



PITCHFORK

Pappinbarra Valley Monthly News

Pappinbarra Progress Association

May 2014

Valley Happenings

PPA membership now stands at 104. Welcome to new members Jane Caldicott, John Kidman, Mick Carle, and Scott Lindsay. Thankyou to all those who have renewed. From 1 May, membership carries over to 30 June 2015. To join, pay at First Friday or complete the form on page 8.

May First Friday is on at the Hollisdale Hall from 6 pm on Friday 2 May. Christine Nolan, Damian Privett and Emma Frost will cook steak, bacon, sausages, vegie burgers, chicken rissoles, onions, chicken satay and prawn satay sticks, at reasonable cost. Water, soft drinks and poppers available; bring any other liquid refreshment you desire! All welcome to unwind and socialise.

April First Friday members' draw was won by George Hegarty; it reverts to \$10 for May. Suzanne Leigh won the raffle and chose the Lewis' Meats voucher. Thanks to Trevor, Michéle and Amy for a very smooth operation on the barbecue and to all who helped with preparation and cleaning up.

Hollisdale RFS will train on Saturday 3 May. Meet at the fire shed in full uniform.

Pappinbarra RFS now has an officially opened shed! See p 2 for Times Past there and a report of the opening.

Pitchfork choir invites you to sing at Hollisdale Hall 10-12 midday on Saturday 10 May. All welcome!

Council communicates with our community on Wednesday 14 May. See p4

Social Tennis at the Upper Pappinbarra court on Friday 9 May - gold coin donation. Kids from 6 pm with fun lessons; adults from 7. Bring things to barbecue or snacks.

All Saints' Pappinbarra invites all to join in the 2 pm service on Sunday 24 May to welcome our new Bishop, Dr Sarah Macneil. And/or bring a plate to share off the back of the ute for afternoon tea round 2.45.



Trivia Night is on again to challenge the grey matter. See poster this page.

Bush Dance on Saturday 14 June with Russell Churcher will be free thanks to a generous grant from Port Macquarie Hastings Council. Admission (including supper) by ticket only - numbers limited due to our small hall. Tickets available from **ecoWild** and **The Living Room** in Wauchope after 1 June.

Pappinbarra Progress Association
2014

Pappinbarra

Trivia

Got lots of pointless trivia

stuffed into your brain?

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at the
Hollisdale
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Saturday 24 May 7pm

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Bring your own refreshments and snacks and gold coins for games

Times Past and Present: Pappinbarra Fire Brigade

The NSW Rural Fire Service Deputy Commissioner, Rob Rogers and Deputy Mayor for Port Macquarie Hastings Council, Adam Roberts, officially opened the new fire shed at Pappinbarra on Saturday 12th of April. In his speech Mr Rogers congratulated Captain Steve Ostler on the strength of support for the fire brigade. Some other rural brigades, he said, were struggling to maintain numbers, but Pappinbarra and Hollisdale were well supported.

Five Pappinbarra fire fighters, Steve Ostler, Andrew Jarrett, Anthony Wall, Bob Ostler and Phil Cordell received long service awards in a ceremony at Wauchope in the morning before the opening at Pappinbarra in the afternoon. The opening was well attended by firefighters from Pappinbarra and Hollisdale, as well as representatives from the King Creek, Bellangry, Sancrox, Rollands Plains and Byabarra brigades, RFS fire communications, fire control and community members. Jack Flanagan, a member of the original Pappinbarra bush fire brigade, also attended and enjoyed seeing the progress made since the early days. Tony Ostler, the only other original brigade member, was unable to attend because he is recovering in hospital from a fall. From his hospital bed, however, he clearly recalled his early firefighting days in the 1950s when he had a farm on the Left Arm.

Tony's next-door neighbour, Cec Howse, looked after their only firefighting equipment - backpacks, a pump and a couple of hoes. "We didn't have a truck for quite a while," Tony recalled. "One of us would take his own truck. My brother Bruce [Ostler] was Captain. He was a very good bushman - knew the bush and knew Pappinbarra. Bruce, Cec, myself, David Ostler, Norm Blanche, Jack Flanagan, George Smurthwaite and Joe Patrick were volunteers. Joe Patrick was a very good bushman too. Later his eldest son John joined as well."

"Our relationship with the Forestry was top class. They would warn us when they were burning off and often wanted us to do back-burns. Max Gatenby was a forester in the early days."

Recalling the fires he attended in the upper Pappinbarra in those times, Tony commented that "We had nothing like the bushfires in the Blue Mountains or the South Coast or Victoria". One big one he remembers well was when "a farmer lit a fire then went off for the weekend. It took off, jumping creeks, and almost reached the Junction. We didn't manage to put it out but the rain did. Bill Flaherty was a terrific bloke but had a habit of doing

things like that. Someone had a merino ram and it got singed - the fire travelled so fast - the speed was amazing."

"Another fire came from Les Forrester's; it got out of control and went through to Mount Boss. Only rain put it out. We had to make sure it was out. It actually did more good than harm."

The fire brigade helped when Joe Patrick's father-in-law, who



Pappinbarra and Hollisdale RFS volunteers

had Alzheimer's, was visiting, went out walking with a little dog and got lost. Pappinbarra is pretty wild country; the fire brigade went looking but never found him. The police came upon him the next day on the road down past Riversleigh [Anthony Wall's].

"The women," Tony recalls, "played a big part in the early days of firefighting." Not only did they keep up refreshments for the firefighters but, probably more importantly, they were responsible for keeping the milking going on the farms while the men were away.

The next improvement for the brigade was when they acquired a trailer with a water tank. It was housed in a small shed where the cement slab is now and they used their utes to pull it. The brigade had, however, acquired a truck by the time the second shed was opened in April 1986 by Hastings Mayor, Bob Woodlands.

The present shed represents another leap forward, housing two trucks as well as a kitchen/crew room and toilet and shower facilities. Captain Steve Ostler thanked all the people who were involved in the creation of the new shed, which should serve the community for many years.



Deputy Fire Commissioner Rob Rogers with Captain Steve Ostler at the shed opening.

Sue Frost

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Hollisdale RFS

Hollisdale has nothing to report on the fire front - no call outs since January. The new digital radio system is partly in use and is great! I called from Pappinbarra and it was crystal clear. Soon it will be fully operational. We have no news on our proposed extension. We have put in grant submissions for much-needed equipment and can only keep our fingers crossed. Good luck to all the crew members advancing their training.

Chris Roelandts

No Permit Required

Prior to a burn you must to give your neighbours notice 24 hours in advance
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: Lyn Blythe 6587-6186; Beechwood: Sam Elphick 0428-856-222.

Snake Alert

Every year at around this time the Pappinbarra Valley sees a major peak in the snake population. The reason for this is the sudden appearance of large numbers of juvenile snakes, some of which have hatched from eggs that were laid in late spring or early summer, while others have been born as fully functional little snakes after being incubated inside their mothers through Summer. Late summer to autumn is a good time for snakes to be born as temperatures are falling and there is an abundance of suitable food for young snakes, including newly-emerged frogs and young lizards.

The two snakes that we have come across most often during our time in the Pappinbarra Valley are the Red-bellied Black (*Pseudechis porphyriacus*) and the Small-eyed Snake (*Cryptophis nigrescens*, sometimes called *Rhinoplocephalus nigrescens*). Both of these species are venomous and they both give birth to fully-formed live young. They are often confused, as both are grey to black on the back with pink to red bellies, but Red-bellied Black Snakes grow to larger size (quite often to 2 m, compared with 50 cm to 1 m in Small-eyed Snakes), are usually jet black rather than grey, and have a more richly coloured belly, especially the margins which are a bright crimson. For a positive identification of a well-restrained or dead snake, the most reliable way to tell them apart is to look at the belly scale immediately in front of the cloaca or vent – in Red-bellied Blacks it is divided into two by a central split, while in Small-eyed Snakes it is undivided like the other belly scales.

Small-eyed Snakes are shy animals that spend their days hidden away under rocks and logs. They are most active at night when they move around in search of sleeping lizards. We often see them when we are moving sheets of corrugated iron or other building materials and it is not rare to find two or more huddled together. The Red-bellied Black is one of the scariest looking of Australia's many different kinds of poisonous snakes – but despite its ferocious appearance and reputation, it is not especially

dangerous and may even be an asset around a property. Unlike some other local snakes – Brown and Tiger Snakes in particular – the Red-bellied Black is difficult to provoke and it usually moves away rather than standing its ground. Even if they do bite – and they might if accidentally trodden on - the bites are rarely if ever fatal, even if left untreated. This is because their venom works mainly as an anticoagulant though it can also damage muscle tissues. The bites typically cause local swelling, local or general muscle pain, nausea and vomiting, but there is only one recorded fatality and that was more than 100 years ago. If you do get bitten, apply first aid (if you don't know how it is a good idea to find out!) and either call an ambulance or go to hospital. There is no point taking risks with any snake bite. One thing that is good to remember is that a bite from a new-born snake is just as

dangerous as from an adult. Most snakes produce lots of young every season. But the world is a very dangerous place for a young snake and few if any babies will survive through to maturity. Kookaburras and other predatory birds take a lot of young snakes, as do goannas. But even more are probably eaten by other snakes, including even their own parents. Yes, cannibalism is rife in the snake world, and newly born snakes generally need to move away from their mother quickly, before she gives in to the munchies. Red-bellied Black Snakes are thought to be particularly partial to other snakes, and it is claimed that having one or more around a property will keep away more dangerous species such as Brown and Tiger Snakes.



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Meet the Neighbours: Todd and Belinda Barnes

Todd has been a local boy all his life; he was born and raised near Taree on a small farm. When he was in his teens, he moved to North Haven with his parents and brother, Jamie. Belinda was born in Sydney and moved to Sancrox as a teenager. They used to knock around in the same group of party loving P platers and gradually became an item.

Todd trained as a Boiler Maker/Welder and moved to Brisbane in search of work. Belinda followed him there and also found work. After a while in his chosen trade, he got a bit sick of it, so decided to set up his own mowing business called 'Buga the Lawns' (typical Todd!) They both enjoyed living in Brisbane and had their two lovely girls, Jessica and Emily. But Todd had a dream to raise his children on a farm so that they could experience the joys of a rural lifestyle.

Todd and Belinda looked around for quite a while and eventually found their perfect patch of paradise in the Pappinbarra Valley. They sold their house and the mowing business and moved into our community. Belinda's mum, Dallas, also moved and lives right next door and Todd's parents are building in Beechwood, so finding a baby sitter is never a problem! On their 40 acres - with about a kilometre of river frontage - they have a large variety of animals: cows, pigs, chooks, turkeys, geese, guinea fowl and a kelpie called Diesel. The children, Jessica aged 9 and Emily nearly 7, love the animals and spend most of their time outside living the dream. Three years ago Todd and Belinda, along with Todd's brother Jamie and his wife Penny bought a Port Macquarie business called 'Designer Living Kitchens', which they set about building up. Jamie is a Cabinet Maker/Joiner so knew the manufacturing side of the business. Belinda's responsibility is



office management and making sure everyone gets paid. Todd turns his hand to anything but his main focus is ensuring that his team of 45 employees and 10-12 contractors are happy and productive. Penny runs their Laurieton branch.

Everything was going really well until they received a phone call from the police in the early hours of 1st March: their factory and showroom in Port was on fire. Unfortunately the building burnt to the ground along with 30 completed kitchens waiting to be installed. Todd says "Sorry - to all my neighbours for the fearful racket from my ute in the early hours of that morning." Most corners were taken on two wheels!

In typical Barnes fashion, 'Designer Living Kitchens' was up and running again in about a week, with Todd, Belinda, Jamie and Penny working seven days a week. Their loyal employees have been fantastic in helping out and ensuring that all the kitchens were delivered on time - no mean feat!

Todd has always had a quiet hankering to try out his acting skills and embraced his role as Greg in *Bushed* last year with gusto. In fact, he said it's the best thing he's ever done and he had a ball. (Belinda is very clear that she has absolutely no desire to get on stage.)

Todd has a reputation for talking to anyone, so if you see him at the supermarket, Bunnings or down the street, stop and have a chat but be aware that Belinda is probably waiting patiently in the car nearby!



Mary Walker

Council News

The previous Rural Consultation Forums have been replaced by a program of meetings called Engaging and Communicating With Our Community.

The meeting for Pappinbarra is scheduled for Wednesday, 14 May 2014 in the Hollisdale Hall.

A meet and greet the Councillors afternoon tea will be held at 5.30pm with the meeting to commence at 6.00pm.

Any questions should be lodged on a "Question for Engaging and Communicating With Our Community" form (these will be available at May First Friday).

You may also visit <http://www.pmhc.nsw.gov.au/About-Us/How-Council-Works/Council-Committee-Meetings/Engaging-Communicating-With-Our-Community> for further information.



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Plant of the month: The Python Tree - *Gossia bidwillii* - Family Myrtaceae

This attractive tree, uncommon in rainforests and their remnants in the Pappinbarra Valley, is found from far North-eastern Queensland to the NSW eastern ranges and coast as far south as the Hunter Valley. The bark is shed in flakes, leaving brown, green, orange and yellow blotches on a beautiful variegated trunk with a sheen like a snake's skin - the first thing you notice when you stumble across it. Oddly, the trunk is cool to the touch. Very slow growing, its wood is extremely hard, second only to African ebony. Aboriginal Australians used it for digging sticks and possibly weapons, while later in Australia's history, cogs and hard-wearing parts for paddle steamers, cogs for windmills, and wooden nails were fashioned from its timber. Branches often have bends; these were used for ribs in boat building, while straight sections became keel and centreboard.

Python tree reaches about 20 metres after many years, when its diameter at breast height can be 20-30 cm. Like many Myrtaceae, its scented flowers have prominent cream stamens and the small dark berries (crowned by the calyx like a lilly-pilly) with 2-5 hard mauve seeds which are eaten by birds. The 5-9 cm long, thin, more or less soft leaves are opposite, smooth and glossy, usually with long fine points. Dotted with numerous conspicuous oil dots, they have a pleasant aroma when crushed. Pythonwood Road, off Pappinbarra Road, is named for the Python Tree.



trunk

[References available on request]
 Editor's note: The 3,000 species of the world-wide aromatic Myrtle Family occur from tropical to temperate regions, mainly South America, Malesia [Malay Peninsula, Malaysia, Philippines, Indonesia and New Guinea] and Australia, which has 1,400 different species, including almost 800 species of eucalypts.

The Python Tree was originally classified as a *Myrtus* [myrtle], then, in 1920, *Austromyrtus*, and, late last century, moved, together with 14 other nice little Australian rainforest trees to a new genus, *Gossia*. Queensland botanists were so thrilled with their Premier's gift of a new herbarium at Mount Coot-tha that they named the new genus in his honour!

Trevor Smith and Peter Michael

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Bird of the Month: Superb Fairy-wren *Malurus cyaneus*

Other names: Superb Blue-wren, Blue Wren, Jenny Wren

Size: 13 - 14 cm.

Status: Secure. Does not occur in WA or NT.

'Australia's most popular bird' and 'Least faithful bird in the world' are just two titles given to the Superb Fairy-wren. The adult breeding male of the species is highly coloured, with a brilliant blue crown, upper back and ear coverts margined by a black nape and deep blue/black breast. The wings are grey/brown while the under-body is grey/white and the blue tail is usually held erect while not flying. Females are brown, paler underneath, have a rich rufous patch around each eye and brown tails which may have a faint blue/green wash. Males in eclipse plumage (non-breeding) are like females but have a



blue/grey tail and no orange colour around the eye. Juveniles have brown tails. Young males are often seen with a partial or incomplete moult into breeding plumage.

The Superb Fairy-wren forms small family groups of 3 to 5 or more birds consisting of the senior male and female with other younger birds from the last year's broods or from nearby groups.

They call loudly for such a small bird. Calls

include 'prip-prip' contact calls between individuals in a feeding group. A long reeling, trilling call is broadcast from prominent spots, generally by males.

The Superb Fairy Wren occurs from SE Queensland, through eastern New South Wales, throughout Victoria and Tasmania and across to the Eyre Peninsula in South Australia. They are

found in a variety of habitats including woodland, heath, forest and urban parks and gardens. Some dense shrubbery or undergrowth is necessary to shelter these tiny birds from predators or for roosting. They feed actively on the ground and in lower foliage, seeking mainly insects. Breeding occurs in spring and summer, mostly August to January. The female builds a small round nest made of grass stems and rootlets and lined with feathers with a side



entrance. Three to four eggs are laid and incubated by the female for 14 days. The male and other members of the group assist in feeding the young, who leave the nest after a further 14 days. More than one clutch can be bred in a season. During this nesting period, sexual promiscuity occurs with the laying female seeking out other nearby males.

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

Peter Fackender

In the Vegie Patch

This is the month to get the most growth on all the vegies in the garden. Lots of organic fertilizers available. 'Seasol' or 'Fish and Kelp' are great ways to promote green growth for the perfect spinach or deep green Kale. 'Nitrosol' or liquid blood and bone suit broccoli and cauliflower. These products are readily available and are easy to use.

Tuscan Kale is a super vegie. It is an heirloom variety with great flavour and is a good source of vitamins, minerals, fibre and antioxidants.

Stay alert for cabbage moth, with increasing numbers after the rain. Dust your vegies or use Yates 'Success', which is organic!



Happy Gardening
Brendan

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Allsorts Fable: Summer disturbance

In mid-summer a gang of noisy Pied Currawongs invaded our patch. First in the morning there were three loud currawongs proposing that they were first among the birds and doing aerobatics and generally hustling the smaller birds. But then there were five... "No, eight. No, five more, thirteen..." In no time there was a big mob of strident currawongs letting everyone and everything know they were there. It was Cronulla Beach all over again. "Listen to us, we are louder, more deserving, more local than all of you!"

Even the fat Wonga Pigeons emerged startled from the dark scrub, and a pair of White Headed Pigeons turned up baring lipstick red lips. A young Scrub Turkey came out to see what the

fuss was all about, and the little birds made rapid sorties to dash for food in the mêlée and retreat to shelter. Only the kookaburra was unperturbed and continued his daily survey of food and territory with assertive swoops from low branch to low branch, confident that although the currawong has a big beak the kookaburra has a bigger beak.

It was very disturbing, but in the end everyone had a good day. The gang moved on. Some feathers were put out, but no lives lost.

Moral: Who belongs tends their nest.

Editor's Musings

Clearing out aged shrubbery today, I found the bower of a satin bird - the local name for *Ptilonorhynchus violaceus*. An ancient golden Christmas bauble lay gleaming there alongside the usual collection of blue baling twine and purple petals.



In Peru, the Incas fashioned gold; in Scotland, archaeologists uncover amulets, necklets and even officers' gold tableware from Roman times; in

Ireland, bogs yield delicate golden Celtic ornaments. The alchemist spent a lifetime in his quest to turn base metal into gold. Australia left the convict era behind with thousands flocking to be part of the gold rush from the mid Nineteenth Century. The worth of an Indian is measured by the gold jewellery adorning his wife. Our noisy violet-eyed feathered friend is not alone when it comes to gold. Though not magnetic like iron, gold exerts an irresistible attraction.

Buried treasure, currency, a show of wealth, a store of riches: gold, though displaced by manufactured money still sets the standard.

Gold is pretty thin on the ground in Pappinbarra and my geologist friends tell me that isn't likely to change. Deregulation of the dairy industry hasn't helped socio-economically either. In days past, those with ample assets donated land for the church and the hall, advanced money to buy the Ellengrove School, and financed the purchase of, or donated materials for community buildings. The rest of the community gave their time and energy in pursuit of common goals. With the present conspicuous lack of millionaires in the valley (or anyone remotely approaching that status), we now rely on grants to get the big-ticket items kick-started. Volunteers are the gold of our community. They find their rewards in jobs well done, visions realised and contentment in living the good life.

Some of them even wear gold uniforms! [See Times Past and Present page 2]

JH

Hastings Farmers' Market

On Saturday 24 May the Hastings Farmers' Market will be back in its home, the Wauchope Showgrounds. The first of the new season fruit and vegies will be for sale, such as freshly harvested apples and pears from Armidale and hopefully the first harvest of mandarins from Moorland. And new at the market are Bellingen Bakery with European style pastries, organic sourdough bread and homemade pies using seasonal organic produce and Jenny's

Kitchen with relishes, pickles and chutneys - all homemade. Jenny will make pancakes with fresh banana, strawberries, honey & cinnamon and have baked goods such as quiche, frittata, and savoury muffins for sale. A feast for all! The Hastings Farmers' Market is on rain or shine from 8 am to 12 noon. See you there.

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Photo Competition

A reminder for all those photographers out there! Photos must be hangable, even mounted on stiff black cardboard is fine. Photos must be taken locally. Entry is \$5 per photo, \$2 for 16 & under. Write your name, location of photo and category on the back and bring them to First Friday or call Sharada on 6587 6079.

Entries close 26 July.

PPA Matters

PPA Committee meetings – Usually the Friday before First Friday at 6pm. All welcome.

General Meetings – quarterly. Next general meeting will follow the AGM in July/August. All welcome.

Facilities for Hire

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Upper Pappinbarra facilities and tennis court - contact Damian Privett 6587 6185

Pitchfork

Circulation

Pitchfork has hardcopy circulation of 300 plus email of about 100. It comes out on the weekend before First Friday - Friday 30 May for the June Issue. Material for the June Issue to the Editor by Thursday 22 May. We run both casual and regular advertisements at very competitive rates. Contact Sharada Boyce.

Production Team

Editor: Jean Hegarty jeanmay@bluemaxx.com.au 6587 6077

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The views expressed in *Pitchfork* are not necessarily those of the PPA.

Pappinbarra Progress Association Committee

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Other Committee Members:

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George Hegarty

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PPA Membership 2013-2014

\$5 per adult

PLEASE PRINT

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Send cash or cheque made out to "Pappinbarra Progress Association" to: Sue Frost, 2751 Pappinbarra Rd, Pappinbarra NSW 2446

