

BUSH NEWS

from the Natural Areas of Kedron Brook & Environs

No 12, Autumn 1992

GreenBrook Association

EDITORIAL

The recent heavy rains have reminded me again of the relationship between remnant bushlands and their surrounding suburbs.

Most bushlands remain along watercourses, and it has been economic for councils everywhere to stop stormwater drains at the edges of development - the water then finding its own path across country to the creek.

This concentration of water is unnatural in the sense that water falling on roads and rooves is sped to the drain outlet very quickly rather than percolating through the soil and leaf-litter. The resulting erosion is often considerable.

Currently the Brisbane City Council is proposing a modification to the Town Plan to allow a higher density of dwellings in Brisbane. While many of the arguments supporting this proposal are valid, factors such as increased erosion in bushlands and creeks have not been mentioned at all.

We have grave concerns that the long-term result of the changes will be to increase the pressures on our already depleted urban bushlands. This must be to the detriment of our quality of life.

Colleen Crosthwaite

KEDRON BROOK IN THE 1930'S

Some recollections of local resident Robert Dunlop as a youngster growing up in the Grange in the 1930's.

By the 1930's the area had been well and truly opened up by timber-getters and there were already remnants of old sawmills. The tanneries, a slaughter house and knackery were all in operation, but Kedron Brook itself was still a crystal-clear stream connecting a series of waterholes and abounding with life.

There were two swimming holes in the creek: the big one was near the end of Wolverhampton St and the little one about half a kilometre up stream. The big one

through the Grange forest area. Holding the tail of a fleeing poddy calf could provide some hair-raising rides.

If the mullet were in season they would swarm up river. A little bit of dough, a fly hook and some patience would often result in a good feed. During the depression men would fish the brook and shoot pigeon and duck along its banks for food.

Turtles were common and boys would leave dead ones on an ant's



was quite shallow and the little one was about twenty-foot deep. Only the big kids who could swim would play in the little hole.

On the way to the creek for a bit of fun we would chase the wild, unbranded cattle that roamed

nest and come and collect the neatly cleaned shell some time latter. Platypus were regularly seen in an old dam near where Blandford St is today. Very large eels (up to 6 inches in diameter), freshwater prawns and loobbies could be caught.

All these activities were upstream of Webster Road, for downstream it was the territory of the Lutwyche mob. Conversely the Grange mob would thump any outsiders they found in the big hole.

Of a Saturday afternoon all the "flash alecs" would gather at the creek near the big hole for a two-up school. Stakes were high at a shilling a time and a youngster could earn a penny "cockatooing" for the school.

Flood times were particularly exciting and Kedron Brook was noted for its regular and forceful floods. Illegal jaunts down the swollen creek were popular, but quite dangerous for the local tanneries used flood times to release poisonous effluent stored in dams. Submerged trees were another hidden danger.

During the summer storms rainbows were very common up the creek and many expeditions were embarked upon to find the pot of gold. Perhaps it is only chasing rainbows but it seems worthwhile trying to restore this area so that it once again can take on an active role in our lives and our children's lives, and provide some healthy outdoor alternatives to passive "pre-packaged" entertainment.

David Walters

CAN YOU HELP US

The next working bees will be held on -

8 March

12 April

17 May

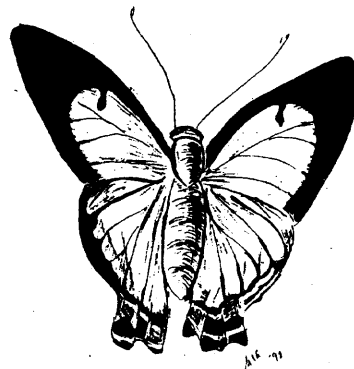
Meet at 8.30am at the Blandford St entrance to Grange Forest Park.

Bob Devine

RECENT SIGHTINGS

During January, when the Monkey Vine flowered in Grange Forest Park its heavy perfume attracted a variety of insects. Among them was the Imperial Blue butterfly.

At rest, the Imperial Blue's folded wings are inconspicuous but in flight they show a soft blue with touches of orange and black.



Imperial Blue

Ants are usually voracious predators of caterpillars. However in the case of the Imperial Blues not only are their caterpillars protected from ant attack but the ants actually perform "nursemaid" duties for them.

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Imperial Blues lay their eggs on the bark of some acacia trees. There must be nests of a particular type of small, black ant nearby.

Each morning, after the eggs reach caterpillar stage, the ants scurry up the trees and stimulate the caterpillars to produce droplets of "honeydew" on which the ants feed.

The presence of masses of ants around the caterpillars deters many of their natural enemies.

If a butterfly should lay her eggs where there were no ants her caterpillars would have a lower survival rate.

Marilyn Box

PLANT OF THE MONTH

Syzygium paniculatum 'Dwarf'

Plants that grow bigger than desired are a constant problem for most home-owners. This is partially due to the fact that most of the long-lived native plants are in the "tree" category - there are relatively few small shrubs available.

One ancient solution to this problem lies in developing miniature versions of desirable large plants. One such cultivar is *Syzygium paniculatum* 'Dwarf'.

This plant retains the dense foliage and edible fruit of its parent, but grows to only 1.5m. With its glossy green leaves it is also ideal as a tub specimen. As with most *Syzygiums*, it prefers good conditions that do not get really dry.



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