

NIMBIN ARTISTS GALLERY
presents

NIMBIN ART FAIR

Sat 30th March - Sun 21st April
10AM to 5PM DAILY
NIMBIN SCHOOL OF ARTS

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Artful Duo connect with country

by Tonia Haynes

Amanda King and Janice Levy are our feature artists at the Nimbin Artists Gallery for the months of April and May.

Amanda and Janice have participated in many self-initiated artist field trips and together, to contemplate, experience and record observations and reflections of their chosen location.

They draw, take photographs, collect flotsam and journal whilst camped out on the land; a process that has a direct relationship to the distinctive style each artist has developed in their arts practice.

These connections with country have brought about a commitment to recognise all the forces of climate change, drought, fire and flood, and the associated loss of habitat and biodiversity.

Amanda King has worked with the photographed image for over three decades, predominately focusing on nature, its patterns, colours and diversity.

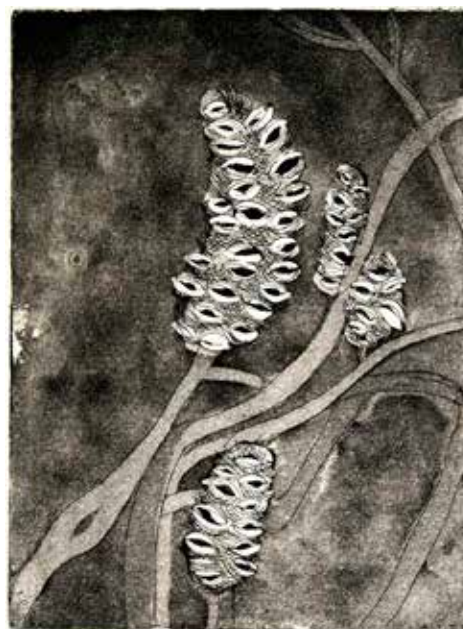
Her photographic style intersects natural history documentation and fine art.



Above: Amanda King 'Erasure 1'
Below: Jan Levy 'Banksia Yarning'

She works in specific ecological regions; her images capture the mood, aesthetic and relationships of hue and light in the chosen environment.

The underlying principles of her work are to show our natural world in its rare beauty and to inspire connection that in turn promotes conservation.



Amanda holds a degree in Audio Production and is currently completing post-graduate study in Digital Media at Southern Cross University.

Janice Levy's work is a reflective conversation with nature, including the way in which nature talks to us during observation of the dramatic changes brought about by flooding and bush fires, thunderous clouds, raging creeks and the verdure of the bush.

She creates work that is characteristic of her vision of the natural world.

Janice holds a Diploma of Visual Art and regularly participates in print workshops, including a six week residential at the Glasgow Print Studio in Scotland in 2023, learning experimental etching techniques.

And a gentle reminder that the Nimbin Art Fair is coming up – book it in for a visit. Doors open Saturday 30th March through to Sunday 21st April.

Artist applications close 11th March. Entry forms can be obtained at: www.nimbinartistsgallery.org or our fb page, or at the Gallery counter at 49 Cullen Street.

Art from women to witches



Esoteric artists. Above: LUXUL;
Left: Julia Chapple; Right: Michelle Nolte



Currently on show at Serpentine Gallery, Lismore is 'The Art of Women', a strong group show by 56 Northern Rivers artists.

The opening was great with a speech from Cr Elly Bird highlighting the many contributions women bring to the community, and a poem by the hilarious yet powerful Zoe Xanadu, one to watch out for. The exhibition runs until 15th March and can be viewed at the launch of the Lismore Women's Festival from 5 till 8pm on Thursday night 7th March. Viva La Femme.

Then with the Autumn Equinox fast approaching, it's a magical time to join us for an opportunity to delve into a culmination of Visual Arts and the Esoteric Arts with a group exhibition titled IAO – Esoteric Arts in Oz.

IAO is a collection of works by Australian artists from the Northern Rivers, Sydney, Queensland, and Victoria.

These Occult Artists will all be

exhibiting pieces related to their personal spiritual beliefs and path, using a variety of mediums including photography, sculpture, painting, audio and performing arts.

Local Curator, Lisa-Jane brings together these creative works that make up this unique collection that explore the practice of group Ceremony and Ritual, the Gods, Mysticism, Witchcraft, Thelema, Tantra, Kundalini, Paganism and the dream realms of the Esoteric practitioner's psyche.

This is a great opportunity for the exhibiting artists to share and audiences to view these often taboo and misunderstood artworks in the public sphere.

The opening night will be held at the tail-end of this year's Autumn Equinox on 22nd March, 6pm 'til 9pm. Audiences on opening night are in for a treat with a special dramatic Ritual performance by Babalon's Rising. IAO runs until 6th April.

There are two workshops during the IAO exhibition, a Teal Leaf Reading Workshop from 2pm 'til 5pm on 24th March, bookings essential via Eventbrite; and a Spell Crafting talk with Sigils from 11am on 30th March. Entry by donation.

Lisa-Jane has been facilitating occult events for over 20 years, initiated as a Kundalini Reiki Practitioner, Witch and Ceremonial Magician, she is always open to connect with new or experienced ritualist for public and private workings.

If you're wanting to connect, feel free to reach out via email: lisajane_mason@yahoo.com.au or message her on facebook. More info: www.witchesworkshop.com/coven-teachers

Reminder: Sketch Club is on each Saturday from 2pm 'til 5pm in the gallery. Free for members, \$10 for guests.

Find Serpentine at 3/104 Conway Street, Lismore. Opening hours: Mon-Fri 10am-4pm; 10am-2pm on Saturdays. gallery@serpentinearts.org

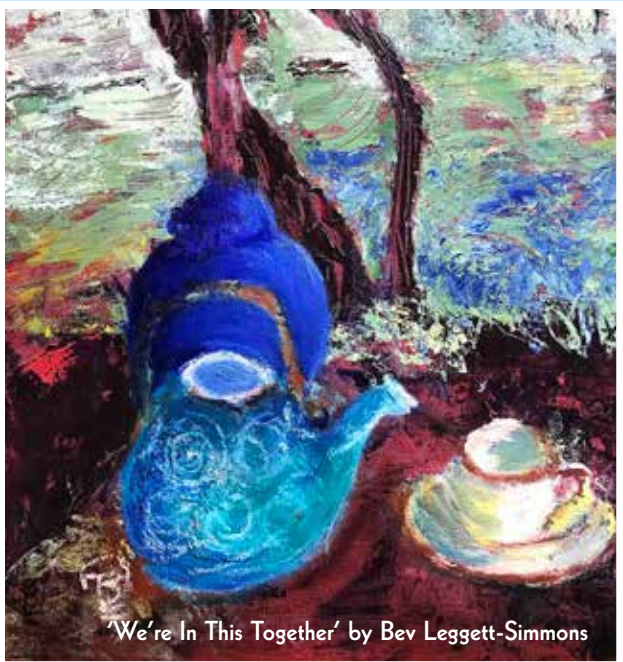
Art that comes from the heart



Spirit of Place by Heather Mary of 'Exotic Elegance'



'Child 0 Master 1' by Sarah-Jane



'We're In This Together' by Bev Leggett-Simmons

Blue Knob Hall Gallery's current members/artists exhibition, 'Art from the Heart', also features 'Spirits of Nature' by Lessi Rees in The Solo Space.

There was a well-attended opening event with music by Andy Walker to kick the afternoon off.

Lessi's Forest Collection invites viewers to join her on a journey into the forest, to soak in the magical effects of the light of the natural world.

With a wonderful and vibrant collection of artworks in 2D and 3D, and works by two new exhibitors, Sarah-Jane with her thought-provoking

installation and Heather Mary's beautiful hand-made jewellery, it is worth a visit before they finish on Saturday 16th March.

Future exhibitions coming to Blue Knob Hall Gallery include Bev Leggett-Simmons in The Solo Space with her exhibition 'A Landscape Medley', commencing Thursday 21st March; and 'From Earth We Come' showcasing works from gallery members and artists.

There will be an opening event for these two new shows on Sunday 24th March from 2.30pm until 4pm.

For enquiries please call 02-6689-7449, email: bkhgallery@inet.net.au or check Blue Knob Gallery, Cafe & Ceramic Studio Facebook page.

Blue Knob Cafe

The cafe re-opened on Thursday 8th February with local chef Mick Toner at the helm.

He has a new menu that has been enjoyed by all the patrons who have visited the Cafe over the last few weeks.

We look forward to seeing you on the veranda and enjoying great food and art at this community space.

Blue Knob Writers Group

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

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WARABA at Flourish Art Gallery

When Nathan Dawson met Sunny Willoughby, they were both teaching at Richmond River High School.

She passed by his Japanese class and spied some immaculately-rendered Simpsons characters drawn on a whiteboard.

She loved to draw, so she entered and introduced herself and asked him about the drawings. It turned out he was an artist. He showed her his 'real' work on his phone, and she was blown away.

A few years later they exhibited together at the Serpentine Gallery.

When Anne-Marie sold 'Sunny' her beautiful home in Georgica, it was not immediately obvious that they would be friends, but through successive volunteering stints on the polling booths at Nimbin Central School, they got to know each other better and discovered their mutual appreciation for making irreverent and playful art.

As a result of these two chance liaisons, Nathan, Anne-Marie Dineen and



Nathan Dawson



Sunny Willoughby



Anne-Marie Dineen

Sunny are exhibiting together during March at the wonderful Flourish Gallery in South Lismore, run by the equally wonderful Jeht Burgoyne.

Anne-Marie hails from the south of Ireland and is a WIRES carer and has spent the past few months nursing baby flying-foxes. Her path to ceramics has been recent and began with pottery classes at Blue Knob Gallery. Her style is influenced by her animal activism.

Nathan is an Indigenous Australian artist with ties to

the Gomeroi Nation around Gunnedah, which, he tells Sunny, has the smallest KFC in NSW.

Nathan is prolific and has had many exhibitions. His art positively pours from him. His work combines a gritty street feel with sensitive and sophisticated capturing of faces and bodies.

Sunny is a second-generation Aquarius baby. Her art is colourful and playful.

Inspired by Kurt Schwitters's collages, some of her works in this show

include the paper detritus collected on a recent holiday combined with her customary surrealist style.

The exhibition is called WARABA, which is the Gomeroi word for turtle, after a conversation between Nath and Sunny in which they discussed 'Cowabunga' as a title, before moving on to Ninja Turtles. Each artist has made a special effort to include a turtle.

WARABA is on show until the end of March. The gallery is at 15 Casino Street, South Lismore.

The Greater Glider faces extinction

by Mark Graham

The Greater Glider (GG) is the largest gliding marsupial on Earth. They are an absurdly cute and ridiculously cuddly fluffball of a thing about the size of a cat that inhabits eucalypt forests with lots of hollows in trees, and can glide up to 100m between the tall trees that it lives in and amongst.

Just like the Koala, Greater Gliders feed on eucalypt leaves, an extremely toxic diet, so they are pretty sedate and basically stoned while slowly digesting and processing these leaves for their nutritional needs.

Sadly, like so much of our mammalian wildlife since European invasion of Australia, GGs have declined. By many indications this decline is by about 80% in recent decades because of logging and land clearing causing the destruction and fragmentation of habitat and the fires of Black Spring and Summer where many animals were killed by fire and a massive amount of their habitat lost to fire.

In particular, as a result of these forest fires – the most extensive and extreme ever – millions of old growth and hollow-bearing trees burnt entirely or collapsed to the ground, leading to extensive local population extinctions of the GG.

This happened simply because GGs can't survive without numerous and abundant hollows which they need to shelter in and breed in their territories that can span up to a few hectares of forest. There are indications of family groups of GGs using 20 or more hollows within their territories.

Industrial logging of the forested habitats of GGs destroys their feeding trees and breeding dens and

makes fires much more severe and frequent; this is a one-two punch of population decline and extinction that is currently the greatest threat to the survival of a species that as recently as 20 to 30 years ago was literally the most common arboreal mammal in many forests.

In very recent times, the Greater Glider has become a bureaucratic and political hot potato in NSW, with the Forestry Corporation of NSW being widely exposed to be engaged in operations that effectively amount to taxpayer funded extinction logging.

This taxpayer loss-making Crown company has been shown to do scant surveys (broad area habitat searches) during the day when there is almost no chance of finding the gliders or identifying their den tree homes that by law must be protected by a 50m buffer from logging (a measure that is tragically demonstrably inadequate to prevent extinctions caused by this very logging).

It is a case of don't look and don't find, then prepare logging plans that ignore their habitat and then log them into extinction.

Forestry Corp was initially caught out killing Greater Gliders in Tallaganda State Forest in the Southern Highland forests of NSW, where independent experts such as Dr Kita Ashman were working on publicly funded conservation initiatives for the GG.

The heinous extinction-generating logging operations of Forestry Corp were audited by a brilliant alliance of the South East Forest Rescue (SEFR), WWF (who Dr Ashman works for) and Wilderness Australia, who found multiple den trees, documented and reported massive destruction of known GG habitat

(including den trees) and caused the EPA to inspect, find a dead GG in the logged area, issue a Stop Work Order to prevent Forestry killing more GGs and then extend this order multiple times before Forestry finally left Tallaganda (hopefully forever).

These kind of events, where community members find GGs and their den trees and seek 50m protection zones for these dens, have been repeated in Flar Rock State Forest on the South Coast and in the north of the state in Styx River and Wild Cattle Creek State Forests, and most recently in Clouds Creek State Forest.

At Clouds Creek, west of Dorrigo, Forestry Corp currently seeks to extinguish a known globally significant GG colony with 22 animals and two den trees found in four nights of survey of areas approved for logging (and mapped as being actively logged).

Community surveys also found threatened Koalas, Quolls, Glossy Black Cockatoos, Parma Wallabies, Stuttering Frogs, Green-thighed Frogs and Masked Owls. Unsurprisingly, Forestry Corp found nothing in these globally significant and truly spectacular tall eucalypt forests.

In these very forests at Clouds Creek (in compartments 48-55) a community-led blockade, involving yours truly with neighbours and friends, assembles each morning in the forest pre-dawn (some standing silently in GG and Koala heads) to peacefully and passively keep the loggers out.

This has worked successfully for 34 working days today (22nd February). This community movement for forest protection has resulted in the



declaration of the 'Clouds Creek Greater Glider sanctuary' and the establishment of the 'Glider Reviver' free café beside the Armidale Road at the entrance to the forests that the Government seeks to log and make extinct the GGs within.

These forests are all part of the Great Koala National Park that the ALP said they would make (as their main environmental commitment prior to election), but have done nothing so far but log the bejesus out of the best Koala and Greater Glider habitats in it.

The Greater Glider was regarded for most of my 47 years as a single species occupying the forested biome of Eastern Australia (a globally significant biodiversity hotspot, as well as a global deforestation hotspot).

As a result of recent detailed genetic and morphological work the GG was split into three species in 2020. Our local species is now regarded as the Southern Greater Glider. Getting things right to arrest the decline and to secure a future for the Greater Glider in our forests is not difficult – in Victoria, Greater Gliders were the "secret sauce" that stopped logging of their public native forests and this can be repeated in NSW.

Protecting GG habitat is the answer, ensuring that it remains connected as well as restoring connectivity between populations and restoring and recovering degraded habitats or those impacted by fire, logging and weeds. In doing this, there are generations of jobs for

displaced workers, literally swapping from forest destruction to forest protection and restoration is a key growth industry.

The key first step for the GGs is for there to be no clearing and fragmentation and no logging of GG habitat. Our government is giving our forests to the loss-making loggers to industrially log and collapse them under the catastrophic logging rules of the Coastal IFOA (literally an extinction manifesto), and in so doing is send our beloved GGs rapidly to their extinction.

The NSW and Commonwealth Governments need to live up to the words of Environment Ministers Sharpe and Plibersek respectively where they (currently) propagandise about wanting "no more extinctions"; they all need to have the resolve, decency and gumption to stop the logging of the public forest estate.

Anything less means that these Ministers, and PM Albo and Premier Minns above them preside over the extinction of our beloved Greater Gliders, and a host of other wildlife like Yellow-bellied Gliders and Koalas.

I invite all readers and all these politicians to come to Clouds Creek and to see these wonders in our forests and to help us protect and rebuild the Greater Glider populations there for the wellbeing of all. Stopping the logging of our public native forests is the only way of stopping the extinctions.

Last year us taxpayers lost about \$15 million extinguishing our forest biota with industrial logging of our native forests. That money would buy out a good chunk of the timber supply contracts that are causing the extinctions, and this money can be much better deployed in the public interest to stop the taxpayer-funded extinction logging operations of Forestry Corp once and for all.

Plastic is one of the big issues facing the planet

by Mark Pestell

The world knows, but some seemingly does not care, that plastics are one of the great scourges of the modern era.

A synthetic material created by human activity, plastics are considered a notable marker of the Anthropocene due to their obvious presence in the environment and long-term consequences, often lasting many thousands of years. Plastics impact the geology and destroy ecosystems.

Plastic production has sharply increased over the last 70 years. In 1950, the world produced just two million tonnes. It now produces over 450 million tonnes a year.

Plastic has added much value to our lives: it's cheap, versatile, and sterile material used in various applications, including construction, home appliances, medical instruments, and food packaging.

However, when plastic waste is mismanaged – not recycled, it becomes an environmental pollutant. NASA along with Greenpeace estimates over four million cubic tons of plastic enter our oceans yearly, affecting wildlife and ecosystems.

Addressing the challenges of plastic pollution requires a multi-faceted approach, including reducing plastic production, improving waste management systems, promoting recycling, and raising awareness about responsible consumption and disposal practices. Global co-operation and individual actions are essential to effectively tackle this environmental issue.

However, what is a global emergency is the concept of recycling plastics or the transformation of plastics. By leveraging the advantages and diverse applications of recycled plastics, industries and consumers

can contribute to a more sustainable and environmentally friendly approach to manufacturing and consumption.

Plastic recycling should be one of our government's main priorities. There is no excuse any more.

Save trees with recycled plastics

A global approach to recycling plastics would save the world's native forests from exploitation. The timber industry could not compete, the amount of timber cut would be at a minimum.

There are several compelling reasons why many environmentalists, scientists and conservationists advocate for the cessation or reduction of logging in forests: 1) biodiversity conservation; 2) climate change mitigation; 3) water cycle regulation; 4) soil conservation; 5) economic alternatives such as eco-tourism; 6) saving medicinal plants; 7) traditional indigenous values global ecosystem balance; 8) Recreational values are truly important considerations for the present and the future.

Recycled plastics offer several advantages and have a variety of uses, contributing to environmental sustainability and resource conservation.

Recycled plastic is durable and outlasts timber. It cannot be eaten by insects and is much cheaper than timber.

Governments show little encouragement to help create a strong plastic recycling industry. The planet needs to reduce the production of plastic. Recycling is one of the best approaches.

Instead, governments allow for forests to be harvested, vast areas to be cleared, and millions of hectares globally. They seem blind to the ability of industry to reduce our planet removing its resources.

Advantages of recycled plastic resource conservation

Using recycled plastics reduces the demand for virgin materials, conserving natural resources such as petroleum and reducing the environmental impact of extraction.

• **Energy Savings:** The production of recycled plastics generally requires less energy compared to the manufacturing of virgin plastics. This results in lower greenhouse gas emissions and a smaller overall carbon footprint.

• **Waste Reduction:** Recycling plastics helps divert waste from landfills and reduces the environmental burden associated with plastic pollution. It contributes to a circular economy by keeping materials in use for longer.

• **Cost Savings:** Incorporating recycled plastics in manufacturing processes can often be more cost-effective compared to timber, steel, and stone. This is particularly true in regions where recycling infrastructure is well-established. Recycled plastic is cheaper than timber, steel or stone.

• **Reduced Pollution:** Recycling plastics helps mitigate environmental pollution associated with the mining, cutting and processing of raw materials. It also helps reduce the amount of plastic waste in oceans, rivers, and other ecosystems.

• **Promotes Circular Economy:** Recycled plastics contribute to the concept of a circular economy by creating a closed-loop system where materials are reused, reducing the need for continuous extraction and production of new resources.

Uses of recycled plastic packaging materials

Recycled plastics are commonly used in the

production of packaging materials, including bottles, containers, and bags. This reduces the environmental impact of single-use plastics.

• **Construction Materials:** Recycled plastics can be used to create construction materials such as lumber, decking, and insulation. These materials offer durability and reduce the demand for traditional building materials.

• **Textiles:** Many clothing brands use recycled plastics to create fabrics for clothing, reducing the reliance on new polyester production and providing a sustainable alternative.

• **Automotive Components:** Recycled plastics are used in the manufacturing of various automotive components, including interior panels, upholstery, and under-the-hood parts.

• **Electronics:** Some electronic devices incorporate recycled plastics in their casings and components, contributing to more sustainable manufacturing practices.

• **Furniture:** Recycled plastics can be used to manufacture furniture, including chairs, tables, and outdoor furniture, offering a sustainable alternative to traditional materials.

• **Toys and Consumer Goods:** Recycled plastics are utilised in the production of toys, containers, and various consumer goods, reducing the environmental impact of these products.

Why cut down trees, why rip up the landscape that supplies oxygen, absorbs carbon, maintains a balanced ecosystem, and protects our communities from floods?

It seems to be immediately apparent without any explanation or proof forests should not be destroyed or thinned out. The forest, the lungs of the earth, should be saved.

Taking stock of catchment water quality

by Scott O’Keeffe, ecologist

This article considers some key factors in the way that rural ecosystems function.

It is predicated on removing the artificial distinction between ‘human’ and ‘natural’ processes in analysing rural ecosystems. Unless we do this any ecological analysis is flawed. Now, on with our story.

Contamination of surface waters through livestock access is a well established phenomenon; solving this problem is easy. So sayeth Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA), the former federal government agency (now privatised) that sets environmental standards for the Australian livestock industry.

They acknowledge that the degradation of waterways and wetlands caused by livestock grazing is an Australia wide problem. It’s always been easy to see in our region, and now painfully obvious following the floods.

So, embracing reality, the MLA states that one of its highest priorities is protecting all types of surface waters from damage by livestock.

No one can seriously suggest that MLA is a ‘lunatic green fringe group.’ The impact of livestock on water bodies of all sorts is broadly recognised and the



Grazing livestock and their feral counterparts cause enormous damage to wetlands in Australia.
Photo: Nathan Waltham

need to address this problem is mainstream thinking. So why are we failing to make progress?

Let’s quickly summarise the adverse impacts that livestock have on surface waters, again by quoting the MLA:

Stock trampling adds to erosion of river banks and increases in stream turbidity and adds to the problems of soil erosion from cultivation and overgrazing. Nutrient levels can increase with the addition of stock manure.

This is also the case for standing water such as dams, lakes and wetlands.

The consequences of widespread unruly stock management are loss and degradation of aquatic and terrestrial wildlife habitat, decreasing biodiversity, filthy water that can’t be used, and loss of amenity. These compound the devastating consequences of land

clearing. You can see this on a drive to Lismore from any direction. The costs of these impacts are borne by us all even when they are generated by the few.

One obvious way to prevent this degradation is to keep livestock well away from water bodies. Again, MLA advocates simple and effective measures:

Remediation is simple and involves fencing of open waterways and wetlands, and installation of (watering) troughs.

Ecologists would add that land restoration of already damaged waterways and wetlands is also needed.

We’ve known about these problems for many decades. We now have a great deal of expertise and practical knowledge about catchment management. Highly successful examples of land and water conservation measures have been in place,



documented and promoted since the 1990s. Many of them have been pioneering examples set on large grazing enterprises. They are pretty much just as MLA suggests – simple and effective.

Putting this advice into practice at a landscape scale is the organisation Sustainable Farms (www.sustainablefarms.org.au). It is a coalition of scientists, farmers, landcare groups and other agencies that has been carrying out research on farm dams, and how conservation measures for water bodies improve water quality, biodiversity and production.

The programs SF runs are well-supported by innovative primary producers. The dramatic benefits of these programs have been expertly evaluated and the benefits are proven. The photo (right) shows an example of successful conservation on

farms.

How do we get people to implement these ‘simple solutions’? Perhaps by abandoning the idea that landholders should take individual responsibility for maintaining catchment health (irrespective of whether or not they have livestock). Conservation measures need to be planned and implanted at a landscape scale.

This means that we need to collectively implement the solutions with the necessary legislative, financial and administrative support. Ad hoc small grants to individual property owners are feel-good initiatives.

I’ve benefitted from these myself. Although these can generate small increases in wildlife habitat, this approach cannot improve water quality or other ecological functions at any significant scale.

I can fence my 500m creek line against livestock and plant trees along the creek bank, and it’s very enjoyable. But efficiencies of scale and lack of security for restoration works mean that a piecemeal approach is a somewhat wasteful use of resources.

What of the neighbours on the other side of the creek that continue letting livestock into the creek bed,

or others that clear ‘ugly native trees’ to put in a mown greensward?

When this happens your conservation efforts turn into mere amenity planting. What if I sell my property? There is nothing to prevent the next owner from clearing the new planting, and more besides, right down to the water’s edge. The same goes for farm dams and wetlands.

So, I’ve restored my little patch along with two or three other landowners upstream, who were also given small grants to plant 500 trees. It’s lovely!

But meanwhile, downstream the neighbours are allowing their livestock into the creek and nearby billabongs, breaking down vegetation and banks, and fouling the water.

Others are clearing trees on steep, already overgrazed and degraded slopes, inviting erosion and serious land slips. Private property trumps public good.

My small efforts, and those carried out in isolation by other landowners are better than nothing but are soon overwhelmed unless the population in the rest of the catchment takes responsibility for the problem. Constraints, obligations and positive incentives are all needed to achieve this.

Although solving these problems is not technically too difficult, finding motivation and commitment seems to be. We need to adopt a model that has a role for individual landholders, but that makes landscape and catchment wide measures its focus.

So Nimbin, while we are busy discussing the future of the town, what collective plan are we developing to improve or restore the ecological integrity of our watercourses and wetlands?

A lantern in the orchard

by Scott O’Keeffe ecologist

As with most insects, not much is known about the Green and Black Planthopper (GBP) (*Desudaba psittacus*).

These strange-looking insects are only 10-15mm long. However, they become conspicuous at times when enormous numbers of them congregate on host trees.

GBPs are part of the *Fulgoridae* Family, or ‘Lantern Flies’. Members of the *Fulgoridae* are found worldwide, being especially diverse in tropical areas where there are thousands of species.

They are part of the great insect order Hemiptera, or ‘True Bugs,’ which contains over 80,000 species, including cicadas.

Fun fact: early taxonomists gave the moniker ‘Lantern Flies’ to the *Fulgoridae* family because it was once believed that the elongated body parts of some species were luminous at

night. However, as far as we know, no species of Lantern Fly exhibits this characteristic.

Like many other *Hermipterans*, GBPs feed on plant sap, which is an excellent source of energy and carbon. It is an abundant resource exploited by many animals, not just insects.

However, the insects that use only sap as a food source have a problem. While sap is an excellent energy source, it contains no significant amino acids (the building blocks of protein).

Sap is an incomplete food, but sap-sucking *Hermipterans* overcome this obstacle with a specialised digestive tract. The digestive tracts of GBPs are filled with bacteria that supply the proteins they need to survive.

GBPs are relatively common, and are found in southern Queensland, Northern New South Wales and the Sydney Basin. They are apparently seen frequently on plants in the Rutaceae family (citrus).



A Green and Black Planthopper resting on the branch of a White Sapote.
Photo by the author

The one I photographed was on a White Sapote Tree (*Casimiroa edulis*), also a member of the *Rutaceae* family.

There were a few dozen GDPs on the tree at the time, but last year, before I had a camera, there were thousands!

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MUSIC: Myki Jay, Chris Fisher, Terri Nicholson & Mick Daley

FAMILY FUN DAY

BOB BROWN FOUNDATION



Nimbin Garden Club notes



by Peter Brooker

Nirvana at Blue Springs

Ken's two acre share on Blue Springs stands, like Everest's base camp, part way up the flank of Blue Knob and at the beginning of the long and arduous climb to its summit.

None of the 36 people who watched the rain tumble down that morning and still had the courage to attend the meeting, maintained the valour to tackle that final ascent and shout "morior invictus" into the valley.

Ken fell in love with his house the first time he saw it nine years ago. He could see beyond the rampant lantana that had overrun the deserted veggie patch then climbed into, and deformed, the mulberry tree.

What he saw was, as Sir John Denham wrote in 1642: "Through untraced ways, and airy paths I fly, more boundless in my fancy than my eye. My eye which swift as thought contracts the space that lies between, and first salutes the

place. Crowned with that sacred pile, so vast, so high that whether tis a part of earth or sky, uncertain seems and may be thought, a proud, aspiring mountain, or descending cloud."

It took Ken, and his good friend George, quite some time to hack away the lantana. An all-too-familiar and frequently told story in this area.

After chatting a while on Ken's extensive verandah with views across the lawns in two directions and a steep descent in another, we set off like intrepid explorers, to circumnavigate the house which is shaded by an enormous Poinsettia tree.

During the annus horribilis that was 2019, that tree became distressed and flowered profusely, attracting swarms of rare Brazilian bird wing butterflies.

Ken doesn't claim a green thumb, that thumb belongs to George, but he does lay claim to maintaining the fine lawns and runs his battery- powered mower over them at regular

intervals.

Even so, it was Ken who led us on an anti-clockwise trek passing the tortured mulberry tree, the banana trees, from which he has never had a banana, the persimmon, the guava, the Brazilian cherry tree, the boronias and the agaves.

At the highest point of Ken's land, where the path to Blue Knob's summit lay, there is a room, a cabin really, that because of its placement and what it offers, Ken has named Nirvana, and for a moment you think the poet Sidney Lanier passed this way when he wrote, "The storms of self below me rage and die, On the still bosom of mine ecstasy, A lotus on a lake of balm, I lie. Forever in Nirvana."

Perhaps Lanier spoke for all who live in this special part of the world.

Anyway, our next Garden is at Saskia's place, 3 Swift Road, Coffee Camp. Usual time, 2pm on Saturday 16th March, so bring a cup, a chair, a friend and a plate to share.



Piss story

View from the loo

by Stuart McConville

There is something very primal about composting toilets: the deep dark hole below, the connectivity with nutrient and carbon cycles.

As a conservationist of many years, I relate to my own need to conserve what is closest and spiral outwards from there. Historically, sustainable cultures began with a civilised way of dealing with their by-products.

Traditional Yemeni apartment buildings collected poo, which was dried and burned as fuel.

In 19th century London "earthen closets" safely processed faeces to remove pathogens and create fertiliser. "Night soil" was collected from cities and towns in many Asian countries to be used as fertiliser on fields.

In Japan, elaborate loos were constructed along roads to attract travellers, farmers competing with each other for the chance to harvest human by-products. Perhaps that may help explain Japan's modern-day fascination with toilets.

Before the advent of chemical fertiliser, human manure was a very valuable commodity. Along with animal manure, it was shipped dry to reduce its weight. Some ships' holds were quite wet, and more than a few methane induced explosions resulted before all manure was stamped S.H.I.T (Ship High In Transit).

Early modern composting toilets date back to 1869, when the Dry Earth Commode was patented in London. Instructions for use were as follows: "The Earth must be dry and sifted. Sand must not be used. Rise from the seat QUICKLY! No "slops" must be thrown down. Before using, let one fall of earth be in the pail."

The first Clivus (Latin for slope) design toilet was built in Sweden in 1939 by Rickard Lindstrom. He wanted a safe way of breaking down human faeces so his children could safely swim in the nearby lake. It worked a treat.

In the early 1970's, composting toilets became popular amongst alternative thinkers and many new designs hit the market.

The first, Clivus Multrum, was



founded by Abby Rockefeller of the famed dynasty when she found she couldn't buy one. Some worked and some didn't, leaving a patchy reputation.

By far the most successful were the simple Clivus designs available from Pooh Solutions locally.

Composting toilets have now found a niche in the market for sensitive environments like National Parks and riverside recreation areas.

Gardeners, conservationists, riparian dwellers all benefit from the use of composting loos. Most of my customers are earth-loving intelligent people who choose not to emit methane as a by-product of their existence.

I find it personally very rewarding to know that I am assisting people to deal with their shit sustainably.

Fortunately, we don't really need costly sewage plants or septic systems to render human by-products into a harmless substance that, instead of being a problem, is a solution to problems of water shortages, water pollution, and reliance on chemical fertilisers.

This is ecological sanitation, taking care of our human sanitation needs in a way that is helpful, rather than harmful, to the environment.

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Stunning Goanna Headland walk



Sea cave in Dirrawong Reserve

by Peter Moyle
Nimbin Bushwalkers Club

So far this year we have missed the worst of the hot humid weather.

The walk at Evans Head saw a gorgeous clear day and a group of 22 take to the coastal heath, the rocky headlands and stunning beaches.

This is always a popular walk and highly recommended for all levels of ability.

A feature this year was having Michael along and his wealth of knowledge and history of the area added to the day. The sea cave is also another highlight when the tide is right.

A swim to cool down followed by a shady get together finished another day out for the Nimbin Bushwalkers.

Walks programme

Sunday 10th March

– Minyon Falls,

Nightcap NP

Leader: Sha East 0421-653-

201. Please ring to book in.

Grade: 3. Some rocks and tree roots to walk over and track can be slippery;

care needed at drop-offs. There should be plenty of water on the falls and

always an enjoyable walk, starting at the picnic area at 9am. Comfortable but

appropriate footwear for bushwalking required.

Meet: 9am Minyon Falls Picnic Area. Bring: the usual: hat, lunch, water.

Friday 22nd to

Monday 25th March –

Girraween NP

Leader: Mark Osberg 0408-

113-125.

Grade: 3-4. Care needed at drop off, can be slippery after rain and care needed on tracks. Stunning landscapes with huge granite boulders, clear running streams, excellent water holes, some easy and some more difficult walking tracks, some steep grades

caution needed at lookouts. Meet: We will be staying at Castle Rock campground. Camping fees of \$7.25 per person/night. Mark is going for a week, so plenty of options around the dates. For more on camping info and to confirm your attendance please contact Mark. A couple of sites available to share.

Bring: camping and walking gear, drinking water and firewood.

Sunday 7th April – Billinudgel Nature Reserve, New Brighton

Leader: Peter Moyle 0412-

656-498. This is a lovely

bit of coastline which has seen rehabilitation and maintenance. Return with a

short distance on the beach and a swim for the keen ones. Last time some of us

had a coffee and a snack

at the café after finishing.

Confirm with Peter as

numbers are limited.

Grade: 3. About 10km

walking through coastal

paperbark forest before

finding mountain and

coastal views.

Meet: 9am at Salty

Mangrove next to the New

Brighton General Store in

River Street.

Bring: water, lunch, and

hat, and wear comfortable

but appropriate footwear

for bushwalking.

Workshop for Garden Habitat Heroes

With a view to foster biodiversity and community engagement, the Garden Habitat Heroes Workshop is on at the Lismore Rainforest Botanic Gardens on Saturday 23rd March, from 9.30am to 12.30pm.

The first of four Garden Habitat Heroes workshops to be held this year, this immersive workshop invites participants on an educational voyage to transform their yards into thriving habitats for native flora and fauna.

From learning the secrets of habitat creation to crafting a native bee hotel for your garden, attendees will embark on a hands-on journey to amplify biodiversity in their own backyards, with a focus on how to encourage solitary and stingless bees to thrive in your garden.

A guided stroll through the lush botanic gardens will round off the event, offering firsthand insights into the elements that constitute an ideal habitat.

There will be observation hives, sugar-bag honey tasting, hands-on displays and lots of time to ask questions to deepen your knowledge of our stingless and solitary bees, as well as habitat creation in general.

Open to individuals of all ages, this event welcomes families to partake in the adventure of habitat creation. For safety reasons, children are kindly requested to be accompanied by an adult throughout the workshop. Morning tea will be provided.

With limited spaces available, early bookings are essential to secure a spot in this transformative workshop.

To register go to: <https://events.humanitix.com/garden-habitat-heroes-stingless-and-solitary-bees> or via the Richmond Landcare website: <https://richmondlandcare.org>

Join us for a morning of discovery and connection. Let's embark on a journey to cultivate thriving habitats, one garden at a time.

The program is funded by the Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal, Strengthening Rural Communities Program.

Beginners riding horses bit-free

by Suzy Maloney, B.Eq.Sc.Dip.Couns.

For novice equestrians, the journey into the world of horseback riding can be both exhilarating and daunting. One aspect that often sparks debates among riders is the choice of bridle – specifically, whether to opt for a traditional bit or embrace a bitless bridle.

In recent years, the latter has gained popularity, especially among beginners. This article delves into the benefits of using bitless bridles for those taking their first steps in the equestrian world.

Before exploring the advantages, it's essential to understand what a bitless bridle is. Unlike traditional bridles, which include a bit in the horse's mouth, bitless bridles operate without this metal piece.

Instead, they use pressure points around the horse's head, nose, and jaw to communicate with them.

1. Enhanced comfort for the horse

Bitless bridles are designed with the comfort of the horse in mind. Traditional bits can cause discomfort or pain, especially for beginners who may not have mastered the art of maintaining a gentle feel.

In my years in the horse world, I have seen numerous beginners riding horses with bits, and their inexperienced hands tugging on the reins, trying to get a horse to do as they ask. This is no fault of theirs, they have neither the experience, skill, nor feel for how to use the reins as a communication tool.

They may also lose their cool because things aren't working and jerk on the rein in frustration. Again, this is not a judgement, it can take years to find that calm steadiness required to work with horses, especially when things are not going well.



2. Reduced risk of mouth injuries

Novice riders are in the learning phase, figuring out how to communicate effectively with their horse. In this process, unintentional harsh tugs or pulls on the reins can occur.

Bitless bridles minimise the risk of mouth injuries that can result from such actions, fostering a safer environment for both horse and rider.

3. Improved safety

If a beginner jerks on a rein with a bit at the end, pain is caused in the horse's mouth, causing a fear response in the horse.

A horse's potential response to pain and fear include a desire to run away, bucking, rearing, pigrooting etc. I have seen quiet horses exhibit potentially dangerous behaviours in response to rough jerks on the bit.

To sit on a 500kg flight animal and cause pain does not promote safety. For a horse to be safe they need to be in a calm relaxed headspace. When horses are in a stressed state their cortisol levels are raised triggering the flight response.

With beginners, safety must be the priority. This goes for everyone, but it's crucial with inexperienced people who don't yet understand what horse riding involves.

4. Effective responses

Horses trained to a bitless bridle give the same responses to the same rein aids

as a horse trained to a bit. No horse is born responding to a bit, the stop and turn responses are trained.

The same training results in a horse that responds to a bitless bridle. No higher skill level is required to ride a bitless horse, as the horses' responses are the same.

5. Improved communication

Bitless bridles encourage riders to develop a deeper understanding of their horse's body language and subtle cues. Without relying on the direct pressure on the mouth, beginners learn to communicate through other means, such as shifts in body weight.

This fosters a stronger bond between rider and horse based on trust and understanding.

6. Encourages softness and responsiveness

Riding with a bitless bridle encourages horses to respond to lighter cues. Beginners often struggle with achieving softness in their horse's movements, but bitless bridles provide a valuable tool in developing this desirable trait.

Horses learn to respond to subtle signals, leading to a more harmonious and responsive partnership.

As novice riders embark on their equestrian journey, the choice of equipment plays a crucial role in shaping their experience. Bitless bridles provide a gentler and more empathetic approach to communication between rider and horse.

The enhanced comfort, reduced risk of injuries, improved safety, effective responses, improved communication and encouragement of softness and responsiveness makes bitless bridles a compelling choice for beginners seeking a harmonious and enjoyable connection with their equine companions.

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The Collie Muster Challenge

by Les Rees

Just recently the new version of the *Muster Dogs* series was shown on ABC-TV.

This time it was featuring collie sheep dogs. I'm drawn to these dogs because they're extremely intelligent, loyal and active, and love to be with you all the time.

Nearly six years ago we brought home a cute little border collie puppy to join the family on our property. Like all puppies, Molly had and still has the capacity to lure most people into a state of doggy bliss, switching on our nurturing instincts with cries of delight and inducing the need to cuddle and pat her.

She had only been with us for two weeks and had already imprinted on her new family. When you think about it, it's a tall ask from a puppy that had only been on the planet for 12 weeks before coming to live with us.

The premise of the Muster Dog challenge selects several people around the country who are working within a farming environment to train

a puppy. These are selected from the same litter of pups donated from a working dog breeder. Under normal conditions these puppies would take four years to train. However, the challenge is to see if it's possible to fast-track the training to reduce the time down to one year.

During this year the puppies learn to herd stock in a gentle manner, keeping them safe at all times. For this challenge the people selected have several levels of training goals to achieve and have to put in a huge amount of effort to gain their dog's trust in order to achieve a working relationship.

The animal behaviourist in me is interested to see how each dog develops throughout the year. They all have different personalities that help to define their strengths and also the ways in which they learn.

The collies all tend to have the herding instinct, which is a great help if you want to train them for work on a farm. Molly has these skills which she diligently practices on my horses. She never hurts



Molly

them and they accept her as part of the family.

However, these instincts were so strong when she was a puppy that she showed all the signs of becoming a car chaser. I had to patiently sit with her when the cars went past and make her sit to teach her not to do it. Now she always comes back to me if she sees a car approaching and sits beside me until the car has passed safely by.

For the muster dog challenge, each competitor also had plenty of work to do around the farm so they couldn't allot huge amounts of time for training, yet all the

dogs mastered the challenges and reached the goal of becoming a fully functioning working dog within the year.

This is no mean task, but the success was attained because each dog had the eagerness to learn the skills needed to help around the farm, and their human families all had special bonds with these beautiful intelligent dogs.

It's a huge demand on one so young, yet there is an instinct within all animals that drives us to learn how to survive in the world. The quicker the rules are learnt, the better their chances of reaching adulthood.

All the pups in the muster dog challenge have not only achieved the goals set for them, they all obviously loved the stimulation of being able to use their natural instincts, and have found their forever, special homes with people who will always appreciate and love them.

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