

The Whisper

June 2003 CIRCULATION: 900

All proceeds from advertisements after printing costs go to the WAMBOIN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION, which started the Whisper in 1981. This Newsletter is distributed to all RMBs in Wamboin, Bywong, Clare, and Yalana at the beginning of each month, except January. Editor is Ned Noel, 17 Reedy Creek Place, Wamboin, 2620, phone 6238-3484. Printer is Canberra Times Fine Print. Contributions which readers may wish to make for the June, 2003 edition of the Wamboin Whisper will be welcome, and should be submitted to the editor's mailbox (or sent by fax to 6238-3562 or by email to nednoel@optusnet.com.au) by the last Sunday of the month, or Sunday, June 29, 2003, 7:00 pm.

LIFE THREATENING EMERGENCIES Fire/Police/Ambulance - Dial 000 All Hours

Queanbeyan Police 6298-0599 Wamboin Fire Brigade Info Centre 6238-3396 Ambulance Bookings 131233

WAMBOIN FACILITIES AND CONTACTS

Wamboin Community Assn	Lofty Mason	President	6238-3258
Bywong Community Assn	Morag Cotsell	President	6230-3523
Fire Brigade	Bernie Broers	Captain	040-999-1340 bh 62383316 ah
Landcare	Jacqui O'Leary	President	6236-9157
Community Nurse	Heather Morrison	Bungendore	6238-1333
Breastfeeding Assoc.	Lisa Whitney	Community Educator	6238 3059
Emergency Services	NSW Call Centre	Staff	132-500
Emergency Services Admin	Colin Brown	Controller	6238-1067
Justice of the Peace	Peter Greenwood	JP	6238-3358
Justice of the Peace	Keith France	JP	6238-3596
Wamboin Cubs	Peter Harrison	Leader	6238-3525
Wamboin Guides	Rosemary Riley	Contact Person	6297-7632
Wamboin Pony Club	Maureen Purdie	Secretary	6238-3343
Gearys Gap Pony Club	Penny Gibson	Contact Person	6236-9363
Play Group	Rebecca Jefferys	Convenor	6238 3278
Hall Bookings	Joan Mason	Bookings	6238-3258
Church, Anglican	Robyn Robertson	Warden	6238-3202
Christian Prayer Group	Steve & Imelda Taylor	Contacts	6238-3220
Yarrowlumla Shire	Peter Greenwood	Councillor	6238-3358
Golf	Peter Greenwood	Golfer	6238-3358
Injured Wildlife	Wildcare	Helpline	6299-1966

THE YOUNG WAMBOIN ENTREPRENEURS

Fiona Skea, babysitting	6238-3290
Rebecca Purdie, babysitting and petsitting	6238-3343
Emily Montesin, babysitting, petsitting, odd jobs	6238-3208
Mia Donald, babysitting	6238-3276
Frank Deveson, bicycle maintenance	6238-3294
Danielle Adams, babysitting, petsitting	6238 3558

Macs Reef Tip Hours 7:30 am to 5:00 pm Fri-Sat-Sun-Mon (to 7 pm Sat - Sun in daylight saving time) closed Tue-Wed-Thurs

WAMBOIN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

President's Paragraphs

By the time you read this a 2 metre wide slab of concrete should be in place along the full length of the hall. This should reduce the amount of dirt tracked into the hall and tidy up the area around the waste and recycle bins. Our thanks to Ian Cuthbertson of Anytime Hire who prepared the area with his backhoe.

We were surprised during the May general meeting with the report of a robbery that afternoon in Cooper Road. Later that evening came the news that the Police had apprehended some suspects with the stolen items. The 'it's all happening here' feeling was accompanied with that sick feeling all house owners get when you hear of a home being broken into.

Geoff Shalders from the Rural Fire Service gave an interesting presentation covering his and our responsibility towards **hazard reduction** under the revised laws. Geoff's primary job is property and building inspection in relation to bush fire danger, and the issuing of certificates for hazard reduction. His presentation was followed by a talk from Fire Captain, Bernie Broers, on **preparing your home against bush fire**. I expect Geoff will prepare an article for the Whisper.

The next meeting of the WCA will be the AGM on the 17th of June at 7.30pm. (I have put in the time for the benefit of Don Evans who arrived at 7pm for our last meeting). Keith France has some interesting points about **capital gains tax** which effect landholders. He will present this talk at the end of the official meeting and then be available for questions. It's not every day you get to stir an accountant. All welcome to our warm hall and to nibbles etc afterwards. - Lofty Mason.

WAMBOIN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

It's that time of the year again – Annual General Meeting time! 7.30pm Tuesday 17 June 2003 at the Wamboin Community Hall. The June General Meeting will follow.

Most people run for cover at the mention of this activity or find some excuse to stay away in case they are asked to VOLUNTEER for a position. It seems to be the same people who find the time to keep your community functioning and some of them have put their hands up for years. A big thank you to those people who have carried the baton in the past and still come forward on the occasions when they are needed.

Just now we have a solid Committee and the different organisations in the Wamboin community are (mostly) well represented at the General Meetings. The warm fire is a welcome feature at our Wamboin winter meetings. Thanks Lofty!!

You are not likely to be conscripted if you come because there are sufficient people to accept the community responsibilities for next year. However, there are others who would like to stand down for a year or so - and, after all, none of the positions are particularly onerous. New residents are very welcome and you can learn a lot about your neighbourhood by just participating.

NB. The General Meeting, following the AGM, is likely to be of interest to quite a number of Wamboin residents, particularly the talk by Keith France (the WCA Treasurer, accountant and financial adviser) on that part of your property which could be subject to capital gains tax.

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Bywong Community News

Donations from the Bywong Car Boot Sale The community has made the following donations from the proceeds of the Car Boot Sale: Wamboin Bush Fire Brigade \$500; Sutton Bushfire Brigade \$200; Wamboin Girl Guides \$200; Bungendore Park Tennis Club \$200. A big thankyou to everyone who participated - both sellers and buyers. Put next year's date in your diary now - 28th March 2004.

Bushwalks Twenty walkers guided by Greenways guru Julian Thompson followed the greenway to its new section at Millpost Hill and enjoyed the beautiful 180-degree view from the top. The next walk, scheduled for late June, will explore the rugged headwaters of the Yass River. Watch the Community notice boards for details.

Sutton development The Community will watch with interests any developments in a reported proposal to drop a large residential complex into the Sutton valley, next to the village. Although no proposal has yet been made to Council, we know that a developer has bought the land. Sutton and District Community Association has set up a working group to safeguard community interests, and a Community committee member has joined the group.

Sugar gliders The Community's sugar glider project is nearing its end, with the completion of deep ripping on some open ground and the planting of trees generously donated by Landcare. Glider boxes are all in place, and a number of bird nesting boxes will follow. We hope to do more planting of natives - trees and small bushes - in spring.

Bywong Trivia Night The Bywong Trivia Challenge has been set for 26 July. Teams interested in competing for the glory of having their names engraved on the Challenge shield should contact Morag on 62303523 or Diana Dack on 6236 9187. We look forward to the usual strong representation from surrounding localities, especially from Wamboin Community and the Lambert Team!!

Community Radio Bywong and Wamboin are now on air! Local broadcaster Alex Colquitt told the last meeting of the Community about his plans for increasing broadcast time and offered to air community announcements at no cost. Listen for developments on 88FM.

Next meeting The next general meeting of the Community is a 7.30pm on Monday night 16 June at the community hall in Birriwa Road, off Macs Reef Road. Anyone who lives locally is very welcome to attend.

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YARROWLUMLA COUNCIL NEWS

Yarrowlumla Shire to be carved up? Despite promises to the contrary from the Carr Government it seems that Yarrowlumla Shire is to be carved up between Queanbeyan City and Yass Shire. Last month I reported that Queanbeyan had made a request to take over all that land south of the City down to Burra. The Boundaries Commission has been instructed by the Government to consider this request and it has advised Yarrowlumla Council of the inquiry but that it will **not** be holding the usual formal public inquiry into the proposed changes. It will only consider Council and public submissions, but no public hearings. Coupled with other information and press releases from the Minister for Local Government and advice to both Queanbeyan and Yass Councils, it is most probable that our Shire will be split between Yass and Queanbeyan.

There are many issues to be considered and more information to come in the following weeks and months but before the end of this year I believe that we will live in Queanbeyan!

LATE BREAKING NEWS AS OF 27 May, 2003 - THE ABOVE IS CONFIRMED. YARROWLUMLA COUNCIL IS TO BE DISSOLVED AND SPLIT BETWEEN YASS SHIRE AND QUEANBEYAN CITY. - P.G.

Wamboin Robberies The robberies seem to be continuing in Wamboin. There has been at least one major burglary in the last couple of weeks and fortunately police have made some arrests but at this stage there have been no Court appearances and those arrested are out on bail. So as they say in the classics "be alert but not alarmed."

Peter Greenwood JP
Your Local Councillor 6238 3358 petergreenwood@actweb.net

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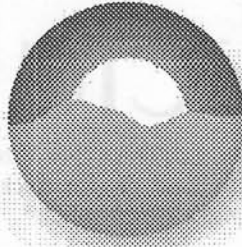
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May – 814 Bungendore Rd \$455,000

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April – Cnr Millyn & Bung Rd \$549,000

May - 13 acres 82 Birriwa Rd \$215,000

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Thanks to the persons below, Wamboin and Bywong residents have a free community owned newsletter.					
150 CO-ORDINATED BY HELEN MONTESIN:					
Dean Evans	Nrtn Area frm Campbl West	18	Bill Owen Cooper Rd.	27	
Helen Montesin	Fernloff Rd	29	Max Klemke	Norton, Cmpbell to Bngley	25
Dave Hubbard	Poppet Rd.	34	Cathy Abell	Canning Close	17
230 CO-ORDINATED BY SUE GANE:					
Joan Mason	Bingley Way	50	Ph 6238 3463		
Sue Ward	Norton, Bngly to Weeroona	28	Margaret Heleimin	Merino Vale Drive	17
Sue Gane	Majors Close	20	Anne Gardner	Weeroona, Norton to Majors	30
Ned Noel	Yarr Cncl & Adv & 10 N Stks	50	David Anderson	Weeroona, Majors to Denley	35
249 CO-ORDINATED BY KERRIE FISHER:					
Colleen Foster	Joe Rocks to Norton	20	Ph 6238 3489		
Antonette Stockdale	Yalana East	34	Ruth Lambert	Yalana West	32
Bernie Reardon	Clare Lane	8	Rob Gorham	South End - Clare Valley	43
Lyle Monetesin	Forrest Road area	50	Pauline Seegeri	North End - Clare Valley	32
Bungendore Shop	Bungendore	10	Amanada Bryan	Donnelly Road	20
278 CO-ORDINATED BY JOHN VAN DER STRAATEN:					
Rachael Gascoine	Brooks Creek Estate	18	Ph 6238 3590		
Sue Gorham	Schofield Road	25	Lachlan & Callum	Whitford Hogan/Kestral area	11
Ann Platts	Denley/Birchman's Area	25	Len Parrish	Summer Hill Rd /Bungendore Rd	32
Laura Snowdon	Hogan Drive	25	Rhett Cox	Macs Reef /Nwngtn to FedHwy	12
Macs Reef Rd	One Off Trial	60	Morag Cameron	Newington/Harriot	50
907 TOTAL			Thelma Martin	Shinglehous/ilhouse/Schfield Rds	20

Rainfall and Temperatures in Wamboin – 28 year statistics from the Robertsons

April rainfall to 27/4/03	12mm
2003 rainfall to 27/4/03	108mm
(2002 r'fall to 28/4/02	225.5mm)
average May rainfall	56.1mm
Wettest May	171mm in 1995
Driest May	1mm in 1982
Hottest May day	20C on 3 occasions
Coldest May day	3C on 29/5/00
Coldest May night	-5C on 28/5/01

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Notes from St Andrew's Church

Services in June will be at 9am at St Andrew's on the 1st and 15th. On the 8th and 22nd there will be services at 8.15am at St Peter's in Sutton, and on the 29th a service for the combined churches at 5pm at St Peter's to celebrate St Peter's Day. A warm welcome awaits you, and you are invited to share a cup of tea or coffee after the services. For more information please ring Robyn Robertson on 62383202 or Bronwyn Elliott on 62383359.

For Sale - Garden Maintenance business in the Wamboin/Bungendore area. Regular customers all year round. No qualifications necessary, but you do need to be honest, reliable and love getting your hands dirty. Would suit healthy, retired person or someone looking to be their own boss. Phone 6238 2342

FOR HIRE: WAMBOIN COMMUNITY HALL. Bookings arranged by Joan Mason 62383258. Local Hire \$65 per use - Bond \$200. Outside Hire \$125 per use - Bond \$250. Teenage/18 year old birthdays/parties (must be supervised by parents) \$160 - Bond \$300.

ADVERTISING RATES: Local classified advertisements are free, as are announcements from community organisations and clubs. Business advertisements attract a small fee (see below) which is donated to the Wamboin Community Association. Please make your cheque out to this association, but post it to the editor. Contact editor on 238-3484 for information.

Advertising rates: Full Page - \$100 Half Page - \$50 1/4 Page - \$25 1/6 Page - \$20 1/8 Page - \$15 1/10 page- \$10

If there is anybody interested in table tennis and or chess in the Bywong Wamboin area, please contact Ivan on 6230 3649.

- For Hire from the Wamboin Community Association: Gas Barbecue - Party Size, Portable \$25.00 per hire (includes gas) and \$25.00 cleaning bond, both payable on collection of barbecue. Cleaning bond is refunded if barbecue is returned clean - Bookings arranged by Helen Montesin- 6238-3208

- The Whisper is Wamboin's community newspaper. If you live in the area and have something to say about living here that is informative, thoughtful or entertaining or have led any major expeditions of exploration, think about writing it up for the next issue. For more information contact the editor on 6238-3484. And thanks to so many of you who already have done so.

Solution to Stable Door Quiz

Larry & Dave cross the creek. Larry stays behind while Dave takes the boat back. Dave waits on the bank while The Fish takes the boat across by himself. The Fish stays on the other side while Larry brings the boat back. Dave gets in the boat with Larry, and they both cross the creek to join The Fish.

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Snippets from Sutton School

Term 2 is once again off to a flying start, with the students and staff participating in a wide variety of activities. The first day of term was a School Development Day and found the teachers being professionally developed in the areas of Mathematics and English. These days are important as they enable the teachers to continually upgrade their knowledge and skills.

Many students represented the school at the District Cross Country Championships on 30 April. The school community is proud of everyone's effort. Congratulations to Tom Argæet, Thomas Walsh, Katie McColl, Claire Demaine and Matthew Taylor who were selected to represent the district at the Regional Championships.

Some primary students have been exercising their brains completing the Univeristy of NSW Science and Computer Competitions. Year 6 is researching the relevant information to solve the problems posed in Murder Under the Microscope.

The school is pleased to announce that Year 5 have received a Certificate of Excellence in the Write4fun 2003 Schools Poetry Competition. More than 13 entries were selected from the class out of thousands of entries received from across Australia. To receive special recognition Year 5 also enjoyed a Disco Day recently as a reward for reaching a class goal.

The muscial group Imbosina performed for the schools of Sutton and Gundaroo on 5 May. The students were entertained by a variety of percussion tunes, which originated from several different countries.

Our annual Enrichment Program has begun. The children are undertaking electives chosen from a number of hobby, sporting and intellectual areas. Special thanks to Michelle Burgess fpr organising such a wonderful event. ~ Alan Petchell

Temperatures and Rainfall in Wamboin – 28 year statistics from the Robertsons

May rainfall to 25/5/03	25.5mm	2003 rainfall tp 25/5/03	135mm
(2002 rainfall to 26/5/02	235.5mm)	average June rainfall	58mm
Wettest June	138mm in 1997	Driest June	8mm in 1979
Hottest June day	17C on 7/6/01	Coldest June day	4C on 28/6/93
Coldest June night	-5C on 20/6/01		

Wamboin 15 years ago – from the “Whisper” of July, 1988, circulation 200.

From the President's Annual Report, presented to the WCA annual general meeting. “Much of our time and effort this year has been divided between the new fire station and fund seeking for the construction of a sports ground. In this regard we have been successful with a grant through the NSW Department of Sport and Recreation and look forward to commencement of construction in the next few months. The effort put into the Wamboin Bicentennial fire station, both in financial and physical resources, I know, has been appreciated by the Wamboin Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade. We now have this Community Centre as the hub of the community, and with the forthcoming construction of the sports ground we will have an amenity of which the community can be justly proud. Facilities of this nature of course do not come easily and it has been with very significant community assistance both in time, and support for fundraising functions, that we have achieved what is the envy of other similar rural residential communities. Another project to commence in the next few weeks is the construction of a new brick toilet block behind the hall. These are well overdue and we expect this project to be completed entirely within our own resources.” (Peter Greenwood – President)

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The Wamboin Firefighter

**A NEWSLETTER FROM YOUR VOLUNTEER RURAL FIRE BRIGADE COMPILED
BY CLIFF SPONG WITH HELP FROM MANY MEMBERS OF THE BRIGADE**

From the Captain's Desk

Although it is not exactly an issue that your fire brigade has been formed to deal with, I feel that all of us in our community should be aware and concerned about recent break-ins and acts of vandalism involving community property. The recent break-in at the fire shed resulted in some valuable equipment being stolen. Disgusting acts of vandalism around the community hall and at nearby properties have dismayed and angered many people. Also recent break-ins at some properties have resulted in property being stolen and causing a great deal of anxiety and anger for the affected residents. We need to keep a watchful eye for anything that looks suspicious. If you notice anything unusual, contact the police. They will attend as soon as they can but as a community we need to realise that we can have a role to play as well. We may not have a formal neighbourhood watch program operating but the principles can be applied by all of us.

It has been fortunate that our services have not been needed to put out any serious fires recently. A small number of motor vehicle accidents have kept us busy however. As well as these incidents we have been busy with another training program for many new recruits and the regular training routines for "older" hands. I am pleased to report that the brigade's ranks are growing and more people in our area have a better understanding of protecting their properties and those of others. The brigade's training programs now have an excellent reputation throughout the Shire.

The extension to the fire shed should start soon. We are waiting for some final quotes. A project management plan has been drawn up and the project coordinator, Andrew Dunn, should be able to get the teams on the job shortly. Behind the scenes Marion Sheldrick has been putting in a lot of time and effort in approaching many companies to see if they can donate equipment or supplies to help the project. We haven't been inundated with offers but it hasn't been for a lack of trying. We will see what happens in the next few weeks.

At the last meeting of the Wamboin Community Association Geoff Shalders, the recently appointed Fire Mitigation Officer in our region, and I, presented some information about hazard reduction and property protection activities in our area. The NSW Rural Fire Service has recently employed 40 Fire Mitigation Officers across the State. Their primary roles are to handle bush fire hazard complaints and to issue Hazard Reduction Certificates. The rest of this month's article concentrates on the issue of hazard reduction and the new procedures we will all need to know and follow.

Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Certificates.

The following information has been summarised from some notes compiled by Geoff Shalders. When the changes become law it will be necessary to adhere to the new procedures. The new system should help residents better reduce the fire hazards at their properties. It also removes the requirements, in most cases, to gain approvals under eight acts. In limited cases, where bush fire hazard reduction work is likely to adversely affect important environmental attributes, a certificate may not be granted. The decision to issue these new certificates has to be made within 7 days after the application is submitted. Geoff can provide more detailed information as well inspecting the sites of the proposed hazard reduction. This will serve at least two purposes. He will firstly be able to gain a good appreciation of our area and secondly provide first hand advice to residents about fire hazards and balancing these with the need to manage the rural environment.

Recent changes to the *Rural Fires Act 1997* and with the introduction of the *Environmental Assessment Amendment Act 2002* will provide an improved assessment procedure for hazard reductions. The Bush Fire Environmental Assessment Code specifies the assessment requirements prior to issuing a Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Certificate. These certificates are issued by the Fire Mitigation Officer and are valid for 12 months. During the fire season an additional permit has to be obtained from the local fire brigade.

Approvals under this Code will not be required for agricultural activities such as stubble burning, burning diseased crops, orchard pruning and grazing. The Code cannot be used to gain approvals for operations such as land clearance, burning of domestic or industrial rubbish or circumventing other regulations such as Tree Preservation Orders.

The Code does not cover the construction of a track, trail or road, coastal wetlands or Littoral rainforests, land to which an integrated forestry operation has been approved, land where a development consent already applies for the provision of Asset Protection Zones, bush regeneration burns including pile burns of weed species or for ecological purposes, or isolated areas of vegetation.

The Code only covers work on land within an Asset Protection Zone (APZ). The maximum width of an APZ must be within the distances described in the Bush Fire Risk Management Plan, which is a maximum of 100 metres from the edge of a habitable structure and for other community assets as defined in the Plan. The types of work permitted are mechanical hazard reduction using slashing, trittering and tree removal as well as the use of graders, dozers and ploughs, and prescribed burning.


If any land has been identified as Strategic Fire Advantage Zones in the Bush Fire Risk Management Plan, as areas complementing an Asset Protection Zone or if the hazard reduction work is generally within 1000 metres of an asset, the types of work permitted are mechanical work for the maintenance of existing breaks, but not removing native vegetation, and prescribed burning.

An application for a Bush Fire Hazard Reduction Certificate on private property must be in writing using the application forms available from the RFS. There is no application fee for the certificates.

If landowners have any questions about the new system, or there is doubt about a proposed hazard reduction activity, they can contact Geoff at Fire Control on 6297 1840 during normal business hours.

Help is Still Wanted

Work will begin shortly on extending the fire shed. If you would like to offer any building or construction related skills to help this project please contact the project coordinator, **Andrew Dunn**, by telephone on **6238 1849**.




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Outdoor Scouting Day

by Gabrielle Simpkin

Hello, this is Gabrielle Simpkin reporting on a very exciting day, an Outdoor Scouting day with 1st Wamboin Cub Scout Pack where we learnt how to light a camp fire safely in the bush. The activity was held on May 3rd, at our Cub Leader Rikki's property, "Langlo" in Bingley Way, Wamboin.

Rikki is our Leader's Cub name, after the Jungle Book character Rikki-Tikki-Tavi. All of our Cub leaders' names are based on those of Jungle Book characters. Rikki's real name is Peter Harrison.

Five Cubs attended our Outdoor Scouting day: Kahli, Stevie, Graeme, Connor and I. When everyone had arrived, we discussed some of the dangers of fire in the Australian bush, then got to work setting up a safe fireplace. We collected rocks, making a ring around the place we would build our fire. Now it was time to collect kindling. Off we ventured into the bush. We were let in on a local fire lighting secret: the grass tussocks out in the bush have dead, grey grass underneath, which catches alight very easily. Using this grass and small twigs, we were each able to light our camp fires with only one match.

We cooked damper and it tasted great. The day was fun and I would like to thank Peter and Barbara (Peter's wife) for making this day possible.

P.S. Rikki asked me to add that, when we had finished, we made sure our fires were out by pouring water on the coals, and burying them, so that there was no danger of starting a bush fire.



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New Faces at Bungendore Preschool

The start of the school year saw many new faces at Bungendore Preschool – children, parents and the Director. Mary Bonney has joined the staff as the new Director. Mary has spent her career working in preschools, primary schools and childcare centres in 3 different states. For the last seven years Mary has been the Director of the YMCA Jamison Early Childhood Centre (Canberra).


Of her new position Mary said “I am enjoying the opportunity to both teach and direct, and am pleased to be working face to face with children again. I have very positive expectations for 2003, after seeing how well the children have settled in, the friendliness of the parents and the professionalism of the staff who have been working here as a team for some years now.

After only three weeks there is a busy contented buzz in the preschool, with children making new friends and being actively engaged in activities, and the staff clearly showing their love of working with young children.”

Due to the growing population of Bungendore there was a greater demand for preschool places. This year the licence has been increased to 39 per day, to open up an extra 36 places. Many of these have been filled, but there are still some places left. The preschool has the advantage of being across the road from Kool Kids Out of School Care, and children who are 4 years old can access this service before and after preschool. For enquires phone Kool Kids 0402482071.

This year looks like being a great year for Bungendore Preschool. They would love to hear from any parents with children three years and over who require a place for their child. Phone 62381423 to make enquiries.

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HORSES AND BUSHFIRES

(Taken from Agriculture Notes by Patricia Ellis & Hilary Pope, Attwood for the State of Victoria Department of Natural Resources & Environment, 1999 -- Will be reprinted in the next few issues of the Whisper. -- suggested for reprinting in the Whisper by Chris Powell)

If you live in a high risk area it is essential to develop a fire safety plan before the fire season. This may include:

A plan for early evacuation of horses to a safer district. Horse evacuations present unique problems. Make arrangements ahead of time for a place to temporarily relocate your horses. Options may include showgrounds, sale yards, parks, racetracks, pony club grounds or placement with family and friends. Identify several possible retreat routes from your property in case fires block your escape. Decide in advance which horses you will evacuate and make sure they are suitably trained for transport.

Identify a "safe" area on the property where horses can be placed if evacuation is not possible or practical. This area should be a closely grazed paddock or be created from several paddocks by opening gates. Ideally it should have a dam with clear access, an alternative "safe" area might be a large well fenced sand menage arena provided there are no trees or buildings nearby that will burn readily. Post your plan in a clearly visible place together with the telephone number of the local fire brigade and your property's CFA map reference.

Make sure that everyone who lives, works or agists at your property understands the plan.

On days of Total Fire Ban put your horses in the designated "safe" area or, if you work away from the property, you might do this the night before.

Have an annual meeting with neighbours, friends or other mutual interest groups to discuss fire contingency plans and establish ahead of time who will check on and help whom and which resources will be shared. Set up a bushfire emergency plan with the landholder if your horses are agisted, and leave horses in well-grazed paddocks or move them to a safe location during the fire season.

REDUCE FIRE HAZARDS

Reduce fire hazards before the fire season starts. Remove all fire fuel such as excess grass, sticks, leaf litter etc for 20 to 30 meters around the buildings. Store hay, straw, shavings, scrap wood, fuel supplies and chemicals safely away from important buildings. Clean roof surfaces and gutters regularly. Create fire breaks in strategic locations. Develop a grazing plan to reduce fire risk.

A well maintained garden and well watered lawn will help protect the house. Use fire resistant plants on your property. Post "no smoking" signs in and around the stable and in vegetated areas as appropriate. Make sure chainsaws and other equipment are fitted with an Australian Standards approved spark arrester.

If you live in a high risk area, invest in a rainwater storage tank, a sprinkler system and a firefighting pump, and consider erecting fireproof fencing such as steel or concrete posts, particularly if you own a stallion. If your fences are electrified, make sure the remainder of fences are "horseproof" as often power is out during a bushfire.

(TO BE CONTINUED IN THE JULY WISPER)

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ALL CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL

by Dr Gary McComb

Firstly a little history and acknowledgement regarding the above titles. I'm sure most of you know the phrase "All Creatures Great and Small" from the name of a book, then movie and TV series about the life and times of an English veterinarian named James Herriot (James Herriot is a pseudonym). Herriot's first book published in Great Britain in 1970 was called "If Only They Could Talk". His second book was titled "It Shouldn't Happen to a Vet" (1972). Subsequent books were "Let Sleeping Vets Lie" (1973), "Vet in Harness" (1974) "Vets Might Fly" (1976) and "Vet in a Spin" (1977).

"All Creatures Great and Small" was an omnibus edition comprising the first two titles and part of the third. It was published for the American market and became a top US seller. At the time of publication of these early works I was studying Veterinary Science at the University of Queensland and these books became a great source of stimulation and encouragement for me and my fellow students. After many many hours of studying physics (why I don't really know), anatomy, animal husbandry, biochemistry (yuk) and nutrition etc etc, it provided great relief to read a chapter or two of Herriot's books. His books certainly at times gave me the stimulation and inspiration to forge ahead with my studies at Uni.

The real James Herriot was J A (Alf) Wight (1916 - 1995) who trained in Glasgow and joined Donald Sinclair (Siegfried Farnon) in his Thirsk (Darrowby) practice. His books have been translated into over 20 languages and also spawned the long running TV series (90 episodes) and two feature films.

A couple of years ago my son Ben and his Derbyshire born wife Norma, took Margie and me on a tour of Yorkshire. We took a detour to Thirsk. Herriot's home and the practice are now a very popular museum. Situated in the actual "Skeldale House" at 23 Kirkgate, Thirsk, North Yorkshire, the creation of the museum was the millennium project of the local Council. I was absolutely fascinated by everything in this museum which showed not only how veterinary science was practiced but also how people lived in that era.

After a couple of hours there Ben, who works in the financial world in London, was having considerable difficulty extracting me from the premises and suggested he was entitled to equal time at the "Accountants' Museum". The thought of looking at lead pencils, rubbers and sharpeners, ledgers and journals did not inspire me!

I hereby acknowledge James Herriot and the titles of his books.

The end of another era. Blair and I began working together in January 1978 and must just about have the record for "Longest Veterinary Partnership" - certainly in this region. As many of you know, Blair retired on the 30th of April 2003. We thank him for his long-serving contribution to animal welfare in this region and wish him well in his retirement. No doubt many of you will see more of him on the golf courses.

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The Stable Door

By Ian Coillet

Was back in my old home town (Melbourne) last week on a flying visit to family and friends. You know the old saying that goes with Melbourne weather – if you want to experience all seasons in the one day, the southern capital is the place to be. Well, for we rain starved rural residential land dwellers of the Southern Tablelands, getting soaked in the wet stuff comes as an absolute joy these days. But in between family frivolities, a most enjoyable outing to the opera for a spot of Madama Butterfly (the tragic love story involving a fine young lady and a cad of a sea captain) and festivities with friends, inclement weather also brings time for a little extra reading. So, I took the opportunity to thumb through a number of magazines – of a motor and travel nature. And so it was that I found these little gems. There's something for you especially if you are enjoying the very latest in car technology. Or, perhaps it will rain again, a little brainteaser for you to work out how to row yourself and others across water to safety. And finally, there's the latest in Canadian efforts to reduce animal/car carnage – a must read for all residents on roads in this region.

CAR SECURITY From the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria's official magazine, Royal Auto, comes the story of Amanda Webster whose car would not start. She did the obvious thing and called her auto club. Patrolman Keith Scott turned up, surmised that the lack of response to the turning of the key was battery-related – and then saw part of the key was missing. After looking around the car for a few minutes, it dawned on Amanda that she had let her one-year old son Oscar play with the car keys. That information allowed Keith to correctly diagnose the problem –



young Oscar had swallowed the key's transponder, a pill-sized electronic security device that is part of the car's security system. This is where the patrolman's experience and ingenuity swung into action. He asked Amanda to hold Oscar against the steering wheel and to try turning the key. Sure enough, the car started. A few days later, the transponder passed out of Oscar and all was well. Keith said: "It was my most unusual call ... and the ultimate in car security."

IT WILL RAIN AGAIN SO BE PREPARED From a travel magazine comes the following (adapted for local conditions of course). Larry, Dave and "The Fish" must cross a creek to visit their friend Peter. They have a boat. But they also have a problem. In a perfect world Larry and Dave each weigh 50kgs. The Fish weighs 75 kgs. And the boat will carry only 100kgs at a time! "Oh no! We can't get across the creek!" moans Dave. The Fish thinks for a moment and says, "I know a way we can all get across. It will just take more than one trip." **What is The Fish's plan?** (Answer is elsewhere in the Whisper.) And, finally, back to the Royal Auto

HOW WE MIGHT CREAM THE ROO AND CAR CARNAGE? Authorities in Canada have installed infra-red cameras in the Rocky Mountains which detect animals in the bushes near the roadside and post warnings to motorists via digital displays on the road. Probably wouldn't want to hold your breath waiting for this one....

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YELLOW-TAILED BLACK COCKATOOS

by Jacquelyn O'Leary

There's been much interest and debate in the Wamboin area (via an email discussion group on local wildlife) concerning the now regular visits from the spectacular but seemingly destructive flocks of **Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos** (*Calyptorhynchus funereus funereus*). Their stay is usually short but they manage to make their presence felt. Like something out of a Hitchcock movie, they fly low, appear to be fearless, have a deafening screech and manage to wreak havoc on many plants. Responses to them vary from joy to annoyance with many locals putting out the welcome mat by planting their favoured native food sources, while others are devising ways to discourage their return.

These birds with their loud, distinctive "kee-ow" calls, have been frequenting the area for the past few years. Their natural habitat varies from rainforests and woodlands through to timber along water-courses. They are known to be regular visitors to coastal heathlands, orchards and pine plantations, which no doubt accounts for their sojourns to the Wamboin district. Short of removing all pines in the area (an idea which would no doubt be supported by many, as they are now high on the list of environmental weeds across the country!) it seems the Yellow-tails are here to stay.

According to Rainer Rehwinkel of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Queanbeyan:

"Part of the natural diet of these wonderful birds is the large wood grub which feeds in wattles and gums. This is what they're hunting for when they are apparently ring-barking trees. These birds were unheard of in the Macs Reef Road area or even the suburbs of Canberra 20 years ago. They seem to have moved into these areas recently because of the pine trees, upon whose cones they feed. Pine seeds are an inferior source of food for this adaptable species - I have heard of a study that showed that Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos that ate large amounts of these seeds had a lower breeding success rate.

The fact that these birds are feeding on their 'natural diet', albeit in the 'new habitat' of rural subdivisions should be regarded as part of the evolutionary processes that are adapting this once uncommon bird species to a landscape highly modified by humans. This should be celebrated. I for one would certainly not mind it if these wonderful birds wrecked a few saplings in order to survive, as they certainly have been doing for eons in their tall forest habitat! And importantly, those trees infested with wood boring grubs will certainly not survive to maturity in any case".

Apart from wood grubs, these birds have a penchant for banksias and hakeas in particular, but will probably search out almost any large-fruited native species or conifers. They leave the bushes looking as if they had been pruned by Edward Scissorhands! Fortunately these plants manage to recover, bear fruit and live to survive another attack.

Of particular interest recently has been the repeated sighting of a **luminous yellow version** of the **Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo** in this area. The bird had small patches of black which at first glance gave the impression that the bird had reversed colourings. It was also thought by some to be albino. Albinoism is the total absence of all pigments which means the bird would have been white with pink eyes. In fact the condition this particular bird had is referred to as 'leucism'. Leucistic birds have an impairment in the normal pigmentation process. In this bird the chemical 'melanin' had been almost totally blocked, only appearing normal in the flight and tail feathers, and some individual feathers on its back and chest.

Understandably, there were great efforts being made to capture this bird in a photograph (hopefully that was the only type of capture attempted!) and although exceedingly difficult some people were successful. We hope to have these photographs posted on the Bywong Community website soon. Look under the Landcare section at www.bywong-community.org.au

Certainly the occasional stop-over of the Yellow-tails is less of a threat than the imminent invasion of the Common (or Indian) Mynah bird to the region. This pest bird was introduced to the local region (Canberra) in 1968, and is now encroaching on this area, having already established at Eaglehawk and sighted near the Sutton Interchange and as far as Newington Road. Common Mynah is a very aggressive, gregarious territorial species. It nests in hollows and soon displaces native species that require hollows for their survival. Often it is in such large numbers that it excludes almost if not all native hollow-requiring species. At the October 13 meeting of the **Geary's Gap/Wamboin Landcare Group**, Chris Tidemann, Senior Lecturer in Wildlife Management from the ANU School of Resources, Environment & Society, will be addressing the problem and providing ideas on how to combat it.

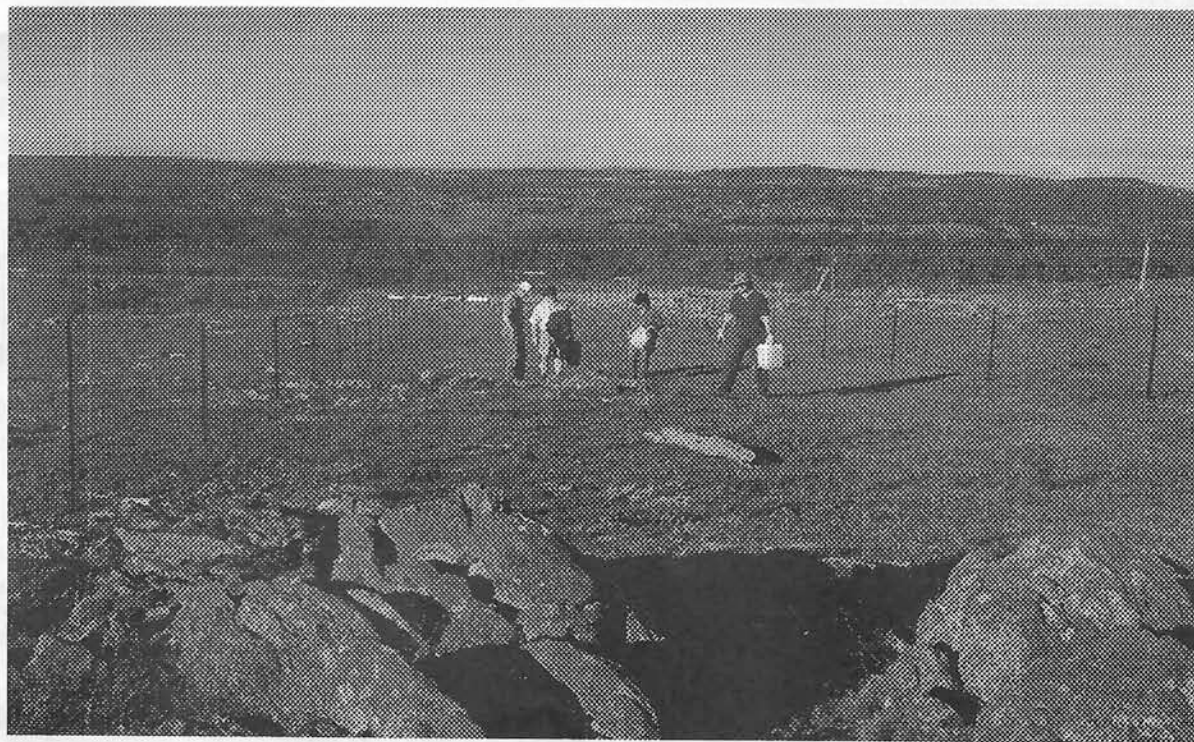
If you are interested in being part of the wildlife email discussion group, contact Colin Johnson at colin.johnson69@bigpond.com This is an informal group which provides a forum for asking questions, sharing sightings, learning about local critters and discussing wildlife issues.

GEARY'S GAP/WAMBOIN LANDCARE

We will be taking a winter break from our regular meetings and resume on Monday August 11th with the well-known Canberra naturalist, **Ian Fraser**, being our guest speaker. There are many more interesting speakers planned so watch this space or check the Landcare calendar on the Bywong Community Association website at www.bywong-community.org.au

Propagation sessions will continue on the 2nd Saturday morning of each month. So all are welcome at 9am 38 Birchmans Grove, Wamboin on Saturday 7 June and 12 July. Phone Geoff on 62369158. - Jacqui O'Leary, Convener

Picture Below: Members of the landcare group watering some of their new plantings on the 'denley drive greenway'.



WAMBOIN COUNTRY GOLF CLUB – MAY COMPETITION RESULTS

The May competition was sponsored by Lambert Winery of Wamboin and we thank Steve and Ruth for the generous trophies and wine tasting of their great wines. Watch out for the grand opening of the Lambert Winery and restaurant later this year.

Ball winners were John Whitney x2, Dick Henley, Bob Mettam x3, Joan Mason and (courtesy of a "Wamboin bounce") Peter Greenwood.

B Grade won by Bob (welcome to A Grade) Mettam by two strokes from Trevor Barker. A

Grade won by Lofty Mason also by two strokes from John Whitney

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Wamboin Muses

Jill Gregory

What could give one greater cause for joy than a carpet of golden leaves just waiting to be raked up, and a pile of well seasoned cow pats softened by overnight rain. My thoughts immediately turned to composting. This, I decided, was the year for compost. But my joy, overall, has been somewhat tempered by recent events.

Now every parent assumes without question that their offspring is god's gift to mankind, a creature loved by all. And this extends to one's pets. So it came as a terrible blow the other day to discover otherwise. Cedric, the rooster, the noble bird who is always the first to strut out to greet me when I arrive home, attacked our dear neighbour when she responded to our dog's cry for help. We thought we had left Mort in charge for the day, but he had obviously felt abandoned, and cried, and Cedric foiled the rescue attempt.

Cedric isn't exactly your common, run of the mill rooster. It is bad enough to be saddled with the name Cedric but to come into the world as he did was most unfortunate. Thus I suggest there were mitigating circumstances. He was hatched by a duck who took one look at her ugly duckling and immediately thrust him out into the cold. Then, scooped up by young hands, he spent his first days in an old ugg boot in the electric frypan on its lowest setting. He thrived, but was reluctant to venture back into the cruel world that had first scorned him. He had a sheltered adolescence, far removed from the peck and scratch of the coop, and his first involuntary crow confused and astounded him. He sought the company of the lamb, ignored the chooks and learned to his own detriment just how far he could push Mort. Mort sat comfortably at the top of the pecking order, but Cedric could not be dissuaded from challenging his position on occasions.

Cedric was in deep trouble. There was only one honourable thing to do.

A few nights later "Cedric" was delivered to the neighbour's front door, plucked and chilled, with a note of apology from Mort tucked under the tartan ribbon. Our gracious neighbours even asked us to join them for dinner.

I was driving home the other morning, enjoying the patchwork of icy white frost on a grey brown landscape, and watching the morning cloud pick up its voluminous skirts and steal into the light, when I turned into our drive, and there was Cedric, strutting boldly towards the car to greet me.

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