



The Whisper

August 2011

CIRCULATION: 1,255

Wamboin Community Assn:
Bywong Community
Fire Brigade:

www.wamboincommunity.asn.au
www.bywongcommunity.org.au
<http://brigade.wamboincommunity.asn.au>

All proceeds from advertisements after printing costs go to the WAMBOIN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION that started The Whisper as a community newsletter in 1981, and continues to own it. The newsletter is distributed to all letterboxes in Wamboin and Bywong (plus other localities in our fire brigade's area) at the start of each month, except January. Contributions from all residents are encouraged, valued and the main content of the newsletter. The Editor is Ned Noel, 17 Reedy Creek Place, Wamboin, 2620, phone 6238-3484. Please email contributions to either nednoel@optusnet.com.au or whisper@wamboincommunity.asn.au or mail them. The deadline for the next issue of The Whisper is always the last Sunday of the month, 7 pm, so for the September 2011 issue the deadline is Sunday, 28 August 2011, 7 pm. Instant Colour Press will then multiply 1 copy into more than 1200. Then the new issue will go to the volunteer deliverers 5 days later.

LIFE THREATENING EMERGENCIES Fire/Police/Ambulance - Dial Triple Zero (000) All Hours

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LOCAL FACILITIES AND CONTACTS

Wamboin Community Assoc.	Peter Harrison	President	6238 3525
Bywong Community	Darryl Bourke	President	6230 3055
Fire Brigade	David Cochrane	Captain	0409 991 340
Wamboin Markets	Joan Mason	contact	6238 3258
Sutton School Playgroup	Toni Moore	Convenor	6238 3669.
Landcare	Roger Good	President	6236 9048
Community Nurse	Heather Morrison	Bungendore	6238 1333
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
Justice of the Peace	Margaret Fletcher	JP	6238 1211
Justice of the Peace	Jill Sedaitis	JP	6236 9559
Justice of the Peace	Tony Holland	JP	6238 3762
Wamboin Scout Group	Peter Harrison	contact	6238 3525
Wamboin Pony Club	Robyn Slater	Senior Instructor	6238 3472
Geary's Gap Pony Club	Katarina Biondic	contact	0421 859 917
Wamboin Play Group	Emma Auzins	Convener	6238 3974 or 0417 464 517
Wamboin Hall Bookings	Joan Mason	contact	6238 3258
Church - Anglican	Robyn Robertson	Warden	6238 3202
Christian Prayer Group	Steve & Imelda Taylor	contacts	6238 3220
KYB Bible Study Group	Yvonne Barrett	contact	6230 3539 or 0409 951 388
Golf	Peter Greenwood	Golfer	6238 3358
Injured Wildlife	Wildcare	Helpline	6299 1966
Wonderful Women of Wamboin	Claire Ayling	Convenor	6238 3347
Lake George VIEW Club	Lydia Zielinski	contact	6230 3488
Wamboin Book Group	Alice Scott	Secretary	6238 3178

YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS

Alana Stenning	petsitting	6238 3060	Jess, Ellen & Nicole Smith	petsitting (incl horses)	6238 3115
Fiona Skea	babysitting	6238 3290	Ashleigh Caird	babysitting	6238 0746
Rebecca Purdie	petsitting	6238 3343	Gabrielle Simpkin	babysitting/ petsitting	6238-1335
Mara Sutcliffe	petsitting	6238 3228	Jack & Matilda Whitney	pet care, baby sitting, odd jobs	6238 3059

THE GREAT WAMBOIN CURRY NIGHT

It's on again. The Great Wamboin Curry Night. Saturday the 20th of August is the date to remember. There is a gold coin donation per person to offset the hire of the Hall. From 7pm all diners bring along their prepared dish. The dishes are displayed with descriptive labels and are then on offer to all curry munchers from 7.30. A prize will go to the dish selected by a secret (no bribes) judge. Tables, chairs and a warm Hall are provided. BYO drinks, plates & cutlery. For more information contact Dave Hubbard on 6238 2308.



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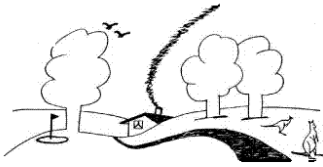
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Wamboin Community Association President's Paragraphs



Community Hall Kitchen 'Upgrade' — There has been much activity around the kitchen area of the Community Hall of late. The 'room' has been gutted, that leaking roof has been repaired, and all preparations made for the installation of the new fittings. In fact, by the time you read this, they may already have been installed! Yet another fantastic effort by Lofty and his elite team of local craftsmen.

Rubbish — On a less pleasant note, there was an unfortunate episode last month when someone saw fit to dump a load of household rubbish against the fence of the Fire Brigade fuel store. Leaving aside the issue of obstructing access to facilities used by a critical community service organisation, and the potential hazard associated with dumping in this particular location, it is important for all of us to recognise how we can contribute to discouraging this sort of behaviour. These problems are often blamed on visitors to our area, but visitors are invariably visiting someone locally. If we remember ourselves, and quietly remind our guests that the local facilities are for recycling only, we might be able to avoid this sort of community inconvenience.

The Great Wamboin Curry Night — The next event on the community calendar, contrary to my comment in last month's column, coming up on Saturday 20 August, will be the community's annual gastronomic event. Details are provided at the bottom of the front page of this Whisper, and on the WCA website (see below).

Bonfire & Fireworks Night — Coming up in September, the annual bonfire night and fireworks display. More on that in next month's Whisper, and on the WCA website.

Upcoming Events — Information on all upcoming events within the community ("What's on in Wamboin") is provided on the WCA website. Just go to <http://wamboincommunity.asn.au> and follow the relevant links for more details on any event of interest. If you belong to a local community group and would like your event(s) included, please email details to the WCA Webmaster at webmaster@wamboincommunity.asn.au.

WCA Electronic Noticeboard — The WCA electronic noticeboard is a convenient way to keep up with community activities. Subscribe by visiting the WCA website at <http://wamboincommunity.asn.au/noticeboard>

The Whisper On-Line — Remember that copies of The Whisper are available on-line at <http://wamboincommunity.asn.au/whisper> on the first Sunday of the month.

-- Pete Harrison (president@wamboincommunity.asn.au)



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Bywong Community News

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**Darryl Bourke, President
This News Put Together by the
Bywong Committee**



Convivial Pursuit: Another big tick to Bywong's annual Trivia Challenge, which is now in its twelfth year. The hall was once more filled to capacity, with all tables fully booked. Lots of people, careful pre-heating, and generous amounts of food and wine ensured that participants kept warm on a chilly night.

But the outstanding feature of the night was the general air of good fellowship and fun which has always characterised this local event. Lots of good humour, coupled with an impressive reserve of knowledge on most subjects, again combined to provide a stimulating evening.

The challenge was won for the sixth time by team XXY from Bungendore, but this talented group will have to look to their laurels as they were closely pressed this year, notably by the local Bywong Book Club 2 team, which came in second. Strong teams from Wamboin added talent, spice and quite a bit of noise to the proceedings.

This year's talented event team lead by Jean-Pierre Favre introduced a number of new ideas to the programme including the introduction of a musical event which saw teams pouring out their souls in song producing a lot of hilarity with no little admiration.

Bywong Association President Darryl Bourke thanked the event team (Jean-Pierre, Anne, Pauline, Kerrie, Clive and Guy) helpers and contributors for making another successful event, and paid particular tribute to Jean-Pierre who personally produced artworks providing some memorable prizes, to local competitor Peter Zimmerman of Cafe D'lish who provided bread rolls, to the now-famous soup-makers who provided supper, and to our friends at Wamboin who again lent us chairs.

A Sustainable Bywong: An evening with Annie Duke from the Sustaining our Towns programme opened some Bywong and Wamboin eyes to a stimulating range of practical ideas which can help us keep warm in winter and cool in summer.

Bywong Community hosted the evening under the State Government funded programme, in which Palerang Council has become a partner. Much of the evening focussed on affordable strategies for retrofitting existing homes for greater heating and cooling efficiency. Annie's presentation covered a wide range of topics, including ventilation, solar passive design, winter heat loss and summer heat gain. She presented a wealth of ideas, often supported by simple diagrams and practical information on available products. Community members shared their own building and renovating experiences and provided further advice on availability of products suitable to our area. Discussion ranged from regulating hot and cold airflows to selecting the best curtains. Annie also raised the possibility of community-oriented projects such as power generation, use of waste and rationalising transport.

Seats Under Bums: With funds from a grant from the Veolia Mulwaree Trust, the Community plans to supplement and improve seating at the Hall. Anyone who hears of new or used chairs in good order and at a reasonable price, please let us know!

AGM: Closing the recent Trivia night, Community President Darryl Bourke reminded those attending that the Community's work continued to be done by a small number of volunteers and appealed for more local residents to come forward to share the load. He highlighted the Annual General Meeting in October, and gave a solemn assurance (perhaps with fingers crossed behind his back?) that the AGM would be just as much fun as the Trivia. Watch the website and the notice boards for details.

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An article from the Wamboin Volunteer Rural Fire Brigade and the Wamboin Community Association

'Ugly'

reared its head mid month thanks to a selfish, thoughtless person who, seemingly, couldn't give a toss.



Access by the fire brigade to its fuel store was all but denied for 48 hrs or so.

While the security cameras may not have identified the person responsible, Palerang Council did.

A fine has been imposed.

A big thanks to Palerang Council and staff for the prompt response including removal of the rubbish.



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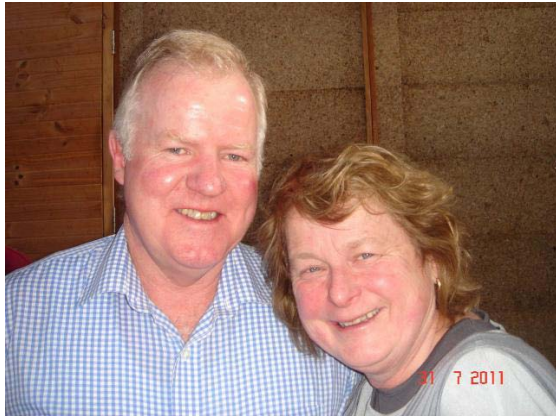
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ANNUAL BONFIRE AND FIREWORKS NIGHT BONFIRE FUEL WANTED

The 2011 Wamboin Bonfire and Fireworks Night is planned for Saturday the 24th of September. Now is a great time to kill two birds with the one stone. You can start to fireproof your property by clearing unwanted stumps, logs, prunings and brush. At the same time you can help make the Bonfire night a memorable occasion by delivering the suitable fuel to the bonfire site at the Bingley Way Community Centre. This night is a major, and sometimes the only, fund raising activity by our community groups. Your load of fuel is required now. -- Lofty Mason.

Wonderful Women of Wamboin

The Wonderful Woman of Wamboin Celebrated Christmas in July at the fabulous venue of the Bywong Community Association Hall Birriwa Road. An extravagant event hosted by the W.W.O.W to farewell Claire and Steve Ayling of Wamboin. They are starting a new endeavour and opening a Bed and Breakfast in Goulburn. Clayre and Steve would not leave Wamboin if it wasn't for a new challenge in their lives. The challenge they are embarking on is to run a heritage guest house in Goulburn. For this we wish them well.



Claire was the founding member of WWOW. She realised that living in this wonderful rural area, it is easy to forget that we have neighbours who may be ill, lonely or indeed new to the area. It all started with the making of a community quilt in 2006. Since then the group has grown to over 70 members. The primary purpose was to get to know each other and to undertake projects that have since raised thousands of dollars for the local and international community. Craft projects have helped children and people in need. A recent example is the quilts for children devastated by the Qld floods and special pampering bags for Women who have recently undertaken surgery. And the timeless teddies for the ambulance people to give out to children and frightened adults who are rushed to hospital. Claire has worked tirelessly inspiring similar minded women to give back to the local community. She will be sincerely missed by the entire community. We have been touched by

her generosity of spirit and kindness. Her greatest wish is to bring people together in friendship and support. Her legacy will live on with women from Wamboin, Bywong, Sutton, and all the surrounding area.

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WAMBOIN HALL KITCHEN UPGRADE

Our first step was to purchase and assemble the kitchen cupboards. In the same fell swoop we bought a new sink and under bench oven. Then the wrecking and repairing began. My wife says 'that a mess means progress' but this was ridiculous. Out came the old collection of cupboards. The outside servery and east wall was dismantled.



Ceiling lights and panels removed. The stove was disconnected and everything that was moveable was stripped out. After repairing the east wall



and with a new servery window in place, the floor tiles were removed. Meanwhile on the roof Don removed the old ventilator (which was jammed with an underarm spray can) and repaired the leaks.

Using a hired concrete grinder on the kitchen floor a slurry pond was created which finally cleared to reveal cleaned concrete. We had the

mess so how about some progress?

At this time we still have panels to repair and painting to do before the cupboard shells are installed and dressed. We



will then have the

stainless steel bench-top installed. The list of workers to date include: Peter Greenwood, Charlie Montesin, Ron Shepherd, Don Evans, Trent Abell, Tim Barter, Keith France and Ian Coillet. Joan has done a great job feeding and fuelling the workers. I also appear on the list as my position as 'project officer' ensures I can be blamed for any mistakes.

I include a special thanks to Steve Hughes of 'The Feed Shed' in Bungendore who has made an unsolicited gift of \$200 to our



project. We plan to purchase a 'Feed Shed' microwave oven. -- Lofty Mason, Project Officer.

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6258 1792

The corvids of Wamboin

By David McDonald

Question: What are those large, noisy, white-eyed, black birds that we have around here?

Simple answer: Crows.

Fuller answer: Well, actually we don't have any crows in Wamboin! Those large, noisy, white-eyed, black birds are either Australian Ravens *Corvus coronoides* or Little Ravens *Corvus mellori*. (Corvidae (the corvids) is the worldwide family covering crows and jays. *Corvus* is the genus within the Corvidae covering the five native species of ravens and crows found in Australia.) Both the Australian and Little Ravens breed in the Canberra region.

Since the second week of March this year most of the ravens around our place, at 870 metres altitude on Norton Road,

have been Little Ravens. Based on earlier years' observations, most will be gone by mid-September and thereafter the Australian Ravens will be far more abundant. In other words, the Australian Raven is here all year long but the Little Raven is the more common of the two here in winter. Little Ravens spend their summers in the High Country to the south. How to tell them apart? Their names imply that size is the differentiating feature, but that is not the case as the two species overlap in size. The Australian Raven is the larger of the two, by a small margin, with an average length of 50 cm (range 46-53 cm). The Little Raven averages 49 cm (range 48-52 cm).

The authority on the matter states that 'All Aust. *Corvus* very difficult to distinguish and great care needed to identify species. The most reliable character is call, and in most cases identity cannot be confirmed without hearing calls.



Australian Raven, photograph © David Cook

However, identification of juveniles and first [year] immatures very difficult or impossible on

current knowledge, and identification best based on white-eyed adults or older immatures with pale-brown or almost white eyes (Footnote 1)...'. (In both species the first year birds have brown eyes, the second years hazel eyes, with the white eyes of the adults appearing in the third year.)

So ... how do we use the calls to differentiate between the Australian and Little Ravens? The answer is given in Australia's best bird field guide (Footnote 2)

Australian Raven: 'Loud, wailing "aah-aah-aah-aaaaahh", drawn out, descending. Also high pitched, descending, baby-like wavering wail; throaty rattles, "chucks"'. This is the archetypal 'crow' call heard through much of Australia.

Little Raven: 'Harsh, short, level, rapid "car, car, car, car, car"'. Notes hard, clipped.'

Of course both species have other calls, some of which sound similar. You can listen to them online at Graeme Chapman's fine web site <http://graemechapman.com.au> – click on 'Photo Library' and select your species.

Another identification feature is the throat hackles, the longish feathers that stick out from the throat especially when the birds are calling. The throat bulges in calling Australian Ravens, and the hackles stick out, but this is much less the case with Little Ravens.

The average group size also differs. Australian Ravens are commonly seen in small numbers, with the 2009-10 median group size reported in the Canberra region being just 3 birds. In contrast, the median group size of the Little Raven last year was 26, including some flocks of many hundreds of birds. (Footnote 3)

So, if up to now you have thought that all the large, noisy, white-eyed, black birds in Wamboin were just crows, what about checking out the relative abundance of the two types of ravens at your place, and observe how the proportions change from winter to summer?

¹ Higgins, PJ, Peter, JM & Cowling, SJ 2006, *Handbook of Australian, New Zealand & Antarctic birds*, vol. 7: Boatbill to starlings, Oxford University Press, Melbourne. p. 691.

² Pizzey, G, Knight, F & Menkhorst, P 2003, *The field guide to the birds of Australia*, 7th edn, HarperCollins, Pymble, N.S.W.

³ Canberra Ornithologists Group 2011, 'Annual Bird Report 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010', *Canberra Bird Notes*, vol. 36, no. 1, p. 49.

NEW CLASSIFIEDS

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Claire Ayling Bali Batik Fabrics: Huge range of quality cotton quilting fabrics on sale the weekend of the 12- 14 August. 9am-6pm. All cut fabrics (fat quarters and metre lengths) at reduced prices. Last chance to buy before I move to Goulburn. 133 Weeroona Drive, Wamboin.

Huge Garage Sale; craft items, household effects, outdoor items and tools. Saturday 13 August 8am onwards. 133 Weeroona Drive, Wamboin

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Roo for Thought.....

As a volunteer for Wildcare – the local wildlife rescue group, I have attended a number of incidents where a kangaroo has been hit on the road. Most motorists are really good and they ring Wildcare and wait by the accident scene until someone arrives. On occasions it is left to a good Samaritan to stop and check an animal.

I don't suppose for a minute that anyone wants to hit a kangaroo, but 'why me?'

Having stood by the side of the road, during the Wamboin/Bywong rush hour, even 80 km/hr (or more?) seems quick. And it might be speed that is the problem that makes some drivers more at risk than others. We are all different and individual reaction times and driving ability will vary. Motorists who avoid hitting kangaroos are not necessarily lucky, they might just be more vigilant, be expecting the unexpected, or driving slower, so they have time to react.

I had a look at the Safe Driver Training website and discovered there is more to it than just hitting the brakes. Total stopping distance is made up of human perception & reaction time, plus vehicle reaction time & vehicle braking capability.

Realising there is a hazard – a camouflaged kangaroo on the road, may take the brain half a second; doing something, such as moving the foot from the accelerator to the brake can be as long as three quarters of a second; and if there is fatigue, tiredness or your mind is somewhere else, then reaction time can blow out to three or four seconds. In four seconds at 100 km/h a car travels 110 metres before the brakes are applied. This is why tailgating is so dangerous – you simply cannot react in time to avoid an accident if the guy in front hits the brakes - one of the most common accidents is rear end collision.

Once the brakes are applied there will be another set of factors that determine stopping distance, such as the car's type of braking system, weight, tyre tread and pressures and so on. And in our area the state of the road! Modern cars can stop quite quickly, but it could still take 40 metres depending on speed.

It is not easy to be specific, as there are too many variables, but the Safe Driver Training website suggests a best-case scenario (excellent driver, healthy, vigilant and aware – is that me?) and at 80 km/h, it will take perhaps 60 metres to stop. But if your reaction time is longer because you are not consciously looking for unexpected risks it could be a much greater stopping distance.

The point I suppose is that we can slow down to give us more time to react, be more vigilant and expect the unexpected – particularly at dawn and dusk and through the night. It doesn't really matter if there is a string of traffic sitting on our backside pushing us faster down the road – it is your safety that's important, as well as the wildlife you are about to hit.

If you get caught out, please do the right thing. Stop and check the animal, then contact *Wildcare* (not *WIRES*) on 6299 1966, so they can send someone out to help both you and the injured animal.

PS. Why not put Wildcare in your Mobile.....now? --- Philip Machin, 6238- 3717



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Home Retrofitting for Better Energy Efficiency

Summary by Pauline Chambers

On July 27 the Bywong Community hosted a workshop by Annie Duke on the above topic. Annie Duke is a building designer, with a strong passion for growing food and building community strength and resilience. She runs an integrated design practice, Barraminnow Whole Design. She is employed casually with Sustaining Our Towns (SOT) as the Palarang Home and Garden Sustainability Reviewer. This role involves conducting free Home and Garden Reviews for individuals and delivering community workshops on a diverse range of topics related to sustainable living. She is also involved, alongside



Melinda Hillery from Bywong and a small but dedicated group of volunteers, with the Palarang Action Network for Sustainability (PANS), a new Palarang-wide initiative supported by SOT which is working to increase the sustainable development capacity of Palarang communities by providing advocacy and secretariat support for local initiatives.

Below are a few of the ideas that were presented and discussed. Email me at paulinechambers@yahoo.com.au for the full handout or check www.bywongcommunity.org.au

Whatever action you can take, will make a difference for you and the environment. Adopt a lifestyle that minimises your use of energy, water and resources. Reduce. Reassess your expectations and adjust your lifestyle. Be innovative and find solutions that don't cost a lot or use a lot of resources to achieve.

Tips for Renovations and Retrofitting

Prioritise the things you wish to achieve for e.g do you need more space or improved functioning in kitchen; increased energy and water efficiency.

- **Insulation and draught sealing are often the most cost effective way to reduce heating and cooling bills.** Design for Climate - Cool Temperate. Energy used in heating and cooling is about 38% so employ passive solar principles. Passive design means using free solar energy in winter and excluding it in summer. The key factor is understanding orientation. This means facing living areas, with windows, to the north.
- In cold climates like Bywong/Wamboin this means...
- site for solar access, to catch beneficial winds and avoid problem winds;
- include high thermal mass within the insulated envelope ;insulate slab edges;
- maximise solar gain by maximising north facing walls and glazing;
- minimise south, east and west facing glazing and wall areas;
- use adjustable external shading to glazing (except where winter sun is desirable to north facing windows);
- use double glazing; heavy drapes to the floor with full pelmets;
- landscaping for shade and shelter from winds;
- cross ventilation for night flushing; draught sealing and airlocks;
- select auxiliary heating from renewable sources; reflective insulation to keep out summer heat; bulk insulation to keep heat in for winter (walls, ceilings, floors)
- **Floors**:- raised timber or suspended concrete slabs. Insulate and enclose subfloors and under-floors. - slab on ground... install vertical edge insulation in cold climates .**Walls** -double brick... loose material can be blown into cavity. **Ceilings and roofs** -- install foil batts between rafters and bulk batts between ceiling joists.- raked ceilings... reflective foil backed plasterboard, foil backed polystyrene foam board or batts between exposed beams .
- **Glazing**: Glass is a very poor insulator. Heat gain through an unshaded window can be up to 100 times that of an insulated wall. One square metre of ordinary glass in the sun equals the heat output of a single bar radiator. Winter heat loss through a plain window can be 10 times that of an insulated wall. Glazing technology has led to a range of specialised glass products. low-e glass - toned or tinted glass -reflective glass - Double glazing units In cold climates the aim is to:-
- locate most glazing to N. Avoid shading windows . Reduce convection heat transfer with snug fitting blinds and curtains with pelmets. Select frames for thermal performance considerations - with metal frames a light colour is better; thermal break (low conductive polymer between int/ext parts of frame); composite frames of timber and metal.
- choose high Solar Heat Gain Coefficient to maximise solar heat gain.
- **Skylights and Lighting**. Use the appropriate number of lights for the space and tasks . Use energy efficient bulbs. Make use of natural daylight. Design lighting to be flexible. Internal surface finishes - colours and reflectivity - influence the lighting .
- Ensure design or maintenance of light fitting doesn't block light . Consider use of sensors and timers to control switching of lights. Select solar powered lighting for gardens.
- Compact Fluorescents... Light Emitting Diodes (LED's)...Halogen Downlights...
- **Wastewater re-use**. Av. household water use is toilet 16%-clothes washing 12%- kitchen 14% -shower and basin 58%.Consider Waterless or Dry Sanitation or Composting Toilets

WAMBOIN GOLF

by Peter Greenwood and Len Ivey

PARK hill Financial Group represented by Keith France proudly sponsored the 11th anniversary of the GST golf competition on Sunday 3 July.

The competition was a modified two per team Ambrose event with handicaps combined then manipulated with accounting finesse and a further 10% added for complexity and confusion.

Griners: The Googly Ball was awarded to John Whitney for wearing his bogan shirt. The Dummy Spit was won again by Peter Greenwood - An habitual offender who wins this more often than most.

Winners: Nearest the pin and longest drive ball winners: Joan Mason x 2, Paul Griffin, Charles Guscott, Stephen Miners, Tim Barter, Jack Whitney, Peter Greenwood, Matt O'Brien and Rob Gorham. The 9 hole event was won by Joan and Lofty Mason with a score of 32.575 from Steve Miners and Ron Shepherd with a score of 31.575. The 18 hole event was won by Len Ivey and Charles Guscott with a score of 57.375 from Matt O'Brien and Tim Barter with a score of 63.525.

The August competition is the 'Tradies Day' event.

Strange Deliveries and Missing Parcels

We've been waiting on a parcel which is long overdue but in the meantime have found an unwrapped, unexpected and unattributed book in our letter box. Australia Post have said that parcels often go missing from roadside mail boxes during school holidays so if any one is missing a lovely journal or received some girlie apparel maybe they could make contact with the Leeson/Ericksons. -- Philip Leeson, 301 Norton Road, Wamboin, AH6238 3951, BH 6295 3311

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<http://brigade.wamboincommunity.asn.au>

THE BUSHFIRE DANGER PERIOD HAS ENDED BUT THERE IS STILL A REAL RISK OF UNCONTROLLED FIRES IN OUR AREA

RING TRIPLE ZERO (000) TO REPORT FIRES OR SMOKE SIGHTINGS.

For the present a Fire Permit is not required to burn off in the open but if you plan to light a fire in the open you must notify:

1. your neighbours, and
2. NSWRFs Fire Control Centre in Queanbeyan (during weekday business hrs)
tel: 6297-1840

at least 24 hours before you light the fire.

Your thoughtfulness will help minimise neighbour anxiety and unnecessary brigade call-outs.

Management, including containment of a fire originating on your property, is your responsibility. If the fire escalates to become more than you can handle, don't hesitate, ring Triple Zero (000).

CALL OUTS:

Your brigade was responded to two Triple Zero (000) callouts during the month.

On Sat 30 July - circa 12.30pm there was a report of a grass fire on a property in Norton Rd, Wamboin. Apparently the fire started from a pile of warm ashes that had earlier been removed by the resident from a slow-combustion stove and discarded on grass. By the time the brigade arrived, fortunately, the fire had been extinguished. Again, a reminder to you all, please take great care when removing and discarding ashes from your fire. Make sure they are completely cold and not placed in an area where they can smoulder and set grass or other fuel alight.

On Sunday 31 July - just after 11.30pm, the brigade was called to a report of a car on fire on Sutton Rd. Queanbeyan Fire & Rescue (428) was first on scene and extinguished the fire. The vehicle, believed to be a Range Rover, was burnt out.

The next fire danger period is less than two months away. Prepare your property now by removing long grass and clearing around buildings.

Although the bush fire danger period is just two months away, it's not too late to begin preparing your property and home for the increasing threat of bush and grass fires. Coming into winter you will undoubtedly have observed that the fuel load, i.e. high and thick grass, is still around. These grass fuels have cured with the onset of winter, the dry conditions and effect of frosts. They are pretty much bone dry. A combination of dry fuels with recent high winds has led to several landowners experiencing fire-related difficulties on their properties. At this point, with the advent of warmer weather not too far away, all things point to a potentially difficult (bush and grass) fire danger period ahead.

PREPARATIONS WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO UNDERTAKE NOW

Here are some of the things that you should consider:

- Prepare or review your Bush Fire Survival Plan. The NSWRFs offers a useful guide and template for a Bush Fire Survival Plan. It can be viewed and downloaded by visiting <http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/> and click on 'For the Community'.
- Inspect your property and buildings identifying any defect or improvements that you need to make before the fire season.
- Inspect and test all fire-fighting equipment.
- Service all fire pumps (one at a time if you have multiple pumps).
- Remove excess ground fuels and combustible material (long dry grass, dead leaves and branches) for a distance of at least 20 metres around all buildings.
- Clean leaves, twigs, bark and other debris from roof and gutters (and revisit on a regular e.g. monthly/ fortnightly/ possibly even weekly basis).
- Trim low lying branches 2 metres from the ground.
- Enclose open areas under your decks and floors.
- Install fine steel wire mesh screens on all windows, doors, vents and weep holes.
- Seal all gaps in external roof and wall cladding.
- Make a detailed list of the tasks to be carried out and tick them off as they are completed.

PROPERTY NUMBERS

The property numbering system that was instituted in our area some years ago has proven to be very successful, especially as an aid to emergency crews responding to triple zero (000) calls. You may notice that many of the property numbers in our district are beginning to fade and/or become unreadable due to physical damage or obstruction by vegetation. To help us to help you in times of emergency, please ensure that you have a clearly visible and easily readable (preferably reflective) property number on the boundary fence beside your entrance gate. Additionally you should remove the old RMB numbers as these can be confusing and misleading.

These are just some examples of some of the problems we encounter.



BRIGADE ACTIVITY LAST MONTH

Equipment Day (Working Bee)

Fifteen or so volunteers (firies and Support Crew) braved a fairly cool start to the Equipment Day working bee on Sunday 24 July. We made good inroads with truck inventories, equipment maintenance, some early 'not quite Spring' cleaning and sorting at the Fire Station, and a bit of polishing up in the Pumphouse and Fuel Store, plus a sorting of first aid supplies across the appliances. The photos below provide a tiny insight to member activity on the day.



While all this was going on, several new recruits were going through the paces of hose bowling and rolling, nozzle work, and truck familiarity.



BRIGADE TRAINING (all sessions begin at the Fire Station)

If you are thinking about becoming a fire fighter or assist in the brigade’s support group, or you would just like to see the brigade in action during a training session, don’t hold back; come along to any of the set training sessions. You’ll be made welcome and we’re happy to just have a chat. All training begins at the Fire Station.

- 1st Tuesday of the Month 7:30pm to 9:30pm
- 2nd Saturday of the Month 1:30pm to 4:30pm
- 4th Sunday of the Month 8:30am to 11:30am
-

In addition, several Brigade members meet at the Eaglehawk Hotel on the 4th Thursday of every month at 7pm for dinner. There’s a great selection of food to choose from and the local Eaglehawk social group is very supportive of the brigade. We’d love other people in the community to come along and join in the fun. You might even be a winner in a raffle – and they are very good prizes!

Of course, if you want to just have a chat on the phone about becoming a member of the brigade, please give our Secretary a call on 6238 3153.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Wamboin Brigade Website: will help you to monitor local conditions and Brigade announcements. The Community Information section has useful information including links to other websites that provide guidance regarding bush fire preparations. You’ll also find the brigade’s history, some pretty interesting photos and other fascinating material on the site. <http://brigade.wamboincommunity.asn.au>

Brigade Information Stall at the Wamboin Home Produce Market: The next information stall will be when the Wamboin Home Produce Market re-opens from its winter recess on the 3rd Saturday in September. Remember, when you come to the market, which is located in the Wamboin Community Association’s Hall, you’ll find us in front of the Fire Station happy to answer all your questions. If you have any queries on a fire-related issue including preparing yourself, your family and your property for a bush or grass or winter house fire, please contact the Brigade on 0409 991 340.

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How The Whisper Gets From the Printer To Your Mailbox Month After Month

Thank you to Ressel and Penny Ball who has volunteered to deliver Whispers to 18 residents along Macs Reef Road between Denley Drive and Bungendore Road. The 50 or so people below each spend time every month to make sure that Wamboin and Bywong homes own and receive a free community newspaper written by residents. 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 or help out. If you already have too many tasks in your month, every now and then give your volunteer paperwoman/man/boy/girl a thank you. - Ned Noel, volunteer editor

168: CO-ORDINATED HELEN MONTESIN: ph 6238 3208

Dene Evans	Norton Rd West Area from Cmpbl Pl	20	Bill Owen	Cooper Rd	26
Helen Montesin	Fernloff Rd	33	Stuart Whitten	Canning Cl	17
Hank Berlee	Poppet Rd (for all on road)	32	Alan Rope	Sutton Rd	40

283: CO-ORDINATED BY TRISH RICE: ph 6238 3791

Joan Mason	Bingley Way	48	Margaret Heleimin	Merino Vale Dr	17
Sue Ward	Norton Rd (Bingley to Weeroona)	32	Anne Gardner	Weeroona Dr (Norton to Majors)	31
Trish Rice	Majors Cl	18	David Anderson	Weeroona Dr (Majors to Denley)	35
Ned Noel	Pal Cncl (14), Advertisers/ Misc (45)	59	Penny Evans	Norton Rd (Campbell to Bingley)	24
Kathy Handel	Yalana West	19			

230: CO-ORDINATED BY KERRIE FISHER: ph 6238 3489

Lesley Page	Valley View Ln	4	Deb Gordon	Yalana East	42
Colleen Foster	B'dore Rd to Nrtm Rd	22	Rob Gorham	South end Clare Valley	38
Cassie Fisher	Clare Ln	12	Lyle Montesin	The Forest Rd area incl Joe Rcks	60
Axelby family	North end Clare Valley	42	Bungendore Foodworks	Bungendore	10

223: CO-ORDINATED BY JOHN VAN DER STRAATEN: ph 6238 3590

Sheryl Barnes	Denley Dr (Kestral to sthn end)	20	Brian Higgison	Denley Dr (Birchmans to Kestral inc)	12
Don Malcolmson	Macs Reef Rd (Denley to Gum Flat)	7	Rhett Cox	Macs Reef Rd (Newington to Bankers)	7
Connie & Hans Bachor	Dnly Dr to Macs Rf Rd incl Bchm Gr	26	Morag & Guy Cotsell	Macs Reef Rd b'n Nwgn& Harriott	30
Nora Stewart	Rovere Ln	7	Sandra Favre	Macs Reef Rd b'n Nwngtn& Harriott	20
Carol & Clive Boughton	Macs Reef Rd (Bankers to Fed Hwy)	30	Joan Milnor	Birriwa Rd plus Macs Rf Rd to Harriott	30
Beth Hope	Gum Flat Ln	6	Tony Bond	Hogan Dr	28

140: CO-ORDINATED BY IAN COILLET ph 6238 3425

Michael & Jose Deane	FdHwSvcRd/Bidges/Hickey/O'Gold	63	Jenny Bryce	Wattle Flat Rd	11
Robt & Marz Luton	Sutton Park Estate	48	Penny & Russell Ball	Macs Reef (Denley Dr to Bungdre Rd)	18

211: CO-ORDINATED BY KEVIN ANDERSON ph 6236 9333

Phil & Pam Dawes	Donnelly Rd & Donnelly Ln	25	David Featherston	Summerhill and Creekborough Rds	24
Kevin Anderson	B'dore Rd (Macs Reef to Summerhill)	33	Diana & Keith Gascoine	Snowgum Rd	27
Kerrie Gougeon	B'dore Rd (Fed Hwy to Summerhill)	29	Chris Fowler	Shinglehouse & Millyn Rds	27
Sue Aunella	Brooks Rd	18	Richard Holding	Wyoming & Doust Rds	28

TOTAL 1,255



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WAMBOIN HOME PRODUCE MARKETS

(Joan Mason 62383258)

The markets are now in recess for the winter break. Next market date is –

17 SEPTEMBER, 2011. Interested in having a stall, please contact me.

BAM

by Ned Noel

BAM. A fast incoming object from the dark winter night crashes into the living room window. "Bark, growl, bark, growl, bark, bark, growl, bark" shouted the dog. She had jumped up from her resting place on the floor and was racing around the room to fight off the unknown attacker, wherever and whatever it is.

Two of us and the dog had been together in the living room, reading and looking at computer and tv screens and papers. The screens, like the lamps and ceiling bulbs in our curtainless and well windowed room, had been shedding light out into the bush around us and the dark night beyond.

Peering out the window, we saw nothing but blackness. I opened a door. The dog did not want to go out.

Ten minutes passed.

BAM. Barking and growling and racing around again. The again excited dog still refused to go outside to fight.

Fifteen more minutes.

BAM. Dog did nothing this time.

So I went outside with her, afraid of finding dead birds or bats, necks broken when they hit the glass, bodies too light and too soft to break the window.

Nothing to see except the dark night and the light streaming out through the windows.

Then a beige blur at least 60 centimeters wide spurted off the eave a meter above. It crossed overhead to a branch a few meters away. The blur coalesced to a smaller owl shape, faintly illuminated by light from the house. It has been around on nights before, near the compost heap where the mice live.

Memory came of magpies on summer mornings diving against the same windows to catch bogong moths. Maybe the owl is like an athlete who knows how to cushion a blow by rotating onto shoulder or back. Maybe it was throwing itself against the glass in a twisting thrust, seizing food with its beak or talons. Had it worked out a way to eat one more night by taking advantage of the moths' and our own fondness for light?

A couple nights later there was another BAM. We photographed probably the same owl on the basketball backboard.



Would you mind not
shining that light in
my eye?
You can get through
winter nights your
way. I'll get
through them my
way

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Dogs Attack Kids' Pet Sheep

By Sandra Hoy, Norton Road

We want to warn everyone that we awoke to find that 2 of our kids pet sheep had been attacked over night, obviously by dog/s. Both sheep had their ears chewed off and one of the sheep was chased and so badly mauled that it had to be destroyed. The sheep were in the paddock with my horse who luckily wasn't injured but could have quite easily been. (Editor's Note: Sandra supplied a horrific photo, which is not printed here.)

I have 2 very upset children due to this senseless attack. I want everyone who owns a dog in this area to make sure your dog is either locked up or chained up at night so there won't be any recurrence of such attacks. We have seen on numerous occasions dogs roaming around at night either by themselves or with other dogs.

It doesn't take much to make sure your dog is restrained and it could save the heartache for many.

Local Food for the Locals

by Pauline Chambers

Would you prefer to shop locally for all of your fresh food and produce?

Do you prefer to buy seasonal foods that have not travelled far before they go on your plate? Foods that have not been tampered with, cold stored or forced into maturity with no taste and too many additives.

Do you wish you had bought more produce at the local Wamboin Markets, and then have to wait another month before you can?

Me too.

So I would like to start a local product guide to the area of Wamboin, Bywong and Sutton. Where suppliers could list what they have to sell each month. It could be a fresh crop of potatoes, honey, flowers, cabbages, or any spare product that you have for sale.

The list would be updated and possibly changed each month, and a map would be set up where you could buy.

The producer would need to list where they are, what they have for sale, and when, customers could buy. It might just be a "once of" if you have a surplus of eggs, or apples.

This is not intended to replace markets, just to enable people like you and me who chose to shop locally when we can, between markets.

An Irish friend commented on my idea saying, "Mm good idea, but it's a awful long way to push a shopping trolley" We laughed. However as I go to my "friendship fix" WWOW meetings on Monday's, I can buy eggs, cabbages, new potatoes, olive oil, all locally grown. Bliss.

Interested? Then email me on paulinechambers@yahoo.com.au and I will start the ball rolling for the September issue of Whisper.

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I'm Seeing Red

by Peter Evans

What a fantastic game for the Queensland Reds to beat the mercurial Crusaders in a spectacular climax to the Super Rugby season. It was great to see the free flowing attacking from the Reds as they took their chances to score their breakthrough title. The international season now moves into the Tri-Nations and Bledisloe Cup leading up the World Cup starting in September in New Zealand. I know there are a few lucky Wamboin residents making the journey across the ditch to cheer on the Wallabies. I trust you all will be in fine voice for our neighbours.

Locally the Mudhooks lost their third game in a row to a highly committed and motivated Boorowa team at Boorowa. Both teams scored a converted try each, but Boorowa was able to kick three penalty goals to win the game 16-7. Despite the Mudhooks scrum totally dominating their opponents, and the Mudhooks forwards showing a big improvement in their work at the breakdown, the Mudhooks did not make the best use of their possession and allowed too many turnovers from dropped passes in the back line and ineffective kicks straight to the opposition.

The Boorowa boys took advantage of the Mudhooks' mistakes and ran the ball back at them time and again, forcing the Mudhooks to spend most of the first 50 minutes of the game in hard fought defence. It was only in the last twenty minutes that the Mudhooks started to get on top of their opposition, but it was too late with their only try being scored right on full time.

The Mudhooks' last home game for the season is against Taralga on 6 August with a 2:30pm kick off. This will be a big day of rugby with the Queanbeyan Junior Whites Rugby Club playing four junior games starting at 9:30am and running through the day until the main game at 2.30pm. The Queanbeyan teams feature a large number of local kids so come on down to Mick Sherd Oval in Bungendore and see the stars of the future.

Afterwards the club will be hosting the annual Injured Players Night. This night raises money to help the clubs injured players. The night is always great fun with wacky sports and competitions such as the Goanna Pull (if you don't know what it is you will have to come along to find out). Everyone is very welcome. And a note for Keith, the Mudhooks always rehydrate at the Royal Hotel.

Rainfall and Temperatures in Wamboin - 36 year statistics from the Robertsons

July rainfall. ... 36.25mm
2011 rainfall to 31/7 ... 349.25mm
Average August rainfall ... 55.6mm
Wettest August ... 170mm in 1984
Hottest Aug day ... 20C on 31/8/82
Coldest Aug night ... -5C on 18/8/ 2010

July 2010 ... 80.25mm
2010 to 31/7 ... 490.25mm
Aug 2010 ... 81mm
Wettest Aug day ... 35mm on 7/8/85
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Geary's Gap/Wamboin Landcare

Think global, act local

National Tree Day at Wamboin Community Hall

Twelve volunteers from Landcare and other community groups turned up to plant about 350 native shrubs, flowers and groundcovers around the Wamboin Community Hall on Sunday 31 July. The local Landcare group supplied the plants, which were propagated in our nursery.



The Council had ripped some furrows to make planting easier. They also did a great job of smoothing a badly eroded embankment at the far corner of the oval (below the golf tee) and making a drain across the top to prevent future erosion. The volunteers planted grasses and groundcovers to stabilize this slope, and Keith France constructed steps for the golfers to get to the tee. Nev Schroder has agreed to put some GUR signs on the slope so golfers can retrieve wayward golf balls without damaging the plantings.



Digging and planting

was done by Geoff Butler, Chris Fowler, *Elisa Pavlic*, Jean, Noela & David McDonald, Kathy Handel, and Caroline & Aubrey Young. Nev & Rachel Schroder and David McDonald did the watering using a CAT 7 fire truck.

-- Kathy Handel, ph 6238 3596, email:

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THE STABLE DOOR

by Ian Coillet

An Occasional Piece



During July I popped down Bendigo way to help celebrate a very dear friend's coming of age; as his T-shirt reads, 'THE 39th ANNIVERSARY OF HIS 21ST BIRTHDAY!'



Tootling along Gundaroo Rd en route to Murrumbateman and Yass for the long trip south, I came across the above sight a few k's north of Sutton Village. I recalled we did have a couple of days of pretty high winds where, along with other debris, there was a fair flurry of spindly grass heads being thrown hither and thither around the place - sometimes to pretty interesting effect.



And, some kilometres on, the fence above with an obvious bias; was it the result of stock straining their necks in search of greener pasture, sub par fencing, magnetic north, climate change or does it say something about the intensity and direction of the prevailing wind?



Whatever the weather, Mum and co. get on with business.

All pretty lovely really.

WAMBOIN 15 YEARS AGO - From the Whisper, July 1996 Circulation: 500

by Robyn Robertson

(Note from Editor: Robyn Supplied this for the July Issue. I accidentally failed to include it. The August piece follows.)

From: YARROWLUMLA COUNCIL NEWS: "Geary's Gap Name Change? Our neighbours in what has been commonly called Geary's Gap are soon to vote on an official name for their area. The Geary's Gap Community Association, with assistance from the Council, will conduct a poll in which residents will choose between Geary's Gap, Bywong and Mac's Reef.

Residents of Wamboin went through a similar, but less formal, process in the early 1980's when the "Canberra Country Estate" formally became "Wamboin". A public meeting was held in the old Cooper Road Fire Shed and although Kowen Hills was the preferred name it was ruled out by the Geographical Names Board due to possible confusion with the Kowen Forestry Settlement. Wamboin was selected from the parish name and is the officially recognised name of our area."

-- Peter Greenwood, Your local Councillor.

From the Whisper, August 1996

From: YARROWLUMLA COUNCIL NEWS: 'Wamboin South Development. Possible development in the Wamboin South area, off the end of Ryans Road, continues to raise its head. Current thinking by developers, following the public meeting in Wamboin 12 months ago, is to reduce the scope of a first phase to about 15 lots in a community titles type development. They hope that this will receive early Council approval with the lots on the market and sold within 18 months. The next stage of the 450 lot development would then proceed over the next few years with a total time span of about 5 years from the March 1995 knock-back of the entire development. I expect a presentation to Council on the 6th August on this first stage. (WCA please note). I will keep you informed." -- Peter Greenwood, Your local Councillor.

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ADVERTISING RATES: Local classified advertisements are free, as are announcements from community organisations and clubs. Business advertisements pay printing and Community Association Projects. Contact editor on 6238-3484 for information. Advertising rates: Full Page - \$120 Half Pg - \$60 1/3 Pg \$40 1/4 Pg - \$30 1/5 Pg - \$25 1/8 Pg - \$20

FOR HIRE from the Wamboin Hall: A 4 Burner, Hooded BBQ with side burner. Half cast iron plate and half grill plus temperature gauge. \$50 (includes gas) together with \$30 cleaning bond. Both payable on collection. Bond refunded if BBQ is returned clean. Enquiries - Joan Mason 6238 3258.

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. whentaken (otherwise they don't go.) Time of pick-up and returned **MUST** be adhered to (I don't live at the Hall!) - Joan Mason, 62383258.

FOR HIRE: WAMBOIN COMMUNITY HALL. Bookings arranged by Joan Mason 6238 3258. Local Residents \$100, Bond \$250. Non-Resident \$150, Bond \$300. The Hall is not available for teenage, 18 or 21st. functions.

FOR HIRE: BYWONG COMMUNITY HALL. Suitable for smaller functions and seminars, groups etc. Check availability and booking information on www.bywongcommunity.org.au.

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

Nature Notes July 2011

Jo Walker

Although we've had some very white frosty mornings this month, the days are becoming pleasantly warm and spring-like. We'll probably get a few more cold or wet days before spring really arrives, but the wattles are beginning to flower, the frogs are croaking in the dam and the birds are singing and calling and generally acting as if it's almost nesting time again. The local echidnas seem to have been active all winter judging by the number of times they have excavated large holes in the meat ant nests. Wolf Spiders are already active too. These are the large spiders seen sitting at the entrance of holes in the ground waiting for some careless food item to wander past. They make a circular lid constructed of silken web and soil which covers the hole's entrance during winter, but these spiders also must sense that spring is imminent, as I've seen several in or near their homes during the last week.

And, this morning, a tiny Grass Skink dashed across a sun-warmed patch of rocky ground. It was very small, probably one that emerged from its egg in autumn. These little lizards lay up to five whitish leathery eggs, buried in shallow soil. The young usually hatch in February or March, fully formed and able to move rapidly away as soon as they burst out of their egg case.

Some of the grasses are beginning to put out a bit of new growth, and the tiny *Schoenus apogon* plants that came up on any patch of moist bare ground during the rains last spring seem to be perennial plants as they have survived the winter. They are small rush-plants, usually not much more than 10 cm tall here, with fine, bright green leaves that take on an orange tinge during winter.

The Grey Butcher-birds have been noisy recently – pleasantly so, though, as they have a melodious call. They seem to keep to their own territory – there is a family of them across the road from here and another in the forest reserve at the top of Poppet Hill. I saw one recently sitting on a fence at the southern end of Sutton Road, watching intently something in the grass below. It flew down suddenly and effortlessly grabbed its meal – a lizard or large insect, I think – and carried it back to the fence in its beak.

Early in the month, we had a day or two of gale-force winds. There seemed to be no birds brave enough to take to the air in such difficult conditions. But the Sulphur-crested Cockatoos weren't going to miss their evening feed here. They came in, a few at a time, expertly swooping and diving and travelling at breakneck speed, successfully battling the furious wind. It was a magnificent sight. They do cause a lot of damage around the place (nobody who lives elsewhere than Wamboin, Bywong or similar areas will quite believe these lovely birds can remove lead chimney flashing), but can be forgiven after a spectacular aerobatic display like that!

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The Wamboin Wombat: 3rd World Engineering at its Best

by Rob Brunswick

I'm the proud owner of the only* Chinese Walking Tractor in Wamboin, having spend months battling Australian Customs to get import permits, weeks assembling, adjusting and making safe, and even longer learning how to drive it without hurting myself. I actually imported two – the second was for a mate whose plans changed, so that one is still in its box.

The walking tractor has its origins in machines made for farming the very steep slopes of the European Alps. Imagine a single cylinder, naturally aspirated, horizontal diesel engine sitting on top of a gearbox with 2 wheels– that's it. At the back of the gearbox, there is a hitch (for a plough, trailer, rake etc.) and a removable hatch that allows a rotary cultivator to be bolted on. The engine drives the main clutch via two vee belts, and the tractor is primarily steered using dog clutches on each wheel via enormous handle bars.

This where the excitement comes in. To turn *right* when travelling *up hill*, the *right* wheel clutch is disconnected, so the left wheel pulls the tractor to the right (the right wheel is now coasting). However, to turn *right* travelling *down hill*, i.e. under engine braking, the *left* clutch must be disengaged instead, so that the right wheel does the braking, the left wheel coasts, turning the tractor to the right.

If you get it wrong, the handlebars simply sweep you off the seat, and into the nearest tree or bushes. Further, if you open the throttle on a down hill turn, the tractor will change direction all by itself.



Confusing? Well, it does make sense if you stop and think about it. But when you are actually in motion, this is so counter-intuitive that you will probably get it wrong about 50% of the time. The crash gearbox has 6 forward and 2 reverse gears – basically it's a 3 speed box with low and high ranges – and the speed difference from low to high is enormous. Low range, 1st gear is slower than tortoise speed. Even at full throttle, this is much slower than walking pace, and 3rd gear, high range does over 20km/hr, which is exhilaratingly (scary) fast.

Another idiosyncrasy is pitching. Because the trailer hitch has an axial swivel to accommodate extremely uneven ground, during very tight turns, when the tractor is almost at right angles to the trailer (i.e. jack knifed), it can pitch forward or backwards unexpectedly, sweeping the handlebars up or down through a meter or more, which can be quite

alarming (and painful, if the handlebars catch your knees or chin).

Finally, although there is a foot brake (of sorts) on the trailer, there is no brake on the tractor itself. The drive can produce 800Nm of torque (equivalent to a V8 at full throttle), so there is no stopping the tractor when in motion, other than disconnecting the clutch (giving the trailer drum brakes a chance) or turning off the fuel, so think ahead!

By (painful) trial and error, I have found that following some simple rules virtually eliminates accidents:

1. Always change to low range before attempting any maneuver, and choose 1st gear for U turns, tipping the trailer etc.
2. Low range 3rd gear is the maximum for any off road driving, even on good tracks (hit a rock or stump going any faster, and you will definitely be thrown off).
3. Only use high range when travelling on a smooth straight road or driveway. High range 3rd gear is for straight line motion only, and not for the faint hearted. Think drag racing (at 20 kph) and you'll get the idea.

Now that I've mastered the Wombat, I can appreciate how useful it really is, especially for hauling firewood and clearing litter ahead of the next fire season. It gets into everywhere on the block (we live in old Wamboin among rocks and trees), the trailer tips for easy unloading, and it really is unstoppable.

If you are interested in taking mine for a walk or a drive, give me a call.

Rob Brunswick 6238 3003



*Although there are possibly 100 million similar tractors in the world of which half are in China and Vietnam.

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Letter

by Mel Hillery, Bywong

I am writing to see if you would like to join a community collaboration to ensure that at least some of the ideas aired in the recent Palerang council community forums come to fruition in the near future.

After attending three of the forums myself and hearing reports of the others I would like to congratulate Palerang Council (both staff and councilors) for the manner in which they enthusiastically volunteered their time to the forums and weathered in good humour the inevitable grumbles about the past, whilst gently keeping us to the task of looking to the future.

A clear process for the formulation of a Community Plan and how that will feed into Council's planning and operations was detailed at the end of each forum, giving us hope that perhaps we really are entering into a new era of collaboration and better communication between Council and the wider community.

However it is now time for the rest of us in the community to step up to the plate and take on our share of the workload. As the facilitator at the forums reminded us, the Community Plan is a plan for the community of Palerang, not just the Council.

Although many participants at the forums might not describe themselves as sustainability advocates there does appear to be very widespread support for projects that promote the strength and diversity of our local communities and economies. This is the bedrock of what groups like the recently established Palerang Action Network for Sustainability (PANS) are trying to achieve.

PANS would like to hear from other community organisations and individuals who might be interested in forming a coalition focused on achieving some of the great ideas put forward in the Council community consultations.

We are particularly interested in tackling the rising costs of living through community owned local power generation; better public transport and reducing our reliance on cars; building up our local economies (including local sustainable food production and distribution); lobbying for better local service provision; providing local services, facilities and recreation for our young and aging residents; and using SMART technology to reduce our carbon, water, biodiversity and waste footprints.

This coalition would aim to keep this program in regular public discussion, lobby Council and other businesses and institutions to enable it, and set up business enterprises to achieve a future that our kids will look forward to.

To get in touch with us please email Mel Hillery (Bywong) at melophorus@bigpond.com 0427 440 335 or Anne-Marie Duke (Braidwood) at annimeel@gmail.com.

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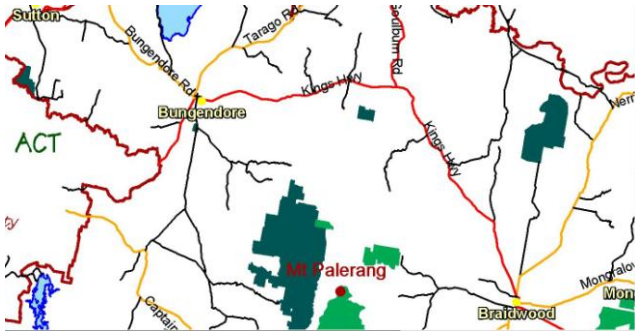


Experiencing this Side of Palerang

by Ned Noel

You've probably noticed the distinctive shape of Mount Palerang, the centre of our local council, from the Kings Highway as you drive out of Braidwood. A couple years back my son Will and I followed the advice at

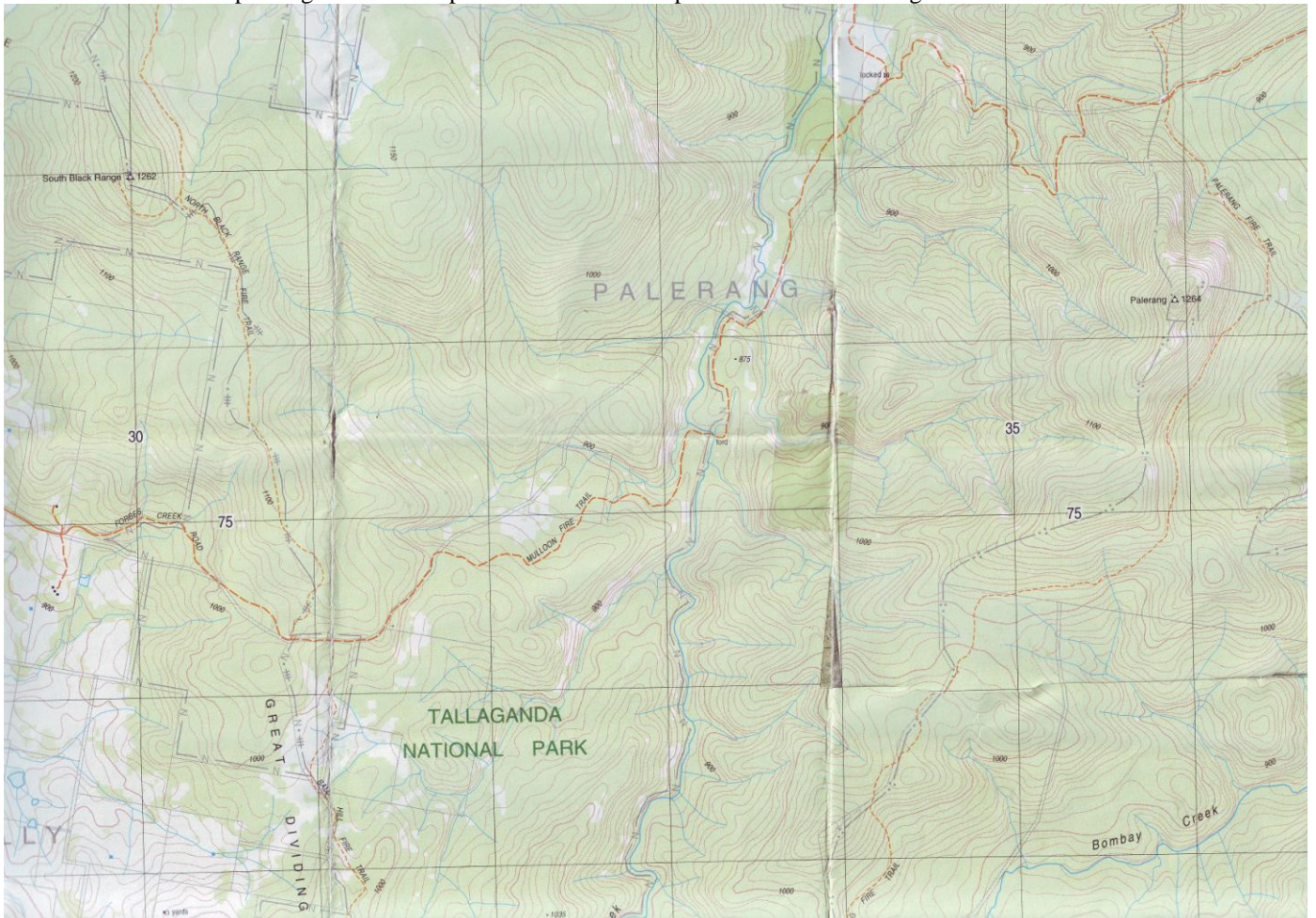
www.kingshwytodiscovery.com.au and drove through Braidwood and then Bombay and then the Muloon Fire Trail to the marked starting point of the one km unmarked trek to the top. Looking toward Wamboin from the top there were only green mountains and forests. We got a bit lost walking down to the car. Google maps showed no way to drive west, so we drove back through Braidwood.



that the Muloon Fire Trail does continue westward from the Mt Palerang "trail" start point to the Great Dividing Range, where it turns into Forbes Creek Road. A couple weeks ago we drove to Bungendore, then south to Hoskinstown (soon on dirt roads), then east to Forbes Creek, then continued on Forbes Creek Road into Tallaganda National Park. We drove a little further (in a 2wd Corolla) to the top of the Dividing Range. A bush parking area there has a sign that includes a map of the park. At this point Forbes Creek Road turns into the Muloon Fire Trail. It took 45 minutes to drive to this spot from Wamboin.



The dirt road was easy to drive, but we wanted to bike. We rode what turned out to be a 9 km beautiful and remote stretch of dirt road through mountain forests. About halfway we crossed the Muloon Creek ford, shown in the picture. A couple were just driving into the empty bush campsite. The photo to the left shows a view from the next stretch. When we reached the marked start of the Mt Palerang "trail", we turned around and biked back. We saw a wombat. We spoke again to the couple who had now set up a tent and a fire. We got back to the car and drove home.



2011 Census – Shed Some Light on Census Night

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) conducts the Census every five years and the next Census is coming up on 9 August 2011.

The Census provides a ‘snapshot’ of the nation on Census night – the number of people in Australia, their key characteristics and the houses in which they live. Census information is used by all levels of government, businesses and communities to make vital decisions on infrastructure and services that affect your everyday lives - things such as roads, schools, housing and health services.

From 29 July an army of 29,000 Census Collectors will be visiting every Australian household to drop off a Census form or eCensus envelope with your unique eCensus number. The eCensus is a fast, secure and easy way to complete your form and it means that a Collector won’t need to return to collect your completed paper form. Unless you have completed the Census online, a Census Collector will return from 10 August 2011 to pick up your completed form.

Everyone in Australia needs to fill out a Census form. The ABS will ensure that Census forms are provided to people staying in hospitals, campsites and hotels or travelling throughout Australia on Census night. Your participation will make a real difference in telling your community’s story and lighting the way forward for local facilities and services.

The information you provide on the Census form is completely confidential. The ABS will not share your information with anyone else.

So please shed some light on Census night and help create a brighter future for your community.

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Wamboin Muse

Jill Gregory

Silence..... under a wide, high sky massed with countless stars twinkling and sparkling like a frost in the early morning sunshine. A landscape, burnt, bleached and sucked dry by winter, smelling of wood smoke. An all embracing silence...but suddenly I was hearing conversations again, making sense of the chatter around me, exchanging pleasantries, joking and slipping into the easy banter of my own language. We were home after three months immersed in foreign tongues, travelling in our own bubble, observing and absorbing, engaging with the history and landscape but rarely engaging with people beyond the superficial. I'm home, and whole again.

I'd become accustomed to the hee hawing of ambulances through the night, of ceaseless whirring traffic in the cities and the triumphant clang and jangle of church bells intruding on your dreams. I'd grown used to green trees and neat fields, frenetic freeways, airport security and fast trains. I'd accepted towering mountains, wide flowing rivers and expanses of water, skies criss-crossed with vapour trails and outdoor crowds eating throughout the day and night. But I remained mute. I seemed unable to mesh the scraps of foreign languages that I had practised with the country I was in. In Germany I muttered apologies in French, for invariably I was on the wrong side of the path or stairs, and in France I whispered incomprehensible German which was ignored anyway. In Crete the locals spoke to us in English, but I never knew what they were saying to each other. I listened fascinated to Swedish speech peppered with the Old English "Nay" but knew nothing more of their conversations. The Dutch sounds were almost English but it all remained "Double Dutch" to me.

However, I become quite competent decoding written information at historic sites in France. I was making hard work of a rather long narrative, one day, picking out the common French/English language links and feeling pleased that I was getting the gist of it until I suddenly realised that the sign was in fact in English! I went back to the beginning and it was so easy on the second reading.

We did try our scraps of language in restaurants and shops, and usually succeeded, but once we got double the order and another time we were forced to share, while the locals looked on bemused, obviously thinking it was a quaint Australian custom. It all became too difficult to explain!

I developed some affection for the computer as an invaluable travelling companion, but it could only accomplish so much. I went on line to hire bikes in rural Sweden, feeling rather pleased with myself for attempting to do so. Initially I had no luck but then a site mysteriously appeared. I booked, but doubts crept in. "Canaria Hire" didn't sound sufficiently Nordic and serious..and it wasn't. I'd hired bikes in the Canary Islands! A few good emails and laughs followed between Germany and the Canary Islands, and an invitation extended to visit and collect the bikes at a later date. Eventually the kind chap at the hotel in Sweden offered us his own bikes! The computer is a great tool, but it's only as good as the operator.

And now we're home. I'd almost forgotten how good a cup of tea made with rainwater, could be, and how pleasant it is to wake to the calm, unhurried voice of the ABC newsreader after months of CNN hype. I'd forgotten the morning ritual of the magpies on the verandah rails waiting for their treat, and I was reminded, with a shock, just how cold a toilet seat could be in the wee small hours of a Wamboin winter! But what I hadn't forgotten was how good it is to be back amongst family and friends in Wamboin I wouldn't live anywhere else.

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