



STEP Matters

Number 133, March 2006

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Michelle Leishman

Committee

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Diary Dates

21 March Talk on volcanoes in the Sydney Basin (see third column)

23 April Bushwalk Deep Creek Reserve (see next column)

6 June Talk on Australian brush turkeys (see next page)

In addition, we are planning at least two further talks, and three walks to:

- Royal National Park (May)
- Cumberland State Forest (winter)
- La Perouse (spring)

As you can see we are deliberately targeting a few areas outside of Ku-ring-gai and surrounds for our walks this year.

Details will be provided in future newsletters, but please pencil the dates in to your diary.

Walk: Deep Creek Reserve, Narrabeen Lake

Date: Sunday 23 April
 Time: 1 pm
 Place: Grassed oval at end of the lane that turns off Wakehurst Parkway immediately on the east side of Deep Creek Bridge
 Contact: John Martyn (9449 7962)

Deep Creek is unusual in suburban Sydney in having a flood plain that retains its natural vegetation, never having been cleared for housing or agriculture. It features an unusual and interesting mix of wetland and rainforest species, and is a popular area with birdwatchers.

The walk is easy to moderate in grade and follows the flood plain upstream from tidal inlet to a small, rocky side valley with waterfalls.

Talk: Explosive Volcanoes and Diatremes in Japan, Kamchatka and the Sydney Basin

Date: Tuesday 21 March
 Time: 8 pm
 Place: St Andrews Church Hall (Vernon Street, South Turramurra)
 Contact: John Martyn (9449 7962)

Most of you will be aware of the ancient volcanic activity of the Sydney Basin through the special vegetation communities that the dykes, intrusions and diatremes support. This is strikingly different to the surrounding sandstone flora, and usually features some mesic or rainforest species such as cabbage tree palms not normally found on sandstone soils. Some of you will have seen such vegetation at West Head on last year's STEP spring bushwalk, and briefly examined the small outcrop of weathered dolerite intrusive in the nearby road cutting.

Our district is well endowed with diatremes: at Browns Field, in the Muogomarra area, and of course the Hornsby Diatreme in Old Mans Valley on the west side of Hornsby.

For our first talk this year, we are lucky to have Dr David Roots, to describe and illuminate the past violent volcanic events from our area by comparing them with examples from active volcanic terrains in East Asia that he has visited. David currently lectures in geology at UTS, and contributed the section on the Hornsby Diatreme in the *Berowra Valley Bushland Guide*.

STEP Inc

Community-based Environmental Conservation since 1978
 PO Box 697, Turramurra, NSW 2074

Talk: Australian Brush Turkeys, our Urban Wanderers

Date: Tuesday 6 June
Time: 8 pm
Place: St Andrews Church Hall
(Vernon Street, South Turramurra)
Contact: Michelle Leishman
(9489 8972)

In recent years brush turkeys have been showing up more and more in suburban bushland and even in back yards in Ku-ring-gai and adjoining areas. They belong to the family known as megapodes, which also includes the mallee fowl. They are large, conspicuous, mainly solitary birds. The male builds large mounds of decaying vegetation in which the eggs are incubated by the heat of decomposition. The favoured habitat is rainforest and adjoining eucalypt forest and woodland, but they are increasingly becoming familiar as urban wanderers.

Dr Ann Goeth from Macquarie University will present this talk.

Environmental Education

In September, STEP offered a grant of \$2,250 to primary schools in Ku-ring-gai to help them implement their School Environmental Management Plan (see *STEP Matters*, Issue 129). This plan is required by all state schools under the Environmental Education Policy and is the driver of environmental education.

The plans are based on three areas:

- curriculum (teaching environment through the Key Learning Areas);
- use of resources (such as water, power, paper); and
- management of the school grounds.

STEP offered the grant over three years for a proposal which would assist the school with either the management of the grounds or with the better use of resources.

St Ives Park Primary was the successful school with its *Environmental Awareness and Ecogarden Project*. The school has remnant bush and has formed a Bushcare group under guidance from Ku-ring-gai Council. STEP will meet with the school to advise and determine how the money will be spent.

This will be a really worthwhile project, as it will be encouraging children to appreciate and care for their local bushland and its wildlife.

Draft Plan of Management for Bushlands in Ku-ring-gai and Draft Biodiversity Strategy

STEP has made submissions on Ku-ring-gai Council's *Draft Plan of Management for Bushlands in Ku-ring-gai* and their *Draft Biodiversity Strategy* which have recently been out for comment.

It is worth noting that serious concerns were expressed about the *Draft Biodiversity Strategy* and a thorough revision was suggested. The preparation of the document appears to be very formulaic, there is some confusion of language, and there are some omissions, e.g. the role of Ku-ring-gai nursery to counter genetic erosion by producing local provenance stock and the threat posed by inappropriate fire regimes. It also omits listing some of the ecological communities present in Ku-ring-gai, thereby falling short of providing a strategy to protect these communities.

In general it was felt that the document does not do justice to the biodiversity in Ku-ring-gai, on which the community places high importance as expressed in the 2004 environmental survey and acknowledged in the document itself.

Australian Plant Society

The North Shore Group of the Australian Plant Society conducts walks and talks at the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Gardens on Tuesdays. Meet at the Visitor Centre at 10 am for a talk followed by a guided walk. The cost is \$4 per head and you are advised to wear suitable footwear and to bring a hat and water.

Contact: Bill (9498 6052), Bob (9417 5217), Margaret (9489 2960) or Julia (9498 4547)

March

- 14 Parts of plants — flowers/ inflorescences
- 21 Identifying plants by their fruits
- 28 Banksias (*Proteaceae*)

April

- 4 Parts of plants — identifying plants by stems and leaves

May

- 2 Geology of the Sydney Basin
- 9 Monocotyledons and dicotyledons
- 16 Plant pollinators
- 23 Ferns
- 29 Plant communities

June

- 6 Flannel flowers, mintbush, daisy and Goodenia families
- 13 Rainforests
- 20 Longer walk (bring lunch, return approx 2.30 pm)

July

- 25 Acacias (*Fabaceae/ Mimosaceae*)

August

- 1 Epacris and Woollysia (*Epacridaceae*)
- 8 The pea family (*Fabaceae*)
- 14 The Boronia family (*Rutaceae*)
- 21 Hakeas and grevilleas (*Proteaceae*)
- 30 Eucalypts (*Myrtaceae*)

September

- 5 Orchids (*Orchidaceae*)
- 12 Waratahs (*Proteaceae*)
- 19 Longer walk (bring lunch, return approx 2.30 pm)

October

- 17 Grass trees, Lomandras and Tetrathecas
- 24 Grasses (*Poaceae*)
- 31 Reeds, rushes and sedges

November

- 7 Bird walk (8.30 am start)
 - 14 Callistemons, Kunzeas, Melaleucas (*Myrtaceae*)
 - 20 Leptospermum, Baeckeas (*Myrtaceae*)
-

National Trust Heritage Festival

The National Trust is Australia's largest non-government conservation organisation. For 60 years the National Trust has worked with the community to safeguard and conserve our heritage and environment, built, natural and cultural.

The following events are being held in Ku-ring-gai as part of this years festival.

For further information contact Janine Kitson (9498 2402, janine_kitson@tpg.com.au)

Saturday 1 April

Bushwalk to Gordon Creek Timber Bridge (9498 7527)

Meet at the end of Barrie Street, East Killara to start at 10 am and return at 11.30 am

Gordon Creek Timber Bridge is a critical link in the walking track system through Middle Harbour. The heritage timber bridge faces some maintenance challenges. National Parks have appointed an engineer to carry out an assessment on the condition of the bridge and the cost of rehabilitation. Hopefully this assessment will be completed in the next few weeks.

Sunday 2 April

Railway station tour: Lindfield, Gordon, Wahroonga (9498 2402)

Monday 3 April

Ku-ring-gai's industry (9499 4568)
The industry of Ku-ring-gai – house and garden (9498 1807)

Saturday 8 April and Sunday 9 April

Eryldene historic house and garden (9498 2271)

Sunday 9 April

The industrialist's granddaughter who loved her arts and crafts home (9498 3754)

Sunday 9 April

Timbergetting: Ku-ring-gai's first industry – heritage bus tour and bushwalk (9489 5794)

Departs Tulkiyan, 707 Pacific Highway, Gordon at 10 am, 12 noon and 2 pm, cost \$3

Two hour bus tour and bushwalk to illustrate Ku-ring-gai's first industry. Walk through the Blue Gum High Forest at St Ives that is today's last link to the timbergetting industry. Learn of the challenges that remain to preserve the existence of this last vestige of magnificent Blue Gum High Forest.

Wear good walking shoes and bring a hat and water. Also bring a raincoat if rain is forecast.

Tuesday 11 April

Talk on promoting eco/heritage tourism (9498 1807)

Saturday 22 April

Heritage meeting on geraniums (9546 5555)

Other Events in Ku-ring-gai 25 to 26 March

Ku-ring-gai Garden Expo
St Ives Showground (organised by Rotary Club of Ku-ring-gai)

18 June

Festival on the Green
St Ives Village Green (organised by Ku-ring-gai Council)

Membership Renewals Due

If 'membership overdue' is written underneath your address at the bottom of page 4, your membership is due for renewal.

Please complete the form at the bottom of this page, indicate any changes needed to the address label, and mail the completed form and payment (by cheque made payable to STEP Inc) to:

The Secretary
Step Inc
PO Box 697
Turramurra, NSW 2074

You can also use the form to order any of our publications.

	Unit cost	Number	Cost (\$)
Membership (only complete if 05 is shown on address label on next page)			
Single (per financial year)	\$16		
Family (per financial year)	\$20		
Life	\$200		
Field Guide to the Bushland of the Upper Lane Cove Valley	\$30		
Maps of Walking Tracks (cost of maps to non-members is \$20)			
Lane Cove Valley	\$15		
Middle Harbour Valley. Sheets 1 and 2 Bungaroo and Roseville Bridge	\$15		
Middle Harbour Valley. Sheets 3 and 4 Northbridge and North Harbour	\$15		
Donation (donations of \$2 or more tax deductible)			
E-mail address		Total cost	



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