

# AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY

*Southern Highlands Group*

*...your local native garden club*

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Wattle Day September 1<sup>st</sup>. Brilliant.

*Wattle photos are courtesy of Frances Simons, Paul Osborne, Sarah Cains and Trisha Arbib.*

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### Upcoming Program

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#### Thursday 1st October.

**Enjoy a bush walk with fellow members.** The eastern rim of Fitzroy Falls. Meet in the National Parks Fitzroy Falls car park at 11 am. Bring a picnic lunch for after the walk (you may wish to bring a chair). Entry to National Parks is \$4 unless you have a pass.



***Nomination forms for the new SHAPS committee will be available at the October bush walk. If not attending, you can request a nomination form from Kay Fintan.***

#### Thursday 5th November.

**The AGM and election of committee members will be a virtual meeting held via Zoom.** Zoom contact details will be emailed to you. Please see note above about nomination forms.

#### Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> November.

**Two APS members’ gardens in Bowral will be open and a great array of plants will be for sale.** These superb native gardens are within 5 minutes walking distance of each other. This is also a great opportunity to buy plant treasures not readily available.

**Note: Members’ friends and relatives are welcome, but because of Covid restrictions there will be timed visits and bookings will be essential. Erica Rink will send out an email closer to the event with details.** The November 14<sup>th</sup> garden visits are a welcome local alternative to the November 2020 NSW APS weekend proposed for the Southern Highlands, which has unfortunately been cancelled, because of Covid and the uncertainties of planning.



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## Snippets

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### Lonely Tree Seeks Loving Companions – Louise Egerton

On the corner of Eridge and Moss Vale Road leans a lonely old gum tree, the edges of its roots encircled by large stones. One of its limbs has been sheared off by the wind but Council has deemed the tree of sufficient heritage and ecological value, to let it stand.

We know this tree as Paddy's Box (*E. macarthurii*); or Camden Woollybutt. It is one of the dominant canopy species found in Southern Highlands Shale Woodlands. Once this community of plants was widespread on the Highlands but today, having lost 95% of its original cover here, it is classed as an Ecological Endangered Community (EEC).

At the suggestion of ex-newsletter editor, Sarah Cains, 3 SHAPS members met with Council's 'people' to discuss the possibilities of planting more *E. macarthurii* around the venerable tree, together with other shale woodland understorey plants. There are plans on this corner for pipe laying and eventually a bike path. SHAPS's proposal was met favourably by Council's Assets Coordinator, Rachel Forte. At her suggestion we are now preparing a submission to Council for the plantings. Sarah and Liz Jacka have come up with a plant list and a draft planting plan for the area so things are progressing in a very positive direction.

*Note: Liz Jacka is a Bowral resident and highly esteemed ex-Landscape Architect and Town Planner. She spoke to our group at the beginning of 2018 (see Newsletter no. 127, March 2018) about her parents' nursery in Geelong. Known as Boddy's Eastern Park Nursery it was the first Australian plant nursery in Victoria.*

### Robertson Waratahs Not to Be Missed

Don't miss seeing the splendid waratahs flowering at Robertson railway station this October. I doubt there will be the usual art show and afternoon teas this year but the waratahs will still be flowering. It is so exciting to turn off the main road through Robertson, and discover both the restored heritage railway station and the huge numbers of large waratah plants covered in flowers.



*Photos from the RHRS, Robertson Heritage Railway station, website.*

<http://www.robertsonrailway.org.au/robertson-common-gardens--grounds.html>

The RHRS Robertson Heritage Railway Station committee continues to maintain the gardens established by their founding Committee members, and our SHAPS members, Helen and

David Tranter. Helen Tranter will be writing a story on the history of the plantings for our November newsletter.

### Botanic Garden's Long-awaited Shale Woodland – Louise Egerton

Jennie Simons is a long-time and dedicated member of our local APS and a member of the Botanic Gardens in Bowral. Some years ago she initiated the planting of 10 Paddy Box gum trees in the Gardens and, despite the drought, they remain healthy and a welcome invitation into the Gardens from one of the entrances. When Jennie suggested that the time might be approaching for planting out the planned shale woodland in the Gardens I jumped at the chance of paying the area a visit.



*Enormous pines to be felled*

Accompanied by Friends of the Gardens Jennie and I walked around the wetlands, at last filled with good rain, and alive with sound of birds. Beyond towered the enormous radiata pine trees that must be felled before planting can begin. I expressed interest, on behalf of our group, in visiting and helping with the plantings when the time comes. At the moment the Friends are working their way through some bureaucratic tape before the pines can come down but watch this (lovely, large) space for developments as difficulties fall away and we have a

chance to be part of a wonderful project.

### Native Plants for Wet Places – Sarah Cains

This interesting article is too long to reproduce here, but it can be found on Winzero's Facebook page.

### Who was Molly O'Neill? – Trisha Arbib



*Molly O'Neill. Image from Australian National Herbarium website*

Molly O'Neill [1913 - 2000] was an amateur botanist and a dedicated conservationist who spent almost 40 years, whilst working as a radiographer, researching and documenting native plants.

In 1967 she co-founded the Goulburn Field Naturalist Society and brought hundreds of Australians into contact with the bush and native plants. She became a member of the Bungonia State Recreation Area Trust and advised park management, donating her photographic herbarium to the Park.

She led many botanical expeditions, developed educational programs, and lobbied to save important natural areas. In 1980 Molly identified a rare ground orchid on a crown reserve, which through her efforts was preserved within the Alison Hone Reserve out on the Crookwell Road, north of Goulburn.

I first heard of this remarkable woman only recently. Visiting the Bungonia National Park I came across the Molly O'Neill Nature Walk which gave information on its namesake. This is an easy walk to take if one is short of time or not physically capable of something more challenging. It is judged suitable for assisted disabled access. It passes through the park's eucalyptus open woodland, taking in typical limestone outcrops. Mosses, liverworts and hornworts, calcium loving and rock hugging, are there in great variety and abundance, especially after rain.

Not a very inspiring walk for Molly I couldn't help thinking, but I saw it midwinter. The pleasure was increased however by attractive interpretive signage, and by the frequent call of a lyrebird, finally seen on a low tree stump. And the walk ended at the dramatic "Bungonia Lookdown".



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## The Artful Waratah

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Jane Pye

Australia in the modern era has never been immune from international movements and influences, and art was no different. A new philosophical way of thinking brought the waratah, *Telopea speciosissima*, to new prominence.

In late 19th century Europe there was a move away from the mass-produced, factory-made goods that were ubiquitous after the Industrial Revolution, and in Britain it took the form of the Arts and Crafts Movement led by William Morris. It was originally a socialist philosophy, utopian and idealistic, placing value on skilled craftsmanship, beautiful materials and a new look at design. Most important of all was the primacy of human skill and agency. In Australia the political ideals of the movement had some influence but it was the aesthetic values of integrating work and life through applied art that continued and evolved. It was already an influence in Australia when approaching Federation focussed the national attention on what it meant to be Australian, and how to promote national identity in an increasingly open world.

Sydney Technical College was established in 1878 teaching practical subjects. In 1895 Arts and Crafts magazine started. Arts and Crafts Societies were set up, for example The Society of Arts and Crafts of New South Wales in 1906, and applied art emerged including woodcarving, metalwork, textiles, architecture and stained glass.

The Arts and Crafts Movement and the associated Federation style in Australia performed a valuable role preserving and reviving traditional skills being lost due to industrialisation.



*Stained glass leadlight panel (c.1905) - George Hulme. Executed at Sydney Technical College. Waratahs with flannel flowers Actinotus, Blandfordia, Epacris, and Acacia. 945 x 845mm.*

The Federation style of architecture was an important expression of this aesthetic and was most prominent from 1900 to 1920 with many fine examples of the style. In the Southern Highlands there are buildings of this style and period, often using Mt Gibraltar trachyte.

Growing interest in highly developed manual skills coincided with the move towards Federation in Australia. There was simultaneously investigation and debate about the resources that exist in Australia such as timber, minerals and agricultural land which would provide a secure economic future. Economic and symbolic possibilities were sought, and the botanists were exploring alongside the prospectors.

The question of national identity was important in the minds of the late 19th and 20th century public figures, how to weld the separate colonies into one nation that could present a single face to the world, a debate that still occurs today in a multicultural society. In terms of emblems that could carry meaning there were unique species that occur nowhere else. Two plant contenders arose, the waratah and the wattle. RT Baker was the main publicist of the waratah. He held, amongst other roles, the position of curator and economic botanist at the Technological Museum (later the Powerhouse Museum of Applied Art and Science). He explored many potential resources within Australia and wrote widely to raise awareness of what could be developed for trade and profit. In 1915 he published *The Australian Flora in Applied Art*, volume 1 *The Waratah* which featured patterns and designs derived from the waratah. (This beautiful book has recently been reprinted in South Australia). Several other volumes were prepared but not published. Baker saw the waratah as having wide application in architecture and decor as brackets, ceilings, columns as well as ceramics, tiles, clock faces and woodcarving. There was even a design for an electric chandelier with waratah motif. Another influential designer was Lucien Henry who published many designs for incorporation into interior décor.



*Silver gilt belt buckle with waratah design*

The waratah-wattle rivalry was hotly contested for many years in town hall meetings and letters to the editors. The waratah became the floral emblem of New South Wales, Grace Bros, also the name of a rugby team, a class of Sydney trains and icon of the Wingecarribee Shire Council. The wattle finally won the higher accolade as the Australian floral emblem and national Wattle Day, first marked on 1st September 1910, specifically with *Acacia*



*pycnantha*. The wide range of the species across Australia made the wattle more of a unifier than the waratah with its limited East coast distribution.

Turning now to other representations of the waratah in art over the years, a very early depiction of a waratah was a hand-coloured engraving made by James Sowerby in England from original sketches and herbarium pieces. It appeared in Edward Smith's book *A Specimen of the Botany of New Holland 1793-95*. Over the years the waratah has provided inspiration to artists and amateurs in many media including embroidery, other textiles, woodcarving, prints and paintings.

Margaret Preston's Waratah is well known and sells widely as a card, print, tea towel. This is exactly what the Arts and Crafts adherents wished for: beautiful design made by a skilled artisan into a practical everyday item.



*Margaret Preston's well known woodcut. Printed in black, hand coloured, 1925.*

Long before the arrival of Captain Cook and Joseph Banks, waratahs had featured in Aboriginal myths and legends for thousands of years. Many stories have been gathered and retold, including in *The Waratah* by Paul Nixon. As a final word on the subject, the author reported in his book the existence of a non-Australian cousin of the waratah, *Alloxylon grandiflora* growing high in the Andes of South America. In the end, neither the *Acacia* nor the *Telopea* were without close relations elsewhere in the world.

*Note on images: The image and information on the stained glass leadlight panel is from the Australian National Botanic Gardens website,*

<https://www.anbg.gov.au/waratah/stained.gl.html>, and they acknowledge Margaret Betteridge (1979) *'Australian Flora in Art'*, Sun Books, South Melbourne.

*The buckle image is from RT Baker, The Australian Flora in Applied Art, Vol. 1, The Waratah 1915.*

*The Margaret Preston image comes from a website on Australian Prints + Printmaking.*

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## A Bush Walk at Mt Annan Botanical Gardens

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### Erica Rink

The Southern Highlands Bushwalkers put on an easy walk at Mt Annan. An excellent time to visit the Gardens. If you need a coffee there is only a kiosk. The shop and restaurant plus Growing Friends are all closed. Plenty of good places for picnics are provided.



We met up at the car park and headed past the paper daisies.  
 All still netted, apparently the ducks like the young plants/seeds and have been known to try and bounce on the netting to sink it for plant access.  
 It's very taut. I'm not sure if or when it gets removed.

*Paper daisies netted against the ducks*

There is a splendid array of colourful plants, *Lechenaultia biloba* (Big blue), the pink flannel flower *Actinodium cunninghamii*, *Eremophila lachnocalyx*, gorgeous huge yellow and orange daisies, *Grevilleas*, also an amazing *Homoranthus flavescens*. I did take plenty of photos and many had their name tags.



*Lechenaultia biloba*



*Doryanthes palmeri* is different from the usual upright flowered Gynea Lily



*Grevillea biternata*



*Eremophila lachnocalyx*



We walked up past the pond gently making our way up the hill. Many Bunya pines have been planted. Not sure when they will start producing nuts but they do look healthy. We've managed to collect a large quantity of nuts from the Bunyas in Mittagong. The one next to the Anglican Church was particularly productive. We've made several cakes, the bread making needs more work. Maybe in the future the Gardens will make delicious items from their nuts.

It was a particularly windy day but there were many protected areas and it's a lot warmer at Mt Annan than the Southern Highlands so OK to go when it's windy. We walked past the Fig Tree Arboretum and the Wedding Knot, then up to the Sundials. One is traditional but the other uses your body to cast the shadow. Very accurate. After the sundials we followed the ridge, Caley Drive and Cunningham Drive to the Bird Hide. Not much action though. There is a Woodland Picnic area, on the way back to the car park, quite sheltered where we had lunch.

Heading back we checked out the Stolen Generation Sculpture, covered at the moment for repairs after vandalism but we enjoyed the boardwalk through the woodland. On the way back we passed the huge structure/area where propagation is carried out. A few Gynea lilies were in flower then back to the car park. Excellent day out and I recommend Mt Annan to everyone.

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## September 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting on Weeds

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### Kim Zegenhagen

An enthusiastic group of 20 members were fortunate to attend the recent general meeting. This was our first face to face meeting since February. We were happy to be seeing so many familiar faces again in a lovely setting at the Mullard's home in Exeter.



*An attentive audience. Photo Sarah Cains*



*Alicia on the right, with Kay displaying weeds. Photo Louise Egerton*

Our guest speaker was Alicia Kaylock, the Biosecurity Officer- Weeds at Wingecarribee Shire Council. Whilst Alicia works at the council, she is paid by the NSW Department of Primary Industries, as are the biosecurity officers at all councils. This reflects the seriousness that weeds have not only on the natural environment but also on primary industries all over the state.

Alicia's job involves finding, assessing, and removing weeds on both public and private land. She looks at both widespread and emerging weeds.

The Shire is divided into six regions from a weed viewpoint. All regions are visited at least twice per year.

An important point to consider is that under the Biosecurity Act a biosecurity officer can inspect land without permission from the owner. The officer can order the owner to remove weeds using a "Biosecurity Direction" letter. Voluntary compliance is always encouraged. Alicia said the use of such letters includes council land such as roadsides and reserves.

In the morning before arriving at the meeting Alicia encountered the following weeds at a couple of locations:



*Mother of millions. Photo Louise Egerton*

- *Berberis* (a well-known weed to those members involved in bush care volunteering).
- Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*).
- Flax leaf broom (*Genista linifolia*- found at Bowral station).
- Bridal creeper (*Asparagus asparagoides*).
- African olive (differentiated by a hooked tip on leaf end).
- Mother of millions (*Bryophyllum delagoense*).

All these weeds need to be removed as soon as detected. If you are not sure about a weed DO NOT touch with bare hands. Some weeds are toxic if absorbed through the skin. Refer to Department of Primary Industries weed website: <https://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/>

Presently ARTC will not allow access to railway land by Biosecurity Officers. So, if you see weeds along a railway line this may be the reason.

Alicia said that broad leafed privet, whilst acknowledged as a weed is now considered beyond any hope of eradication and needs to be managed, to prevent further infestation.

Alicia said that when using glyphosate be sure to apply within 20 seconds after scraping on woody weeds. Another useful herbicide is 'Vigilant II gel'.

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## Weed Control – The Legal Framework

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### John Desmond

Weeds are a very significant environmental problem, with the financial impact of weeds on agriculture in NSW being estimated at \$2.5 billion in lost production and \$1.8 billion in control activities every year. In addition there is significant general environmental damage caused, where the long term impacts may be unknown.

From 1 July 2017 the NSW Biosecurity Act came into effect replacing a number of other pieces of legislation, including the Noxious Weeds Act. The aim of the Act is to allow risk based management of biosecurity, with the control activities based on the level of threat. The main legal arrangements for weed control are a general biosecurity duty, control orders, mandatory measures and biosecurity zones.

All land managers have a responsibility and a duty to manage weed biosecurity risks that they know about or could reasonably be expected to know about. Strategic weed

management plans for particular areas provide guidance on expected outcomes and more detail on the land managers' duties.

In addition to the general duties control orders may be issued which require the presence or suspected presence to be notified and may impose movement controls and destruction requirements.

Mandatory measures are requirement for dealing with weeds or weed threats which are set out in regulations governing risk management. These measures may be imposed on dealers and carriers as well as land managers.

A biosecurity zone can be established by regulation with the aim of eliminating a biosecurity risk within a specific part of the state.

Some specific weeds such as parthenium weed and hawkweed are listed in Schedule 2 of the Act and it is an offence to deal with or possess these. There are also strict notification provisions.

As a land manager Wingecarribee Shire Council must prevent, eliminate or minimise the risk posed by weeds on all land under its control. It is also the local control authority for the area of the Shire and is responsible for administering and enforcing the weed control measures of the Biosecurity Act. This gives wide powers to weed control officers, including the power to enter land and enforce appropriate control measures. If the land manager fails in their duties Council may carry out the required control measures and recover the costs from the land manager. In addition there are substantial financial penalties available under the Act for serious breaches.

Overall policy direction under the Act is contained in the South East Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan 2017 – 2022 which identifies state and regional prioritised weeds and specifies outcomes necessary to demonstrate compliance with the general biosecurity duty.

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## Discovering Ball's Head

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**Robyn Kremer**



Ball's Head, a large bushland remnant which juts out into Sydney Harbour is a wonderful place to visit.

In 1916, local North Sydney resident Henry Lawson wrote sad poems lamenting the loss of bushland around Sydney Harbour. 'The Sacrifice of Ball's Head'



described the devastation that was proposed to power the steamships that had replaced sail.

He was a conservationist when many city dwellers were needing to chop firewood & burn coal to eke out meagre wages. Though named after Lt. Lidgbird Ball, who surveyed many of the headlands & bays when Sydney Cove was being settled, local children called it bald head; it was so denuded.

Since a deep channel runs along the western side of the Headland, it was leased by the State Government to Sydney Coal Bunkering Company, a subsidiary of Union Steamship Co. A massive sandstone platform with 4 tunnels underneath through which open trucks circulated on narrow gauge railway tracks was constructed.



*What's left of the old wharf once used for loading steam powered vessels*

A wharf projected out into the harbour where smaller steam powered vessels could be loaded via gantry cranes. By 1921 a noisy, dusty industrial site was polluting the headland. Coal steamers from Catherine Hill Bay would pull alongside the Coal Loader and massive cranes would unload their cargo and drop it onto the platform creating a terrible din, day and night.

Seventy years later in 1992, the dust settled on the Coal Loader site and debate began as to its future. Housing was proposed but local residents were determined that it should be preserved for public recreation.

The Cammeraygal people had inhabited this headland for thousands of years leaving middens, artifacts, a burial site and a large rock engraving of a whale.

In the 1930's Annie White, founder of the National Trust in Australia and friends replanted areas bordering the Coal Loader site. *Acacia elata* and *Angophora costata* were successful species though formerly a diversity of eucalypts were enjoyed by adventurous picnickers & nature lovers during the nineteenth century.



Conservationists & architects like Ted Mack guided North Sydney Councillors & residents to imaginatively reuse & adapt heritage structures on public land from the 1970's onwards.

Genia McCafferty led the Council through long negotiations with various stake holders, residents and the State Government. The result is an extraordinary adaptation of the Coal Loader site as a Sustainability Centre, Community Garden, Council Nursery propagating

natives for its Streets Alive Program and an Education Centre teaching about alternative energy & recycling.

The Headland bushwalks are popular and two of the tunnels are open for a multitude of imaginative uses. Another one is a habitat for micro bats & the fourth collects rainwater in a row of tanks. Sixty thousand litres are recirculated for every conceivable use throughout the site. Runoff eventually is filtered through a reed garden & discharges into the Harbour.



*A massive sandstone platform with tunnels underneath*

Happy gardeners, volunteers, bushwalkers and visitors enjoy delicious food 7 days per week from 7-3pm at the Coal Loader Café. There is adequate parking & Waverton Station with its cluster of attractive cafes provides public transport access to beautiful Balls Head.

Ref: North Sydney Council website has a fascinating illustrated history in a half hour video entitled 'Coal Loader- Return to Community' Feb 2017.

I'd like to thank Jane Pye, Louise Egerton, Kim Zegenhagen, John Desmond, Robyn Kremer, Erica Rink, Sarah Cains, Paul Osborne and Frances Simons, all of whom contributed to this newsletter. Contributions are always welcome. Please write to me at trisharbib@gmail.com with suggestions.

MANY THANKS  
to all  
contributors to  
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