

NIMBIN ARTISTS GALLERY

OPEN DAILY
10am - 4 pm

49 Cullen St, Nimbin

CONTACT: PH 02 6689 1444
www.nimbinartistsgallery.org
nimbinartistsgallery@gmail.com

A journey of love

John Storey moved to Nimbin in 2019 and similar other creatives who live in this region, John's talents are many. His interest in art began in 1973 at Hornsby Tafe in 1973, where he studied drawing and painting. From there his passion extended to photography in small, medium and large formats, developing his work in his own darkroom.

The public at large were gifted his talents when he began a landscape and construction business in Sydney in 1975, from which he retired in 2019.

Somehow in his busy life, together with a partner, he specialised in creating solid timber artisan furniture between 1991 and 1993.

Then, beteen 2008 and 2016 he studied as a part-time art student, majoring in philosophy, at Sydney University.

During this journey, his love for painting and drawing have never left him, and the Nimbin Artists Gallery is privileged to be able to exhibit a small part of his collection of expressions of



nature as seen through his eyes.

His influences over time have come from Cezanne, Van Gogh, Monet, Matisse and Soutine. More recently he has moved closer to the feelings of abstraction in the landscape – Picasso, Braque, early Mondrian, Pollock and de Kooning have left their imprint on his art.

John said his exhibition this month at Nimbin Artists Gallery includes “some of more than one hundred plein air works (various French schools of art from the 19th century) that I produced, mostly in Centennial Park in Sydney.”



They consist of watercolour, gouache, charcoal, pastel and oil pastel on paper.

“My desire was to reproduce the fractal nature of the landscape and the repetitions of its pattern and form.

“But most important of all is my continual desire to render the living nature of light and find that mysterious moment when an image appears,” he said.

Last chance to see triple exhibition

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by Artis Tree

Serpentine Gallery's triple exhibition of Michelle Gilroy, Sharla La, and Art With Wings, closes on Friday 8th September.

It presents works of Michelle Gilroy who presents --an emotional response to habitat destruction through ornithological oil paintings, ink drawings, and wire-wool sculptures.

Her work is a progression from nature-loving exhibits to an environmentally conscious one. Amid a climate crisis, these works urge action. Facing escalating extreme weather events, it's time to heed the bird call.

In 'Don't Let them Tame You', Sharla La delves into human experiences emphasising cultural identity and ancestral narratives. She uses lace-infused printing as a textural element complementing expressionist figurative



Paintings left and above by Michelle Gilroy

paintings to explore gender, mental health, and emotional responses to culture.

Her collages embody visual and narrative self-portraiture as a means of consciousness raising. Sharla La's work invites viewers to engage, empathise, and co-create meaning through the raw essence of shared experiences.

Art With Wings is a collaborative exhibition curated by Gemma Hall



Painting by Nathan C

featuring 10 diverse artists united by a passion for artistry and expression.

The captivating artworks embody the spirit of freedom and transformation, echoing the essence of the Art with Wings community by celebrating the magic of flight and creativity.

From vivid paintings to intricate sculptures, these works highlight the intrinsic power of artistic collaboration, taking viewers on a visual journey through imagination and innovation.

Serpentine Gallery has moved to 3/104 Conway Street, near the Wyrallah Road/Ballina Road roundabout. Parking is available via the old Service NSW carpark in Ewing Street.

Contact: gallery@serpentinearts.org or phone 0492-964-819.

Serpentine Community Gallery acknowledges that we are located on the lands of the Bundjalung Nation and pays respect to all Aboriginal people past, present and emerging.

Call-out for Spring Arts exhibits

Artist registration forms are now available at Perceptio Bookshop for the annual Nimbin Spring Arts Exhibition.

A major show of artists' work for over 30 years, the exhibition opens at Nimbin School of Arts Hall and the Nimbin Artists Gallery on Saturday 23rd

September.

It will be open daily until Sunday 8th October. Entry is free but donations are always welcome.

Artists must submit their works on Wednesday 20th September, and while the foyer, auditorium, stage, backstage studio

and Artists Gallery are all available, artists are reminded that space is limited.

For further information, contact the Nimbin Artists Gallery on 6689-1577.

Photo: 'Echoes of an arid dawn' by Amanda Doran



Three showings at Blue Knob Hall Gallery



'Boat People' by Anthea Moffatt

'Pre-Loved, Re-Loved', the 'recycling' exhibition, is still on at Blue Knob Hall Gallery.

It has had a great response from the community and visitors alike, and we have seen quite a few works go and some new pieces coming in.

This exhibition was an opportunity for members who might be downsizing or divesting themselves of artwork, to sell and re-home once-loved, original artworks including paintings, ceramics, photography, prints and sculpture.

Artworks by local artists have appeared for re-sale and other pieces have come from different parts of Australia or overseas. Some purchases have stayed local and others have travelled on with visitors.

Come along and see if there is

anything you might like to 'Re-Love'.

Some artworks have been donated for fundraising, so we would like to thank our members and artists for supporting this exhibition and contributing to always needed funds for Blue Knob Hall Gallery, Cafe and Ceramic Studio.

'Poetry in Motion' is the next members/artists exhibition, with Bendee Productions and their exhibition, 'Throw a tree in ocean' in The Solo Space.

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

These two exhibitions will run concurrently, with an Opening Event on Sunday 24th September from 2.30pm to 4pm. Refreshments are provided.

The Vocal Minority choir will be



Ceramics by Dee

performing on the day. All are welcome to come along.

Blue Knob Writers Group

This group meets weekly at Blue Knob Cafe on Sundays. For more info regarding the Writers Group, contact Alex on 6689-7268 or Helen 0487-385-134.

Blue Knob Cafe

The cafe has an all-day breakfast menu, meals, specials, cake and coffee.

Monthly Sunday morning music is on-going. For more information regarding dates and who is playing check our Facebook page.

Celebration – A tribute to Woodenbong's Jim Grasby

Local Woodenbong artist Jim Grasby saw the need for this community to support local artists to support, encourage, and develop their talents, to hold exhibitions, markets and workshops and showcase the enormous amount of creative talent west of the range.

As a result, together with a few interested community members he formed the incorporated association known as the Woodenbong Arts Group (WAG).

Over the years, WAG has provided people living west of the range great opportunities to meet like-minded people and share their interest in the arts.

The group has welcomed members of the Bonalbo Artists Alliance (BAA), and together they have participated in the many exhibitions held at Kyogle's Roxy Gallery.

This year WAG and BAA are coming together to exhibit a new body of works in 'Celebration' to show their gratitude to Jim for the enormous amount of energy and enthusiasm he has imparted over the years to the arts in the community.

'Celebration – A tribute to Jim Grasby' is on show until Sunday 17th September, and includes two fantastic free events.

Author Gail Fay (aka Fay Mars) will launch *Kombi Kapers*, a fun interactive book for kids on Saturday 9th September at 11am.

Kombi Kapers is an adventure story based on a



'Sunflowers and Daisies' by John Reeve

talking Kombi van named Felicity. The book came about through Gail's chance encounter with a painter and illustrator Riki Mason, who had done a series of illustrations based on her honeymoon road trip from Sydney to Far North Queensland some 40 years ago.

Riki had an idea for a children's adventure book and had completed illustrations for it. With experience and knowledge of storytelling, theatrical experience, and a background in publishing and designing, Gail offered her assistance to Riki, resulting in this first series of *Kombi Kapers*.

At 1pm on Saturday 16th September, the gallery has first dibs of the screening of *Bohemian Kings X Swan Song*, a documentary filmed and produced by JayneeAM in the early 2000s.

JayneeAM is a



'Hoare Teapots' by Anna Jackowaik

multidisciplinary artist whose arts practice covers a lifetime with many achievements. She has lived through many artistic and subcultural revolutions in New Zealand since the 1960s, and then in Australia from 1980s.

Since moving to Woodenbong and the Kyogle area, she has featured in the first Kyogle Writers Festival as a street performer where she recited her recently recorded poetry soundscape *Drac is Back*, as well as other poems from her second book, to a live audience.

Bohemian Kings X Swan Song was edited by Andy Bambach of INYAFACE Productions in early 2023. Jaynee video-documented the last Kings Cross Arts Guild festival 2004 that featured underground musical and theatrical artists, many of whom have since died, with their final commentaries about the gentrification of the Cross are their swan song to

the Bohemian fringe known to Sydney's subculture up until the end of the 1990s.

Interest in exhibiting at the Roxy Gallery in 2024

Roxy Gallery is now accepting exhibition proposals for its 2024 exhibition program.

We welcome applications that display innovative approaches to contemporary arts from regional and local artists, designers, curators, community, and cultural groups. The gallery features a program of up to 10 exhibitions per year, four to six weeks in duration.

The Roxy Gallery aims to support established, emerging, and aspirational artists from Kyogle LGA and the wider region with an objective to connecting content which will inspire creativity in artists and audiences both local to the region and visitors.

Applications are assessed by a panel once a year for the program from February to November. Proposals should be submitted before the closing date: Tuesday 3rd October, 2023.

Applications and further information can be found on-line at the Roxy Gallery page on the Kyogle Council website: www.kyogle.nsw.gov.au/recreation-community/community-facilities/roxy-gallery

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

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Plant of the month



by Richard Burer

It's spring and it's Bottlebrush time! It's a favourite for me and also to the birds including honey eaters and insects that relish this shrub and sometimes large tree's nectar.

There are about 30 species all endemic to Australia. Pictured is a hybrid possibly Pink Alma or Candy Burst, which can be found in your native nurseries and are perfect for the smaller growing garden sizes we now find common in Nimbin.

We often feature Red Bottlebrush and White Bottlebrush in the *Nimbin GoodTimes*. They are hardy and are a mainstay in my commercial plantings, both very adaptable and cope with riparian zones and the sometimes in damp places.

Red Bottlebrush, believe it or not, can get enormous and specimens can be found for your viewing at Fawcetts Creek in Kyogle in town where they easily reach 20m and are probably 100 years old or more.

In Nimbin, White Bottlebrush is common on the wet flats but also hanging on fragile soils west of town, and in town the Red Bottlebrush holds the creeks together and slows the water down on its way to the Wilson River.

But back to the home garden, and the available varieties this spring from nurseries include smaller, compact hybrids with stunning flowers, great for a natural living hedge attracting birds and insects.

Callistemon from Greek kallistos = very beautiful

Richard Burer is a Nimbin-based natural area restoration contractor and consultant: richard.burer@gmail.com

After the flood: Nick and Andi

Interview by Yagia Gentle

Yagia: Can you tell me about what happened on 27th February last year?

Andi: I was painting out the back, it was the last room that we had worked on. We had renovated the whole house, and we just finished the last room. Nick said, "It's going to flood tonight." We live in a raised house, so we moved everything upstairs.

We had a knock on the door in the night. It was the SES asking, "Do you know it's going to flood? It'll be about the same as 2017." I thought that would be OK, we've been through floods before, so we took our cars up the hill.

We tried to get some sleep, but too much was going on. My sense of time that night was way out. We got up and just watched the water rising. When it got to the top step I thought, "I wonder if Fenn, our neighbour, knows?"

I called her and said, "Fenn, is there water coming inside your house?" she looked down from her bed and said, "It's under my bed. What do I do?" and started to panic. She was on her own, with her two cats.

From then we were constantly on the phone to SES and the police trying to get someone to rescue her. We found out later that she was on the phone to her dad for four hours as the water was rising, and she was standing on tables and chairs and getting her head closer and closer to the ceiling. Her dad thought she was going to die.

We got word at 7am that there was no help coming from emergency services. They told her she was on her own.

Fenn's autistic. That call was too much for her. She didn't know how to cope, and she was saying; "I'll just come out of my house and swim to your house". But what she couldn't grasp at the time was that the water was flowing so fast, and there was so much stuff in it, if she made it out of her door she would have died, she wouldn't have made it to our house, even though it's just next door.

In the 2017 flood the water was slow and calm, and the rain was kind of drizzly, but this time it was torrential. The river that was flowing in the street was intense. Really intense. Fenn did try to get out of her house, but she wasn't able to because the force of the water against the door was too much. So eventually our other neighbour knew someone who had a boat. After rescuing their own kids, they came back and got Fenn.

It was just insane, because it was the last minute that they could've been able to get her, as the water was about to go over the top of the doors and windows. If that had happened they wouldn't have been able to find where to get into the house. They had to smash the glass in the back door and then drag her, bleeding, over the broken glass. And while they were dragging her out, their boat almost capsised.

For several hours our entire focus was what's going on next door. Trying to find somebody to get her help, talking to her to try and trying to keep her calm. Just as they pulled her out, our smoke alarm went off. The gas pipe had snapped and gas entered our entire house. I didn't realise, that as I was leaning out the window trying to direct the boat, I was leaning over the gas leak. The exposure made me quite sick. I screamed at my family to go onto the veranda and wait for a boat to rescue us. It was a pretty traumatic experience. From the veranda we could see a house on fire. I started panicking.

When a boat finally came for us, we had to leave our pets. I was very confused. The emergency and the stress



of it all, plus the gas that I had been exposed to. I didn't have any kind of clarity. It was all very surreal to me, and having to leave the pets was just awful. But they were in their own survival mode.

The boat dropped us off at the Ballina Road bridge. From there, the kids got in a boat and we got a ride on a jet ski to a safe drop-off point. When we got there we already had some friends who had organised a place for us to go, which was just incredible, and our neighbour, Fenn, came with us. I felt really blessed that everybody was providing food and clothes and all the things that we needed. We hadn't slept all night, and were confused and exhausted.

Nick: The next day I borrowed a canoe to get the pets. I couldn't get into Fenn's to rescue her cats, but they survived. We belong to the Seventh Day Adventist church in Alstonville and they reached out to help us. When we settled down from the emergency we went into shock. We just went quiet, and ate and slept. Andi got herself together and thought about renting somewhere for a while. We found an old farmhouse we thought looked good, but when we got in there it wasn't great. Damp, mouldy, and a bare tin roof that was so loud when it rained. And it rained for six months after the flood.

The church gave us emergency money and food and bedding, and our house was insured, so we knew that we'd be OK in the long run. Many of the church members cooked for the flood refugees, and the church hall filled up with donations. They bought washing machines for the community to use, and even came into town to help with the clean-up. They organised themselves into teams for all the different tasks. Some took food and other items to places that were further out, like Wardell and Coraki, and others went out to help at the evacuation centres.

And then as time went on, the church identified some individuals needing help. They first focussed on teachers and students from the Blue Hills school in Goonellabah, and organised grants and ongoing support to those people, as well as following up with them after a time to see how things are going.

We've found in the community that there's people who don't know what to do, they're very confused. They either don't have money to do the work, or for those who have some money, they don't know where to start, or if it's worth the effort, when flooding could happen again. After the trauma and the clean-up, the uncertainty has sucked out their motivation.

We had insurance and renovation experience, and we refused to have our beautiful old timber lining boards and architraves ripped out by the insurance company, like what happened to so many affected houses, plus we have each

other to bounce off.

There was lots of stuff to organise. Centrelink, insurance, rent, school. After we cleaned up, and the adrenaline rush settled, it hit me. I still get emotional when I think of all our stuff in a wet pile on the side of the road. I know it seems silly, but I miss my big fish tank, and Andi and I still go to get something, and then remember that it was lost in the flood. In hindsight we should've saved certain things, it took a lot of time and effort to get any money from the insurance company, even for mattresses. When we got the rental we needed something to sleep on. And we needed that so the kids and us could all be in one place together.

Yagia: How has the flood experience affected you?

Nick: I initially adopted a philosophy that the flood cleaned out our lives for a fresh start. Before the flood my faith in Jesus was already growing as I was emerging from being a drug and alcohol addict. By the time the flood hit I had cemented Jesus as being the way to change my life, and become someone who serves others. I decided to look at the flood disaster as a way of service. I wanted to change my life.

I feel I have met someone that I thought, wow, this life is so much better with him, but I've still got all this stuff, and the message of Jesus is to serve others, not to serve myself. So I looked at it as, for a while I'm free from commitments, so now I can serve others. Since then we've both got more involved in our church. We both have ministries and run groups. So I got a lot of comfort and help from my faith, although I'm still up and down, I'm still a bit traumatised.

Andi: I'm glad the church gave us roles that we could go and help others. That helped me to focus outside of my own predicament. I'm the health ministry's team leader now, so I help run programs that help people with addictions, or smoking, or mental health issues, and that's giving me this greater sense of purpose in life.

You know, I float around what is my purpose. What's life all about, why are we even here? And I think it wasn't necessarily because the flood happened. I think it was because I was a bit traumatised, and I didn't know what to do. When I was offered these positions to help people, I just went, "Yep, I'll do it," because I just didn't know what else to do.

I couldn't figure out how to put the steps together to see where I wanted my life to go. Saying 'yes' to things has made my faith grow, because I can see now that I have a purpose, and that life isn't just about me. If life is just about me, what's the point?

Yagia: Any closing comments?

Nick: I love the community spirit that's been around. Initially there was a lot of mismanagement from government and insurance companies. I feel when a disaster happens you get the good and the bad. Luckily our house wasn't too structurally damaged, it was more just the stuff inside our house that was destroyed.

Andi: Nick's been working at half his pay rate to help people get back into their house, and I've been helping people through the church. Yeah, we've kept ourselves really busy, and it's helped us process the grief and loss. Now when I recall something lost in the flood, I have to have a moment of grief for it. It's still putting one foot in front of the other, but that's the process for moving forward.

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Byron Writers Festival: readers rejoice!

by Craig Nelson

Be wary of writers' festivals. They flow with ideas, and ideas are dangerous.

Byron Writers Festival had more than 100 writers and thousands of people attend 80 sessions over three days at Bangalow Showground.

There were Australian and international speakers, covering fiction, memoir, crime, environment, society, politics, poetry, art comedy and music. Enough for any inquisitive mind.

I went on Saturday and learnt and unlearnt much. With so many sessions, which do you pick? I was lucky.

Anna Funder talking about her latest book *Wifedom*. It's about Eric Blair's, aka George Orwell's, wife Eileen O'Shaughnessy, who is virtually anonymous in all the male-written biographies of her husband.

Interesting how she wrote a schoolgirl essay about 1984 and thought of writing about animals on the farm when they were living afar from idyllic rural existence. Then there's their involvement in



Photo: Kate Holmes

the Spanish civil war. Guess who was more effective?

A highlight speaker is a doyen of Australian history, Henry Reynolds. His early days in academe were at odds with white custodians of 'Australian' history. They scoffed at his ideas of writing from the other side of the frontier.

Twenty books later, he is not only an eminent historian, but a significant player in history, through his friendship and support for Eddie Mabo in a High Court decision that over turned the notion of terra nullius. As it happened, Henry and his wife were

good mates with Eddie and his family.

Henry had the uncomfortable task of telling Eddie that his ancestral land was in fact 'crown land'. Imagine being told your land wasn't yours.

A fortuitous meeting at an international conference with some North American indigenous land rights experts kick-started what we now know as the 'Mabo Case'. History is often a series of accidental events.

Aboriginal educator Debra Dank talked about language. If English, as we know it, is only 800 years old, how does that relate to what is 15K

years of verifiable Aboriginal storytelling?

Her book *We Come With This Place* is part memoir, guide to bush, customs and what she describes as non-linear story telling as it exists in her community. She challenges the relevance of our education system for Aboriginal kids and it made me wonder about the benefits of an Aboriginal perspective for us all.

At this festival, whether you went for one day or three days, the hardest part was choosing from the many offerings. Whatever your choice, it's guaranteed to make you think.



Anna Funder Photo: Kurt Petersen



Debra Dank Photo: Kurt Petersen

As a venue, Bangalow Showgrounds is a winner. Spacious grounds that can hold four big marquees, with hundreds of attentive listeners in each. Other, small, intimate venues offered safe-space story telling.

A pavilion for book sales

and signings, plenty of food stalls, and a bar for thirsty discussion. Plenty of on-site parking and the most organised and efficient traffic management system anywhere.

I left full of ideas. A festival that lacked nothing but an apostrophe.

Heat: Jeff Goodell's dire warning on climate change

by Sue Stock

Jeff Goodell was one of the speakers at the August Byron Writers Festival. His new book is *Heat: Life and death on a scorched planet*.

Being long interested in environmental communication, I found his ideas of huge interest, particularly considering the last Northern Hemisphere summer with huge fires in Canada and Greece and record high temperatures in places such as Phoenix, Arizona at 50°C.

How hot can it get? Goodell condenses the multiple issues relating to extreme heat within an engaging and detailed structure, which always focuses on the impact on people and connects us with our humanity. "Wherever we may be headed, we are all on this journey together," he said.

How dangerous is heat? "Heat is a predatory force that can kill you like a bug zapper."

Jeff Goodell's *Heat* is a very readable book about one of the largest consequences of climate change, heat, and the consequences of the heat. In his book, he states:



Jeff Goodell in conversation with The Saturday Paper editor Eric Jensen Photo: Sue Stock

"When heat comes, it's invisible. It doesn't bend tree branches or blow hair across your face to let you know it's arrived. The ground doesn't shake. It just surrounds you and works on you in ways you can't anticipate or control. You sweat. Your heart races. You're thirsty. Your vision blurs. The sun feels like the barrel of a gun pointed at you. Plants look like they're crying. Birds vanish from the sky and take refuge in deep shade."

He avoids being highly scientific and data-driven, incorporating information into a book that is very

readable. He does a great job of mixing in stories of real people and real communities impacted by the rising temperatures, ranging from a family on the outskirts of Silicon Valley to the tragic story of illegal immigrant worker Sebastien Perez in Oregon.

He reminds us of the many different ways trees make a difference, while pointing out how hard it seems to be for our leaders to appreciate their value. Something we are all too aware of here in the Northern Rivers.

"I judge politicians on how well

they understand how fast our world is changing," he writes.

"In this book, my goal is to convince you to think about heat in a different way. The kind of heat I'm talking about here is not an incremental bump on the thermometer or the slow slide of spring into summer. It is heat as an active force, one that can bend railroad tracks and kill you before you even understand that your life is at risk."

He projects that extreme heat will be the defining feature of the next decade, as it drives climate migration, exposes social injustices, threatens lives, endangers crops and increases the risks of zoonotic diseases.

Diseases include those resulting from the increased range of Lyme-carrying ticks and deadly mosquitoes, causing Dengue fever. By 2080, he said, five billion people or 60% of the world's population may be at risk from dengue.

Furthermore, he highlights the potential dangers currently hiding in the Arctic permafrost, which may yet see the light of day in a warming world.

One very important part of his discussions at the Festival for me was his highlighting the important work of scientists like Dr Fredericke Otto. This work is vital in identifying whether climate events could have happened without climate change – and identification of responsibility is just the first step on the way to climate justice.

"To me, science is – or can be – a tool for justice," she [Otto] told me. "Extreme event attribution is the first science ever developed with the court in mind."

For example, he said that to directly attribute climate change as the cause of an event could eventually lead to the largest fossil fuel companies being sued for damages for the deaths, property destruction and economic losses from every climate-driven flood and heatwave – past, present, and future.

"To say that there are hundreds of billions of dollars at stake doesn't begin to describe it," he said.

This a must-read book, and it was great to hear him speak at a number of forums at Byron Writers Festival.



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Nimbin Garden Club notes

by Peter Brooker

Lae and Gerard's terrace gardens at Blue Springs

When Lae and Gerard first saw their 2.5 acre property on Blue Springs fifteen years ago it was little more than a rock strewn slope covered in Lantana, Molasses grass and Camphor with a shed at the bottom and magnificent views to Blue Knob from everywhere.

It seems they didn't see the rocky slope, they saw something else, something Henry David Thoreau put very well when he wrote, "it's the beauty within us that makes it possible for us to recognise the beauty around us. The question is not what you look at, but what you see."

What Lae and Gerard saw was a series of small terraces stepping their way up to their own small summit where Lae's studio now stands overlooking not only Blue Knob and

the valleys to the west but the large rock pool they built. It sits in a flat cleared area with table and chairs and is reminiscent of an infinity pool among the trees.

To reach the summit and the pool you can choose between a meandering path or the more direct route of stone steps. The terrace gardens aren't deep, but they are filled with all manner of shrubs including *Xanthorrhoea Australis* which we learnt thrive on molasses water.

All these gardens are held in place by hand-built rock walls. All the stones with the exception of the massive rocks at the top, were prised from the ground using a crowbar and moved, at first by hand and later by trolley, to their final location.

It was during Lae's five year stay in Greece that he learnt how to build dry stone walls. He watched the Albanians work and learnt the secret is to pick up a rock and place it straight away or it will take weeks to find a spot. There is

so much more to this garden but space has beaten us.

The project started when Lae was fifty and he had hoped to finish by retirement age. He has all but finished. There is a small wall near the rock pool that requires his skill, and he is two years late. Some of that delay can be laid at the feet of the flood that caused the wall next to the house to collapse and the removal of ten truckloads of soil. It was rebuilt, this time with drainage, omitted the first time as it was deemed unnecessary.

Times, as we are all aware, have changed. So, it has taken seventeen years, the first six years on weekends only, to reach an end.

Not bad I say. It took three Roman legions, approximately 15,600 young fit men, six years to complete Hadrian's Wall in AD 122 and the walls of Troy took from 3000 to 2600 BC to finish.

So, we as mere observers, should remember the words of Maya Angelou



when we are admiring these achievements: "We delight in the beauty of the butterfly but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty."

We have been fortunate indeed with the gardens this year and the next one at Chris and Christine's will be no exception. We hope to see

you at 1049 Williams Road Barkers Vale on Saturday 16th September at 2pm.

You have also been given a further month to finalise your Committee membership campaign as our AGM was delayed. Don't forget to bring a chair, a plate to share and your membership fees.

The Poo Poo Tree

View from the loo

by Stuart McConville



It's boulevard market evening in Sihanoukville, Cambodia. Miniature speakers eke out a scratchy recording advertising one of the myriad of food items sold from motorised carts.

Although I can't make head nor tail of it, I can appreciate that the vendors have gone to some effort to create a catchy jingle, as they always seem to end up as earworms. I check out the fare until I come across what looks like red crab's claws barbecued on sticks. Turns out they are Chook wings creatively sculptured but they still taste great.

I remember friends telling me about this place years ago. It was a haven of small bamboo huts along the coconut lined beach, reggae bars and great cheap hotels and restaurants. Now it is a world of high-rise casinos and hotels with a jagged skyline of unfinished apartment building. China was here, say the locals.

Pre-covid, Chinese money came to town investing hugely in building projects and displacing local fishermen and small tourism operators. They say Chinese-run casinos provide an offshore money laundering service to the wealthy Chinese that come here. The Cambodians took advantage of the flow of capital and using their own corrupt processes ripped off the Chinese and now the Chinese are done with investing, leaving half finished projects everywhere.

Nearly every tuk tuk driver, hotel manager, tour guide has nothing good to say about the Chinese here. Major allies to this virtual dictatorship, they need the deep ports and trade ties to build their economic empire. They whisper carefully about their Prime Minister, Hun Sen, who has been in power continuously since 1985, and has now handed power over to his son, Hun Manet. They are ashamed that their country has no real democracy. They know we laugh when we hear that Cambodia is having an election. The outcome is pre-determined. They whisper because the secret police are oppressive to any dissension.

Trying to find the old version of this place we head down the coast to Otres Beach, where we find BBQ'd langoustines and cold beer. Stupidly, I accept the ice in the beer and in the coming days live to regret it. Traveller's diarrhea (amoebic dysentery) is unfortunately quite common here. The bottomless tanks that pass for septic leach wastewater directly into the water table, whereupon a nearby spear pump or bore sucks it straight back out again for your ice-maker's pleasure.

I have found the following techniques are best way to deal with it.

- Get some Imodium to stop the diarrhea. It only treats the symptoms so do the following also
- Eat Bananas, rice and toast. Drink ginger tea. No alcohol.
- Find a cold BBQ grill and eat a large coal crushing it up finely before swallowing it with water. This will pass through your intestines physically scraping the bowel lining and dislodging the amoebas.
- Find a Poo Poo tree (alias Papaya) and snap off a green Papaya and lick up the white sap. It has a high concentration of enzymes that will eat away at the little amoebas causing the problem.
- The seeds of the ripe Papaya are also rich in enzymes and when crushed in your mouth prove sharp scrapers for your gut lining.

Superb forests and views



by Peter Moyle
Nimbin Bushwalkers Club

After a two-month break from camping the club had a weekend away in the Border Ranges NP.

We booked into Forest Tops camping area and a sheltered but sunny site made for a comfortable three days away.

The weather was mild and a nice campfire at night made reminiscing and relaxing ideal. Birds were active early, and time spent quietly observing had us spotting plenty.

As usual, camp cooking was a main activity in the afternoon and the highlight was Ken's damper, so easy, the taste superb. It came out almost the texture of sponge cake and was gone quickly. Ken will be re-doing next camp with insights as he prepares.

The main walk was on the Saturday and as usual we had a couple of day trippers join us. Brindle Creek was chosen, and this must be in the top couple of walks in the Northern Rivers.

Superb rainforest with beautiful creek views and then add the gorgeous waterfalls and you have an ideal way to spend a few hours wandering up the track for plenty of time to stop for the wow moments.

Still some tracks closed but with the lookouts open and Bald Mountain circuit available we had plenty to do.

I would highly recommend the Border Ranges, two great camp areas and the walks and views well worth the effort, even as a day visit.



Brindle Creek bridge

Walks programme

8th to 10th September – Lake Arragan in Yuraygir NP near Brooms Head

Leader: Peter Moyle 0412-656-498

Grade: 3-4. We will be walking parts of the Multi day coastal walk, especially the section from Angourie to Lake Arragan just reopened. We may also do some paddling if enough interest. Meet: at the Campground, contact Peter to register your interest. You can come for a day walk or you can camp for a night or two. Sites 25, 26 and 27 have been booked to share or book your own nearby. NSW Parks vehicle daily access fee applies, or yearly better value.

Walks: There will be a walk on the Saturday from 9am and the Sunday from 8am.

Camping: Peter Moyle is taking bookings; ring to reserve your stay.

Sunday 24th September – Springbrook National Park behind the Gold Coast

Leader: Anne Gilmore 0413-450-440, Anne is doing this as a day walk.

Grade: 3-4. Care needed at drop offs,



Ken's damper

can be slippery after rain and some rough tracks. Stunning views, clear running streams, spectacular waterfalls, some easy and some more difficult walking tracks, some steep grades, caution needed at lookouts.

Meet: at Yelgun rest area at 8am to carpool or along the way pickups. The drive is less than 90 minutes.

If you prefer you can stay a couple of days at The Settlement camping area. Camping fees of \$7.25 per person/night. Book at: <https://parks.des.qld.gov.au/parks/springbrook>

Consent matters

by Suzy Maloney, BEqSc

If we do something with a horse without their consent, what are we doing?

What does that mean? Is that then a master/slave relationship? This reality permeates the horse world.

I have worked in the equine industry most of my life and have been exposed to it often. Seeing the extreme behaviours horses exhibit to avoid doing something, or alternatively those that give up and shut down, has made me question what we are doing with horses in this world many times.

If a horse gives their consent, they are a willing partner in whatever we do together. I think horses can enjoy doing things with us, including riding. Sometimes this means slowing down and taking a bit longer with things.

I wonder if it's our human trait of wanting things to happen 'now' that has caused the problem in the first place. Horses are incredibly willing and have a huge number of yesses in them when asked the right way.

Probably even more important, I've come to accept when a horse says no. In my own life, I want to be able to say no to things I

don't want to do, and yet I have struggled with this for some time with horses.

I was raised in a horse world where if you were a good horseperson, the horse will do whatever you want. It's portrayed as a lacking or fault in the human's horsemanship skills if a horse doesn't do as you say.

Finding a middle road has worked for me, where I hear the horse's no and let them know I've heard it, then open a discussion on how it might be possible for this to be a yes.

Sometimes the no remains and I accept that, and other times the horse says yes when I explain in detail each element of what I'm asking.

Here's an example. If we want to mount a horse, we can hold the reins short so they don't move while we mount, this is standard practice. Or, we could have a long loose rein in the middle of an open space.

In the first scenario we can usually get on the horse immediately. In the second we may have to do a bit more.

First, we'd need to teach the horse park, standing still with them, not asking anything, until they relax and stand.

Then we would need to repeat this beside the mounting block. Then



Tara on Bob

with us standing on the mounting block. Then leaning over, putting a foot in the stirrup, playing with the saddle, picking up the reins, all the things we do before mounting, and waiting until the horses says yes to each element.

The final test is if we can mount without rein contact and the horse doesn't walk off. This can take time, but at the end your horse is relaxed and OK with you getting on.

If a horse says no to mounting, should we just go ahead and do it anyway? In my opinion this is not only wrong by the horse, but also potentially dangerous.

Practically everything we do with horses can be broken down into individual progressive steps. By taking the time to explain each step and waiting until the horse says yes to it, we end up with a very happy horse. But also, a horse who trusts us hugely.

In the horses' eyes we are extremely trustworthy as we never place them in a position where they have their fight, flight, or freeze mechanisms activated.

Instead of being slightly afraid or concerned when we start doing things with them, they are open, interested to try the next thing. There are no defence mechanisms. They are mentally and emotionally healthy.

And asking consent shows respect. People often say they want the horse to respect them. I can't really expect a horse to respect me if I'm not respecting them.

Consent is important, it changes everything about your relationship with your horse.

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Understanding the flight response

by Les Rees

Horses need to feel safe and like all animals it's part of all our genetic makeup.

The difference for our horses is that they are flight animals and they have a brain that has to make split second decisions concerning the need to flee from danger. This is often misunderstood in the belief that a horse has a behavioural problem.

I used to label it as the "lights on, nobody in syndrome" as I had a horse that had a number of dangerous issues concerning his flight response. Bucking and rearing was a common event when this beautiful boy first came to live with our family. Not good for creating confidence, when it happened on a daily basis, whilst riding him.

He was a 16.3hh thoroughbred, bred for the racing industry and was an extreme athlete. It didn't help that he was also shut down, a horse that had been misunderstood and treated badly who had switched off from any relationships with humans, whom he saw as the enemy.

The interesting point is that when he bucked me off, he seemed totally unaware of the event preceding it, genuinely seeming surprised that I was on the ground. After the first few times he stopped being afraid of coming back to me, as he feared the treatment that he'd received from previous owners, which made me all the more determined to get to the bottom of this horse's problems.

There can be many reasons why these



Charlie

reactions occur ranging from physical to psychological problems.

This isn't helped by the fact that the safety of the horse is controlled by the unconscious part of the brain working in tandem with the sympathetic nervous system that controls reactions to flight responses.

This would explain why my horse seemed perplexed by finding me on the ground when the last time he was aware of my presence I was sitting on his back.

One of the first things I did was to look into his history and discovered that he had been broken in by a notoriously cruel man. This would explain his fear of humans.

The next discovery was that he had been owned by a lady who had decided

that he was too dangerous to ride. As a result, he was left alone in a paddock for months, and eventually found with his leg trapped in a wire fence.

These two events of his short life had caused so much damage both physically and psychologically. The one thing I was sure of was that I wasn't going to give up on this poor beautiful boy.

It took a huge amount of time to gain his trust and I began with creating a regimented system where there were precise times when things would happen during each day.

Traumatised horses soon get used to the regime and can relate to knowing what to expect at any time during the day. This, in my view is when the horse can begin to build trust via positive expectations.

He was always treated with care, respect, love and understanding. I never once lost my temper with him! Gradually the layers were peeled away and I had myself one amazingly beautiful horse that went on to teach me so much not only about him but also the other horses that came to join our family.

I cannot express strongly enough the importance of fully understanding the flight response in horses. If you increase your awareness of the way in which your horse reacts to stressful situations, you can always discover gentle ways to introduce them to their fears in a safe environment to enable you to reinforce positive outcomes.

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

NATIVE BEE HOTELS WORKSHOP

A free workshop is being held on building native bee habitats.

We all know how important bees are to the environment and the pollination process, and this is the perfect opportunity to learn more and the get skills to build one in your own garden.

The workshop will have a presentation by Bee Abodes, and will focus on building healthy diverse habitats that include native plants for native bees and the various ways to make bee hotel habitats.

There will also be a presentation by Stingless Bee Buzz which will talk about native stingless bees, hives and provide some honey tasting.

Native plant packages that attract pollinators will be available from the nursery on the day.

At the same time, enjoy a walk through the bush tucker planted grounds of Ngulingah Nursery at Nimbin and partake in a free morning tea.

When: Saturday 16th September, 9am -noon

Where: Ngulingah Nursery, Nimbin Rocks, Morton Rd, Nimbin

Presenters: Barbara Mills and Crystal White

To register your interest and for catering purposes, please call Vanessa on 6689-7079.



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