

SPRING 2008

Newsletter No.18



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# Newham & District Landcare Group



Working towards a  
healthier environment

Address – PO Box 314, WOODEND, 3442

## Library/book review

Being librarian puts a range of interesting and useful material at your fingertips – are you in a position to take on this role?

Currently the library is at the Roberts household – contact Penny on 5427 0795 for loans or more information regarding becoming librarian.

We have seven new books in the library, as listed below.

**Nestbox book** – Gould Group

**Backyard insects** – Horne & Crawford

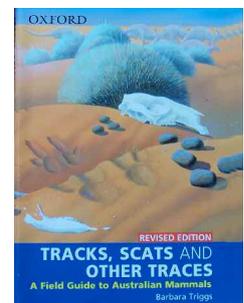
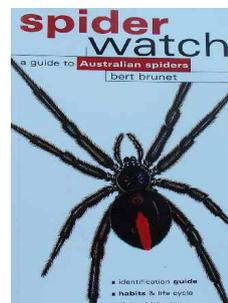
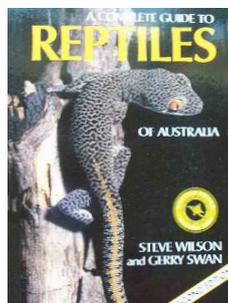
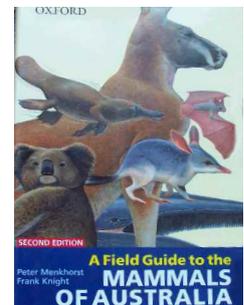
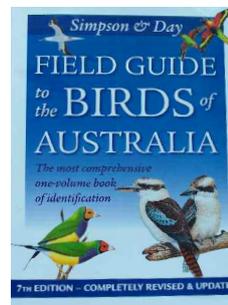
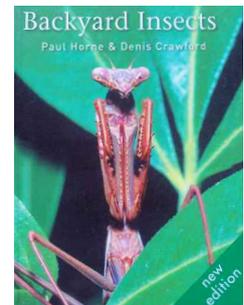
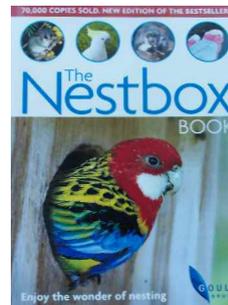
**Field guide to birds of Australia** – Simpson & Day

**A field guide to mammals of Australia** –  
Menkhorst & Knight

**A complete guide to Reptiles** – Wilson & Swan

**Spider watch – a guide to Australian spiders** –  
Brunet

**Tracks, scats and other traces** –  
Barbara Triggs



## This months review

**Natural Farming – a practical guide**

by Pat Coleby. Published by Scribe

261 page paperback. Price \$35

Pat Coleby is an authority on farming without chemicals with over 50 years experience. She is based in Central Victoria and has traveled widely as a lecture and consultant in farm management. She is a prolific writer with similar books specifically about sheep, goats, cattle horses, alpacas and pets.

This book carries the simple message that healthy soil makes healthy plants, which in turn makes health animals and health people. The book explains soil chemistry in terms that every farmer can understand and explores the consequences of the application of superphosphate and artificial fertilizer. The exact role of each mineral is outlined and it explains how to prevent outbreaks of disease and how to minimize the use of expensive artificial sprays and fertilizers.

The book contains accounts of spectacular successes in the regeneration of degraded land and the curing of sick and diseased animals. The simple prescriptions can be applied to any farming enterprise to restore the natural balance and fertility of the land and increase productivity.

**Clare Mc Kenna, Aesops Attic, Kyneton**

## New committee office bearers

**President:** Nick Massie. **Treasurer:** Hilary Roberts. **Secretary:** Don Lang.

Continuing committee members – Penny Roberts, Jim Sansom, Arthur Clarke, John Luckock, Fran Spain – and new member Doug Dagleish.

Chris Wiggett has stepped down from the committee but will continue to take an active role in the group – particularly in activities planned for families. Thank you Chris for your enthusiastic contribution.

**New members, general queries:** Penny Roberts, 5427 0795.

**Roadsides:** Sue Massie, 5427 0665. **Newham Primary:** Jenny Waugh, 5427 0408.

**Animal pests:** John Luckock, 5427 0909. **Wesley Park:** Fran Spain, 5427 0661.

**Flora, library, small tools, grants:** Penny Roberts, 5427 0795.

**Spray trailer:** Keith Wiggett, 5423 5279.

The committee meets on the first Monday of the month [February to December] between 7.30 – 9 pm in Newham. All members are welcome to attend the Committee meetings to become more involved or raise specific matters. Please advise a committee member if you wish to attend. Meetings start and finish on time... and we enjoy them!

## DIARY OF EVENTS

### OCTOBER

**Saturday 19th**

Lancefield Show / Mount William Stone Axe Quarry tour  
*(see page 6 for details)*

### NOVEMBER

**Saturday 15th**

Wildflower Walk (FoHR)  
*Meet at the Hanging Rock Café at 10am*  
Newham Garden Club Plant Sale  
*Mechanics Institute Hall, 9.00am – 3.00pm*

### DECEMBER

**Saturday 6th**

End-of-Year BBQ at Wesley Park  
*5pm onwards*

### FEBRUARY 2009

**Saturday 15th**

Picnic/field day looking at NHT funded sites

## Grant news – another success!

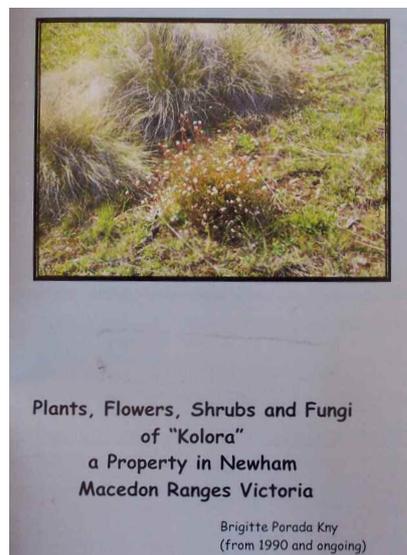
DSE has provided the group with \$3,000 through its 'Botanic Guardians Grants Scheme'.

The grant will be used to increase awareness of our local 'plant community' through the publication of a booklet (*cover proof shown on right*).

This 64 page publication will show the huge number of plant species recorded to date on a single property in the district.

[keep tuned for the launch shin-dig].

The grant will also support the propagation of a threatened species, *Dianella amoena* [Matted Flax Lily], which has been found at several locations around Newham.



## Plant profile

*Wumbea dioica* [Early Nancy]

This is the first lily to flower in Spring [August – October] on stems 5-10cm high.

Flowers are white with purple banding and plants are generally dioecious – meaning that the male and female parts occur on separate plants.

Survives in lightly grazed paddocks, growing in colonies and is common in grasslands.

Readily raised from seeds.

Its small, starchy corm is a highly nutritional Koori food source.

## Roadside Management Group

The group welcomes Doug Dalgleish as a member and we are sure his experience in weed control will be an invaluable contribution to the group.

The group will be mapping the weed infestation in Croziers Lane and Whitebridge Road in the next few weeks and other initiatives include consideration of a field trip to collect seeds in late summer. The group invites interested Landcare members to contact them if they wish to assist.

The group is also considering speaking to Lachlan Milne about the group undertaking treatment of small weed infestations in the local area using the cut and past method.

Landcare recently undertook a trial of this method in Lavender Farm Road with good results.

## Combined working bee at Newham Primary School

This was a lovely day – sun shining, Christine Sullivan with her waffle machine and a mix of school families and Landcare members pitching in and then lunching together.

We had a University student from Sunbury turn up to assist – young blood is always welcome [thank you Dean!] – as well as seven students from the school.

Gravel was spread on the shade-house floor [five cubic meters] and 400 common tussock grass [*Poa labillardieri*] seedlings were planted on the dam banks, adjacent to the carpark.

Thanks to all who attended.



## Pest control project very successful

Earlier this year, six adjoining landholders on the north and east sides of The Jim Jim took part in a co-ordinated project to reduce the numbers of rabbits and foxes on their properties. This project has resulted in a dramatic reduction in these two pests, with long-term landholder and farmer in the area, Arthur Clarke, commenting that he cannot recall a time when rabbits were at such low numbers.

The key to the project was to co-ordinate the activities over all the properties at the same time, thus minimising the usual problem of reinvasion from neighbouring properties when individual landholders act alone. The Newham and District Landcare Group acted as the catalyst in this process; and also was successful in obtaining government funding for a substantial part of the cost.

The project was conducted in three parts. First the rabbits and foxes were baited by a professional contractor. Then the habitat was destroyed by ripping warrens and burrows to make the environment very unfriendly for rabbits and foxes, and to deny shelter to any residual populations. Finally the ripped areas and related land was planted with trees and understory to stabilise the land.

With the pest animal population on these six properties reduced to historically low levels, now is the time for adjoining landholders to conduct a similar project as there is little chance of reinvasion from the properties already treated. The Landcare Group will help with co-ordination and guidance, but it cannot do the work... **the initiative must come from the landholders.**

Why not gather together a group of neighbours and conduct a co-ordinated campaign to reduce pest animals in your area. According to Arthur Clarke, it pays, as this year he has been able to sow crops that in earlier years would have been decimated by rabbits.

**John Luckock**

# Rivers and streams are a critical part of our landscape

During his recent visit (Mechanics Hall, July 25th), Assoc. Professor Ian Rutherford made the following points during his talk and the discussion that followed:

1. For thousands of years before Europeans arrived the Australian landscape remained relatively un-altered. Many creeks and smaller streams did not flow in clearly defined channels as we know them today. There was much more swampy ground with water slowly working its way through tussocks, rushes and thick tangles of tea-tree etc.
2. Clearing for pasture and cultivation changed all that causing water to flow more quickly, especially after heavy rain. The speed of the water gouged out channels. Flooding became more of a problem with fewer swampy areas to hold back the water and so release it slowly.
3. Planting of willows (originally encouraged by the authorities to help secure unstable banks) is now known to alter stream ecology since they drop all their leaves (source of food for all the little water critters) at one time in the Autumn. Unlike the previous steady supply of food all year round.
4. Clearing of willows must be done with strategic re-planting so that a canopy cover helps to maintain stream temperature suitable for the complex life in the stream.
5. Re-planting of this riparian zone must be done so that a self-sustaining vegetation community is established. This in turn relates to the total health of the stream.
6. Wood in streams is fundamental. The old practice of clearing snags etc out of the stream so water flowed freely is wrong. Logs and branches in the water provide habitat for aquatic creatures and also slow down the speed of flow thus reducing the erosive energy of the stream.
7. By a quirk of history, early Australian legislation regarding crown title rights over 'bed and banks' of streams now provides us with a wonderful opportunity. Governments (Federal, State and Local) are keen to establish 'connectivity' between areas of native habitat and vegetation along streams has the potential to become an important part of this.
8. The last 10 to 15 years has seen a major change in the Government's attitude towards streams. Prior to this they were regarded as a water resource to be used by farmers to water stock and irrigate. The new approach is to view streams and their accompanying riparian zones as a community resource to be looked after in order to maintain water quality and habitat. Farmers are now encouraged to fence out creeks and provide off-stream watering for stock.
9. Finally, and most important, the new Federal Government initiative "CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY" is likely to favour with funding, projects which promote habitat corridors and bio-links – like our own 'Campaspe-Maribryngong-Headwaters-Biolink'. Our forward-looking work and planning puts us in the box seat for funding to continue this work.

Our thanks go to Ian for a most informative and interesting evening and we wish him every success in his new job as 'Director of River Health' with DSE.

**Jim Sansom**

*This year Newham & District Landcare Group will be participating jointly with Lancefield/Deep Creek and Upper Maribyrnong Groups to provide a display for the Lancefield Show.*

*If you are able to assist for any period of time [at least one hour] between 11am and 3pm, please give me a call on 5427 0795 or email: [penroberts@bigpond.com](mailto:penroberts@bigpond.com)*

## **Lancefield Show – See you there!**

Spring is in the air... new life, buds bursting and warmer weather and with that we welcome the always popular Lancefield Agricultural Show!

This year's show will be held in the beautiful Lancefield Park facilities on Sunday 19 October and with the return of the horse program and an action packed schedule of competition and entertainment, there promises to be something for everyone!

Commenting on the show, President John Sheehan said 'This is a really exciting event in our local community and we look forward to delivering a day of entertainment, competitive opportunities, knowledge sharing and lifestyle ideas. Our show is part of our local fabric, it's a day for us to showcase Lancefield to our community and visitors and above all it's a day we can all enjoy with our friends and families'.

A taste of the program is guaranteed to please with the horse, sheep, cattle and poultry competitions; Mt William Aboriginal Greenstone Axe Quarry display, Landcare, arts and crafts; the local farmers market; the always popular Vintage Tractor pull; a wood chop competition; dog high jump and fox terrier racing; a ute show; show bags; animal petting and plenty of educational activities. Be sure to keep an eye out for your opportunity to buy a ticket in the monster raffle which will be drawn at the show. Raffle tickets can be purchased on the day.

Show tickets can be purchased at the gate on the day and are priced as follows:

\$15 family.    \$3 pensioner/child    \$8 single

Where: Lancefield Showgrounds, Chauncey Street, Lancefield. VicRoads Map Ref. 635 N3

When: 9.00am – 5.00pm, Sunday 19 October 2008

Contact Theresa Elliot on 0407 88 77 12 or email [ctelliott@bigpond.net.au](mailto:ctelliott@bigpond.net.au)

## **Mt William Wurundjeri Stone Axe Quarry Tours**

Show visitors this year will be able to take a bus tour to the Mt William Wurundjeri Stone Axe Quarry, a site of National Cultural and Archaeological Significance.

The tours will be guided by Annette Xiberras who is a Wurundjeri Traditional owner of Mt William and the Macedon Ranges Shire region.

In addition to the significance of the site to the Wurundjeri, the views are spectacular and the site is located in high quality native vegetation with an abundance of wildflowers.

There will be four tours on the day – leaving the show 9.15am, 11.15am, 1.30pm and 3.30pm. Each tour goes for 1.5–2hrs including travel time.

Wurundjeri Stone Axe Quarry Tickets are:

\$20 per family, \$10 Adult Concession, \$15 per Adult.

***Prices do not include entry to the Show.***

Tickets can be booked in advance of the show if you are interested in attending. Last year all tours were booked out, so take advantage of booking ahead.

For tours call Lachlan Milne on (03) 5421 9695, leave a message including a contact phone number.

All proceeds from the tours will go to the management of the axe quarry.

## Weed while we walk

Landcare members may be interested to know that there are many walking groups in the Macedon ranges area. (see below for details). These groups may become even more important as we are trying to incorporate a check for weeds as we walk. (thanks to Doug) If possible we will note weeds on the walking paths and arrange for them to be sprayed or dug up. More details re this initiative in later issues.

### Fran Spain



Area	Day	Length	Contact	Email	Phone	Cuppa
Gisborne Ramblers (Bush Tracks)	Friday 9.30am	Up to 2 Hours	Anne	julie.gujer@mhrs.com.au	5428 2852	Yes
Gisborne Bush Walking	Contact Club/ Website for details	Day Walks	Anne	<a href="http://home.vicnet.net.au/~gisbw/">http://home.vicnet.net.au/~gisbw/</a> <a href="mailto:gisbw@internode.on.net">gisbw@internode.on.net</a>	5428 2852	BYO food and drink
Kyneton Cobaw Thursday Walkers	Thursday 9.30am	Up to 2 Hours varying locations	Margaret		5427 3340	Yes
Newham	Tuesday 9.00am	Up to 1 Hour	Fran		5427 0661	Yes
Riddells Creek	Tuesday 9.15am	90 minutes	Robin		5428 6593	Yes
Riddells Creek	Tuesday 11.00am	Up to 30 minutes	Robin		5428 6593	Yes
Riddells Creek	Thursday 9.00am	90 minutes	Jean and Colin		5428 7836	
Romsey	Tuesday 9.30am	(Combined) Up to 45 minutes	Heather		5429 5895	
Romsey (Meet at Laundromat)	Tuesday 9.00am	Up to 2 hours	Laurie		5429 6414	Yes
Tylden (General Store)	Wednesday 2.00pm	Up to 1 Hour	Deanne	<a href="mailto:wnci@netcon.net.au">wnci@netcon.net.au</a>	5424 8143	Yes
Woodend	Monday 9.00am	Up to 30 minutes	Leesa	<a href="mailto:wnci@netcon.net.au">wnci@netcon.net.au</a>	5420 7458	
Woodend	Tuesday 10.00am	Up to 1 hour	Mike Hubert	<a href="mailto:weisrockaus@bigpond.com">weisrockaus@bigpond.com</a>	5427 1547 5427 3208	Yes
Woodend	Tuesday 2.00pm	Up to 1 hour	Woodend Neighbourhood House	<a href="mailto:wnci@netcon.net.au">wnci@netcon.net.au</a>	5427 1845	
Woodend	Wednesday 10.00am	Up to 1 Hour	Deann	<a href="mailto:wnci@netcon.net.au">wnci@netcon.net.au</a>	5424 8143	
Woodend (Pram Plus)	Friday 11.00am	Up to 1 Hour	Deborah	<a href="mailto:wnci@netcon.net.au">wnci@netcon.net.au</a>	5427 3539	Yes