wide geographic range. They can also be captured relatively easily for scientific purposes.

- Associate Professor Thomas Schlacher,
University of the Sunshine Coast



Importance of Native Groundcovers in Weed Control



Blair Case History

Blair Reserve is a good example of the important role in weed control played by ground cover species. This is Blair Reserve in January 2004 before Landcare attempted to restore it. It was a 2003 National Tree Day planting site of Koala food trees that had no follow up work done.

The first job was to knock down the grasses and Farmers Friend that had run riot. This allowed access for Landcare volunteers, who started by mulching the area to smother the weed seed bank that was to prove the most vexing issue for the area. In 2007 we were still mulching the area to deal with this problem. The growth in the trees can be seen in the background but there was still not enough canopy cover to shade out the weeds that continued to emerge.



The Blair team reduced in numbers around this time and to keep on top of the weeds they sprayed them. Unfortunately the emerging ground covers that would have helped with weed reduction were sprayed as well. Also around this time the trees that were planted in

2003 started to decline in health due to the poor fill that was their soil. This produced more gaps in the canopy, leading to more advantageous sites for the weeds seeds to germinate. This cycle continued until early 2012 when more resources were made available to Blair in the form of Rex's team spending many Tuesdays supplementing the Blair volunteers.

The first task was to cease spraying this site and hand remove weeds as they appeared and before they had a chance to set seeds. It took Jenny Reeve and Cecilia Carroll several weeks to do the first hand weed of the dreaded Farmers Friend. This process continued throughout the year and was supplemented with plantings of understory rainforest trees to produce more shade, and ground covers grown at the nursery for this purpose. These plantings were made possible by funding received from the NRMA for the Missing Link Project.

We also put in plugs of other ground covers from surrounding areas. These resulted in a big reduction in the regrowth of the Farmers Friend. This section took 10 hours to hand weed just a few weeks ago and just 1 hour to weed last week.



These 3 photos show the progress from bare ground to the first plantings of ground covers to the fully covered forest floor with very little weed invasion and the emergence of a shrub layer of *Alocasia brisbanensis*. Ground covers were: *Commelina cyanea* grown at the nursery, plugs of *Centella asiatica* and *Dichondra repens* already on site.

Just when we thought we were getting on top of things more canopy was destroyed in the recent rain. We have removed the debris so we can continue to maintain the area and not have it go backwards.

- Estelle Gough



Photo taken March 2013 with the growth of the Brush Box shown



Native Plant: Pepperbush



Tasmannia insipida

Australian native pepper has become popular over the last decade as a bush food spice. It is sold commercially and usually derived from *Tasmannia lanceolata* and *Tasmannia stipitata*.

Tasmannia insipida is a shrub 2.5 to 3 metres high (sometimes taller) with reddish stems. It responds well to pruning and becomes a dense bush in a semi-shaded position with reasonable drainage. The simple leaves are arranged in clustered whorls; narrow, glossy and tapering to a point, they have a peppery aroma when crushed. The small white flowers occur in umbels from the leaf axils in spring through to summer. All varieties are dioecious,



which means male and female flowers grow on separate plants, so you will need two if you want to enjoy the soft, pastel mauve fruit. These are ripe September to October and are edible but insipid, while the seeds taste like freshly ground black pepper.

Tasmannia insipida have been grown easily from seed at the Landcare Nursery after pulping the fruit.

The larvae of the butterfly, Macleay's Swallowtail or *Graphium macleayanus* use this plant as a food source.

- Estelle Gough

Weed: Chinese Rain Tree



Koelreuteria formosana

Origin: Taiwan

Noxious Weed Category: Environmental Weed

Description: Habit: small to medium deciduous tree growing to 7 metres with a broad dome shaped crown. Leaves: compound (bi-pinnate/twice-divided), dark green above and paler green below and of variable size and shape. The leaves are hairless, often appear feathery and measure up to 90 mm in length. The leaflets are narrow, ovate and have irregularly toothed edges and a long, tapering point. Each leaflet is approximately 90 mm in length. Flowers: small, to 20 mm in length, and occur in branched clusters at the stem tips. They are butter-yellow with five petals that vary in length until opening. Each flower contains seven to eight pale yellow stamens with hairy white filaments. Fruit: an inflated papery capsule that splits into three parts and is light pink to deep rose in colour. Fruits are up to 50 mm long and appear in large drooping

clusters. The seeds are small, black and round and about 5 mm in diameter.

Ecology: This plant is on the Alert List for Environmental Weeds, a list of 28 non-native plants that threaten biodiversity and cause other environmental damage. It was first recognised as a naturalised environmental weed in the 1990s in the Brisbane City Council area where it has invaded urban parks, bushland, gullies and streets. It is a fast growing species that is tolerant of a wide range of environmental conditions. It usually escapes from cultivated plantings on properties and street-scapes by wind-blown seeds into waterways and nearby bushland. Bushland edges, in particular, are susceptible to invasion and establishment. Being fast-growing it can out-compete local native species at the shrub/understory and mid-story layer strata.

Dispersal: It reproduces by seeds, which can germinate within 6–8 days. It is not known exactly how the seeds are dispersed, but it is possible that water and wind may contribute as well as contaminated soil/machinery. Seedlings are often found beneath mature trees, however, successful germination of seed and subsequent growth of the seedling to maturity is dependent on the level of sunlight penetration.

Control: As for many woody weeds, control is best undertaken as early as

possible while the plant is still small. Hand: Small plants to 2 years old can be hand pulled but when older than this hand-pulling can be difficult. Use caution when hand pulling on steep or friable soils. Chemical: Plants too large for hand pulling but up to 100mm diameter can be cut close to ground level and immediately painted with undiluted glyphosate (eg RoundUp Biactive). Chisel or drill and inject larger trees with undiluted glyphosate @ 2mL per cut/hole, holes 100mm apart and as close to the ground as possible (also treat any dominant surface roots).

- Estelle Gough



Chinese Rain Tree seedling

Native Look-alikes:



Foambark:
Jagera pseudorhus



White Cedar:
Melia azedarach



Weed: Brazilian Nightshade



Solanum seaforthianum

Origin: Caribbean area

Common names: Brazilian nightshade, Climbing Nightshade, Potato Creeper, St Vincent Lilac



Climbing Nightshade flourishes in forested coastal environments including dry and wet sclerophyll and littoral rainforests. The lilac colour of its flowers is one of the most attractive features of this plant, but it also has decorative lobed leaves and red berries in large clusters. No wonder it has been planted as an ornamental! Unfortunately, it has now become a weed in Africa, India, Indochina, the Pacific Islands and Australia. It quickly climbs into the canopy to display the flowers and fruits, shedding seeds that germinate in their thousands around the "mother" plant. It can overwhelm native trees and displace other native plants

which are necessary for the survival of wildlife, such as *Cayratia* vines.

Solanum seaforthianum is not just delinquent, it also has a darker side. It can poison humans and domestic stock, and while it is reportedly spread by birds, it may be poisonous to some of them. This toxicity is a feature of the Solanaceae family to which it belongs. These plants contain tropane alkaloids (reputed to be ingredients in the Haitian zombie drug!) Ingesting these alkaloids can result in hyperthermia, confusion, amnesia, agitation, seizures, coma, and death. Wikipedia says *Solanum seaforthianum* is "mildly toxic and inedible" as it contains modest amounts of the tropine alkaloids *Atropine*, *Scopolamine*, and *Hyoscyamine*). These alkaloids can dilate the pupils, increase heart rate, and cause confusion and hallucinations. So this plant is dangerous despite being pretty.



Please remove it whenever you see it, especially if it is flowering or fruiting. It's usually easy to pull out each vine by the rather shallow roots, but you must get all the roots, as fragments will regenerate and send up shoots. Older stems can be 2cm or more across and you may have to cut-and-paint them with 100% glyphosate. Collect and bag all the seeds, as even the unripe green ones may be viable. The seeds germinate and grow quickly on the soil surface, but you can kill them with Roundup spray.

Of course, the Solanaceae family of plants also includes many that are cultivated and safe to eat: potato, tomato, eggplant and capsicum. Another family member is tobacco.

- Julie Ho



Guest Speaking Engagement



Guest speaker, Jo Ho from Port Macquarie Landcare being presented with a certificate from Shane Divett of Hastings Headway

Julie Ho was recently asked to speak to members of Hastings Headway.

Julie enjoyed her time answering participants' questions and handing out bumper stickers and posters



Malinda (work placement), Glenn (service user) and Suzanne (support worker) with Julie Ho watching a PowerPoint presentation



Worms



Land carers for thousands of years, earthworms, along with their associated life forms (biota), condition the topsoil. They can chew through anything that has ever lived (organic waste) and produce castings in a plant soluble form.

Vermiculture for human Landcarers can be as easy as burying some kitchen waste in the ground with mulch over the top (the earthworms will come to the deposited waste) or you can become a fanatic and have worm farm bins at home, at work, and for the neighbours.

Commercial compost worm species are the best for this task (Red Manure worms, Tiger worms, or 'Blues'). These three are epigeic species, which means they are surface dwelling, ingesting freshly decaying plant or animal residues. They thrive in 20-25cm (8-10 inch) deep bins, positioned in a warm,

shady location, away from heavy downpours but kept moist and dark.

Alternatively you can place the bin on the ground with a rain cover (allowing for airflow) on top. This system allows the 'worm wee' to seep into the garden soil and allows retreat for the worms in hotter weather.

You will need 1000-2000 worms per 1-2 person household – they can double their population every three months during Spring/Summer if well cared for. Feed the worms only as much as they can handle or the waste will get mouldy or smell. Feed them again when you see most of the waste has disappeared. Worms are wonderful!

- 'Madam Slithers' (Janet Slater)

Itinerant Landcarers

Email to Julie Ho from Ian Jury

Hi Julie,

We left Innisfail just before the rains came and hit the road south staying at Bangal Beach north of Townsville for the first night. The local red tailed black cockatoos and blue winged kookaburras put on a fine show. Next day we headed inland to Charters Towers visiting the old gold crushing plant and watching the allied rock wallabies on Towers Hill. South east from there down the inland road to Emerald staying for 2 nights at Sapphire where Carol had the time of her life sieving buckets of gravel from the gem mines. In her first bucket she got a 6.3 carat green sapphire and ended up with about 200 carats of cuttable gems which we have sent to Bangkok to be cut and polished. With flocks of brolgas, bustards and red winged parrots I had plenty to look out for too. We tackled the 163 Km dirt road from Alpha to Tambo and didn't get stuck but the wagon got a good thick coat of red mud. We stopped at Augathella then Charleville as we followed the Warego south. At Charleville we went to the observatory and in a perfectly cloud and moon free sky had excellent views of nebulae, globular clusters, and binary stars finishing off with the moons of Jupiter,

Then down the Mitchell Highway to Bourke where we stayed in a beaut log cabin, The Darling was in flood so we missed out on a boat cruise but no matter, the camp site was full of birds new to me; spotted bowerbird, blue bonnet parrots and white winged fairy wrens. We strolled around the historic cemetery spotting graves of bushrangers and paid homage to Fred Hollows, another Kiwi claimed by Australia!

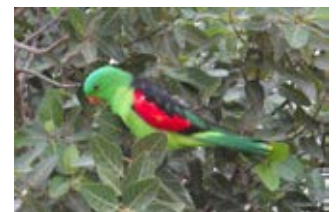
From Bourke south to Cobar then west into the desert. We took a detour to see the Aboriginal rock art at Mt Grenfell meeting a central bearded dragon and a large sand monitor on the way.

Last stop was Wilcannia which seemed to be a ghost town, I saw 40 black kites, thousands of corellas and dozens of black cockatoos but only 9 people in a circuit of the town, many shops were boarded up or falling down. Finally found human life at the Wilcannia golf club where we ate an excellent Chinese meal. A very strange place.

Arrived safely in Broken Hill, we have a lovely furnished flat with a Mediterranean style garden which the local birds flock to when the sprinkler system turns on. Carol loves the hospital which has very friendly staff and encourages her to do midwifery the way she enjoys. I'm trying to get in touch with the local Landcare group, at least here the weeds will not grow so fast. Off to Whitecliffs at the weekend to look for opals and stay in the Underground Motel.



All the best,
Ian and Carol



Meet our Volunteer



Angela Millett - 'Fungi Lady'

I first got involved with Landcare about 4½ years ago through my Landcarer mother, Bronwyn Newton. I thought a few hours working on a site weeding and planting would be great - and it was! Then I discovered fungi. Now we drive to a work site and Mum goes off with shovels and picks and I head off in a different direction looking for fungi.

Each specimen I find is photographed and GPS location, altitude, habitat, substrate, specimen description and date are all recorded. This information is sent to the Royal Botanical Gardens of Melbourne where a study of 100 target species is being conducted. Anyone interested can find out more at www.fungimap.rbg.vic.gov.au.

Collecting the necessary information is sometimes easy. On a good day you can stumble across a large troop of one species, from young to mature. Being able to see all stages at one site is like being a kid in a candy store. Where do I start? Information overload!

At other times it's more complicated. As featured in the photos, young specimens can look very different from mature ones, making it easy to think you are dealing with two different species. Recently I spent a few weeks at Hat Head and was lucky enough to photograph this fungus day and night for a week showing the changing stages through a fruiting cycle.

This fungus is ***Omphalotas nidiformis***. It is reported to be luminescent at night. Unfortunately few photos of its luminescence have been captured in Australia, but I will not give up. Seasons and weather patterns are known to be contributing factors. Field notes can be difficult to write if you find a tiny little cup-shaped cap no bigger than 2 mm across with gills the width of a hair. This makes it very hard to tell how the gills are attached to the stem (I have added a magnifying glass to my "fungi hunting bag" to help in this situation). In some specimens the caps, when young, are attached to the stem by a membrane that protects the gills until they have reached the spore producing stage.

Spore prints are also not always easy to record as I don't take specimens out of their location if they are solitary (I think these guys work too hard just to be there). A mature specimen is required to release spores, as young fungi are not at a fertile stage. Specimens that I am able to take home sit on glass slide plate over night dropping their spores (hopefully). Colour can be observed at this stage, but if colour is not evident (due to too few spores) a specimen may need to be placed on black or white paper overnight to leave a print. I have just bought myself a digital microscope that allows me to photograph the spores through the microscope and download the images onto my computer so identifying spores has just become a little easier.

In my fungi hunting bag are: camera, tripod, field note sheets, pencils, ruler, knife, scissors, chopping board, collection box (adjustable fishing tackle box and ice-cream containers), magnifying glass, small hand shovel and a large plastic sheet to lie or sit on - did I mention fungi like the rain!

To sum up my experience, I'm loving every dirty moment of this study and look forward to my weekends. I love the fact that I have infected my friends and family with the fungi "bug" (vacations stories now include what fungi have been seen) and I'm excited to have found over 100 different species of fungi in the Port Macquarie area so far (not bad for a weekend hobby). I've identified just over 50 species (8 are in the FUNGIMAPS 100 target species) and I'm well on my way to identifying more with the help of my new microscope. I would love to have some feedback on my "What the Fungi" column In The Habitatler and feel free to contact me and send photos if you're unsure what is on your site. I can't guarantee I can answer all emails straight away as I've just started my own business (nothing to do with fungi) but I will do my best!

-Angela Millett angela.26@bigpond.com



Angela and her other passion

Omphalotas nidiformis



Stage 1



Stage 2



Stage 3



Stage 4



School Planting at Lighthouse Beach

The day was 2 April 2013, the scene was South Watonga and the mission was to welcome St Columba students doing some community service.

A week earlier Bob Rosenbaum from Council had generously sent us machines and operators to define the edge for planting Lomandras. They knocked down and mulched masses of dead weeds and fallen limbs then spread out an old pile of rotten mulch – see picture. It saved hours of labour!

Landcarers were already at work by 8.30am cutting back the eye-poking sticks and straggly grass left behind by the slasher.



There was no stopping the yellow shirted superheroes when they saw the mulch, kindly delivered by Port Tree Fella. They got the site ready for plant-



ing to start when the Year 8 students arrived at 9.30, bright-eyed and bushy-tailed.

After some serious talk about ticks, tools and Terracottem the Saints were split into three groups, with the teacher choosing those most likely to survive working with mulch forks.

Others put on their gloves and began to plant, closely supervised by Landcarers. There's one right way to plant seedlings, but often things go wrong – must be Murphy's law.

200 seedlings went in, with Lomandras along the edge and 50 littoral rainforest understorey plants infilling behind them. They were all watered with Landcare's green mile of hose, connected to a Council tap.

Meanwhile the third group was bashing bitou on the last dune, aiming to stop the flowers turning into seeds. These

students relished the chance to use real tools, and liked butchering the bitou so much that they did not want to stop.

But it just got too hot, and when most of the work was done, it was time to get out of the sun and answer to The Enforcer. Happily all the tools were accounted for and the students had time for a geography talk while they were cooling off in the shade.

To the 12 patient, kind, hard-working Landcarers: you are great with kids and it could never have been done without you. No damaged kids, no lost tools, all work done and you still had time for morning tea!

Thank you to John O'Reilly for the St Columba pix!

- Julie Ho



St Columba students with Jenny Reeve (Landcarer)

Green Catbird

Ailuroedus crassirostris

The scientific name aptly describes the major features of this bird – *Ailuroedus* (cat singer) *crassirostris* (thick billed). This species is endemic (found nowhere else in the world) to central-eastern Australia, including Port Macquarie. It can be difficult to see in its rainforest habitat, and its "cat-wailing" call is heard far more often than the bird is actually seen by the casual observer. It feeds at all levels of the rainforest but especially in the middle canopy, taking a wide variety of fruit but also flowers, buds, leaves, stems and seeds.

Its nest is a large, bulky bowl made of sticks, twigs, vine stems, tendrils and rootlets. The nest is mostly sited in an

upright fork of a bushy sapling among a tangle of vines, but sometimes in a Cabbage Palm *Livistona*. Nests are under constant threat from predators - presumably the vegetation and vines are for camouflage and the Cabbage Palm for protection. Usually two eggs form the clutch and incubation lasts 23 days. The young leave the nest after a further 21 days (when they weigh approx 153 grams) and remain dependent on the parents for 80 days!

This species is sedentary, meaning breeding pairs remain within a stable home range of one to two hectares throughout the year and wild birds may live up to 15 years. There is no

plumage difference between male and female. The major threat to this species is now habitat clearance or degradation, not as in earlier days when it was considered "good eating" and was shot in significant numbers.

- Tony Bischoff



An advanced nestling Green Catbird experiences its new world. Photo by Roz Anderson.



Visiting Landcarers Lend a Hand

From: Marc Ó Conaill

To: nursery@landcareportmac.com.au

Sent: Thursday April 04, 2013 10:11 am

Subject: Marc, Ingrid, Grainne and Sietske visitors to Port Macquarie Landcare Group

Hi Estelle,

Many thanks for your kind hospitality on our recent visit to one of your Landcare group's working bees. As promised I have written up a bit of a bio about us for your newsletter. I have included a link to our Landcare group below, and have sent you a separate link to our photos on SkyDrive. Feel free to use any you like. It was great meeting such dedicated and organised volunteers. But, Landcare is like that. Thanks for your time.

Regards,
Marc

Marc (Irish) and Ingrid (Dutch) met while volunteering in Killarney National Park, south west Ireland about 24 years ago. Our task was to clear rhododendron, which was introduced to the park and preventing the natural regeneration of native oak. The site in which we worked is reported to have Stone Age remnants and is titled Glasheen na Marbh (pronounced Glaseen-Nah-Mar-iv, meaning Valley of the Dead). We volunteered there for a number of years, eventually leading international volunteers. Would you believe they paid to experience Irish weather and mud. Such dedication!

We emigrated to Australia about 14 years ago, travelling for 1.5 years and volunteering as we went. One of the most interesting stints was as Volunteer Dolphin Rangers at Monkey Mia. We learned quite a lot there about the interplay and conflict between conservation, tourism and politics.

To us Adelaide was one of the more beautiful places we visited and so we decided to settle. Grainne (pronounced Graw-in-yah, meaning Grace) is 9 and Sietske (pronounced Seats-kuh) is 7. Both girls have been active in conservation work since born. They saw how



to weed from being carried on Mum and Dad's backs. Our family are active members of Campbelltown Landcare Group in Adelaide and the Tarcowie Landcare Group in the mid-north of SA. Campbelltown Landcare Group, one of Australia's first urban Landcare groups, looks after the last intact remnant of Adelaide plains vegetation, while Tarcowie Landcare Group are actively establishing very large corridors between remnant vegetation.

In January of this year we hit the road with the kids for 6 months. We home school the kids from our little Jayco Offroad Dove and it goes well. We are in regular contact with their teachers in Athelstone, SA, who are more than supportive of us doing what we are doing. Our first stop, after sweltering 45° weather in Adelaide, was Tasmania. Our plan is to mix camping in the bush, usually for 5 days and typically in a National Park, with then returning to civilisation for a clean-up etc.

Some highlights of our trip have been organising a guide to bring us to Miranda Gibson's protest site against the logging of the Upper Florentine. Up until very recently Miranda was 64m high up a tree in the Upper Florentine protesting against the logging of World Heritage proposed forests. Our girls interviewed her over CB radio and delivered a large donation on behalf of our Landcare groups. We have also visited the Tarkine National Coalition head Scott Jordan who explained to the kids the work his group are doing to help protect the Tarkine against mining. The kids have said that historic Ross, Tasmania was a highlight, as well as horse riding in the alps of Mt Beauty, Victoria,

and experiencing the beautiful area surrounding Mount Field in Tasmania. They asked that we return there for the snow.

We have seen such landscapes, plants, animals, and ecosystems. We have also met such motivated people such as yourselves on our travels. From the Tasmanian

alps to the rainforests of south-east Queensland, where I am now writing. Travelling is not easy and can be an effort at times, but we are certain the experiences are impacting our kids in such a life changing way. Just check out their diaries!

Onward we go

Link:

Campbelltown Landcare Group:
<http://www.facebook.com/campbelltown.landcare>



Swapping Landcare stories and ideas over a cuppa at morning tea



Foote Sanctuary

A Landcare-Type Project in Memory of a Fallen Soldier

On Anzac Day this year I heard on TV the speech given by the Australian Ambassador to France, Mr. Ric Wells, at a memorial service at Villers-Bretonneux in France. One of the soldiers mentioned was Eric Foote. Momentarily stunned, I then quickly recognised this as the name associated with a bush sanctuary in Buderim on the Sunshine Coast - a reserve which, when living nearby, I visited countless times to walk through and to take many environmental, portrait and wedding photographs.

Foote Sanctuary covers 9 hectares on the eastern slopes of Buderim. This is a plateau of rich red soil formed as a result of the pre-historic eruption of volcanoes near Maleny that spewed out basalt lava that flowed north and eastwards, filling valleys and streams and coating ridges. Dense forests of Red Cedar, Blackbean and Beech trees eventually formed in the resulting nutrient rich soils. In the 1860s the native timbers were taken out and milled and the area was almost completely cleared to allow farming of bananas, various citrus fruits, coffee and vegetables.

In 1948, the Sanctuary land was donated to a community association, now known as the Buderim War Memorial Community Association, by the Footes - a local farming family - in memory of their son and brother Eric who was killed in the fighting at the Somme during the First World War. With the cessation of farming weeds had taken over and elephant grass had become a major pest, together with lantana and other vine weeds. As it was a memorial, provision was made for walking paths, seats and barbeque areas. First though, the weeds had to be removed. On the advice of Forestry officers, slow tree planting was strategically carried out to allow natural regrowth. Strictly indigenous trees were planted, indigenous defined as "within an area of 10 kilometres of Buderim", to preserve the reality of the bush from pre-1860's.

At some point the land was put into the hands of the local council to administer and sometime after that it was suggested that it be sold, due to lack of community interest. This led to a public outcry and resurgence of respect for the memory of Eric Foote and his family's wishes. A voluntary committee formed in 1963 of quietly dedicated workers who took on the task of clearing the

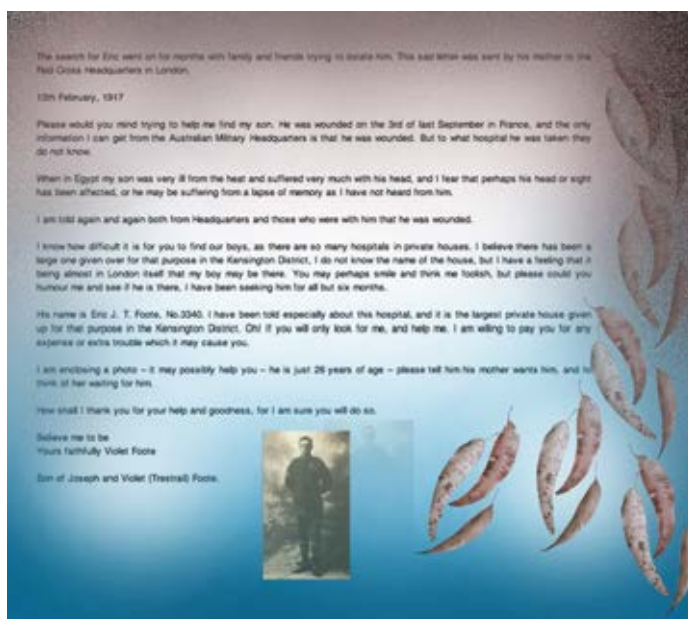
overgrowth and weed infestation and creating many new walking tracks for people to appreciate the bush ... and maybe reflect on those who have given so much for their community in the past and in the present. The trees have matured, bird species have increased and other fauna abound. A new generation of volunteers continue the work and a memory is preserved.

- Rex Moir



Eric Foote was born in Ipswich, Queensland in January 1891, the eldest of six children to Joseph and Violet Foote. Following many holidays on the Sunshine Coast the family was drawn and eventually relocated to Buderim, buying a 220 hectare lot of land. They established a mixed farm growing various citrus fruits, pineapples, bananas, coffee and pecans. Adventurous and independent, Eric soon went out on his own breeding horses in close by Woombye. As it was for many other young Australians, the "Great War" (1914-18) was Eric's calling. His talents were noted and he was quickly promoted to Sergeant and bound for Egypt to train for the anticipated battle on the Western Front. However Eric became very ill with heatstroke and dysentery, missing the 9th Battalion transport to "The Front". After recovery he voluntarily accepted demotion to Private and was transferred to the 49th Battalion, promoted to Corporal in April 1916, then to Sergeant in August 1916. "Sent to France and fought on Moquet Farm, where he was first wounded in hand, and ordered to the dressing station. He returned to the line and was given charge of bombs, but was relieved of that, and he was offered to lead a relieving party who were carrying water to the front line. Killed in Action. Awarded the Military Medal posthumously 19th April 1917."

As for all wartime tragedies, Eric's was laden with, confusion, hope, anguish, loss and grief. This is a letter from Eric Foote's mother (and family) to try and find his whereabouts.



Nursery Natterings



The wall that has been built next to the nursery has already resulted in problems caused by increased shade. We have had to have a clean-up day to remove the build-up of spores from various fungi and algae, which hide everywhere. The igloo was cleaned inside and out and the benches and gravel were also cleaned. This required the use of a gurney, provided by Brian Grant, and the application of an algae-cide, 'Algae Died B'.



Although the boys looked like butchers they did a great job and we've seen a decline in fungi and algae for now.

Some other jobs have been done as well. Marie was our pruner for the *Dianella caerulea* to



keep them from becoming a trip hazard. Peter spent a lot of time fixing sprayers and respraying settled gravel.

One of the nursery jobs is to visit Colleen Werner who collects seeds of rainforest species we can't get, and grows some plants for us.

Bruno and Ann Ryan and their daughter Madeline Eisner and I have been to visit her. Colleen is also a wildlife carer, so the Swamp Wallaby, Ring-Tailed Possum and Paddy Melons she is caring for stole the show.



On a wet day we are often visited by the "Creature from the Black Lagoon" aka Lorraine Moore.

-Estelle Gough

Upcoming Events

Date / Time	Event Details	Contact
Sunday 30 June 2013	Membership Fees due PO Box 5287 Port Macquarie 2444	Ken Gough treasurer@landcareportmac.com.au
Tuesday 9 July 2013 6.45pm for 7pm start	General Meeting of PMLG Port City Bowling Club	RSVP Janet Slater janetslater1237@bigpond.com
2 - 6 September 2013	Landcare Week Display at Port Macquarie Library	Estelle nursery@landcareportmac.com.au

The **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** of **PORT MACQUARIE LANDCARE INC** will be held on **Tuesday, 10 September** at **Port City Bowling Club** commencing at **7.00pm**. The AGM will be directly followed by a General Meeting.

All committee positions are declared open and nominations are welcome. If you wish to nominate someone for a committee position:

- Send an email to the person you wish to nominate and ask them to reply to you, accepting the nomination;
- If they accept, forward the resulting email at least 7 days before AGM to janetslater1237@bigpond.com

If the number of nominations received is equal to the number of vacancies to be filled, the persons nominated will be taken to be elected.

If the number of nominations received exceeds the number of vacancies to be filled, a ballot will be held at the AGM.

Habitatler Team: Coordinator and Layout: Carol Jungblut

Editor: Bev Sibthorpe

Photo Editor: Rex Moir



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