



HARBOUR GEORGES RIVER Group of APS NSW NEWSLETTER – June 2023

NEXT HARBOUR GEORGES RIVER EVENT:

Sunday 9th July, from 10 am

**Patches of Urban Bush (PUB) Crawl
along 'the Greenway'**

the Light Rail line along the Hawthorne Canal

**Meet on the Arlington light rail platform (east side).
at 10 am**

Please RSVP to Liz on elsmere02@gmail.com in case of a change of plans.

VISITORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME

Welcome to the June 2023 edition of the APS Harbour Georges River Group Newsletter.

We're being rather environmental this month, with a tour of a long-term regeneration project as well as an update on the Jennifer St Banksia Scrub patch, both under threat from development.

There is some good news about the environment from other sources, including other group newsletters. And NPWS are setting up a feral predator free park in Western Sydney.

I look forward to meeting you on our next outing and hearing from you about a favourite plant of project of your own.

Dorothy Luther, Editor

In the spirit of reconciliation, the APS Harbour Georges River group acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

<https://www.austplants.com.au/Harbour-Georges-River>

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1 one of Marie's flower arrangements, photo by Marie

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

Another month has passed and we are halfway through another successful year.

The garden is looking dry and we need to keep an eye on what needs watering.

It's a great time for pruning and looking out for the plants being attacked by bugs and insects. I had to do a hard prune of the candle banksia under the Grevillea in the front garden as it was being severely damaged by a small pest. I had left too much foliage and the airflow was reduced leaving it open to attack.

I take satisfaction & pleasure in the journey of caring for the plants in the garden and picking flowers and leaves to arrange in the house.

Thank you all for your help and support as we continue to evolve into a new and stronger group.

Warmest regards to all, and a big thanks to Dorothy for the wonderful newsletter she produces.

Marie O'Connor President of HGR APS NSW.



2 one of Marie's flower arrangements, photo by Marie

NEXT MEETING

Sunday 9th July, from 10 am – ‘PUB’ Crawl

The expression ‘Patches of Urban Bush’ came about because we don’t have a large national park or botanical garden to show off, as many other APS groups do. However, we do have a regional park and lots of remnant bushland, or regenerated bushland, scattered throughout our patch. And as urban dwellers, we can’t go far without a coffee.

Meet at 10 am in Dulwich Hill on the east side of Arlington light rail station.

– that is, the line going away from the city, to Dulwich Hill.

If you fancy a coffee first, grab one at Cafe Calibre, just up the stairs from the platform.

There, we will have an introduction to the area, from the walk organisers – Chris King and Jo Blackman – who are leaders in the Inner West Environment Group (IWEG).

After the introduction, we will walk North through the bush care sites and streets, inspecting the plantings that are part of the bush restoration. The GreenWay walking track is awaiting completion and the morning section is along footpaths. The afternoon section is along a dedicated path. Most of the walk is flat but there are a couple of uneven patches that will be optional.

We will stop for a cuppa or early lunch at a cafe at Lewisham West light rail station at about 12. We will then continue along the GreenWay, which follows Hawthorne Canal & the light rail line.

We will **end at Café Bones** for coffee, close to Hawthorne light rail station. (This is the Inner West – you must have coffee regularly). The café can serve a light lunch or adjourn to the picnic areas in Richard Murden Reserve for BYO lunch.

Bring your Opal cards for the light rail. There are a number of stops along the way so members can take a ride for one or more stops if tired.

This area is well supplied with public transport and poorly supplied with car parking spaces. We strongly suggest you bring your Opal Card & travel by train or bus.

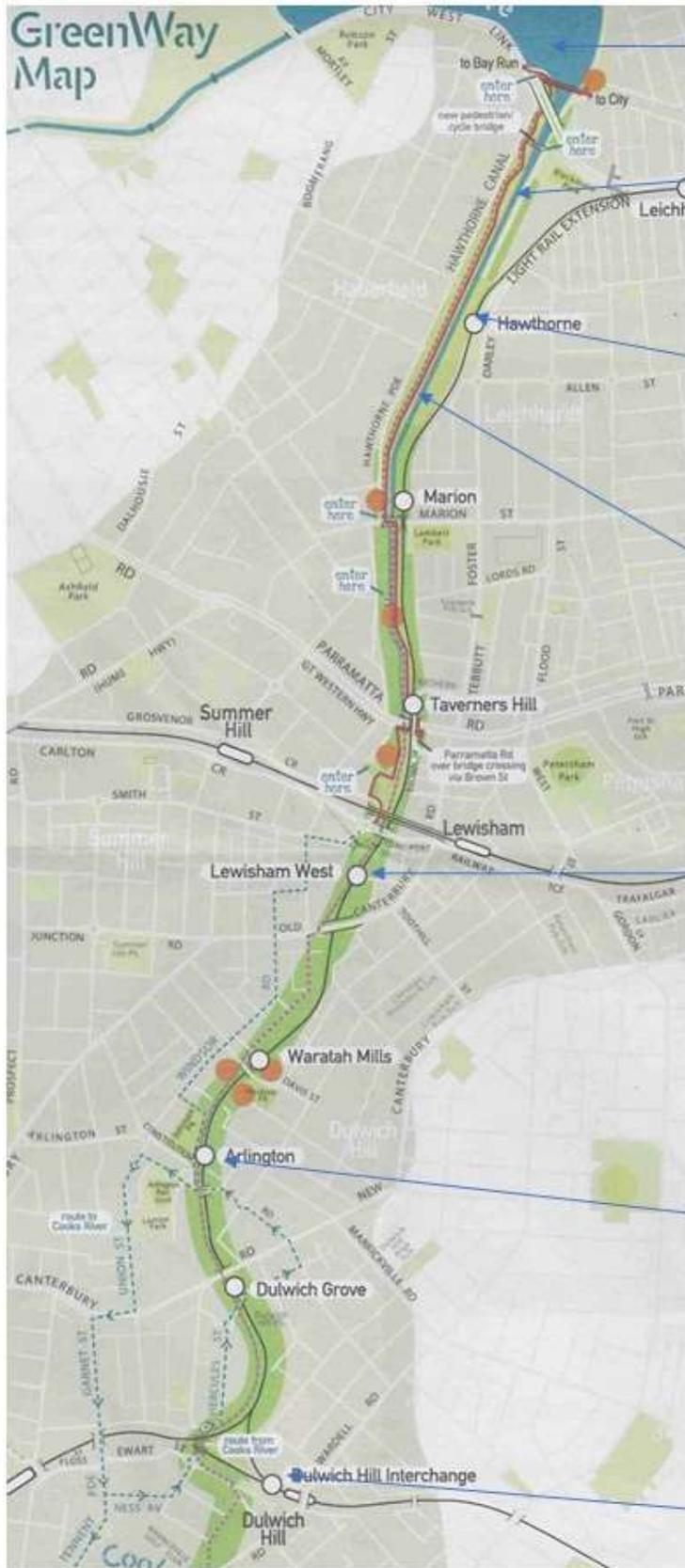
For more information about the GreenWay, see:

<https://www.innerwest.nsw.gov.au/live/environment-and-sustainability/in-your-neighbourhood/bushland-parks-and-verges/greenway>

Contingency Plan

If it's raining lightly, we will go ahead. If the rain is heavy and set-in, we will cancel. The IWEG website will have a message if we intend to cancel. <http://www.iweg.asn.au/>

Sunday trains are notorious for being affected by track work. Nothing is advertised at the moment, but we must plan for sudden changes. Please advise Liz by email on elsmere02@gmail.com if you are intending to come to the event so we can let you know of any changes.



Iron Cove

Film studios

Café Bones
(End here)

Coffee, food
toilets

Richard Murden
Reserve,
picnic areas

Lewisham West
Food, Toilets
Train interchange

Start here at
Light rail station
Toilets in cafe

Train interchange

LAST MEETING

Indoor Meeting and Talks, Wednesday 7th June

Our June meeting was held at Club Burwood RSL.

We originally planned to have an academic speak about their research projects, but early June is a bad time for academics. Its end of semester exam marking with all the associated dramas & stress. So, we had **something completely different**. There will be presentations by three HGR members – Marie O'Connor, Chris King and a team effort from Graham Fry and Liz Cameron

Marie O'Connor – demonstration of arranging native flowers from her garden. Marie has been a successful competitor in the Australian Native Plants section of the Royal Easter Show for a number of years. See her photos of her floral arrangements scattered through the newsletter.

The Macquarie Marshes

By Chris King – words and photos

The Macquarie River - Wambuul rises in the central highlands and travels northwest past Dubbo, Narromine and Warren to the Macquarie Marshes, which in turn drains into the Darling River. The system is part of the Murray–Darling basin. I was part of a small group tour organised by the Nature Conservation Council in November 2022.



The Burrendong reservoir, built in the 1960s, and the subsequent Windamere dam, impound the waters of the Macquarie River - Wambuul and its tributaries for flood control, irrigation and water supply for Dubbo. **When in flood, as they were 6 months ago**, the Marshes can cover up to 200,000 hectares. Only 10% of this area is protected as a nature reserve. Since the dams were built, much of the agricultural grazing land has been converted to more intensive irrigated crops, particularly the most profitable crop, cotton. And the practice of "floodplain harvesting" impounds rain in huge on-farm dams, depriving local creeks and rivers of in-flows. Previous NSW state governments have approved increased yearly allocations for irrigation. With the Marshes starved of their natural water flows, reed beds were on fire in the 2019 drought - the first time this has been known to happen.

Why are the Marshes special? They are listed under the Ramsar Convention for their international importance as **breeding habitat for water birds**. In a significant flood year there would be an estimated 80,000 water bird nests. After 3 years of La Nina rainfall and flooding events, the Marshes were so flooded that we had to use canoes to get about. Water was up to a metre deep. The aquatic plants were thick, lush and bright green.

The forests were looking healthy and festooned with nests. As we paddled through flooded red gum forest *E. camaldulensis* there were 'villages', each with its own nesting waterbird species - hundreds of nests of Royal spoonbills, Nankeen night herons, Intermediate egrets, Straw-necked ibis, Australian white ibis, little black cormorants.



Other forests were dominated by Coolibah *Eucalyptus coolabah* & Black box *Eucalyptus largiflorens*. One of these forests had many hundreds of nests which emitted a noisy racket of Royal spoonbills, Straw-necked ibis, Cormorants, Black swans, Magpie geese and others.

The marshes are significant for their extensive stands of Common reeds, *Phragmites*

australis, and large areas of Water couch grasslands *Paspalum paspaloides*. We saw a range of mixed marsh plants, including rushes like Tall spike rush *Eleocharis sphacelata* and two yellow flowering species Wavy marshwort *Nymphoides crenata* and Swamp buttercup *Ranunculus undosus*. Altogether this was a most memorable event to experience.

Robinson's Field guide to the plants of Sydney 2nd ed. provides a useful introduction to the types of aquatic plants, classified by whether the leaves are emergent or submerged and the roots are free floating, submerged or growing in mud.



Highlights from a trip to Bhutan in April 2013

By Graham Fry and Liz Cameron.

Bhutan, on the wrinkled edge of the Himalayas, is 300 km wide and 150 km north to south, and the altitude ranges from 100m asl in the south, up to 7,540 m on the Tibetan border. Deep valleys running north-south are separated by high mountain passes.



3 *Rhododendron arboretum* and hemlock forest

The wide altitudinal gradient is reflected in vegetation ranging from the treeless alpine zone through temperate conifer and broadleaf forests to subtropical forests. Forests cover 70% of the land and the small area of arable land in the valleys is intensively farmed for livestock and cropping.

At high altitudes, Graham and Liz saw dwarf bamboo on which the yaks graze, and slightly lower, hemlock and flowering rhododendron forests festooned with lichen and carpeted with blue primulas.



5 *Primula bhutanica*



Figure 4 *Dendrobium nobilis*

Bhutan's national flower is also blue – the poppy *Meconopsis gakyidiana*.

Down in the valleys, broadleaf forests supported epiphytes including the endemic Noble Orchid, *Dendrobium nobilis*.

Conifers dominated many forests. At lower altitudes Chir Pines (*Pinus roxburghii*) regenerate after fire but are susceptible to snow; at higher altitudes they are replaced by Blue Pines (*Pinus wallichiana*) which tolerate low temperatures but are killed by fire.

Bhutan or Himalayan Cypress (*Cupressus cashmeriana* aka *C. torulosa*) is traditionally planted around **dzongs** - the imposing fortified monasteries that incorporate religious, military and administrative functions. Also planted around dzongs were sacred figs or peepal trees, *Ficus religiosa*.



6 *Daphne sp*

Parks and gardens were planted with cosmopolitan species including *Amaryllis*, aloes, eucalypts, white cedars, bottlebrushes (*Callistemon*) and Madagascar periwinkles. Apart from timber harvesting, commercial use of Bhutanese plants includes paper production from

Daphne papyracea and *D. bholua*, and essential oils from lemongrass *Cymbopogon bhutanicus*.

Plant Table

Thanks to Boyd for recording the plant table items.

Many tip cuttings and flowers were brought in by members, including those listed below.

<i>Austromyrtus dulcis</i>	Midyim, Midgen Berry (foliage)
<i>Banksia integrifolia</i>	Coast Banksia
<i>Correa baeuerlenii</i>	Chef's Hat Correa
<i>Correa</i> 'Dusky Bells'	
<i>Correa reflexa</i>	Common Correa, Native Fuchsia
<i>Grevillea bronweniae</i>	
<i>Grevillea</i> Cultivars	'Kimberley Gold', 'Miami Pink', 'Moonlight'
<i>Grevillea preissii</i>	Spider Net Grevillea
<i>Hibiscus insularis</i>	Phillip Island Hibiscus
<i>Persoonia pinifolia</i>	Pine-leaved Geebung
<i>Prostanthera incisa</i>	Cut-leaved Mint-bush
<i>Scaevola calendulacea</i>	Dune Fan Flower

Correa baeuerlenii. This Correa is endemic to forests of south east NSW; classed as vulnerable in the wild. Best propagated by cuttings, in sheltered gardens in well drained slightly shaded spots the shrub will grow to about 1 m. The greenish yellow flowers have 4 petals fused to a tubular shape, stamens protruding from the end; the calyx turned up to the shape of top of a chef's hat – hence its popular name.



Hibiscus insularis. This Hibiscus is endemic to Phillip Island, a small islet off the coast of Norfolk Island. Endangered in the wild, it has been propagated from cuttings in mainland Australia. In full sun or part shade, in well-drained soil, the plant can grow quickly to 1.5 to 2m. The evergreen leaves tolerate coastal winds, leading to horticultural use as hedges. The flowers emerge coloured cream to light green with a magenta centre; then turn reddish or purple as they age. Self-pollination can occur.



Prostanthera incisa. Found naturally at the margins of forests in NSW, this shrub needs well drained soil in garden beds. Usually seen with purple flowers, a pink flowered form has also been described. The NSW Australian Plant Society link

<https://resources.austplants.com.au/plant/prostanthera-incisa/> has photos and further advice on its care, particularly the need to avoid fungal root disease by not overwatering the shrub once it is established.

Also shown on the table:

A demonstration by Ebony of successful propagation of the lesser swamp orchid, (*Phaius australis*, previously *P.tankarvilleae*) from a flower stem embedded in a river sand mix.

Caterpillars, probably of the moth, *Spodoptera picta*, have damaged Boyd's previously thriving swamp lily (*Crinum pedunculatum*) repeatedly over several weeks. The moth is nocturnal and lays its eggs on the underside of the lily's leaf. Section of damaged leaf and one culprit caterpillar on display.

(Notes by Boyd Webster)

Dorothy's 'lawn' that copes with heavy shade, tree roots and much modified clay soil. The plants fend for themselves with occasional watering & have spread in a random way. Described from left to right in the photo.

Microlaena stipoides - weeping meadow grass. Grown from seed. Fine dark green leaves.



Cyperus gracilis - technically a reed, self-seeded, very difficult to transplant, but if it appears in your garden, encourage it.

Viola hederacea - native violet, planted.

Aneilima acuminatus - crinkly basket grass, "a rare plant from the sub-tropical rainforests of the Royal National Park" that has grown wild. I think it escaped from a pot.

Broad leafed weed with false pretences, sold as *brunionella australis*. Has purple trumpet flowers in summer, produces runners, and eventually tough roots.

Erharta - weed grass, much brighter green than *microlaena*, and easy to pull out.

I mow it all with the whipper snipper occasionally, to keep it to a manageable height. I walk on it & it springs back as grasses do. It is not an even lawn as the plants tend to clump, but quite decorative.

GROUP NEWS

Planning for 2023

We are still working on the activities for the rest of 2023. Here is the updated plan:

Sun August 13th, 9:30 am start – 'PUB' crawl with the Bankstown Bushland Society (BBS), to see their planting & bush care projects.

Wed 6th September - Mt Annan Botanic Gardens tour with the manager of the Herbarium. This will feature a tour of the herbarium, which may take an hour. We will visit the quarantine areas and see how staff operate within the herbarium. We will also visit the incredible vaults and check the collection of herbarium specimens collected by Banks and

Solander. This part of the tour will be limited to 15 people – first in, best dressed. We will then take a self-guided tour of the gardens which others are welcome to join.

Wed. October 4th, evening meeting - Garden design workshop with James Middleton, one of our members, who is a landscape designer.

November – TBA

Wed December 13th – Christmas Party & AGM, at Earlwood Uniting Church, in the hall.

Membership Renewal

Many members subscriptions are due for renewal in June. If you renew online, please also update your member profile, using the green 'Edit Profile' button. This lets your committee know your interests, so we can contact you when there is a project that you might like to participate in.

Where Everyone Lives

I've been analysing the membership list again. There are 206 suburbs in our 11 Local Government Areas (LGA). Sometimes we get requests to contact people in an LGA – usually to sign a petition.

This is the result of my analysis:

Local Government Area	members
Bayside	2
Canada Bay	1
CB-Council	4
City of Sydney	6
Georges River	9
Inner West	15
Randwick	4
Strathfield	1
Waverley	2
Woollahra	1
Outside our patch	1
Grand Total	46

NEIGHBOURHOOD NEWS

There is a lot happening in our patch, with community groups and local councils being active in promoting native plants. My plan is to feature a local group or event each month. I welcome contributions - stories about your other favourite groups.

Inner West Sustainability Hub

From their newsletter

On 1 July, Inner West Council will launch the Inner West Sustainability Hub, designed to put environmental initiatives at the fingertips of residents. The space, located at the old Council depot (7 Prospect Road, Summer Hill), will provide resources, services, and information on sustainability initiatives in partnership with local organisations, such as The Bower Repair & Reuse Centre, TOMRA (Return and Earn), The Village Project, and Dress for Success Sydney. The Hub will also feature street libraries, bike tune-ups, and **Council's Green Living Centre**

services, among others. This is a one-stop shop for residents to learn about and engage in sustainability initiatives.

Jennifer St Banksia Scrub

We have a progress report from Andrew:

“I was contacted by Randwick Council recently as someone who had made a submission about the development application. The developer has appealed Council's latest decision regarding the development to the Land and Environment Court of NSW. As a result, a **section 34 conciliation conference** was arranged for the morning of 9 June 2023, where representatives of the developer, the Council, anyone who made a submission and a Commissioner of the Court attended. A local resident, myself, a representative from Malabar Bushcare and a representative of the neighbouring golf course all spoke against the development. The council and developers then held a confidential meeting with the commissioner **where the matter was adjourned.**”



7 Conciliation Conference, photo by Lynda Newnam

Andrew’s speech is posted on our web site along with the newsletter. Here is an excerpt:

“The whole development application and court process seems to be skewed towards ways in which the development can ultimately go ahead. ... the question before the court is framed in such a way that the value of housing becomes a deciding factor in whether or not to allow development to go ahead. If you ask that question, it’s easy to then go on to say, “Yes, it is in the public good”.

“But if the process were to be truly equal, it’s almost as if a separate question should be put before the court, completely independent of any development application. **Is preserving this piece of bushland in the public good?** Because if the court sought to answer that same question, the answer would surely be yes.”

From NPWS – Yiraaldiya National Park Feral Predator-free Area

<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/parks-reserves-and-protected-areas/park-management/return-of-threatened-and-declining-species/yiraaldiya-national-park-feral-predator-free-area>

This park is Greater Sydney's only site within the feral predator-free network, one of the most significant threatened fauna and ecological restoration projects in NSW history.

Formerly called **Shanes Park**, the 550-hectare area is in western Sydney and Blacktown Local Government Area, about halfway between Windsor & St Marys. Priority species that formerly occurred in western Sydney but have become locally extinct because of feral cats and foxes are being assessed for reintroduction, including **eastern bettong, koala, emu and bush stone curlew**.

The program will see the reintroduction of animals that are 'ecosystem engineers', which play an important role in turning over soil, seed and spore dispersal, and population management through predation, among others. Individual eastern bettongs turn over tonnes of soil every year, while eastern quolls are important predators.

The return of these ecosystem engineers will help restore the health of ecosystems at Yiraaldiya National Park. The park hosts a number of threatened ecological communities which are in poor-moderate condition as a result of past disturbance and the ongoing impact of feral animals, weeds and illegal use.

The project will significantly improve the ecological condition of the site through the ... restoration of ecological processes and remnant vegetation.



8 Two of Marie's flower arrangements, photos by Marie

RANDOM JOTTINGS

These are items of general interest found on the World Wide Web & other sources. All contributions for future editions gratefully accepted.

Leopard slug - *Limax maximus*

Limax maximus is the type species of the genus *Limax*. The adult slug measures 10–20 cm (4–8 in) in length and is generally a light greyish or grey-brown with darker spots and blotches, although the coloration and exact patterning of the body of this slug species is quite variable.



9 Leopard slug in Dorothy's garden

blotches, although the coloration and exact patterning of the body of this slug species is quite variable.

Limax maximus is omnivorous. It cleans up dead plants and fungi, and is a **carnivore** known to pursue other slugs at a top speed of 15 centimetres (6 in) per minute.

(Wow!!! **So please don't kill them.** – Ed.)

Limax maximus feeds at night. It is not very active or prolific. They need at least two years to reach sexual maturity, and they only live for 3 years. The homing instinct is strongly developed in this species, so that, after its nocturnal rambles or foraging expeditions, it usually

returns to the particular crevice or chink in which it has established itself.

From https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Limax_maximus

I don't know where this one was hiding, but I disturbed it in the middle of the day, while weeding. It took off at 'top speed' to a hopefully safer place. It is longer than my middle finger and my ferns are getting much less chewed since they turned up again. I had been killing them in ignorance, before discovering their eating habits.

Although native to Europe, this species has been accidentally introduced to many other parts of the world. But please don't kill them.

Indigenous Plants for Health (IPHA)

<https://indigenousplantsforhealth.com/>

Found this group via the Australian Food Plants Study Group newsletter.

"We are dedicated to: raising awareness of indigenous plants used for food and medicine in Australia, supporting research related to indigenous foods and medicines, offering educational opportunities through field schools, lectures, workshops and this website."

As well as raising awareness, their focus is on sustainable production of indigenous plant-based products. This involves community engagement in the protection, propagation, plant sales and the development of plant based medicinal products.

"We have created a list of significant indigenous species that meet the health-promoting criteria, including but not restricted to plants with medicinal, aromatic and nutritional benefits. A monthly newsletter is distributed to our members, each month we feature a profile of one of the plants from the health-promoting species list."

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

Newsletters Received – June

Australian Plants Society, Hunter Valley Group - Newsletter June 2023

Science in the Garden - Cation Exchange Capacity - a measurement of the soil's ability to retain and exchange positively charged ions, known as cations. It is an important property of soils that influences their fertility and nutrient-holding capacity.

Olearia elliptica grows up to 2m high with sticky stems and leaves. It is worthy of being more widely grown.

A visit to a working native flower farm in July.

Australian Plants Society, Sutherland Group - Newsletter June 2023

Talk on a Bush-Tucker Garden – Samantha Newton of Tonbo Garden Design, followed by the plant table and bush tucker goodies. 30 years of Sutherland Shire Bushcare: One volunteer's story.

Australian Plants Society, Northern Beaches Group - Newsletter June 2023

the alpine plants of the Central Highlands of Tasmania. About the Ranunculaceae family (Ranunculus and Clematis). Visit to Arnhem Land.

Australian Plants Society, South East Group - Newsletter June 2023

Impressive regeneration after bush fires. A cream and green flowered local form of *Correa reflexa* collected at Menai, and propagated by (HGR member) Jan Douglas.

Other Groups Newsletters

We have begun to swap newsletters with other environmental groups in the Harbour Georges River area. Links to their web sites are provided where available.

National Parks & Wildlife Service, 'Naturescapes' June 2023

Book Muogamarra Nature Reserve, located just north of Sydney near Cowan. The reserve is only open for 6 weeks per year (12 August – 17 September) to preserve its fragile ecosystem and Aboriginal cultural heritage. Platypus return to Royal National Park. Plant disease (Myrtle rust) contained on Lord Howe Island.

Wolli Creek Preservation Society Quarterly newsletter, June 2023

<http://www.wollicreek.org.au/wp-content/wolliupload/Update0623.pdf>

this is their historic 100th issue. It includes a photo from the Unwin Green Stret launch. See if you can spot an HGR member or two. There is a long article about the legendary Judy Finlaison and results from the latest fungi foray.

COMING EVENTS

For further details of coming district group events, please see the APS NSW website at <http://austplants.com.au/calendar>

Sun 9th July,	HGR PUB Crawl along the Greenway.
Sat, Sun 1,2,8,9 Jul	Illawarra Grevillea Park open days. Grevillea Park Road, Bulli
Wed, 19 Jul	Sutherland Group Meeting. Story of a Burrawang.
Sunday September 10	Northern Beaches group invites us to the Stony Range Flora Reserve Festival
Sat 16 September	APS NSW September Gathering, hosted by Illawarra Group. Meet at 1pm at Corrimal Community Hall. More information & registration here. https://austplants.com.au/event-5278229
Thursday 19 October	WCPS Annual Dinner, with Peter Ridgeway, naturalist and author of "A Wide and Open Land" about walking the Cumberland Plain



10 Two of Marie's flower arrangements, photos by Marie

EAST HILLS GROUP CONTACTS

President	Marie O'Connor	9546 8105	madoc71@gmail.com
Secretary	Liz Cameron	9580 6621	elsmere02@gmail.com
Newsletter Editor	Dorothy Luther	9564 6513	dlutherau@yahoo.com.au
Website Editor	Dorothy Luther	9564 6513	dlutherau@yahoo.com.au

<https://www.austplants.com.au/Harbour-Georges-River>

