

APS EAST HILLS GROUP NEWSLETTER



August 2021

NEXT EHG MEETING:

August Meeting cancelled

Due to COVID Lockdown

BUT the Newsletter has lots of goodies

To keep you entertained

Hoping to see you all back again in September.

Stay safe & well until then

VISITORS ARE WELCOME

WELCOME to the August 2021 edition of the APS East Hills Group Newsletter.

This month's newsletter is again unusual. We have no meeting to report on and no plant table to drool over. However, all is not lost. Tony & Kate Porritt have been on a big adventure through 3 deserts, so sit back & enjoy their story without the bumps, bull dust & flies. We also have a report from Karlo on some new orchid finds. Hopefully we'll be back in September with Sophie Moore speaking on the benefits of urban trees.

Dorothy Luther, Editor

In the spirit of reconciliation, the APS East Hills group acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

<http://austplants.com.au/East-Hills>



A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

I hope you are all well and taking care of yourselves both physically and mentally in this difficult situation of COVID-19 lockdown. Also those who are on their own and members who have health problems will not be finding the lockdown easy going. Our thoughts are with you all.

It seems as though lock down is becoming the new normal. We'll all be very fit after this. Everyone is walking the local streets and gardening. Children will think their grandparents live in little boxes and food appears at the door in cartons. Never try to explain about how milk comes from cows! This disconnect from nature is becoming a problem with trying to get people interested in bush care. What is 'bush' after all? - Some dangerous place with creepy crawlies, spiders and snakes. And climate change is such a BIG thing that we can't do anything about it.

Des & I are enjoying having time in the garden. He recently removed an unhealthy camellia tree for me. After tackling the onion weeds in this section I am planting a Lilli Pilli with deep pink flowers. I bought it from Lloyd Hedges at a recent meeting. I will keep you posted on its progress.

Also in bud is the Swamp Orchid Kyril gave me a few years ago that I grew from a flower spike. I will take a photo of the flowers when they bloom.

My self-seeded banksias are coming along nicely, as you can see.

Spring must be on the way. The bush wattles are starting to bloom in our area.

Thank you to Dorothy for producing the newsletter & all those who contributed to it.

Warmest regards to all,
Marie O'Connor.
President, East Hills Group



MEMBER ADVENTURES

Across Three Deserts with Kate & Tony Porritt

On our recent trip in June we travelled through the Great Sandy (GSD), Gibson (GD) and Great Victoria Deserts (GVD) between southern latitudes 22 and 26. The intention of the trip was to travel many of the roads\tracks Len Beadell surveyed in the 1950's & early 60's in these 3 deserts.

A desert is defined as an area of low or irregular patterns of precipitation, prolonged high temperatures, high evaporation rates from soil surfaces and extreme temperature fluctuations. It is not necessarily an endless landscape of bare sandy dunes, in fact Australian deserts are notable for their great variety of flora.

We were hopeful that recent rains in these areas would not impede our travel but create an abundance of vegetation. The photos below show the changes in terrain, vegetation and roads\tracks we took.

Some of these tracks were incredibly bad and some we created on our way. Day temperatures were pleasant (low 20's) but the nights were very cold, one night below freezing.

Starting out from Alice Springs our journey west brought us to Gary Junction in the Great Sandy Desert, and then south along the Gary Highway. We followed the road between red sand dunes of varying heights. These dunes were covered in vegetation, this no doubt helped stabilise them.



Typical sand dune of the Great Sandy Desert

After this the land was flat but still sandy. Some plants were already making use of the recent rains and growing profusely. These rains forced us to make a detour from the Gary Highway when we found the road underwater, thus causing us to create our own track (see below).



Flooded track in the Gibson Desert



New growth after water receded in the Gibson Desert

On the next track Spinifex plants were flourishing, causing the need to stop and clear engine areas of the seed heads. Spinifex has been known to ignite when close to hot engine parts causing serious damage and even destroying vehicles.



Flourishing Spinifex along the track (GD)

We were now quite used to the change in terrain from open plains of red sand or gravel to rocky areas and even some hills that gave us a view of the surrounding country. Plants still flourished in all areas, with some wooded areas that made good camp sites.



Gravel terrain in the Gibson Desert



Red sand of the Gibson Desert



Mallee & Mulga in the Gibson Desert



Mallee campsite in the Great Victoria Desert



New growth following rain (GVD)

Among the places we visited were the Maralinga atom bomb sites, Warri waterhole where the last aboriginals still living a nomadic lifestyle were encountered and an abandoned airstrip used by Len Beadell to bring in supplies. The airstrip was still in very good condition, allowing one of us to attempt the land speed record.

It was a very enjoyable trip seeing such a variety of landscapes, fauna and flora. We are in the process of identifying the flora and will happily distribute the final list to anyone interested.


GROUP NEWS

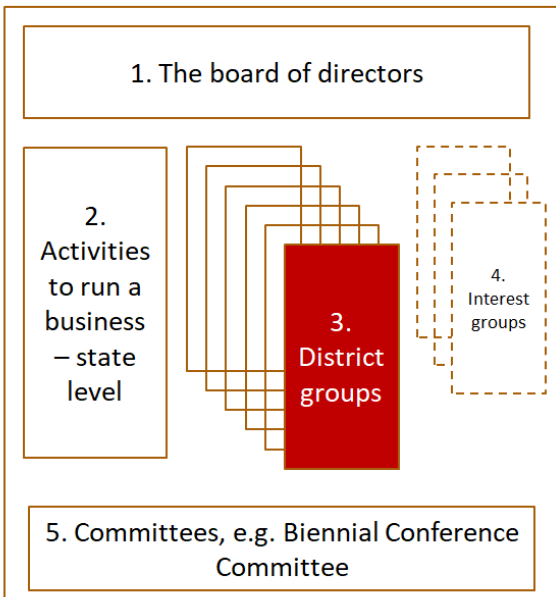
President's Strategy Workshop

On the 19 & 20 June 2021 Marie and Dorothy Luther attended this workshop in Parramatta to review the draft strategy the board has been working on and how to implement it.

The workshop started with a discussion on the structure of APS NSW & ANPSA and of how the finances are allocated. This resulted in a short presentation which we will share at our next meeting. In the meantime, here are a couple of the slides to whet your appetite:

Structure – District groups






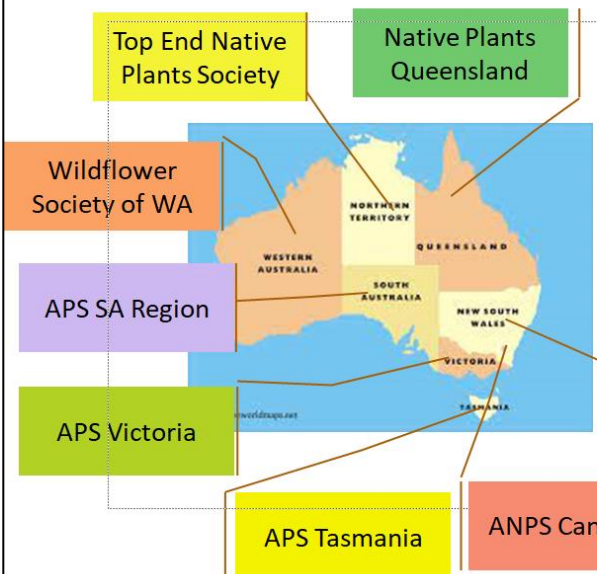
3. District groups

- Currently of various members sizes
- Activities:
 - Group finances
 - Member management
 - Social media, websites, newsletters
 - Events
 - Partnerships and projects
- If the group has a bank account, it must have a responsible officer (eg President/Treasurer) who reports on finances and activities
- Some groups have operating guidelines/'constitutions' to assist them to manage their activities
- Many groups have funds which they use to support their activities
- Each group receives \$10 for each membership per year (adjusting for # of years paid etc) – funds provided quarterly

ANPSA

Australian Native Plants Society Australia





ANPSA

- Each state has a native plants society, albeit with different names
- ANPSA is an association to which all state native plant societies belong
- It is an overarching body to represent native plant societies across Australia
- Each state pays fees to ANPSA annually to support them operating (\$2,000 for APS NSW)
- ANPSA is responsible for:
 - ANPSA website, study groups

Speakers List – Mining the Newsletters

As well as the Native Plant Distributions lists that Tony Maxwell is compiling (see the June newsletter), he is also working on a list of speakers at previous District Group meetings. The idea is to provide this list to all District Groups as some ideas on topics that could be canvassed by them. It may result in offers to speak at other group meetings. To help this exercise, I went back through our newsletters to the start of 2017 & reviewed them. I was quite impressed at the number of presentations done by our own members. I counted only 14 external speakers over 4.5 years.

Another APS Resource

The indefatigable Tony Maxwell has also compiled a list of the Rare & Endangered species in the Parramatta Hills District (his District Group). It can be found in the members area under the group section [here](#). You need to log in for this.

TWO New Orchid Species found by Karlo Taliana

***Pharochilum daintreanum* – a new orchid species for Bankstown LGA**

This month has seen the unexpected discovery of a Greenhood orchid species, *Pharochilum daintreanum* (formerly *Pterostylis daintreana*) at Picnic Point in the Georges River National Park. The vast majority of the local Greenhoods are found around Yeramba Lagoon but in this case, a single plant of this particular species was found up on the ridge in laterite soils.

From a distance, the plant could have easily been mistaken for the common species *Bunochilus longifolius* (formerly *Pterostylis longifolia*) but its occurrence on laterite made me suspicious enough to think it may be different. On closer examination, I knew I had found *Pharochilum daintreanum* – a species that I was also familiar with only because there had been many recent reports by others of it flowering at locations outside Sydney through social media pages like Facebook. *Pharochilum daintreanum* was first named by George Bentham in 1873 based on specimens collected by Edwin Daintrey (naturalist, botanical collector). This species tends to inhabit skeletal soils over sandstone slabs sometimes within moss beds. It has a widespread distribution from Queensland (Darling Downs, Ipswich, MacPherson Ranges) extending down south into NSW with the occasional report of its existence in the northern suburbs of Sydney. According to PlantNet, the NSW Herbarium records suggest there have been very few records of this species in Sydney's south with the last sighting in the Georges River area occurring at Lugarno in 1946. Despite further searches, no other specimens were found so it is assumed that this species is likely to be very rare in our local area.



Pharochilum daintreanum

Further to this find, about a week later I was also excited to have come across the elusive helmet orchid, *Corybas pruinosus*, after having been tipped off by Robert Miller that there had been historic recordings of this species at Picnic Point. According to long-term member of the Bankstown Bushland Society, Colin Gibson, the only Bankstown LGA observations of this species were by Bob Fry during the period 1978-82. Bob knew the local flora very well but back in those days with no satellite navigation available to him, his sittings along the rock ledges of the Ridge Walk (referred to as 'Blackwall' by local flora experts) could not be confirmed. My searches last year failed to locate any of plants in the general area Bob had located them previously. The new patch found exists in a completely different section of Picnic Point along the western side of Yeramba Lagoon. Darryl Mackay (local orchid expert) was able to confirm this find as *Corybas pruinosus* (Toothed Helmet orchid) – now the third helmet



Corybas pruinosus

orchid species in our local area along with *C aconitiflorus* and *C fimbriatus*.

Rutaceae of the Georges River National Park, by Karlo Taliana

This article relates to members of the plant family, Rutaceae (so the information provided is not necessarily based on what may be flowering right now).

All the photos shown I have taken at various locations within the Georges River National Park.

Rutaceae is a plant family, commonly known as the citrus family, with several members naturally found within the Georges River National Park (GRNP). Most occur as small to medium shrubs with leaves (often aromatic) containing oil glands and the flowers have four to five sepals and petals. Following is a list of some of the locally-occurring species in GRNP (only some of which will be described below):- *Boronia ledifolia*, *Correa reflexa*, *Crowea exalata*, *Eriostemon australasius*, *Leionema diosmium* (very rare in GRNP), *Philotheca salsolifolia*, *Philotheca scabra*, *Zieria laevigata*, *Zieria pilosa*.

Boronia ledifolia (Sydney Boronia) – is a small erect shrub to 1m with simple or trifoliate leaves to 40mm long, aromatic when crushed. Deep pink star-like flowers (pictured right) have four petals appearing from early Spring.



Correa reflexa (Native fuchsia) – a common variable shrub to 1.5m with round to heart-shaped leaves 1-5 to 5cm long. Tubular flowers (local forms have green flowers) with eight slightly protruding stamens (see left) Flowering occurs in Winter.

Crowea exalata (Small Crowea or Waxflower) – uncommon species within the GRNP with sporadic flowering through the year but this seems to peak around February. Small spreading shrubs to 70cm high with a metre spread, very floriferous and showy. Leaves are linear to narrow-elliptical 1.5-5cm long; star-shaped flowers 1.5-3cm in diameter, mostly deep pink (see right)



Philotheca scabra [Syn. *Eriostemon scaber*] – very common species growing to 60cm high with a one metre spread. Leaves narrow-oblong to elliptical, 10-25mm long with lower surfaces warty; white flowers emerge from leaf axils 15-25mm in diameter occurring in Spring (pictured left)

Eriostemon australasius (Pink Waxflower) – Erect shrub reaching mostly to 1m high (occasionally higher) by 1m across. Common in shallow soils over sandstone. Leaves are narrow, oblong in shape 3-7cm long; waxy flowers pale to mid-pink, up to 4cm in diameter occurring in profusion, often spectacular, extending from late Winter to late Spring. (pictured right)



FROM OUR JULY MEETING

APS EAST HILLS GROUP MEETING – WEDNESDAY 7 JULY 2021

Lugarno–Peakhurst Uniting Church, Lugarno

No meeting because of COVID

Correspondence Received - July

Native Plants for NSW – July 2021

The monthly e-newsletter of the Australian Plants Society NSW, available at

<https://resources.austplants.com.au/newsletters-journals/monthly-enewsletter/>

Special note it is with profound sorrow that I inform you of the death of Shirley Pipitone (3 April 1947 – 15 July 2021). Shirley is from the ACT, but I thought many of you might have known her, or read her writings. A memorial service will be held on Tuesday 10th August 2021 at 10.00am in the Margaret Whitlam Pavilion of the National Arboretum.

Australian Plants Society, Menai Wildflower Group - Newsletter July 2021

The Acclimatisation Society and the Royal National Park – why there are deer there

Australian Plants Society, Sutherland NSW Group - Newsletter July 2021

Visiting Mungo National Park and Central Western NSW, including the Japanese gardens at Cowra, Griffith, and the Narrandera Fisheries Centre

Australian Plants Society, South East NSW Group - July 2021

Proteaceae of the Eurobodalla Region & how to recognise them by John Knight, with lots of lovely photos and a working bee at the botanic garden

Australian Plants Society, Northern Beaches NSW Group - July 2021

Visit to Harvest Seeds & Native Plants Nursery, and lessons on propagating, Jennifer McLean
Talk by John Martyn 3 June 2021 – “Rocks and Trees”, Russell Beardmore

Correspondence Received - August

Australian Plants Society, South East NSW Group - August 2021

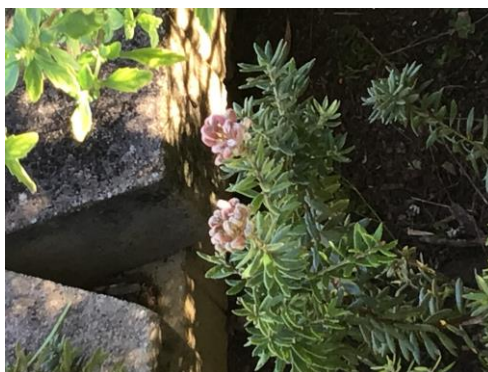
South Pacific Heathland Reserve revisited - recovery from fires; now looking lush and growing strongly with plenty of undergrowth and fresh green shoots everywhere.

More on the Guerilla Bay BioBlitz data gathering exercise

Australian Plants Society, Northern Beaches NSW Group - August 2021

Fifteen minute talk on a selected family of native plants - “mistletoes”

Australia or Africa? The botanical controversy over who can call their plants 'acacia', from ABC Science Jun 20, 2021. Belinda Smith



One of Marie's grevilleas

COMING EVENTS

For details of coming events, please see the APS NSW newsletter (which members should be receiving by email at the end of each month).

You can find more district group events on the APS NSW website at <http://austplants.com.au/calendar>

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|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Wednesday 7 July 2021 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm | East Hills Group meeting. - Lugarno-Peakhurst Uniting Church, 909 Forest Road Lugarno CANCELLED DUE TO COVID |
| Sunday 12 th September 9am to 3pm | Stony Range 60 th Birthday Celebrations, 810 Pittwater Rd, Dee Why |
| 15-18 October | Four day APS trip to the Central West, including visits to Burrendong Botanic Garden and Arboretum near Wellington, Dubbo Botanic Garden, Taronga Western Plains Zoo and the Knop property at Narromine. |

EAST HILLS GROUP CONTACTS

| | | | |
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Marie's wattle ground cover over the wall on the front pond

<http://austplants.com.au/East-Hills>

 **Australian
Plants**
SOCIETY NSW

