

BUSH NEWS

from the Natural Areas of Kedron Brook & Environs

No 10, Spring 1991

GreenBrook Association

EDITORIAL

Population growth is already having an immense effect on South-east Queensland.

Recently a public protest over the dumping of sewerage off the Gold Coast beaches attracted a large crowd. Poor planning forces governments to make "catch-up" decisions such as these.

By and large governments and councils see population growth as desirable.

Planning appears to be confined to dividing existing land and services amongst more people. Little attention seems to be given to preserving the existing quality of life.

This cocktail of poor planning and population growth will bring tremendous pressures. The result will be a decline in services, traffic congestion and pollution in all its forms.

Current residents and ratepayers are the stakeholders in the city and have the most to lose.

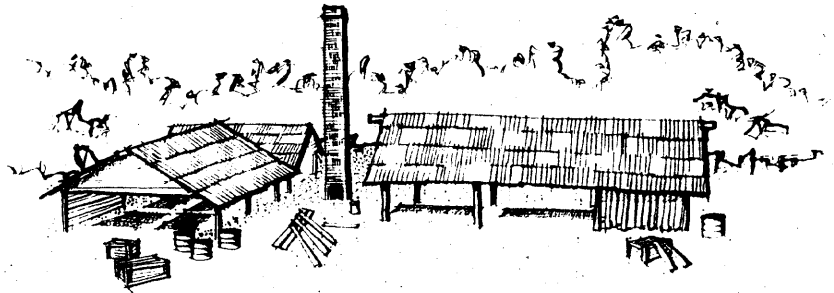
To preserve our present lifestyle population growth must be restricted and town planners must give greater consideration to residents wishes.

Colleen Crosthwaite

DOWN'S' TANNERY

Kedron Brook was once renowned as a tanning area. This article describes Downs' Tannery, which operated on the site of the new Jehovah's Witness hall in Blandford St Grange.

The tannery was built beside the creek, just above flood level. Throughout its life it used only the "wattlebark" tanning process.



Pits were dug into the ground and boarded all round, each pit being about 8ft x 8ft x 8ft. Steam from a large boiler was used to pump water from the creek into the pits.

To start the process hides were soaked in pits of water for 2-3 days. They were then put into pits of lime for a similar time in order to loosen the hair. After this they were drawn over curved beams where the hair was scraped off with a broad two-handled knife.

Neutraliser pits of water then removed some of the lime, following which any flesh was scraped from the remaining side.

There were 3 strengths of tanning pit - weak, medium and strong. The hides spent about 4 days in each of the first two pits and 14 days in the strong mix. The tanning pits contained water in which was dissolved the bark of a South Australian wattle. This bark, about 6 potato bags per pit, lasted for some 6 weeks.

For very good quality leather, a final process involved stacking the

hides in a dry pit with wattlebark between each hide, and then filling the pit with water. After 4 weeks of this each hide was taken into the machine shed for rolling.

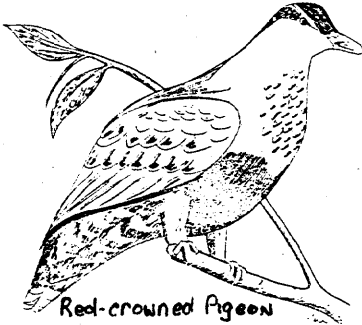
It is thought that this tannery started in the 1860's. It was bought by the Downs family in the 1890's. At its peak it employed approximately 46 people, producing hides in an average time of 3 months.

Information courtesy Arthur Downs, who was the last owner/operator of the tannery

RECENT SIGHTINGS

A pair of **Red-crowned Pigeons** has been sighted at Grange Forest Park. Listed as rare in the Brisbane area in the 1983 Wildlife Survey, this little fruit pigeon is a welcome visitor.

The red-crowned pigeon is a tree-dweller and feeds entirely on fruit. It likes to spend its time in large trees and palms.



Fruit pigeons were once common in the district. "Wooloowin" is an Aboriginal word meaning pigeon.

At Grange Forest Park rainforest trees have been planted to attract fruit eating pigeons to the area. However these trees have not yet fruited and these birds are probably an itinerant pair.

The **Golden Bronzed Cuckoo** has also been sighted recently along Kedron Brook. Another particularly colourful bird, it is common all along the east coast of Australia.

Golden bronzed cuckoos eat mainly caterpillars and insects. Like other cuckoos they lay their eggs in the nests of other birds. Their eggs have been found in the nests of at least 65 other species.

Striped Marsh Frogs laid eggs at Alderley during the last rains in June. Contrary to expectations the rescued tadpoles have grown remarkably during winter.

CAN YOU HELP US?

The old adage "many hands make light work" was certainly true at our July clean up in the "big gully".

The work was heavy and dirty. Often the larger items had to be hauled up the gully with ropes.

This work could not have been done without the help of the many volunteers who attended.

During the last four years much work has been done to transform this area from a weed choked gully into a rainforest. Now that the lantana has been removed from some trees it can be seen that it was 20ft high in parts.

One hundred rainforest trees were planted last working bee and another 400 are planned to go in before the end of the year.

The next working bees will be held on -

8 September

6 October

3 November

Meet at 8.30 am at the Blandford St entrance to Grange Forest Park.

Bob Devine

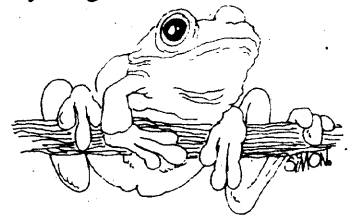
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SPRING

Spring is upon us and we can look forward to the seasonal changes along Kedron Brook.

Sparkes Hill can expect the return of the flying foxes to their summer camp to give birth to their young.



With the commencement of the rains in late October frogs will be heard giving their mating calls. Tadpoles can be collected after heavy rain.

Late winter / early spring is also the time to see local wattles in bloom, plus the purple-flowered Hovea. For the sharp-eyed there are still ground orchids in Grange Forest Park.

PLANT OF THE MONTH

Barklya syringifolia

Many plants are chosen for their flowers only, but with *Barklya* the leaves are almost as attractive. They are heart-shaped, with a beautiful persistent gloss. The flowers come in large clusters of brilliant gold.

It was once a local rainforest tree, but in gardens remains as a dense shrub to about 6m. A good screen plant.



BARKLYA SYRINGIFOLIA

Available from Perrotts Nursery
Elkhorn St, Enoggera