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Huge Spring Arts Exhibition

The Nimbin Spring Arts Show, running during the school holidays in the Town Hall and Artists Gallery, was again an eclectic collection of artworks in all mediums.

Over 100 local artists' work was on show, including emerging artists from four local schools.

The exhibition was opened by Ros Derrett (pictured), a long-time supporter of the arts in the Northern Rivers.



Photos:
Peter Derrett



In her opening address, Ms Derrett pointed out the value of large exhibitions in encouraging networking and engagement between creatives, who often work alone. By the end of the official opening, red "sold" dots were spreading like measles, suggesting there would be good returns to the artists.

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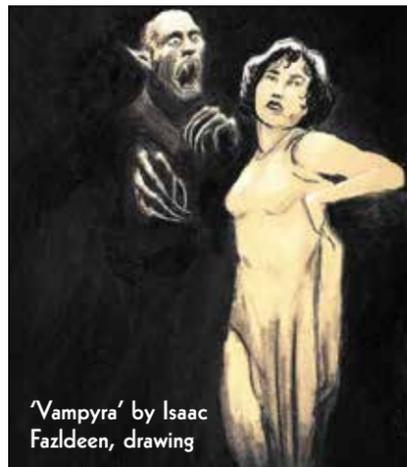
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It's a Spooky October at Serpentine



'Vampyra' by Isaac
Fazldeen, drawing

by Artis Tree

It's a Spooky October at Serpentine Gallery with two openings this month.

First off is 'Dragular's Dark Carnivale' featuring five emerging local artists all exploring horror from different angles.

Horror, a genre that is as old as time itself, wraps itself in the darkness of night and tickles our imaginations with the possibility of unknown entities living in that darkness that would consume our sanity.

Defining horror is like trying to catch water with a sieve. It is nebulous, changing and shifting just when we think we understand what it means. Each person has a different idea of what Horror is that comes from their own personal experiences and their interaction with the world around them. We asked some of

the artists what horror means to them.

Bard Pendragon says, "To me, horror is the manifestation of our projections from our shadow self. The things we hate about others and the world around us are the things we hate about ourselves. I've chosen to use pop culture and queer culture to explore the horror from my own childhood. My work is a mixture of acrylic paintings and altered toys, which allow me to use bright colours and humour to share some dark experiences."

Benjamin Gully: "True horror for me exists within the human psyche. Whether as a result of a chemical imbalance, mental illness/disorder/impairment, family history, trauma or religious/spiritual beliefs... It's that which our minds create – and therefore are capable making us do that scares me most." Benjamin feels his work encompasses this in its use of dark tones and its overall aesthetic and by the "characters" he has introduced in his work.

Dean Heaton: "Horror is fun escapism. My work generally revolves around Pop Culture so I've put my own twist on the classics. I chose painting so they will be singular and I can work on a decent scale."

Isaac Fazldeen: "Horror, to me, represents the primal threats that wormed their way into our evolutionary subconscious. The fear and disgust we often feel when faced with darkness or disease once kept us alive, but now creates a vestigial and harmful fear of the unfamiliar. Creating horror-inspired artwork lets me claim ownership of these fears and dismiss our collective



'The Ritual' by Zoe Fazldeen, oil painting

ignorance, one monster at a time. I chose relief printing as my medium for its potential for simplicity and striking contrasts, and used inkwash and charcoal when more subtlety was required."

Dragular's Dark Carnivale is on exhibition until Saturday 21st October. All welcome.

Members Show

Opening on Friday 27th October is a group show by our Serpentine artists community exploring the theme 'Out of the Shadows' with live music by duo Chad and Fez and fire twirling performance with Art Fire Metal.

'Out of the Shadows' will run until 17th November. Please contact the gallery if you would like to participate in this exhibition.

Serpentine is open Monday to Friday 10am til 4pm and Saturday 10am til 2pm, and is located at 3/104 Conway Street, Lismore. Phone 0492-964-819, email: gallery@serpentinearts.org

Art Club show

The Lismore Art Club is set to open its annual art show in October, with members preparing to celebrate its 63rd exhibition, making it the longest running art exhibition in the region.

Lismore Art Club was established in 1960 and has maintained a healthy and enthusiastic membership throughout the decades of change in Lismore.

Always welcoming new artists and people open to developing their art skills, the Lismore Art Club invites new members regardless of their

art background or training.

"It's quite a feat that The Lismore Art Club has actively continued to hold their annual exhibition for 63 consecutive years, despite floods, the pandemic and everything else that has happened in Lismore for the past six decades," said Lismore Art Club President and local artist Jehu Burgoyne.

"It's a great club to be involved with. Even if you only have a small creative bone in your body, the club welcomes people from all



walks of life from beginners to professional artists."

The exhibition will run at Flourish Gallery until 27th October at the Flourish Gallery, 15 Casino Street South Lismore, and can be viewed during gallery opening hours: Wednesday-Fridays

10am-4pm and Saturdays 10am-2pm.

For more information contact Lismore Arts Club President and owner of Flourish Gallery/Studios, Jehu Burgoyne on 0427-545-398 or email: jehuburgoyne@yahoo.com

Bendee Productions at The Solo Space



'Brunhilde' by Anne-Marie Dineen



'Muse Entering the Fifth Dimension' (Batik) by Bendee



'Sandy the Seahorse' (Mosaic) by Jane Foundling & Jack Horner

'*Throw a tree in the ocean*' is the new exhibition by Bendee Productions in The Solo Space at Blue Knob Hall Gallery.

Bendee is a multi-disciplinary creative duo from Blue Knob who present their latest exhibition – a celebration of creativity and life.

This is an eclectic mix of Batik, fibre, ceramics, artworks, handmade journals and the first chapter of the *Farmboy* comic book. The exhibition is a riot of colour and the two banners "Love" and "Peace" bring an always needed message for the times.

Poetry in Motion: Artists are inspired by a poem, a line from a poem or song, a piece of text or their own writing, to create a visual work.

There are some touching and

heartfelt pieces, along with the whimsical and humorous.

Jane Foundling's poem that goes with *Sandy the Seahorse*, a large mosaic piece by her and Jack Horner, has some of us wishing we had a 'seahorse husband'. You'll have to come and visit and read it for yourself!

An Opening Event was held on Sunday 24th September with the wonderful Vocal Minority Choir performing on the day.

Blue Knob Writers Group – meet weekly at Blue Knob Cafe on Sundays. For more info regarding the Writers Group contact Alex 02 6689-7268 or Helen 0487-385-134.

Blue Knob Cafe – has an all day breakfast menu, meals, specials, cake and coffee. On the first Sunday of

the month, the café presents Sunday Morning Music from 10am. For more information, check our Facebook page.

Volunteering at Blue Knob Hall Gallery, Café. If you have an interest in the arts or would like to support this iconic community space, we would love to hear from you.

Blue Knob Hall Gallery was opened in 2004 and has had a continuous dedicated group of people who have kept the place open to be enjoyed by all.

We would like to encourage getting involved and being part of taking this unique combination of Gallery, Ceramic Studio and Cafe into the future.

The International Art Textile Biennale 2023

Fibre Artists from Mexico, Hungary, Australia, Germany, United Kingdom, South Korea, Japan, India, France, and USA are represented in this year's International Art Textiles Biennale exhibition that is touring around Australia and currently on exhibition at the Roxy Gallery until 11th November.

Fibre Arts Australia's International Art Textile Biennale (IATB) 2023 highlights the contemporary practice within Art Textiles as an artform, and has been curated into a touring exhibition for the second International Art Textile Biennale.

With entries from 167 artists from 25 countries and 270 pieces entered in the Biennale, Fibre Arts Australia undertook the huge task of selecting 35 finalists to tour in the IATB 2023 to eight gallery locations throughout Australia, and the Roxy Gallery is one of the lucky spaces to share in exhibiting this amazing body of work.

The dynamic impact of this exhibition will bring out the 'WOW' factor in all that come into the gallery to experience the diverse array of techniques and materials.

As stated by the CEO of Fibre Arts Australia, Glenys Mann, "Viewers will be captivated and engaged by the rhythm of the maker and excellence that is exhibited.

"The selected works push previously held notions



Janet Wilson 'Fleurette Rabbit'

of textile/fibre, opening a dialogue about what it is to be a textile artist that makes an expression and commentary on content and concept in the 21st Century. "The finalists show a well-resolved concept combined with exploratory and expert use of their chosen material. From intimate reflections to huge environmental issues, the works vary in concepts, techniques, material, and presentation."

This is an exhibition not to be missed with catalogues for this show on sale at the Roxy Gallery and all works have QR codes that reveal more information on the artist and artwork.

The winner of the major prize in this year's Biennale was Josephine Jakobi. Her work, 'The Huntsman and I' is a delicate, almost doyley-like piece ingeniously mounted on carefully balanced shards of Perspex that enable it to tremble nervously.

The International Excellence Award was won by German artist, Katherina Sommer for 'Mug Women II'. This large triptych is based on the "mug shots" of



Ji Seon Yoon 'Rag Face'

convicted women, each with her own moving story.

The Australian Excellence Award went to Brenda Livermore for 'Firebrand', a pendular threesome based on the Gynea lily, known for its resilience and regeneration in the wake of bushfires. Using basketry techniques and paper, string, the bright red work is a celebration of life.

The Glenys Mann Award of Excellence was won by Australian artist, Claudia Mazzotta for 'Stitching as Registration: Labouring over Maternal Care'. Re-purposed old pillowcases are embroidered with an almost calligraphic mark-making that recalls the geometry of sound patterns traversed by random red threads.

Steppin' Up Gallery

To complement the IATB the Steppin' Up Gallery space in the foyer entrance to the Roxy Gallery has a very impressive body of basketry works by local fibre artist Janet Wilson.

Although exhibiting is no longer a sphere of interest for Janet, textiles and fibres continue to hold interest

for her across several art forms. Choosing to use basketry and plant fibres with found objects, Janet has concentrated on simple, repetitive techniques to highlight the oldest craft known that is still practised across the world with each culture and society developing their own take on traditional techniques and modern basketry.

Janet was one of the key fibre artists involved in the National Museum's Encounter project in 2015 which saw a resurgence in traditional fibre techniques for basket-making being used to create new works to sit alongside traditional bags from the Mary Bundock collection that are held in the British Museum.

Janet describes the skills and techniques utilised in creating these works as a safe, cheap and forgiving medium which requires almost no tools. Young families with children can spend almost cost-free time developing skills in a safe and outdoor environment.

Socialisation in a safe working environment allows young parents to learn new technical skills, plant identification, as well as history, geography, and social studies. Janet's message is simple: "Learn new skills while socialising with other families, no money is required."

For more info, email: roxygallery@kyogle.nsw.gov.au or phone 02 6632-0230.

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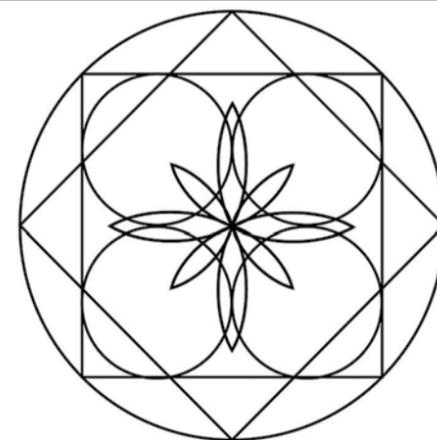


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In love with Broms

Darren Corbett is a patient man.

He is devoted to growing and breeding bromeliads and tropical foliage, particularly *Alcantarea* which takes 12-17 years to flower. But when it does, the spectacular flower spike can be over three metres tall.

Darren has worked in nurseries for 23 years, in Brisbane and the Northern Rivers. He bought his first *Alcantarea* from a Queensland nursery in the 1990s. He has been breeding and growing from seed and pups (offshoot plants of the main bromeliad) ever since.

Darren established a nursery at his five-acre farm at Larnook where he has lived off-grid for 16 years.

His tree change involves eradication of lantana and regeneration of his steep and hilly share of a community acreage.

Fire is a concern. Darren promotes bromeliad plantings under native trees as an effective firebreak.

Broms, as Darren calls them, are native to Brazil. Nevertheless he says they

are "invaluable not only as a firebreak but for providing habitat for frogs, and nectar for bees and birds. They require few resources to maintain."

They do require patience, however. It takes three to four years for a bromeliad grown from seed to reach a saleable size; two years for pups.

Aside from the challenge of destructive bush turkeys, Darren's Broms live a serene life. With solar power and gravity-fed water from spring-fed dams, the nursery only needs love and dedication.

Darren strives to breed *alcantareas* to be even bigger than the parent plants, and with even more vivid purple markings. Darren talks of these like a proud and loving parent.

You can find Darren's Broms at the Rotary Kyogle Bazaar, every fourth Saturday, 9am to 2pm, where he also offers gingers, orchids, cordylines, rainforest tree seedlings, and even some vegetable seedlings.

Opponents of Richmond incinerator meet on-line with UN Rapporteur



Residents Against the Richmond Valley Incinerator at a protest meeting on the proposed site last year.

by Liz Stops for RARVI Inc

On 4th September, four members of Residents Against the Richmond Valley Incinerator Inc. (RARVI) participated in an on-line meeting with Dr Marcos Orellana, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Toxics and Human Rights.

His overall brief during his visit to Australia covered many issues, but Energy-from-Waste (EfW) incineration was the topic of this particular meeting. It was initiated by Jane Bremmer, who heads up Zero Waste Australia and the Alliance for a Clean Environment.

Jane invited representatives from several groups around New South Wales and Victoria, all fighting to prevent EfW incinerators being built and operated in their Local Government Areas (LGA). After Jane gave a general overview of waste incineration, one person from each group spoke about their particular circumstances and the threats they face.

Ros Irwin spoke on behalf of RARVI and did an excellent job of outlining the situation in the Northern Rivers generally, and Richmond Valley LGA in particular. Each speaker complained of frustration due to a lack of Government transparency in the decision-making process and almost no community consultation.

Dr Orellana noted on 8th September in his End of Mission Statement (EoMS): "Underlying the distance between the State and communities is the perception of tokenistic engagement. When public participation is reduced to a checklist, instead of being conducive to genuine dialogue, then one of the fundamental pillars of sustainable development begins to collapse. And when that happens dialogue is replaced by anger and distrust."

He also commented on protest laws: "Draconian restrictions on the right to protest in several states are also very troubling. Peaceful protests are a legitimate exercise of the right to freedom of assembly, and they enable citizens to mobilise their concerns and make them visible to public authorities."

Another common concern between all the groups was the impact an EfW incinerator would have on agricultural and associated businesses. People are very afraid their land, crops and animals, and therefore their products, would be tainted due to the proximity to an incinerator, and their livelihoods irreparably damaged.

They are also worried about the health impacts of an incinerator on the community and the environment.

Marcos Orellana was very receptive and attentive to all the presentations. He responded with a few observations at the end of the meeting. He commented on the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), ratified by Australia in 2004.

Annexe C of the Stockholm Convention identifies waste incinerators as a major source of unintentional persistent organic pollutant emissions (ie dioxins) and requires measures to address the unintended releases of POPs, such as those from waste incinerators. See: <https://chm.pops.int/TheConvention/ThePOPs/ListingofPOPs/tabid/2509/Default.aspx>

In addition, Annexe D of the Minamata Convention lists waste incineration in the top five industrial sources of mercury pollution. See: www.dceew.gov.au/environment/protection/chemicals-management/mercury/sector-specific-guidance

Given Australia is a signatory to these conventions, our government is obliged to acknowledge these facts and uphold the convention's recommendations to eliminate all sources of dioxin and mercury pollution.

Dr Orellana pointed out that the Stockholm Convention commits all signatories to formulating a National Implementation Plan (NIP). This was completed by our government in August 2006.

However, Australia has not ratified subsequent amendments that have listed new pollutants beyond the original 12 POPs and the NIP is now more than 15 years old.

Dr Orellana also noted the Government, and others, adopting the

NIMBY narrative. This was reinforced by a representative from Tarago, near Goulburn, where in their 2022 EIS for an EfW incinerator, the company Veolia used the NIMBY argument specifically to dismiss local residents and trivialise their concerns.

This is ludicrous. As Nan Nicholson wrote in a recent NGT, of course we are NIMBYs. We all care for and treasure our own backyards, but we are campaigning for EfW incinerators to be banned everywhere.

Another comment from Dr Orellana was that the term 'circular economy' has been co-opted and abused. This is evidenced by the NSW Government legitimising EfW incineration as an inclusion in a circular economy because it satisfies a 'reuse' criteria as the waste material is used to produce energy. This ignores the fact that incinerators emit dangerous toxics, produce energy very inefficiently and are even more climate-unfriendly than a coal-fired power station.

As he said in his EoMS: "Waste incineration is the end of the line for fossil fuels. It reflects a linear process that is incompatible with a circular economy. Incineration imposes heavy health and other costs on local communities, and it is a significant source of greenhouse gases. It has been reported that even the most modern incinerators produce dioxins, furans, and toxic ash."

Toxics and human rights were Dr Orellana's focus, and it was made clear from everyone's presentations that our human rights have been infringed upon by a lack of government transparency at all levels, eroding democratic process and potentially exposing us to substances that leave a toxic legacy that cannot be rectified.

You can find Dr Orellana's September 8th press release on RARVI's website: <http://norichmondvalleyincinerator.org> under our 'news' tab. Within the press release there is a link to his longer, End of Mission Statement. He also delivered a report to the Federal Government, and a full report of his visit to Australia will be presented to the UN Human Rights Council in September 2024.

Open Learning classes



Nimbin Open Learning Term 4 will commence on Wednesday 18th October.

We are still finalising our timetable but we have confirmed a Life Drawing class with Lisa and Creative Writing with Christine.

Enrolments open on Wednesday 11th and Thursday 12th October, from 10am to 3pm, at the Nimbin Community Centre.

For more information, see our facebook page at Nimbin Open Learning or call 6689-1477.

The sound of warm Spring nights

by Scott O’Keeffe

As the nights have warmed, I’ve noticed a surge in the number of frogs (species and individuals) vocalising around my farm dam.

Over the past few years, the species dominating the frog chorus seem to be replaced by others in the following years. This year Tusked Frogs (*Adelotus brevis*) stand out.

They’ve always been around, but their calls were, until this season, usually hard to distinguish from the cacophony created by the three other species commonly found in our dam.

Having so many Tusked Frogs in the dam is encouraging since agriculture is probably a major factor in the decline of this now Near Threatened species.

Tusked Frogs are found from Northern Queensland to central New South Wales.

They are fairly small, with females growing to 4cm and males reaching 5cm.

Their upper parts are ridged or bumpy, brown or olive coloured, with irregular dark mottling. Their undersides are marbled gray and white with colourful red patches on the hind legs and groin.

Their common name comes from the unique bony tusks on the lower jaws of males. These can only be seen when they open their mouths, which they do when sparring.

Wet forests, woodlands and grasslands from coastal to highland areas are the historical habitat of this species but they are also found in wet ditches, farm dams and similar moist environments.

Tusked Frogs breed in early summer. The males call from nest sites hidden in vegetation and protected from sunlight.

The calls are two notes, slurred together. Until you

are familiar with their “tok-tok” calls, they can be hard to distinguish from the calls of co-occurring Marsh Frogs (*Limnodynastes peronii*).

Tusked Frogs have declined in many upland areas where they seem to be adversely affected by chytrid fungus.

Since they also remain common in many highly altered landscapes, where chytrid fungus occurs, Tusked Frogs are a potentially good species for investigation by citizen scientists.

Observations of these frogs and the environments where they occur are valuable pieces of data. You don’t need to be an expert in frog identification, you only need to hear them and record their calls to make a contribution. If you see them, that’s a bonus!

The FrogID app is a project of The Australian Museum and other natural sciences agencies. It allows citizen

scientists to use mobile phones and tablets to record frog calls along with their locations and habitat data.

Observers can use the references and sound library in the app to make their own identifications, or they can leave the ID work to the experts that review all submissions. They respond promptly to confirm ID’s observers make, or to give correct ID’s on unknowns.

The feedback you get from the experts will help you to distinguish between the frog species you have locally. Expect to discover something new.

Alternatively, if you submit your observations, photos and recordings using the iNaturalist platform you can also hook up with other people interested in frogs. You’ll undoubtedly find some that live in your district.

Frog watching anyone? You can download FrogID from



the Australian Museum website. In five minutes, you’ll be a herpetologist.

Male Tusked Frogs have unique bony tusks protruding from their bottom jaw

Science by the people

by Scott O’Keeffe

It’s never been just wealthy and educated people who have practiced science.

Farmers, village priests, artists and many others have always made records of natural phenomena out of curiosity or to record information of practical value.

Historically, for amateurs, this was likely a solitary activity. Now and then someone from outside of academia would discover something astounding or produce a body of work that would grab everyone’s attention.

My favorite example of this, and the one that really got me interested in citizen science, is the first collection of botanically accurate paintings of all Australian Eucalyptus species, by Stan Kelly, a locomotive engine driver whose work took him all over Australia.

Published in 1969, he said of his work, “If it prevents destruction or inspires the planting of a single tree, then its purpose will have been fulfilled.”

As interest in the Australian environment has grown and leisure time has increased, the number of talented naturalists of all sorts and making field observations, has exploded. Now it is possible with ubiquitous social media to collate this impressive ‘amateur’ data and

make use of it. When combined with the structured research of professional scientists and some oversight, this becomes a huge resource for education, conservation and land management.

For its potential to be realised this collaboration needs a reliable, dedicated approach to ensure systematic data collection, quality and public access. The Australian Citizen Science Association (ACSA) has been established to take on this role. ACSA ensures data about the natural environment is collected and verified using scientific methods. ACSA’s guiding principle is that science and discovery must be publicly available: Science by the people!

Those who use social media to explore nature can be directly involved in science, not just by contributing data, but by refining their skills when they make use of willing and available experts.

Citizen science using social media gives us access to much more information than traditional identification guides that are usually expensive, and for some groups of organisms, woefully incomplete.

Some citizen science platforms, such as iNaturalist, encourage the formation of specialist groups based on classes of organisms (for example butterflies, mushrooms),

or geographic regions. Want to hook up with dragonfly enthusiasts in your area? It’s easily done with iNaturalist.

There are apps that allow citizen scientists to contribute all kinds of data including simple sightings, detailed observations, photos, video and sound. Some, like iNaturalist, accept data about all types of organism. Others are designed to accept data about specific classes of organisms such as frogs (FrogID) or natural phenomena, such as clouds (CloudSpotter).

Since this is ‘citizen’ science, the apps must necessarily allow anyone to freely view the data that everyone contributes. Some platforms allow access directly via the data collection app. Observations collected on some other platforms are viewed using the internet to access the database that stores the information.

These usually allow more filtering and analysis of entries. *The Atlas of Living Australia* (ALA) for example, allows you to interactively view mapped data and drill down to individual records.

ACSA encourages scientists whose research draws upon citizen science, to publish their results in journals that do not lock their contents up behind a paywall.

The collaboration between dedicated scientists and talented



A mystery mushroom growing at my place. Can you identify it for me? Below: A rare Kelvin-Helmholtz cloud formation

‘amateurs’ can generate discoveries rapidly. Don’t underestimate their importance!

For example, a large study incorporating 8800 farm dams across Australia has recently found that farm dams are important habitat, or refuges, for 107 species of frogs. That’s 40% of the total number of Australian species. Many of these are common species.

However, the study also found that many threatened frog species also rely on farm dams. Of the 100,000 observations used in the analysis for this study, 86% came from citizen scientists using the FrogID app developed by the Australian Museum.

This is the largest set of data ever collected for frogs. Without this collective effort, a study covering the greater part of Australia would not have been possible.



So, I have a weird mushroom at my place that I can’t identify using any of my field guides. I’ve labelled it “Mystery mushroom” in this article. See if you can work out for me what species this is. iNaturalist might be of some use. If you work it out, please send me an email at: malurus@posteo.net

Don’t forget to read the article on the Tusked Frog on this page; you can listen to its vocals on the free FrogID app.

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Nimbin Garden Club notes

by Kerry Hagan

In September we visited Chris and Christine's garden at Barkers Vale.

Eight years ago, this property was a very neglected and overgrown former cattle farm.

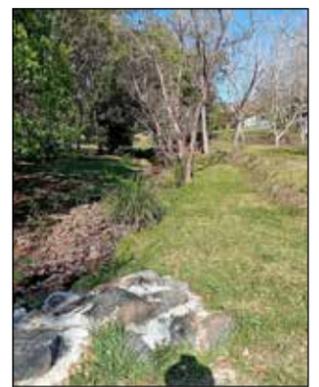
It's really hard to imagine that now, as the property we visited is beautifully maintained and presented.

It boasts some 200 pecan trees, about the same number of olives and various other fruit trees.

Herb gardens and a rainforest surround two old railway carriages that have been gorgeously restored for guest accommodation, and it was in this area that we gathered for afternoon tea.

We also held our Annual General Meeting there.

It was a wonderful afternoon. Thanks Chris and



Christine.

Our October garden is at Saskia's in Paradise Valley, 519 Crofton Road, on Saturday 21st October, 2 to 4pm.

It is recommended for this visit that we car-pool as a 4-wheel drive vehicle is necessary.

As usual, please bring a cup, a chair and a plate to share.

Guests are always welcome.

Out Back O' Bourke

View from the loo

by Stuart McConville



A noise from the scrub in the pre-dawn gloaming alerts me to something large nearby.

It is approaching rapidly, leaf litter crunches as trotters patter a path straight for the European Carp my mate left hanging on a branch nearby.

My flimsy half-pitched tent is directly in its path.

I sit up and hiss like a snake and the pig grunts and heads off startled in another direction. Catastrophe averted.

We are on the Darling River out back of Bourke, on our way home from a tour that has taken in most of the large inland waterways and lakes to our west. A last-ditch chance to see water in these famous rivers as they start to dry out in anticipation of the long dry to come. El Nino is back again, and like the child it is named after, has no concern for our livelihoods or our agricultural economies.

The past three years have seen fantastic growth in agriculture sectors with more efficient farming practices boasting higher returns. The ecological price however, is one that does not appear in the big Ag businesses spreadsheets' bottom line. Increased yields with ready water mean better breeding conditions for feral animals, and we were not prepared for the vast numbers of pigs and goats and carp we saw almost everywhere we camped.

Under the Coolabahs and River Red Gums, the soil was chewed back to the quick by goats and torn to shreds by pigs searching for roots. The natural cycle of boom and bust will ensure that many of them die in the coming drought, however the natural vegetation along the waterways will never be able to recover completely.

We also saw many Emu dads with a great cluster of up to 10 chicks in tow and plenty of Red Kangaroos. There is no doubt these animals do well in good years too and since the "plumbing" of the Great Artesian Basin have had more water than pre-settlement populations ever had.

Numbers are up, but farmers are now commonly using exclusion fences which are high enough to prevent emus and kangaroos from accessing water on stations with bores for livestock. Although these fences prevent ferals from getting to water and feed, it has been known for carcasses of natives to be "piled up" against the fence as a result of loss of access to water.

Baiting for "wild dogs" is killing Dingoes indiscriminately and we are losing one of our great outback assets in controlling goats and pigs. We now know that the myth of the Dingo being bred out is just that. There are plenty of pure Dingoes left and we should be protecting them against poorly-targeted eradication attempts.

More research into hormone-based control needs to happen so that the excruciating death of poisoned feral animals no longer occurs. We heard the screaming of a pig dying all night long, presumably after consuming 1080 bait.

Stuart McConville runs Pooh Solutions, compost toilets and waste water services: www.poohsolutions.com.au Phone 0427-897-496

Out and about with Nimbin Bushwalkers



by Peter Moyle
Nimbin Bushwalkers Club

With warmer weather, especially the nights, the Nimbin Bushwalkers have been out and about.

Another weekend away saw us head to Lake Arragan in the Yuraygir National Park for a couple of days. There are plenty of campsites, mostly spread out for privacy, and after many visits we know the best ones and try to pick the sheltered and shady spots.

The main activity was the Saturday walk from Angowrie back to camp, a walk of 11km. We were joined by the day walkers and with blue skies and little wind, this was a joy to take.

Travelling along white sandy beaches, rocky headlands, and sheltered paperbark trails behind the sandhills saw us complete the walk in five hours with many stops along the way to take in the whales, still moving south, as well as the gorgeous spring flowers in full bloom.

As usual a very relaxing long lunch at Shelley Headland camp saw us take in and appreciate our fabulous coastline. For those without the travel logistics,

a good way to do this walk is starting at either end and walking to Shelly Headland and return, about 10km.

Our second walk of the month was a day trip to Springbrook National Park, and our leader Anne selected a wonderful outing on parts of the Warrie Circuit and the Twin Falls walk. All up, 15 hikers made the day trip; a bit of travel but well worth the 90-minute drive.

A short heavy shower as we started did not deter, and the rain bought out the freshness in colour of the abundant flora as well as the accompanying aroma. Many waterfalls on the route, and still plenty of water to help us appreciate this gem.

Walks programme

Sunday 15th October
Terania Creek and Protesters Falls, Nightcap National Park
Leader: Ron Smith 0497-792-789

Contact for more info and to register.
Grade: 4. In this World Heritage-listed area we will take the formed track to Protesters Falls through magnificent rainforest to a spectacular waterfall. 1.5km and about 1.5 hours to take

in this great spot. We will then cross the creek for an off-track walk again through pristine rainforest hopefully to another creek. There will be some slippery rocks and rough walking particularly after rain.

Meet: 9am at The Channon Tavern for car-pooling, or 9.30am at the picnic area at the end of Terania Creek Road, 15km from The Channon. Bring the usual, hat, drinking water, lunch, and good bush walking boots/shoes.

Sunday 29th October

Brunswick Heads on the river
Leader: Peter Moyle 0412-656-498

Contact for more info and to register.

A paddle on the river after many requests. The tides are good so we will paddle up Simpsons Creek with helping tides both ways, so not too strenuous. Bring your canoe, kayak, or paddle board. This is a beautiful waterway and a must do for anyone keen on paddling.
Meet: at the end of Mona Lane in the heart of Bruns on the main river. Very easy access before heading south through town and towards Tyagarah, 8.45am for a 9am start. Bring good sun protection and the usual lunch and water.

Ode to Minka

by Suzy Maloney, BEqSc

For sixteen years I had the good fortune to walk beside a beautiful soul called Minka. She came into my life as a dressage horse, then later was a fabulous trail horse and finally her role was as guardian and carer of everyone in her life.

In honour of this amazing horse, I would like to share some stories which demonstrate the depth of not only her, but all horses.

At the time the herd consisted of Minka, a beautiful thoroughbred mare in her prime; Darcy, a stunning stockhorse/arab who had been with us many years as Minka's partner and was aging at this point; and Rumpy, a young brumby who had been a stallion in the wild for the first five years of his life and who was now Minka's number one.

I was introducing a new horse, Soray, a gorgeous young bay thoroughbred gelding, to the paddock.

Despite my best efforts to do a slow introduction, Soray broke out of the enclosure I put him in, resulting in him being in the main paddock with the others. Rumpy still exhibited a lot of stallion behaviours and pursued Soray until he stood still, whereupon Rumpy started

biting at his legs and flanks, forcing Soray to submit completely. It was quite confronting to see such aggressive behaviour, but I knew it had to be sorted out for them all to live together peacefully.

Meanwhile Minka had left Rumpy as his companion and took up post around Darcy. She put her body between him and Soray constantly, and maintained this for weeks, never leaving his side, until she was sure Soray would not harm Darcy, at which point she returned to hanging out with Rumpy.

Everything seemed settled, so shortly after I went out for a trail ride on Rumpy. The house was situated at the top of a long driveway with an open paddock all the way from the bottom gate to the house. This meant that when I went out riding, I would come in through the bottom gate and ride up to the house to untack, going through the paddock.

I'd been doing this for years and there was never an issue to ride through the paddock where the herd lived. Until this day.

We came through the gate and I started riding up the driveway when suddenly Minka galloped straight at me with that fierce mare look on her face. I had



no time to dismount or do anything, I remember thinking, "This is it; I'm gone." Then at the last minute she wheeled to a stop and started circling around me, presenting her hindquarters to Soray if he even looked my way.

I started breathing again then continued riding up the driveway with Minka keeping pace with us. She trotted circles around us the whole way up to the house, where she then considered I was safe and returned to the herd. Never in my life have I received such an escort. Her protective instinct and what she would do to protect her loved ones blew my mind, and I felt so honoured that she included me on that list.

Several years went by and my mother passed away. After three weeks at her death bed, then the funeral, I returned home. While it was a great blessing to have been there with my mother at this time, the grief I experienced was unlike anything I'd felt before.

I got home from the airport and went straight

into the horse paddock. I walked to the horses' favourite camp tree and sat below it. And sobbed.

Minka came over and placed her face on my cheek and held it there. Then Soray came over and put his face against my other cheek. I sat there sobbing until I was dry, with a horse touching each side of my face.

That these two could hold this space for me and be so present and caring still blows my mind today. I've never looked at horses the same way again.

The things I have experienced with Minka over the years have shown me how deeply horses feel emotions, and how caring they can be of others. She opened my eyes to the depth of a horse's heart and how sensitive and loving they really are.

Thank you Minka.

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Paralysis ticks

by Les Rees

The life cycle of the paralysis tick consists of four stages consisting of the egg, larva, nymph and the adult.

The last three stages require the blood from three separate hosts and all three stages can be harmful to our animals.

I've been finding a lot of ticks on our dogs recently which is a timely reminder that the tick season is prominent at the moment.

A lot of people seem unaware that the black peppercorn-sized ticks they are finding on their dogs and cats at the moment are not grass ticks; according to veterinary information, they are paralysis ticks, in the nymph stage of their life cycle.

Ticks lay up to 3,000 eggs and when the larvae have hatched, they climb up onto nearby plants ready to drop onto their first hosts. After engorging their blood, they fall to the ground, moult and develop into the nymph stage.

They then repeat stage one, climbing onto the nearby vegetation and finding a second host, engorging another fill of blood, and after moulting become adult ticks.

After getting her fill of blood, the female tick can become more than 100 times her original weight when she drops off her host and lays her eggs, beginning the whole process again.

When you look at the amount of eggs laid by each individual female

tick, it is hardly surprising that their density of numbers can be so high and the consequences of their bites can be devastating for our animals.

The saliva of a paralysis tick contains a particularly nasty toxin which is both neurotoxic and cardiotoxic, meaning that it affects the nervous system and heart muscle and can paralyse and kill a horse.

They can be found around bushy vegetation and paddocks that are used as wildlife corridors in areas where there's shelter from direct sunlight. When they need to feed, they climb the taller plants and structures and drop down onto passing animals.

They stay attached whilst engorging blood from their hosts from 1-7 days, during which the toxin spreads, with clinical signs appearing around the third day, and toxicity peaking around the fifth day.

The symptoms of tick toxicity include lethargy, falling or lying down, off feed, peripheral nerve dysfunction, lameness, wobbliness in the hind legs or all the legs, reduced muscle tone, difficulty eating, impaired respiratory function, heart and muscle dysfunction, debility and sweating.

If any of these symptoms are present, you need to act immediately. If you find ticks, remove them and keep the horse in a cool stable away from direct sunlight since the toxins are more readily spread around the body during movement and hot weather.

It's important to do a daily search for



ticks, which are found mostly on the upper body, around the head including the lips, chin, around the eyes and ears, back of the head, neck, in between and around the front and back legs.

Just feel around for a lump and if it's a tick, remove it carefully so that the head is extracted along with the body.

Some people turn the tick around 180 degrees to ensure the entire tick is removed. There are several methods, but I've read that veterinary advice is not to use topical sprays because they tend to promote further production of toxins when the tick is dying!

We tend to keep our horses away from bushy areas and keep the paddocks mowed throughout the growing season to lessen tick burdens.

We also use an essential oil spray on our horses which helps to keep the ticks from biting them, along with herbal medication that assists the reactions of the body by boosting immune function.

As a result, we have very few problems with ticks.

Les Rees is an equine naturopath and sports therapist. Phone 0437-586-705.
www.horsetailherbs.com.au

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