

The Whisper

June 2006 CIRCULATION: 1029

All proceeds from advertisements after printing costs go to the WAMBOIN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION, which started the Whisper in 1981 and continues to own it. 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. Contributions which readers may wish to make will be appreciated, and should be submitted to by email to nednoel@optusnet.com.au or dropped into his mailbox at 17 Reedy Creek Place. The deadline for the next issue is always the last Sunday of the month, 7 pm, so for the July 2006 Whisper the deadline is Sunday, June 25, 2005, 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

TT 1 . C	11 1 14	P :1	6220 2200
Wamboin Community Assn	Helen Montesin	President	6238-3208
Bywong Community Assn	Warwick Cathro	President	6236-9187
Fire Brigade	Cliff Spong	Captain	040-999-1340 bh 6236 9220 ah
Wamboin Playgroup	Leanne Quick	Convener	6238 3435
Landcare	Roger Good	President	6236-9048
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 Scout Group	Peter Harrison	Contact Person	6238-3525
Wamboin Guides	Rosemary Riley	Contact Person	6297-7632
Wamboin Pony Club	Maureen Purdie	Contact Person	6238-3343
Gearys Gap Pony Club	Anne McInnes	Secretary	6236-9883
Play Group	Leanne Quick	Convenor	6238-3435
Hall Bookings	Joan Mason	Bookings	6238-3258
Church, Anglican	Robyn Robertson	Warden	6238-3202
Christian Prayer Group	Steve & Imelda Taylor	Contacts	6238-3220
Golf	Peter Greenwood	Golfer	6238-3358
Injured Wildlife	Wildcare	Helpline	6299-1966

THE YOUNG WAMBOIN ENTREPRENEURS

Deanne Brucic, babysitting & Petsitting	6238-1884
Ellen Smith, petsitting (experienced with horses)	6238-3115
Sarah Dunn, babysitting, cooking	6238 1849 or 0424 023 841.
Fiona Skea, babysitting	6238-3290
Rebecca Purdie, petsitting	6238-3343
Frank Deveson, bicycle maintenance	6238-3294
Alycia and Hannah Elword, babysitting, petsitting	6236 9186
John Brennan, babysitting and petsitting	6238 3472
Gabrielle Simpkin & Nicolette Neveu-Abramczuk, petsitting	62383600

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

Bywong Community News

Collated by Morag Cotsell

Local vineyard to sponsor Trivia: Lambert Vineyards is sponsoring this year's Bywong Trivia Challenge. This year's Trivia night, traditionally contested by teams from a number of local communities, will take place on the earlier date of 1 July. Lamberts has donated prizes of estate wine for each member of the winning team, and participants will also have the chance to win a dinner for two (with wine!) in a limited trivia-night raffle. Organisers Warwick and Diana (6236 9187) will take bookings from groups up to 8 or individuals for the unchanged admission price of \$10 per person. The community will provide its usual popular selection of soups for supper.

Adventure bushwalk: Everyone who lives in the Shire should know the Big Hole in Deua National Park, out of Braidwood. The Community has organised a walk to this astonishing natural phenomenon for Sunday 18 June (only 2 km each way, but a gentle wade through the Shoalhaven River). We shall be organising a car pool - details from Jean-Pierre Favre (6230 3573 or email him on jsfavre@gmail.com. We shall meet at the Community Hall at 9.30 am. Bring a picnic lunch and dry socks or sandals.

Greenways talk: Jan Day from the Greenways Committee will give a short talk on the Greenways network at the Community's next general meeting on Monday 19 June. Come and hear about the latest developments and plans for use of this valuable amenity in our region.

Donations to local groups: The Community has realised a surplus from the March Car Boot Sale, and has decided to make donations of \$500 to the Fire Brigade, \$200 to the Brownies, and \$100 to Bungendore Park Tennis Club. The Community also decided to allocate remaining surplus funds from the Sugar Glider Project to the Greenways Committee (\$405) and Wildcare (\$200).

Forthcoming meetings: The next general meeting is on 19 June. The Annual General Meeting is on 21 August.

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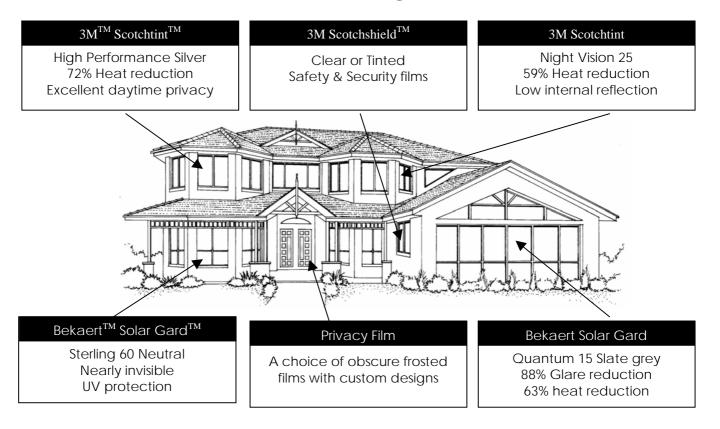
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The 37 people below each spend a bit of time each month to make sure that Wamboin and Bywong residents own and receive a free community newspaper. If your deliverer has been on the job for a long time and you have a bit of time you could spare, think about offering to take over the job. If you already have too many tasks in your month, every now and then give your volunteer paperwoman/man/boy/girl a thank you.

130 CO-ORDINATI	ED BY HELEN MONTESIN:		Ph 6238 3208		
Dean Evans	Nrtn Area frm Campbl West	18	Bill Owen Cooper R	d.	28
Helen Montesin	Fernloff Rd	33	Cathy Abell	Canning Close	17
Hank Berlee	11 Poppet Rd (for all on road)	34			
271 CO-ORDINATI	ED BY SUE GANE:		Ph 6238 3463		
Joan Mason	Bingley Way	45	Margaret Heleimin	Merino Vale Drive	17
Sue Ward	Norton, Bngly to Weeroona	32	Anne Gardner	Weeroona, Norton to Majors	30
Sue Gane	Majors Close	20	David Anderson	Weeroona, Majors to Denley	35
Ned Noel	13 YrCn 35Adv	48	Penny Evans	Norton, Cmpbell to Bngley	25
Kathy Handel	Yalana West	19			
227 CO-ORDINATI	ED BY KERRIE FISHER:		Ph 6238 3489		
Colleen Foster	Joe Rocks to Norton	20			
Deb Gordon	Yalana East	41	Rob Gorham	South End - Clare Valley	38
Cassie Fisher	Clare Lane	11	Pauline Segeri	North End - Clare Valley	42
Lyle Monetesin	Forrest Road area	60	Bungendore Shop E	Bungendore	10
204 CO-ORDINAT	ED BY JOHN VAN DER STRAA	TEN:	Ph 6238 3590		
Sheryl Barnes	Quinn's Estate / Denley	20	Brian Higgiso	Deley/Kestral area	11
Don Malcomson	Macs R Denley to Gum Flat	35	Rhett Cox	Macs Reef /Nwngtn to FdHwy	12
Ann Platts	Denley MacReef to Birchman's	26	Morag Cotsell	MReef /Newington/Harriot	45
Warrick Cathro	Macs Reef -GumFlat to Harriott	18	Esther/Ian Rudd	MReef/Bankers/FedHwy	25
Joan Milner	Birriwa Road	12			
197 CO-ORDINATI	ED BY LAURA SNOWDON Ph 6	5236 9609			
Trevor Kirk	Macs R - Denley to Bung Rd	20	Snowdon Family	Hogan Drive	30
Len Parrish	Summerhill Rd Area	32	Diana+Keith Gascoin	ne Snow Gum Road	23
Sue Gorham	Schofields/Brooks/Millyn	47	Thelma Martin	Shinglehouse Rd area	20
Sue Aunella	Doust/Wyoming/Brooks	25	TOTAL FOR WHISI	PER 1029	



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MORE RATES FOR WAMBOIN!

Many residents of Wamboin would have been surprised recently to receive a notice from the Braidwood Rural Lands Protection Board informing them that as owners of a property of between 4 and 10 hectares they would be liable for a rate and for other incidental charges associated with ownership of that property. The enclosures provided information on the Board's role and activities.

Consequently, the Wamboin Community Association invited the Board to address a General Meeting on its functions and to discuss the relevance of the Board to small area properties with minimal stock carrying capabilities and unlikely to ever need reference to the Board or its staff.

On 16 May approximately 50 community members attended the WCA General Meeting dedicated to an address by the BRLPB Deputy Chairman, John Reardon, and the BRLPB veterinarian, Bob Templeton, on the provisions of the NSW Rural Land Protection Act 1998. We were informed that the BRLPB carries out many of the responsibilities of the NSW Department of Agriculture which also, in recent years, has retreated from administering animal health in the State. The Board's activities include the control of animal diseases, noxious animals, stock reserves, abattoirs and chemical residues. It administers special purpose levies, eg. Insect Levy, IT Levy, Meat Industry Levy, the National Livestock Identification Scheme and an annual return on stock carried at the end of June each year. The Board veterinarian and ranger are available for advice on stock health matters and the ranger will hire out fox traps and provide you with rabbit calicivirus when necessary.

Discussion during the evening was at times spirited, particularly when we were informed that "there was nothing in the Act to require the Board to provide ratepayers with a service." Other points of contention were the rationale and authority for a change from a minimum of 10ha to 4ha, the need for an RLPB, its relationship with the NSW Department of Agriculture, the relevance of travelling stock reserves and the appropriateness of some levies to small area properties. It appears that the minimum area rated until 1990 was 4ha when it was changed to 10ha as it was agreed by the then Board that 50 DSE was the carrying capacity for 10ha in the BRLPB. Last year the Board required additional funding for new responsibilities eg. the NLIS, so approached the NSW Minister for Agriculture for approval to determine a minimum of 1ha. The Minister is reported to have recently agreed to a return to a 4ha minimum and advised the Board that levies could be implemented according to the carrying capacity of the properties. Hence, the Board has determined the minimum of 4ha for rating purposes, that should you carry 50 or more head of stock you are liable for a Meat Industry Levy and that specific areas of the BRLPB will pay an Insect Levy. The BRLPB representatives indicated that a questionnaire is to be sent to all ratepayers seeking information on their properties and the views of the owners on a number of issues.

The WCA members at the General Meeting expressed dissatisfaction with the arbitrary extension of the BRLPB's rating structure from 10ha to 4ha as a blatant revenue raising exercise which, together with the admission that no additional service would be provided by the BRLPB, led to the passage of a motion that this dissatisfaction be brought to the attention of the NSW Minister for Agriculture, the Member for Monaro and the BRLPB.

John van der Straaten – WCA Secretary – 6238 3590

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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 6238-3484 for information. Advertising rates: Full Page - \$100 Half Pg - \$50 1/3 Pg \$35 1/4 Pg - \$30 1/5 Pg - \$25 1/6 Pg - \$20 1/8 Pg - \$15

FOR HIRE: WAMBOIN COMMUNITY HALL. Bookings arranged by Joan Mason 62383258.

Local Resident \$75-00, Bond \$250. Non Resident \$150, Bond \$300. The Hall is not available for teenage or 21st functions.

Trestles and chairs are available for hire by local residents. Hire rates are: Trestle \$10ea and chairs \$1.50 ea. Price does not include delivery or pick-up charges. Available from the Wamboin Community Hall, 112 Bingley Way. Must be returned in clean servicable condition. All damages are responsibility of the hirer. Equipment must be tied securely on trailer etc. when taken (otherwise they don't go.) Time of pick-up and returned MUST be adhered too (I don't live at the Hall!) -Joan Mason, 62383258.

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 Joan Mason- 6238-3258

The Whisper is a community newspaper for Wamboin and Bywong. If you live in the area and have something to say about living here that is informative, thoughtful or entertaining, think about writing it up for the next issue. For more information contact the editor on 6238-3484 or email nednoel@optusnet.com.au. And thanks if you have already done so.

Rainfall and Temperatures in Wamboin.. 31 year statistics from the Robertsons

May rainfall to 28/5 12.75mm (May 2005 2mm) 2006 rainfall to 28/5 239.75mm (2005 to 29/5 149.5mm)

Av June rainfall 57.5mmWettest June 138mm in 1977 Driest June 8mm in 1979

Hottest June day 17c (7/6/01) Coldest June day 4c (28/6/93) Coldest June night -5c (20/6/01)

NOTICE

Wamboin Volunteer Rural Fire Brigade 2006 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Wamboin Volunteer Rural Fire Brigade will be held on Tuesday 13 June 2006 Wamboin Community Association Hall 112 Bingley Way Wamboin. The meeting will begin at 7.30pm. The Brigade's most important formal event of the year. All members are encouraged to attend. Aspiring members, families and visitors are welcome. Ian Coillet, Secretary, 6238 3425



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1st Wamboin Scouts

Wamboin Scouts has provided young local boys and girls with a variety of outdoor skills and activities since the late 80's and in recent times has won both the District Standards camps run over 3 days in Kowen Forest and is now on the search for children aged between 10 and 15 years of age to make the group viable. The focus for the younger scouts will be on outdoor skills (summer and winter), camping, construction and badge work through achieving planned activities (Monday night hall work and weekend camps) If you have an interest in having fun and developing your outdoor skills, come and see the Scouts. Time: Mondays 7 - 9 pm Location: Wamboin Community Hall, Bingley Way For further information Please contact Marita Corra (H):62383246 (W): 62383882 Email: marita@cyberone.com.au or Paul Brugman (H):62383539

(W): 61253830 Email: paul.brugman@anu.edu.au



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- □ S/C Heaters Removed or Replaced
- ☐ Smoke Detectors Supplied and Installed For appointments or further information please phone Brian

6258 1792



A newsletter from YOUR volunteer rural fire brigade compiled by Cliff Spong with help from many members of the Brigade (Wamboin Brigade's website is www.wamboin-fireshed.com)

The fire season has now ended. Fire permits are not required if you want to burn off or light fires in the open, but please notify your neighbours and your fire brigade Captain 24 hours before you light up.

Ring 000 to report fires or smoke sightings.

From the Captain's Desk



Our ever diligent and over-worked editor has let me know that I may need to keep things brief this month as space is a little limited. I will do my best.

Luckily for us last month was quiet for the Wamboinite fireys, if you don't count an interesting call out to fire in a local substation! On a drizzly Sunday afternoon the pagers went off alerting us to the fire. Within 10 minutes I was on scene. A few minutes later the fire brigade from Queanbeyan was there. A short while after that two crews from Sutton were on the scene just as was the first crew from Wamboin. Two other Wamboin crews were rapidly making their way from the fire shed while other members of the brigade were arriving at the shed ready for any developments at the incident. What a fantastic response! There was only one small problem though. Although there had been some sort of

explosion the resulting fire had the gall to self-extinguish itself before we could do anything about it! Talk about all dressed up for the party!

Our regular brigade training continues unabated. We had several interesting and rewarding sessions during the month. During our regular Saturday afternoon training session we were visited by one of the staff from RFS headquarters in Sydney whose job involved developing training programs for all RFS volunteers across the State. Our training that day involved a simulated accident where a car had hit a power pole and the power lines had then fallen across a paddock and the resulting sparks from the wires contacting a wire fence had started a grass fire. While one crew dealt with the car accident the other crew contained and extinguished the real grass fire lit to add some realism. Our crews dealt with everything that day in a calm and controlled fashion. It was a pleasure to watch. Our visitor was extremely impressed and commented that it was a pity that he didn't a video camera so that members in his own brigade back in Sydney could see how their country cousins ran a very good training exercise. (cont'd next page)

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1/6

On June 18 we are having a working bee at the fire shed. All help will be greatly appreciated. At 1230 we will be starting a new tradition for the brigade when we will be having an end of season barbecue for brigade members and their families. It should be a fun day. We would really like as many family members to join us so that we can show our appreciation for their support during the fire season in allowing us to do the fun stuff and mess around in big red trucks.

On the 13th of June we will be holding our Annual General Meeting. All residents in the Wamboin, Bywong and Sutton areas who are in our brigade area are cordially invited. It will be a great opportunity to come along and meet those among you who choose to spend much of their time quietly going about their fire brigade duties.

There is much information on the brigade's website about property protection and things to do when fires approach. I encourage you to look it up, if you have access to the Internet. Failing that, please give me a phone call on 0409 991 340 or 6236 9220.

THE CAPTAIN'S LIST	Businesses supporting the Wamboin Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade	
A'Hern Fitness at the Airport	Coolah Holdings Pty Ltd	Quick-Eze Towing
AAA Water Carriers	Cross Country Construction	Ratz Mobile Welding
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B & B Tree Surgery	Horizon Real Estate	Sotech Pty Ltd
Bingley Contractors (Water Carriers)	FH Office Services	Shepherds Hut Wines
Bungendore Rural	France Harrison & Associates	Sherrin Hire
Bungendore Taxi Service	Gidgee Estate Winery	Sutton Real Estate
Capital Business Services	Inland Trading Co (Aust)	Tipton Shopfitters Pty Ltd
Capital Stainless Steel	Lambert Vineyards	Trevor Barker & Associates
Clare Valley Tree Services	LMS Consulting	Trevor Duncan Homes
Coates Hire, Fyshwick	Manuka Childcare Centre	Wagonga Coffee
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New Encounters

by Jake Annetts, Weeroona Drive

Having spent the first forty years of my life in England, I found myself comfortable with the cold, the grey skies, and the fact that one only needs the sunnies for a few months maximum and in the interim, they stay in a dusty draw until you find them usually quite by chance. Donning of the sunnies in England becomes a statement pronouncing the coming of summer, accompanied by the sudden emergence of many pairs of white skinny legs, the sounds and smells of grass being cut and a strange occurrence consisting of families from inner London, sitting on a piece of grass beside a busy road and having a 'picnic'. Very odd behaviour and it takes seeing it to believe it.

I was always a 'country type', although I grew up in south London. I worked as a Tree Surgeon and a Gardener and brought my organic approach to my suburban postage stamp of a garden, growing the most fantastic veggies using the 'no dig' method, consisting of the layering of organic matter on the surface and growing through it. The worms do the all the work and the produce is terrific!

Quite by chance, I met a lady from Australia and to cut a long story short, I ended up here. I am now an Aussie, still a Pom, so I call myself a Possie. My first encounter with the Australian outdoors I treated as if I'd just arrived on another planet. I was very cautious to say the least, especially when lifting a pile of old bricks. I'd heard about all the dangers, the spiders, the snakes, and looking between the gaps, I found my first ever cockroaches, bigger than I expected, and then my first Huntsman... bigger than anything I'd encountered outside a zoo! So, bit-by-bit, I became accustomed to my new surroundings and enjoyed watching the Roo's, Maggies and the odd Kookaburra.

We moved to Wamboin in 2005 and now live very happily in the bush. We quickly discovered that the bugs here are bigger and healthier looking than the ACT counterparts. The flies weigh a few kilos each, the March Flies, although persistent, are easy to catch once distracted by the eager feed that awaits, and I feed their twitching remains to the chooks. No waste from our place.

The snakes are a different matter and my first encounter was an alarming one to say the least. Blokes have the luxury of being able to take a call of nature without having to bother with wasting water, and I went out into the back yard with this intention. Whilst sniffing the fresh air and looking up into the trees watching a 'gaggle' of Kookaburras, I went about my business. Luckily for me, the valve that lets go hadn't quite been synchronised and whilst concentrating and searching for the trigger, I looked down to where I might take my first step, only to find what looked like a four foot Brown snake. I think an impromptu shower may have made it cranky so I swiftly forgot the search for my 'wee switch', and began to holler for my wife to come see my snake. Say no more. It slithered off not to be seen again, and now I'm more careful when slipping outside.

Since then I've seen a couple of Tiger snakes, but they always seem to avoid me, perhaps they chatted with their brown cousin and give me a wide berth. Nevertheless, I love it here, my sunnies are well worn old favourites that never even reach a drawer, my accent is still a thick clipped London one, yet I've added a few sayings to my repertoire, "No worries, and she'll be right mate"

Jake Annetts, Weeroona Drive

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WAMBOIN GOLF CLUB - MAY COMPETITION RESULTS

At hit-off time we were threatened with some cold wet weather but this did not deter the intrepid golfers; at least for a few holes. The event was a stableford game generously sponsored once again by Steve and Ruth from Lambert Vineyards. After about six holes the Committee Members playing (me!) decided that a seven-hole event was appropriate for the cold wet and windy conditions. The few who piked after six holes were offset by a few others who battled on for nine notable holes. Juniors Jack and Matilda Whitney played 9 holes and were rewarded with some golf balls and soft drinks. Thanks to Steve and Ruth the other players all went home with a bottle of award winning Lambert wine. Larry King won the NAGA and John Whitney the main trophy for 9 holes.

Many thanks again to Steve and Ruth Lambert from Lambert Vineyards and Café.

-- Peter Greenwood, Golf enquiries 6238 3358

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Lock up your daughters!!!

Having a quick surf through the Yass Valley Council web-site the other day for reasons I don't need to go into here and the had a little article on the Companion Animals Act 1998. Well, it wasn't the Act itself that caught my attention but the couple of "Did you Know?" stats preceding. So, did you know...

The average number of litters a fertile dog can produce: 2 a year.

Average number of puppies in a litter: 6 - 10.

Number of dogs in six years one female dog and her offspring can produce: 67,000 dogs!!!

Average number of litters a fertile cat can produce: 3 a year.

Average number of kittens in an average feline litter: 7 - 10.

Number of cats in seven years one female cat and her offspring can produce: 420,000 cats!!!

Bloody hell!!

############

Last month, I mentioned I had picked up a great little publication in the shop at Parliament House prepared by the then Federal Capital Commission titled "Canberra – General Notes for the Information of Public Servants". Originally published in 1926 the booklet was to inform members of the Commonwealth Public Service who were being transferred from Melbourne to Canberra in the following year...."in regard to how they will get to Canberra, and how they will get on when they get there".

It's an interesting read (subject matter and writing style) and there are some magic old photos to portray the roolly early days of Canberra. I thought I'd pull a couple of excerpts to give you a flavour:

"CLIMATE. To folk accustomed to Melbourne winters, it should be made clear that and equipment of warm clothing, combined with the improvement in appetite which is noticeable in the case of all new-comers, will afford ample protection from the rigours of a Canberra winter.

DOMESTIC AND OTHER PESTS. While the mosquito is rarely heard, the common house fly and blowfly are problems which face the housewife here as in Melbourne.

Snakes. – It was the custom of that section of the Australian press which was distinctly hostile to the establishment of Canberra to picture the countryside as more or less alive with venomous snakes. The fact is that, while the odd species indigenous to New South Wales ignore the existence of the boundary of the Territory for the Seat of Government, they are exceedingly modest."

These are Domestic pets? I don't think so.

"Firewood. – Firewood is available at £1 per cord.

SOCIAL LIFE. The social life of any community, of course, covers a wide field of home and community activity, and while it would be futile to attempt to classify the ramifications of the personal taste of the individual, it is appropriate to outline the organisation which has been set up by the people of Canberra at the instance of the Commission, and which will round out life for the householder who comes to Canberra from a suburb of Melbourne. (continued next page)

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SUCH OFFICERS WILL FILL IN FORM C All officers to be transferred must have a form filled in and in the hands of the Commission by 30 June 1926." -- Aaaaghh! So this is where the form-filling fetish was founded.

The Devil is in the Detail

by Graham Bailey, Norton Road

I'm one of the newcomers to the Farmers Subsidy Scheme, known as the Braidwood Rural Lands Protection Board. The minimum taxable area changed to 4 hectares on 31 December 2005 and the rates notices are already in. I cannot see how any of the core functions of the Board have any relevance to a small residential block in Wamboin. Have a look at the detail.

Part of this new Tax is levied to pay debt due to a 2004/05 locust plague way out west, a long way from Wamboin. This charge will be levied for a further five years. This means the locust plague and the debt pre-date our entry to the rip-off club on 31 December 2005. What a tax grab. How do they do it?



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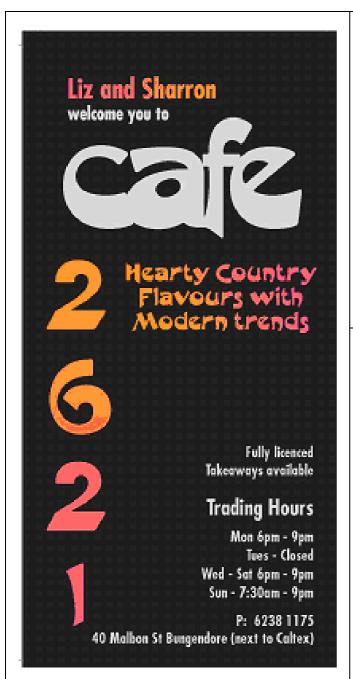


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Wamboin 15 years ago ,from the Whisper, June 1991 (circulation 265 ed. Suzanne Frazer)

From Yarrowlumla Shire Council News, by Peter Greenwood (Deputy Shire President)
Perpared by Robyn Robertson

"Council at a recent meeting considered the state of the unsealed "link" section of Weeroona Drive between Wamboin and Geerys Gap. This link road is in a fairly bad state of repair which is unfortunately common on many of the Shire's unsealed roads due to the high cost of maintenance and the very limited funding available. Unfortunately, the available funds will only seal about one third of the road and Council will be considering other ways and means to complete the work on this heavily trafficked section of the road."



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A Request for Help from the Wamboin Volunteer Rural Fire Brigade

Wamboin Volunteer Rural Fire Brigade Calling all local Tradespeople

Your local volunteer fire-fighters are having a working-bee at the Fire Station 112 Bingley Way Wamboin on Sunday June 18. There's a raft of activities planned

and a range of skill-sets and machinery required for excavating, concreting, electrical and plumbing work. Commences 8am and at 12.30pm a BBQ lunch will be provided.Can you volunteer some of your valuable time to help the community's fire brigade tackle its list of chores?

If YES, please call Andrew Dunn on 0427 480 031. We assure you, any support you can offer is greatly appreciated.



BUNGENDORE EVENING VIEW CLUB BEING STATIONED IN IRAQ DID HAVE ITS LIGHTER SIDE

What a diverse group of ladies Bungendore Evening VIEW club are! At the May Dinner Meeting Jacque Kopievsky, a club member gave an eye opening yet humorous talk, to 39 ladies about her stay in Iraq during 2004. Jacque, a Major in The Australian Army, a resident in Bungendore opened by depicting the dangerous side; bomb blasts, guns, kidnappings, frightened people all part of everyday life experienced by the armed forces. Life was, at times, extremely difficult and dangerous; however, she managed to show the lighter side of it all as well. What did come over loud and clear, was enthusiasm for her job and a dedication to serving her country, while, in true Australian fashion, managing to maintain an incredible sense of humour. Her anecdotes caused much laughter.

She showed the very opulent palaces in Baghdad, previously not opened to the public, (she actually showed a slide of herself taken sitting on one of Saddam Hussein's many elaborate thrones). Iraq is a place of vast contrasts eg a donkey and cart alongside modern vehicles, an Iraqui local pushing a wheelbarrow along a three lane highway. Jacque's account of chasing after a Christmas treat caused much hilarity. Evidently, the special treat for Australian troops was an issue of two beers per soldier. Unfortunately, she said "we had had to work hard to get the beer as someone had loaded them on to their own truck and driven off". Jacque and other soldiers went off in hot pursuit to retrieve them and quench their thirst. They drank later them even though they were warm.

She described the Iraqis as "loving having us there and, for people who did not have homes, water and who were living in constant fear they saw us as a 'form of comfort' ". There were many humourous comparisons of the 'perks' the Americans got as opposed to other coalition forces. "They got scantily clad cheer leaders/ dancing girls – we got Angry Anderson!" They had Burger King, KFC and Dunkin Donuts stalls in their mess tents, we had the usual canteen food'! These she said "were not to be taken as complaints". Despite all the laughter which took place during the evening all there were moved by the conditions and difficulties our forces have to face. and how their efforts were appreciated by some of the Iraqui people. Newly elected President, Debbie Hudson thanked Jacque and said that "as question time was so lively it had indicated that those present were very interested and had enjoyed her talk". We should all be proud to know that there are women like Jacque who are prepared to go and serve in such places for Australia.

Next month on 5 June, Eric Dangerfied, Bungendore's Evening VIEW CLUB's Celebrity Chef, because of last years success, has been asked to do a 'repeat performance'. Eric will be demonstrating an entrée at Café Woodworks 6.45 for 7.50 pm. Cost \$25. Numbers to Ros Welch 62380769 (home) 0417 297 754 (mobile) or email mijwelchj@alphalink.com.au before Friday 2 June.. Visitors are most welcome to come along so, if you are a recent arrival to the village, this could be an opportunity to meet ladies of the area in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere. . — Ros Welch

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Have Your Say on Rates Model

By Terry Bransdon

Palerang's Braidwood-based councillors and the Burra-based mayor rejected a motion at the Council's Bungendore meeting in May to use sub-categories and to divide east and west rural residential areas to enable fairer rate distribution. This is despite the fact that all Palerang's neighbouring councils use sub-categories to enable equity. Also the Minister for Local Government Kerry Hickey instructed the Council to use sub-categories to stop complaints about inequity from west Palerang ratepayers.

The rates model chosen has just three categories — farmland, residential and business. While the model goes some way towards reducing the impact of last year's huge rate rise west of the Great Dividing Range, the rejected Model C is fairer. Model B now on exhibition is similar to one of the models examined by the Rates Reference Group that I established last year. It gives an average rate of \$799 for rural residential properties over here and \$508 in the east. That's a big inequity again s Model C's average rural residential rate of \$637 in the west and \$532 in the east. The Rates Reference Group did some commendable work, but as expected could not reach consensus on a single model only agreeing that a base rate and not a minimum rate should be used.

However after the group finished its work the Department of Local Government said that rural residential areas could be sub-categorised providing there was a distinct geographical area. This opened up an opportunity for a fairer distribution using all the tools other councils use to ensure one sector of ratepayers aren't slugged too heavily. The rejected model separated the east and west areas that came together in the amalgamation. That is an additional tool that could have ensured the ability-to-pay and the benefit principles were applied. A total of 1100 of the East's 1464 ratepayers paid the minimum rate of \$366 last year. Only 364 ratepayers paid more than the minimum rate. In the west 2339 ratepayers paid more than the minimum with just 113 paying \$366. (cont'd next page)

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Please if you feel you've been treated unfairly again, write to Palerang Council at PO Box 348 Bungendore 2621 or email to peter.bascomb@palerang.nsw.gov.au to complain. And send original letters or copies of your letter to Palerang to Kerrie Hickey at Level 19 Governor Macquarie Tower, 1 Farrer Place, Sydney, NSW 2000 or email to localgovt@hickey.minister.nsw.gov.au or kerry.hickey@parliament.nsw.gov.au and Steve Whan at City Link Plaza, Queanbeyan 2620 or email monaro@parliament.nsw.gov.au.



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The Grasshoppers

Based on an Interview with Phil McGrath, Ranger, NSW Rural Lands Protection Board, Braidwood, May 23 and on a 1995 Video from NSW Agriculture Titled "Wingless Grasshopper – the Nematode Story", written up by Ned Noel

Almost certainly there will be even more grasshoppers on your land next summer. Each one that visited with you this past summer will have by now reached the end of its life with all its ups and downs. However, before this end the grasshoppers have worked together to produce billions of eggs. The eggs survive best when late autumn is dry, as it has been.

There were probably many kinds of grasshoppers – perhaps around ten - staying with you this past summer. Most fall in the general description of "wingless grasshopper", even though some are winged. Some of the varieties have names like Eastern Plague Locust, Yellow Winged Locust, and Small Plague Grasshopper. Note that they did not include the one locust which the government provides funds to defeat – the Australian Plague Locust. Hence the RLPB has no funding to deal with the grasshoppers that have come to spend time with us.

The eggs will hatch in the spring, probably about October. If you notice a patch of your land that is full of hatchlings, there is a way to stop them, particlarly in relatively small areas, from about 20 acres on down. The RLPB can give advice on a number of registered insecticides, costing around \$50 per acre, as well as on local pest control contractors. Paying someone to spray will cost around \$100 per hour, but an hour's work can cover as much as 20 acres. To be effective the spraying must be done within a week or so of the hatchlings' appearance.

The NSW Agriculture video says the last time there was a serious grasshopper problem was 1979 to 1983, when the problem was even more serious than this past summer. In addition to consuming pastures and gardens they are pine needles off trees and paint off buildings. A worry for this coming summer is that they might move on a target that has emerged since the early 80's -- vineyards.

Phil McGrath says there is not a strong dividing line between the damage these grasshoppers cause and that caused by the Australian Plague Locust which as a legislated pest draws funding. One possible reason for the Australian Plague Locust's special targeted status is that it can come back in plage proportions year after year, whereas the wingless grasshoppers tend to reach large numbers only every twenty years or so. Another might be that it is easier to attack, as it is more sociable. Millions Australian Plague Locusts can gather in "bands" each band covering an area 2 metres by 50 metres, making it easier to spray them, while the wingless grasshoppers tend to spread a similar force over a much larger area. (cont'd next page)

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Two factors tend to end wingless grasshopper plagues, but they often take several years to amass enough power to successfully counter-attack the grasshoppers. The most important prong of the counter-attack is climate. Climate attacks them most effectively through strong cold snaps in the spring, low spring rainfall, and a damp late summer and autumn. Last all of these failed to occur, allowing the grasshoppers to move in strongly. Absence of spring cold snaps ensured most of the grasshoper hatchlings survived till summer. Spring rain ensured abundant grasss for them to feed on during the summer. They became fat and filled with vigor to reproduce. The dry late summer and autumn minimized loss of eggs laid in the ground, probably by hindering growth of moisture dependent bacteria rhat could attack the eggs.

The second prong of the counter-attack on the grasshoppers is conducted by armies of nematode worms. Probably the climatic factors are more important, but the nematodes can also kill billions if climactic conditions are right for their own population to reproduce abundantly. One study, hilighted in the video, found that 75% of the population of grasshoppers on a property were infected by the nematode worm.

There are also about ten species of these nematode worms. A few species lay eggs on leaves, but the majority burrow about 25 cm underground to lay their eggs. Spring rains are required to trigger the underground eggs to hatch into larvae. This year we did have spring rain, but several dry springs in preceding years meant the population was very low, so even good reproduction rates could not furnish a worm army of sufficient numbers to inflict much damage on the grasshoppers.

Both the larvae hatching in the ground and those born on leaves make their way out onto leaves of grass. They are minuscule, around a tenth of a millimetre long. NSW Agriculture in the video suggests that 99% of the larvae may die, but around 1% succeed in entering a grasshopper. Each nematode larva has a needle-like stilletto appendage. It punches a hole into a grasshopper in periods such as early morning when it is immobilised by the cold, for which the Nematode is better equipped. It bores its way though the outer skin of the grasshopper and sets up a home inside.

According to the NSW Agriculture video the nematode larva slowly grows inside the grasshopper's gut into a worm from 10 to 50 centimeters long, with a width of around 1mm. The NSW Agriculture video shows the result. Break open a grasshopper late next summer, and you may find a long threadlike, white coloured worm coiled up into numerous loops and occupying most of the grasshoper's interior.

Eventually the relentlessly expanding worm kills, sometimes explodes, the grasshopper. The nematode falls out. It then burrows into the ground to lay eggs to make even more grasshopper counter-attackers. After a series of dry springs the worms will need a series of wet springs to build up sufficient billions to take out a significant proportion of the grasshoppers.

The Braidwood Rural Land's Protection Board can be reached on (02) 4842 2536. It is located at the southwest corner of the Braidwood Courthouse building. It has a website at www.rlpbnsw.org.au/southern_tablelands/braidwood/ It can be reached by email at braidwood@rlpb.org.au

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Nature Notes – May 2006 Jo Walker

After the welcome rain earlier in the year, the weather has deteriorated and we're officially back into drought again. The effects of the dry conditions are disguised somewhat in this part of Wamboin by the soft grey-green foliage of the Silver Wattles (*Acacia dealbata*), but at ground level the Kangaroo Grass has browned off after the first frosts and the winter grasses are not yet putting on much growth due to the lack of moisture.

Looking on the positive side, at least the dam has a little more water in it than it did at this time last year, and there are obviously still some yabbies and other creatures surviving there, as the Little Pied Cormorant and a pair of White-faced Herons are regular visitors. A recent arrival on the dam is a little male Australasian Grebe. These are small birds (up to 25 cm) which often fluff out their rear feathers, giving them a rounded appearance. Head, wings and back are brownish, and the underparts are greyish or buff (males have a chestnut stripe on the back of the head and a small yellow spot between the beak and eyes). These little birds can dive up to 3 metres in search of prey. I've read that they can stay submerged for up to 16 seconds, but I think the Wamboin ones must be training for the Olympics: they stay down considerably longer than that. In fact, the first time I saw one dive, I thought it had got stuck in the mud on the bottom of the dam.

Most of the spiders that were so plentiful earlier in the year seem to have tucked themselves away for the winter, but there are still a few Golden Orb-weaving Spiders (*Nephila* sp.) lying in wait for prey in their huge webs. These are very large spiders (up to 4 cm in length) whose long bodies are covered in short silvery-white hairs, and the species that occurs around here has dense tufts of dark hairs on the joints of the long, thin legs. The webs, constructed of yellowish silk, can be a metre or more across and are usually strung between shrubs or small trees. Fortunately for the arachnophobes amongst us, these huge webs are mostly built above head height – although I have walked into one or two low-slung ones. Although these spiders are capable of catching and killing quite large prey caught in their webs, they are not poisonous or harmful to humans.

Most of the kangaroo does have well-developed joeys in their pouches, and a few of the babies are emerging for a quick hop. Although there have always been a few Swamp Wallabies here, I've rarely seen a young one – but, recently, while I was standing still watching something near the dam, a little female came hopping by with a joey at foot. There are two or three male Swamp Wallabies around, and they occasionally have a quick fight or chase each other along the hillside for a while. One of them has suffered an accident at some time and has lost 30 cm or more of his tail, but it doesn't seem to have affected his ability to get around.

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