



PITCHFORK

Pappinbarra Valley Monthly News
Pappinbarra Progress Association

February 2017

Valley Happenings

Please join PPA (only \$5 per adult) to support your committee and be part of the community that is admired throughout the LGA for its vibrant, inclusive and varied activities.

First Friday get-together is on from 6 pm at Hollisdale Hall, Pappinbarra Road on **3 February**. Come along and enjoy the company. Don't worry if you don't know anyone - we make all feel welcome! Cooks will be Adrian, Emma, Gary and George. Vegetarian and gluten-free options included in a tasty low cost menu. Soft drinks available. BYOG.

December First Friday saw the members' draw won by Suzanne Pollett. The cooks did a great job. Many thanks to all who helped in any way during the evening. Thanks to Santa who brought beautiful presents for the kids, his helper Jeannette Rainbow, and driver Chris Roelands!

Lifeline workshop at the hall on Saturday 11 February at 10 am. Gold coin donation; bring a plate to share for lunch. Tea and coffee provided by PPA. There will be a 'safetalk' on suicide awareness and a session on mental health first aid. Come if you can - you never know when you may need to help someone.

All Saints' Pappinbarra: Service on Sunday February 26 at 2 pm with afternoon tea around 2.45 off the back of Murphys' ute. All welcome. Bring a plate to share.

Rural Fire Brigade training has been changed to the second Saturday of the month: 11 February 8-10 am. Training will be followed by a sector meeting, 10-11. Meet at the hall in full uniform.

Pappinbarra Community Market - Grown and Gathered is on Sunday 5 February. Come along and bring the family from 9 am to 1 pm for a country experience with beautiful food and coffee and live music! We need more pre-loved items for PPA's charity stall. (Drop off at First Friday.) Proceeds this month to FAWNA. Stall enquiries to Lisa on 0418 220 138.

facebook.com/grownandgatheredcommunitymarket/

Beekeeping: If you would like to join the group, contact Landcare. The field day at *Pythonwood* last year was very successful - thanks Trish for hosting and Patrick for running.

2017 Pappinbarra Calendar: Some still available for sale at ecoWild in Wauchope. It showcases our wonderful valley. Don't miss out!

President's message

I hope you will all have a wonderful year, that you'll dream dangerously and outrageously, that you'll make something that didn't exist before you made it, that you will be loved and that you will be liked, and that you will have people to love and to like in return. And, most importantly (because I think there should be more kindness and more wisdom in the world right now), that you will, when you need to, be wise, and that you will always be kind.

Quote of the Month:

Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.

Lisa McLeod

Tennis anyone?

Tennis will start on 15 February. It's a great night out with lots of hits, misses and giggles to be had. We are looking for as many people as possible to play.

Email or call Lisa so she can get the teams organised. You don't have to be a seasoned player - we will teach you and promise that you will have fun.

Plans for 2017 and beyond - PPA and WDHS

2018 will see the centenary of the Ellengrove school - the little one-teacher school onto which the hall was built in 1966. The structure, together with awning, mud brick toilet block, disabled-access toilet and storeroom, known as Hollisdale Hall, is owned by the Pappinbarra community and maintained and improved by the Pappinbarra Progress Association Inc.

All but one of the seven committee members of the Wauchope District Historical Society Inc. (WDHS) are Pappinbarra people. Mary Wagg has been working on Pappinbarra's history for several years; WDHS will publish her book to coincide with the Ellengrove Centenary and plans are afoot to have a 'Back to Pappinbarra' weekend with houses and gardens open for visitors and a display in and around the hall. PPA and WDHS will cooperate on this. A Pappinbarra recipe book is being collated.

For the 2018 Pappinbarra calendar, the proposal is to have a historic theme, with photos from the past and present 'photoshopped' in interesting combinations. Landscapes, people, animals, vehicles, farm machinery and buildings are all subjects

of interest. Of course, we newcomers to the district will need assistance from the descendants of the original settlers to get the calendar, and all the proposed centenary celebrations happening. Advice, information and loan of photographs sought and welcomed - we can come to you to scan material.

2018 also marks the bicentenary of the exploration of our district by John Oxley. Jeannette Rainbow (WDHS treasurer and the only true local on the committee) is coordinating the commemoration; Rob Tickle (WDHS vice-president) is writing a book on Oxley; excursions, displays, re-enactments, a dinner, a dance, a kids' book and a play are all proposals for consideration and action. Jeannette welcomes input from interested community members and will assemble a working group to oversee planning. If you are interested please get involved!

Contact Jeannette on 0424 226 258 to offer help or suggestions on the Oxley Bicentenary, Lisa to contribute recipes or Jean to volunteer photos or artefacts for display.

JH

Bird of the Month - Brown Thornbill *Acanthiza pusilla*

Other names: Brown Tit, Dusky Warbler, Scrub Thornbill

Size: 9 to 10 cm.

Status: Secure in Qld, NSW, Vic, Tasmania and SA.

Of the twelve thornbills which make up the genus *Acanthiza*, the brown thornbill is a well known and more common member. Thornbills are characterised by their size, all being about 10 cm, and by their longish pointed bills.

The plumage is brown to olive-brown above with a rufous-brown rump and a whitish tipped tail with a sub-terminal black band. The underbody is buff to yellowish-white. The grey throat is streaked with black markings and the forehead is rufous with paler scalloping. The eye is deep red. Both sexes are alike.

Found in the eastern part of Australia from Proserpine in Queensland, southward to the Yorke Peninsula in South Australia and in Tasmania, brown thornbills inhabit shrubbery and understory growth in wet and dry forest and often along

watercourses. They associate with other small passerines singly or in pairs or small feeding groups. Being sedentary by nature, they actively search out insects, seeds and fruits in their own locality.



The call is often a sweet mellow 'ser-ser-ser chero-wup' warble with a variety of other higher pitched songs. They are also accomplished mimics.

Breeding takes place between July and January when a small oval nest with a side entrance, made of dry grass, bark fibres or other vegetation and lined with softer plant down and feathers, is placed usually low down in a bush, clump of grass or ferns. Clutch size is 3 eggs. These

are incubated by the female for 19 days and both parents feed the chicks before they fledge at about 16 days.


Peter Fackender

For further information or questions relating to this or other species contact can be made through this email address peter_fac@yahoo.com.au

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Plant of the Month: Giant Rat's Tail Grass

The common name - giant rat's tail grass - refers to two species, both closely related to giant Parramatta grass: *Sporobolus natensis* and *S. pyramidalis*. They were introduced to Australia in the early 1960s in contaminated pasture seed and have since spread from north Queensland to the NSW central coast, infesting vast areas.



These weedy grasses quickly dominate pastures, especially after any soil disturbance, decreasing carrying capacity, nutritional value and loosening the teeth of cattle and horses that graze them. Together, the weedy *Sporobolus* grasses threaten more than 60% of Queensland. Yes, more than 60%!

Like giant Parramatta grass, seeding is profuse and seeds persist in the soil for many years.

Crown rot has developed in giant rat's tail grass after spraying with Parra Trooper AND we now have a strain of Parra Trooper grown from crown rot-affected giant rat's tail plants ready to go out in the New Year.

In a collaborative response to what's potentially a very large scale problem, landholders, Councils, Landcare, and government agencies have come together to combat giant rat's tail. Trials using Parra Trooper cultured from crown rot in giant rat's tail grass (GRT) will go ahead on the Atherton Tableland and in the Fitzroy Basin in early 2017.

You can order the GRT Parra Trooper now and we will send it out. Just make

a note in the 'comments' field at the checkout www.parra-trooper.com.au/shop or call/text us on 0448 562 024.

We keep seeing and receiving reports of positive impacts on giant parramatta grass despite some adverse conditions for fungal growth this season. (Who said we were in for a wet spring??) We love to hear from you. Send us your story and photos via email cath@parra-trooper.com.au or facebook <http://www.facebook.com/parra.trooper.spores> or just ring us for a chat on 0448 562 024.

Jeremy Bradley and Cath Eggert

Farewell Lita: August 1949 - November 2016

Manuelita Hollis was laid to rest in Wauchope Cemetery after a requiem mass at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church. She and Geoff had been married for almost thirty years. Geoff, son of Herb Hollis and Gwen née Worth from Wootton, grew up on his parents' property and went off to Newcastle. For twenty years he worked with the engineering firm that makes Tangara electric trains, then bought the John Wallis Road property when Gwen and Herb retired to Beechwood.

After his divorce, Geoff was introduced long distance to Lita by a friend from Tanilba Bay. She was a wages clerk at the Singapore Embassy in Manila and after corresponding for a while, Geoff went over to meet her. The rest is history. He brought her back to Australia on 26 November thirty years ago and they married 10 January 1987. Lita's daughter Ivy was eleven at the time and Geoff had children Melinda and Justin.

Ivy told of how Lita worked hard to look after the three young children, but found peace and happiness at the farm with a soulmate to look after her. She was an honest person - 'straight down the line'. When the time came, she was proud to be a grandmother.

Melinda recalled that there were a 'few steps required' before Lita and her step-children 'reached a point of understanding. An amazing person, she adored Geoff and spent her days caring for him. Many people live their entire lives without such devotion. Never one to reserve her opinion, she was always genuine, truthful and grateful for everything.'



Geoff and Lita ran beef cattle and sold native plants at the Maitland markets till they decided to go travelling a couple of years ago. They were home for just five days after a great trip to southern Australia when Lita suffered an aneurism. Neighbour Paul Everingham came to help; the ambulance took her to Port Base, and airlifted to John Hunter. Sadly, an operation was to no avail and life support was switched off. Geoff, Ivy, Melinda and Justin were all there, grieving for a life cut short far too soon. Geoff says he thinks of Lita 'every hour of every day'. Ivy and Melinda are regular visitors. He has been keeping busy with the front-end loader and dozer and plans to go river fishing with an inflatable canoe.

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Meet the Neighbours: Sharlene and Ben Smith

Sharlene was born in Wagga Wagga in 1977 but moved to Newcastle after her father, who was in the RAAF, was killed in a car accident when she was only four and a half months old. Her mother eventually re married and they became a blended family of two boys and five girls.

Schooling was in Newcastle with Sharlene attending a Catholic Primary School (with lovely nuns), then Glendale Tech where she completed Year 10. After working as a barista until her early twenties, she decided it was time to get some qualifications so she undertook a Certificate 3 in Childcare. This stood her in good stead; she then stopped work to have her children - Larnah, Abbey and Brooke.

The year before last she completed a Certificate 3 in Aged Care and Disability. Currently working as a volunteer at Bundaleer, Sharlene is very keen to find work with the disabled.



Ben was born in Newcastle in 1975 and has lived there most of his life. After finishing Year 12 he trained as a fitter and worked in shops and mines until 2005 when he started his own earth moving company. He ran this successfully until he and Sharlene went travelling in 2013.

Ben met Sharlene at a night club and suggested going for a bike ride. She presumed he meant on a push bike, but - surprise - he turned up on a large and powerful motor bike! She hung on very tightly for 30 k and they haven't been apart since! They dated for about seven years and moved in together to start their family in 2004.

In 2013 they decided that Australia was a lot bigger than Newcastle and set off on an adventure lasting two and a half years. Off they went with their three girls in a camper trailer. Very little planning was involved; they just went wherever the mood took them. Ben loves to fish so they purchased a canoe which they carried on top of the camper trailer and quickly discovered that the crocodiles were bigger than the canoe! After some modification to the trailer, the canoe was replaced by a beautiful boat. After lashing it on, they set off south then up the middle of Australia and down the west coast.

The family spent four months at Kalumburu Aboriginal community in the Kimberley. This was the highlight of their trip; they learned bush skills, lived off the land fishing, hunting,

crabbing and finding abalone (yum), ate bush tucker and huge quantities of mangoes and also learned a bit of the local language of Kwini and Bardi. The children did distance education, talking to their teacher from a public phone booth with feral roosters trying to attack them! They attended the local Aboriginal school for three weeks and made some good friends. They left before the wet season or they would have been trapped for a few more months.

On return to Newcastle, the family tried to settle down to life in the 'Big Smoke' but were restless, yearning for wide open spaces and fresh air. After searching the net and the country for eight months and wasting lots of energy, they found a beautiful property in our special valley - one look and they fell in love! They have 298 acres, a large house with a flat underneath, a guest house, swimming pool and sheds everywhere. Visitors abound and the accommodation is often full of family and friends.

Larnah, now 14, goes to Wauchope High, Abbey, 11, and Brooke, 10, attend Beechwood Primary. Sharlene is hoping to find work in the disability field and Ben is busy fencing, mending bridges and trying to control the feral dog population with poison and his trusty gun. They are a happy, chatty family who have taken to life on the farm with gusto!

Mary Walker

Susan Ashton RN



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Wild dogs in Pappinbarra

It seems as if everyone has heard about our sheep and lamb losses from a visiting pack of dogs. Others have had calves taken. Packs of up to eight motley mongrels have been sighted and local marksmen (thanks Ben and Anthony!) have managed to shoot several. Nowhere in the district is free from the possibility of wild dog attack; they even venture close to towns. They are reputed to kill desexed female domestic dogs and abduct intact females.

Mick Thorman of Local Land Service (LLS) at Kempsey tells me that the threat increases in summer because there are lots of pups on the ground - hungry and into chasing everything. Numbers of feral dogs are on the up everywhere. This is due not only to irresponsible dumping of unwanted dogs but also the ability of crossbred dogs to breed twice yearly.

Wild dogs, according to the Department of Primary Industries website (www.dpi.nsw.gov.au) are highly adaptable, living anywhere there is food, water and shelter, mostly eating fresh meat (kills) and carrion, but subsisting on insects and fruit if necessary (as do foxes). As well as domestic livestock, 'common prey items include wallabies, rabbits, possums, wombats, echidnas, birds, reptiles, native rodents and other small mammals'. They will chase koalas when they move from tree to tree on the ground.

Pack members 'meet and separate over time and rely on vocal communication' - howling. Each dog has a range of up to 4000 hectares in our part of the country and will hunt solo or join with the pack to hunt larger prey when seasonal availability of food decreases or there are pups to be fed. In the excitement of the attack, wild dogs, like foxes, can embark on a frenzy of killing, leaving mauled and maimed livestock that have to be put down - not a pretty sight - and a thankless task.

Because of the numbers of feral dogs, pure dingoes are highly unlikely to occur here. Wild dogs threaten the survival of native wildlife as well as the livelihoods of stockmen; they are an economic liability. The Local Land Services Act 2013 legislates for wild dog control, requiring 'owners and occupiers of land to eradicate, continuously suppress or destroy wild dogs on their property'. Mick tells me that a coordinated approach to baiting, with landholders cooperating, is most successful.

More bad news: baiting is very tightly regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). In this era of



Photo: Richard Ali

legislation, EPA requires bait users to have a 'chemical user's card', issued after completion of a two-day Chemical Certificate course costing \$300. The card covers use of all chemicals (farm or industry) and has to be renewed every five years.

The good news is that LLS will run a three-hour course covering the use of 1080 and 'Pandore' rabbit poison at Pappinbarra free of charge if we can get a decent number of participants (at least 10).

1080, when put out properly in the ground in accordance with instructions, has been shown to have little impact on quolls (native predators), but deals with feral dogs, cats and foxes. Goannas love it but are immune to the poison! If you were prepared to sit for long hours with a gun to deal with wild dogs, you could say no to baiting on green grounds; otherwise it seems the way to go to both conserve native wildlife and keep our stock safe.

Ring George on 65 876 077 to indicate your interest in the course. The more landholders who participate, the better our chances of preventing further wild dog attacks.

Jean Hegarty

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Critter of the Month: Feathertail Gliders

"There's a mouse on the bathroom floor!" I was about to plant a foot on it but, fortunately, had a closer look. Mice don't have feathery tails, nor are they as endearing as this tiny creature, which seemed exhausted - possibly from trying to scale tiled walls.



As a kid, I once met a woman who kept a feathertail glider in her cleavage. She had rescued it from her cat, but I don't remember if it was a permanent fixture!

I held this one close and it seemed unperturbed. We supposed it had somehow got in the previous evening, so must have been tired and hungry. On the lime tree, it went from flower to flower slurping nectar before disappearing, hopefully to join the rest of the group in some hollow.

A few weeks later, we found another, slightly smaller one - actually in the bath and paddling frantically. Dried off and ensconced in a wool sock, it seemed disinclined to move, so we hung it and sock on the lime tree the following evening. I watched for a while and there was no movement but it slipped away during the next hour.

Over the years of living here, we have had many feathertail glider visitors- leaping from ceiling to floor and careering up the blind cords at an incredible pace. Ken says there are two species in the valley; we have both of them. A couple of months ago, I spotted what I thought was a clump of dust under the bath. Reprimanding myself for neglecting the housework, I picked it up. It moved! A juvenile male, weighing little more than four grams, he seemed on the way out, but was successfully reared to about ten grams (still tiny but mature) and released just before Christmas. Not so lucky was his sister, whom I found unmarked and dead under the steps. We assume their mother had died. Ken took a sample for DNA analysis.

Angela Wall tells me they used to have gliders come in on the washing quite often; that explains how they get into our bedroom and bathroom, though other visitors - *Antechinus* and rodents - just slip through small openings and take up permanent residence if undetected. I'm a feathertail glider fan.

JH

Feathertail Gliders (*Acrobates pygmaeus* & *A. frontalis*) are a kind of possum and are the smallest gliding mammals in the world, adults reaching only 12 grams at maturity (the size of a small mouse). Being a marsupial, the females have a pouch into which the tiny babies, only 3 mm long at birth, crawl and attach to a teat. Feathertails feed on nectar, pollen and small insects, spending most of their time high in the forest canopy. They will also come into gardens where flowering plants are numerous so keep an eye out next time your bottle-brushes and lilly-pillies are flowering!

Angela Frost



Photos: Silva Vaughan-Jones

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Rural Fire Brigade News

It has been fairly quiet in our area. Even with the very hot weather and a small amount of rain we have been lucky. The coastal brigades have been fairly busy and a substantial amount of rain would help us all out.

On Christmas day there was a suspicious fire on Mountain Valley Road. Hollisdale's crew was not available but six trucks from Wauchope, Sancrox and King Creek gave Pappinbarra a hand to extinguish the fire. Many thanks to all.

Our sector meeting was held in December and was well attended. Training with Pappinbarra and Beechwood has been organised. The day has been changed to the second Saturday of the month.

Permits to burn are available only for piles of one square metre or less. Don't risk an escaped fire or prosecution!

Chris Roelandts
Hollisdale Captain

Permits are required for burning off.
You also need to give your neighbours at least 24 hours notice.
IN CASE OF FIRE – CALL 000

Fire Permit Officers: Upper Pappinbarra: Steve Ostler 6587-6090; Bob Ostler 6587-6180; Anthony Wall 6587-6127 or Andrew Jarrett 6587-6181; Hollisdale and Lower Pappinbarra: Peter Michael 65876022, Chris Roelandts 65856700; Beechwood: Sam Elphick 0428-856-222.

In the veggie patch

Beat the heat this February, work under the shade of a tree. With the early January rain the garden has boomed. Many gardeners are harvesting cucumbers and picking tomatoes. Keep an eye out for grubs and snails as they can be quite active with the warm weather. There is still time to plant your quicker maturing veggies such as radish, lettuce, tomatoes and all the herbs. If your garden's struggling to hold moisture try adding some organic matter such as compost or mushroom fines.



Happy gardening
Brendan

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Pappinbarra Community Connect

To connect with Pappinbarra Valley residents for trading, swapping, selling and other services go to Pappinbarra Community Connect on Facebook: [facebook.com/groups/850891678290572/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/850891678290572/)
(Admin Damian Privett)

To find out more about our monthly 'Grown and Gathered' market (or to give us a 'like'!) go to [facebook.com/grownandgatheredcommunitymarket/](https://www.facebook.com/grownandgatheredcommunitymarket/) or google 'Grown and Gathered Market'



FAWNA NSW INC
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Caring for orphaned and injured wildlife is a specialised task; wildlife carers go through a thorough training course and are mentored by experienced carers as they begin caring for animals. It is a rewarding job although often it involves late night feeds, scratchy bitey animals who don't want to be handled and a great deal of heartbreak. But the joy of rearing a gorgeous Australian native animal to adulthood or releasing an animal after nursing it back to health makes it all worth it.

In our region FAWNA (For Australian Wildlife Needing Aid) is the group licensed by the NSW Government to care for native fauna. It is not legal to keep native wildlife without a permit in Australia. Some birds eg budgies and reptiles like bearded dragons, can be kept as pets without a licence but they must be bred in captivity and not collected from the wild. Even housing wildlife temporarily such as when caring for an orphan is illegal without a licence. So, if you want to look after native animals then you need to join FAWNA and do their training courses to become qualified.

Thanks to FAWNA's dedicated volunteers there is a 24-hour hotline that the public can call if they find injured or orphaned wildlife. They will also come out to help dispatch an injured native animal if there is no way it can be saved. All the work carried out by FAWNA is voluntary, however there are always costs involved with running an organisation and some carers receive support if they have high costs associated with the fauna they are rehabilitating, so donations are always welcome. The proceeds from the charity table at this month's Grown and Gathered Market (5 February) are going to FAWNA.

If you do find an injured or orphaned animal, keep it warm in a dark and quiet place, don't try to feed it and call **6581 4141**. Alternatively, take it to your local vet. For more information go to fawna.org.au



Photos: courtesy of FAWNA Facebook page

Angela Frost

PPA Matters

PPA Committee meetings – every third Friday of the month 6 pm at the Hall. Interested members welcome.

Hollisdale Hall Hire - booking essential. Contact George Hegarty 6587 6077.

Upper Pappinbarra facilities and tennis court - contact Lisa McLeod 0418 220 138 or Robyn Flanagan 6587 6011

Pitchfork

Contributions welcome. Email to editor Jean Hegarty jeanmay@activ8.net.au by Thursday 16 February. (Copy may be edited for reasons of space or clarity. The views expressed in *Pitchfork* are not necessarily those of the PPA).

Advertising Contact Liz Gough lizabeth52@hotmail.com 0473 170 761 for info on both casual and regular ads. If your business would like a one-off A4 advertising insert in Pitchfork, provide us with 300 copies and we will distribute for \$30. Deadline is 22 February for the March issue. Classified ads are free for members.

Circulation: 300 hard copies; over 100 by email. Comes out the weekend before First Friday.

Production including ad design: Angela Frost angfrost@hotmail.com

