

# MOGGILL CREEK CATCHMENT GROUP

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Print Post Approved PP 424022/2141

## NEWSLETTER

## SUMMER 2007

*Synoum glandulosum*  
see p. 7 (Scentless Rosewood) ►  
Photo - Bryan Hacker



▲  
What do you know about lichens?  
see p. 7 (Lichens)  
Photos - Graeme Wilson

Cottage opening see p. 6 ►  
Photo - Geoff Lawrence



# Editorial

*It has been a somewhat perplexing year for us revegetators, and that because of the Climate Change thing. We began with yet another failure of normal wet season rain and were inclined to think that we may have been going through a "seven lean years" experience; perhaps soon to end. But by mid-year we were fairly well persuaded that something different had come to stay. Then we felt that our expertise should allow us to begin making recommendations about how to go about our work; we even said that we soon would. But by the following newsletter it seemed that we didn't really have anything new to say, and now, particularly after recent welcome rain, the general mood seems to be that we should simply carry on as usual.*

*And that "usual" is to plant a wide range of species, accepting that we may put in a species here and there which is not suited to the particular situation but not being so foolish as to place one where it is well enough known to have little chance. Apart from that, surface management to maximize water retention and removal of competing weeds is going to be especially important.*

*The great thing is the continuing enthusiasm, shown by members still taking plants from the nursery at about one thousand a month.*

## Coordinator's Report

A lot has been happening in the catchment lately. Finally, the two concrete rainwater tanks have been installed at the Brookfield Produce Store, and I thank the owners for allowing them to be placed within their grounds and connecting them to their gutters. Already, they are nearly full and the water can be used for group plantings nearby, plants at other catchment sites and for fire control (if needed by BCC fire crews with their portable tanker).

We have been awarded an Envirofund Grant to restore Gap Creek and establish a Birdwing Vine Refuge. I thank Richmond Birdwing Recovery Network's Don Sands and Michael Humphries (Section 12 Leader) for assisting in developing the project and application. The group has also sponsored Andrew Rogers in his Envirofund Grant to rid part of Moggill Creek between Boscombe Rd and Creekside Park of Chinese Elms, Privets and Camphor Laurels. This will be done on private lands with landholders contributing a small proportion of the cost.

So, we can look forward to a lot happening on the revegetation front.

Dalton Rogers of Brookfield State School won the Brisbane-wide GOA Billboard Poster competition. Congratulations. And the catchment has had a number of visits by students (from Japan and UQ, St Lucia) and public servants from China to look at what the Group is achieving. I thank Group members who have helped me lead these field trips.

Next year looks pretty busy with the development of the Cottage and its grounds as a community environmental resource.

Contact me on 0408 774 631 if you have projects that you think need doing.

*Greg Siepen*

Moggill Creek Catchment Group is a volunteer action group aiming to conserve and improve the natural environment of its catchment on both private and public land.

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## Chairman's Report

The year 2007 has been a very significant year for the Catchment. Being the year of our 10th Birthday, we have had much to celebrate. We have retained our membership level of 350 members and that level has been pretty well constant over the last four years. We continue to focus on revegetation and habitat restoration both on public and private land.

The highlight for the year was the opening of our new Catchment Environmental Centre, "The Cottage", by Lord Mayor Campbell Newman on 13 October 2007. The event was attended by more than 100 members and friends. Traditional Owner Kathryn Fisher welcomed the group and performed several dances with some of her relations. The Brookfield Branch of the CWA provided some delicious refreshments and Carolyn Parsons arranged activities for the young people present. It was a day that I will always remember and I am sure that will be so for others too.

Greg Siepen, our BCC-funded Coordinator, has been active through the year attracting funds for a number of worthwhile projects. Chief amongst these would be funding for (a) two horse management workshops; (b) the new water tanks behind Brookfield Produce, that enable us to harvest water for various important revegetation projects and (c) for establishing a corridor (primarily for the Richmond Birdwing Butterfly) along Gap Creek. Greg has also obtained funding that has enabled us to start to establish ourselves in "The Cottage."

Graeme Wilson and his loyal band of supporters continue to grow local native plants for distributing to landholders. This last year more than 11,000 plants in 172 species have been given away for revegetation projects on private land. Almost 30% were given to our neighbours in the Pullen Pullen Catchments Group, several of whom support our nursery activities. Although most plants go to acreage sites, many also find homes on smaller blocks, where many of our natives provide an important resource for butterflies and birds.

We continue to work with Habitat Brisbane on our eight Bushcare sites. In 2007, by mid-October a total of 4277 plants had been planted by volunteers who had committed 2,070 hours of their free time. Once again, Malcolm Frost's Huntington Bushcare Group was outstanding, with twice the number of plants and volunteer hours of any other group.

As partners with the Richmond Birdwing Butterfly Network (RBBN), we have been growing butterfly vines for selling to our members and others, to establish a corridor for this beautiful butterfly that used to be common in Brisbane. We are also collaborating in a breeding project with the RBBN, aiming to overcome inbreeding problems with the butterfly.

Promotion and publicity is all-important to our success. Ten newspaper articles have been published in local papers over the last year. Our 'Platypus Festival' in April, held in conjunction with several other groups and supported by the Council, attracted some 350 participants. Our Photography Competition in September attracted some superb entries but the small number of entries from young photographers was somewhat disappointing. This is something we should pay heed to in 2008. Other publicity events that we have been active in have been the Brookfield Show, Teddy Bears' Picnic and two week-long exhibits in Kenmore Village. The mid-year talk by MCCG member Deborah Tabart on koalas and issues associated with development was well-attended. Our 8-page newsletter, each with two pages in colour, was published quarterly and attracts considerable interest. Thank you for a great editorial job, Graeme.

An emerging problem in our Catchment is feral deer, that are causing increasing problems with revegetation projects as well as being a potential hazard on the roads. We have been writing to various Ministers expressing concerns over this problem. As a volunteer group, MCCG sees it has a right and a responsibility to express concern over any environmental matter in the Catchment.

The MCCG has widespread support in the Catchment, but some of our supporters would perhaps rather support us financially than commit time to working with us. We are therefore well advanced in arranging for tax-deductibility for donations to the Group. Any such donations will be lodged in a Trust fund which will be managed by a small sub-committee.

This is my last year as Chairman of the MCCG and I would like to express my sincere thanks to the various committee members and MCCG members that have supported me as Chairman over the last six years. I would also like to give my best wishes to our new Chairman Richard Woodhead and his Committee. A new Committee position has been instigated – Landcare Adviser – for which I have been nominated, and I hope to continue my role in relation to biodiversity and landcare issues in that position.

*Bryan Hacker*

## GOA Billboard Competition

The GOA Billboard Competition was held again this year in association with Riverfestival. It looks for the best poster submitted by a primary school student, depicting some environmental aspect of the management of waterways. Dalton Rogers of Brookfield State School was the Moggill Creek Catchment winner and went on to be the overall winner across all Brisbane catchments. His poster was displayed on a GOA billboard at Indooroopilly Railway Station for a few months.

The photo on p.5 shows Dalton (with a GOA representative) accepting the prize from the Lord Mayor.



## You said -----

I was thrilled to hear a wonderful throng of frogs in our local Upper Brookfield area after the Spring rain. With the fantastic work that MCCG and Brisbane City Council has done and the contagious effects of re-vegetating damaged bush throughout the valley-especially after Tina Heybrook's efforts - it was so rewarding to see clear filtered water slowly filling the creeks and waterholes. This initiated a welcome flutter of frog activity.

I had recently borrowed from the BCC library David Stewart's CD Nature Sound - 'Australian Frog Calls Subtropical East'. I recognized quite a few frog sounds and it was exciting hearing sounds that I would have previously just blended together as general frog sounds (typically Brown Marsh Frogs). To hear what sounded like a 'Barking Frog' and others distinctly and loudly having a great evening after the drought breaking rain was just fantastic!

I recommend this CD to anybody who needs motivating to get that lantana out, kill those weeds, thrash those unwanted non-native species and don't give up, even in the driest times. When it rains again - IT IS ALL WORTH IT!!! - for the frogs, the other wildlife and insect life too and the planet in general!!

NB. Has anybody noticed a distinct reduction in the cicada noise in summer? I have seen this really diminish since their very noisy time 10 and 20 years ago, when they were really quite deafening in summer. Have we overused insecticides-and I hate those insect zappers-or is it other factors at work. Less insects means less wildlife sustained and less cross pollination etc. What is happening?

*Linda Clarke.*

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I have just received a copy of "Connect with your Catchment". What a beautiful publication. Congratulations to all involved in its production - I am sure anyone receiving this could not help but take the time to read it.

*Margaret de Wit  
Councillor for Pullenvale Ward*

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One of MCCG's many quiet achievers is Michael Humphries. He has been rehabilitating his property adjoining the junction of Gap Creek and Moggill Creek for many years. However, his work does not stop at his own fenceline. His bushcare group has been working tirelessly further up Gap Creek, removing exotic weeds such as Dutchman's Pipe, Ochna and Chinese Elms and replanting with native species.

The Gap Creek regeneration includes being an important link in the Richmond Birdwing Butterfly recovery project and plantings include many Richmond Birdwing Butterfly Vines (*Pararistolochia praevenosa*), the only food plant for this beautiful butterfly that has become locally extinct.

*Christine Hosking*

## An Object Lesson

Meeting the objectives of MCCG requires that a significant area of land be preserved or restored biologically. It is also necessary, for biological reasons, that there be many sites of large size. That is difficult to achieve when individual landholdings are often not large enough. A way around that is to provide adequate vegetational corridors linking suitable sites or have neighbouring properties engaged in similar management programs. Unfortunately, we rarely see the latter happening. It was therefore a great pleasure to come across a splendid example of such cooperation.

One of our members situated some way up McKay Brook had come to us for advice on restoring vegetation and had been making good progress when he mentioned that a number of neighbours were engaged in similar work. We asked that we might have a look at this, which he arranged. Five of us, representing a cross section of active interest in MCCG, were conducted through several of the properties and were absolutely astonished by what we saw; a large area of some 20 properties dominated by quite substantial forest with no apparent substantial cleared space, generally discreet housing, no fencing between properties, extensive planting of natives and removal of weeds, and friendly association among the people.

The photo on p5 is typical enough. Looking across the gully from the house is a fine backdrop of forest with tall trees and a copious understory. Coming back up the slope, what had been once cleared and gone to weeds is now being planted to lower growing natives which will take the place of a more formal conventional garden with largely exotic species, as is fairly typically associated with a house.

Some enquiries seemed to show that while not all properties had restoration work in hand, at least none had, at least recently, suffered the environmental destruction which is occurring widespread throughout our catchment. A few people not doing any work on their land came to a social gathering after our walkabout and seemed to be interested in hearing about us. We are optimistic that community involvement will strengthen further.

This is a wonderful success story, both environmentally and socially. If only we could see more of it elsewhere!

And thanks to Rob Greenwood for bringing it to our attention, for arranging the visit, and for his hospitality in providing the final social gathering.

*Graeme Wilson*



◀ Prize winner *see p.3* (GOA Billboard)

Great work *see p.4* (An Object Lesson)  
 Photo - Chris Hosking

Haze over CBD *see p.7* (Catchment Drying)  
 Photo - Eric Heidecker



*Arundia* (above) and *Pennisetum* (below) *see p.8* ▶  
 (Two giant grasses) Photo - Bryan Hacker



▲ Junior winners at Photography Competition *see p.6*  
 (Photo Competition) Photo - Chris Hosking



## Opening of “The Cottage”, an Environmental Centre for MCCG

We now have a home. On October 13 the Lord Mayor, Campbell Newman, opened “The Cottage” at a ceremony attended by Councillor Margaret de Wit, MP Bruce Flegg, Kathryn Fisher representing the Garumbar Aboriginal people who were neighbours of the Turrbal, the traditional owners of the land, and 110 members and friends of our Catchment Group.

The Cottage was built in the early 1900s as a residence for the caretaker of the Gold Creek reservoir, a position occupied from 1940 to 1959 by Mr Tom Leahy. His son Brian, an active member of Catchment Group and a resident of the Gold Creek valley, grew up there and remembers the planting of many of the trees which now shade the house and its surroundings. The house is a classical Queenslander, set on high stumps, with several rooms and wide verandas on three sides. Its future was in doubt just a couple of years ago when the Gold Creek Reservoir wall was being raised and strengthened. There was a widespread belief that it had suffered termite damage to the extent that rehabilitation was impractical. However, closer inspection, combined with significant urging from some of the locals, revealed that the damage was actually quite minor so Brisbane Water reconsidered their decision to demolish and, instead, refurbished and repainted it.

An application by MCCG to lease the premises as its home travelled quite slowly through the bureaucracy and is not yet completely finalised, but we have a licence to use it and anticipate that a 5-year lease will be granted shortly. Acknowledgement must be made here of the strong support and encouragement we have had from Cr Margaret De Wit through this process.

The lease will cover an area with an eastern boundary just beyond the Cottage extending through the entrance gate to the creek, thence following it to the bridge below the dam and then back east. It includes not only The Cottage but also the MCCG nursery on the flat below and the butterfly breeding cage that has been built beside the creek by the Richmond Birdwing Recovery Network. The site adjoins the upper end of Section 9's area (Upper Gold Creek Bushcare Group) whose members have volunteered to extend their area up-valley to the dam wall, encompassing the area surrounding the lease area.

The Cottage will provide an excellent venue for meetings, educational and training workshops, school activities and a wide range of environment related events. We anticipate that it will also be a base for research activities, and already the butterfly network has plans for work there during the breeding season and the room underneath will make a suitable venue for some behavioural studies on bats.

Management of The Cottage is in the hands of an MCCG sub-committee made up of Richard Woodhead, Greg Siepen and Gordon Grigg. There will be more news about The Cottage and its operations in future newsletters.

*Gordon Grigg*

*(The photo on p1 shows, L-R, Bryan Hacker, Campbell Newman, Margaret de Wit and Kathryn Fisher.)*

## 2007 Photography Competition

Photos of a carpet python hanging through a bathroom fan heater, a sulphur crested cockatoo shown in flight, a heavily polluted stretch of creek and people planting trees as part of National Tree Day activities were some of the 62 photos exhibited in the 2007 Moggill Catchment Photo Competition at Kenmore Village from 10th to 15th September. Entries came from local residents, as well as members of a U3A Camera Club at Albion. In fact, it was a member of this group, Nina Fitzpatrick, who won the Supreme Exhibit prize, with her photo, titled “Water Pollution”. With prizes of \$150 and \$75 for adult entrants and \$50 and \$35 for young photographers, the competition would not have been possible without the generous support of local people and businesses to provide the prize money pool of \$1200.00.

The Catchment Group would like to thank these sponsors and donors:

**Blazing Star Health Foods; Brookfield Produce and Pet Pavilion; Café Bliss; Centenary Hire; The Gunn Family; Harvey World Travel; Kenmore Centre for Health; Kenmore Fruit Bowl; Kenmore Veterinary Surgery; Darryl Mappin Nursery; Mark McCarthy Automotive; Mitre 10, Kenmore; Moggill Constructions; Orrum Jewellers; Pool Mart; Water Solutions; Cr Margaret de Wit; and Dr Bruce Flegg. Hampton Gardens, Kenmore Village Management, Kodak Express, The Local Bulletin and The Print Shoppe** also supported the Competition.

Thanks must go also to our judge, Dr Joseph McDowall, Senior Lecturer in Photography, Griffith University for his continuing involvement in the Competition. It was disappointing to see the few entries submitted from young photographers. (The success of the young photographers in the picture on p5 – L to R: Nicholas Ward, Rueben Dutton, Jarred and Billy Edwardson - might encourage greater participation in the 2008 competition by youngsters keen to explore the unique environment in which they live and go to school.)

*Robyn Frost*

## HAVE YOU SLIPPED THROUGH THE NET?

Our committee consists of volunteers with busy lives and mistakes are sometimes made; we need your help to keep our membership database up-to-date.

If you are a current member but feel you may not be receiving emails and/or newsletters, please let us know!

Contact the Secretary on: [mccgsecretary@primus.com.au](mailto:mccgsecretary@primus.com.au), or phone Gaynor on 3378 2339.

# Lichens

The usual living organisms with which you have some familiarity are species of plant or animal or fungus, but a lichen comprises two or more species living in permanent association; a fungus with an algal and/or a cyanobacterium partner. (Cyanobacteria, while not algae, are known as blue-green algae. Both have however photosynthetic capability. For convenience, they are both referred to here as algae.) The fungus quantitatively dominates the structure, with the algae occupying positions among the fungal strands. This is not a random mix of the partners; rather for any one species association there is a precise structural arrangement. Also, that one association develops in to a standard shape, giving rise to one of the four basic growth forms. The crustose form thin layers, strongly attached to their substrate. The *squamulose* form thicker layers of tightly clustered and slightly flattened pebble-like units. The two pictures on p1 show the *fruticose*, comprising free-standing branching tubes while the foliose form leaflike sheets of tissue. (Note that the former includes other forms on the same stick.)

There is a mutually beneficial relationship between the partners. The algae photosynthesise organic material (via sunlight, carbon dioxide, water and minerals) and some of this is passed on to the fungi which lack that capability. On the other hand the algae get a home, some of the water intercepted by the fungus and perhaps some of the minerals it may have taken up from the substrate.

They are widely distributed with some bias towards the higher latitudes. They are most abundantly seen on tree trunks and branches, old timber and rocks. They take their scientific names from the fungal partner. An enormous number have been described.

There is much more to them than touched on here. If interested, have a look on the internet. If not, still have a look; you may develop a useful interest! This is just another example (as was the article on moths in the last issue) of a large group of organisms of which most people take little notice, but some study of which can be so rewarding.

Graeme Wilson

## Scentless Rosewood – *Synoum glandulosum*

Scentless rosewood is an attractive medium-sized tree up to 20 m tall, that is native to the Moggill Creek Catchment. As far as I know, it is uncommon in our district; certainly I had not seen it before I came across a few rather shrubby plants towards the eastern end of Upper Brookfield Road. However, in the available literature, it is reputed to be common on rainforest margins and gullies in sclerophyll forest north from southern NSW. It was in this sort of situation in which I found it in Upper Brookfield. The fruit were 15-20 mm long and splitting open to reveal the bright red aril that surrounds each seed. (See photo p.1) Presumably the aril is a tasty morsel for birds, attracted by the red colour. According to 'Wild Plants of Greater Brisbane', fruit are eaten by Paradise Riflebirds, King Parrots and Green Catbirds.

Leaves are pinnate and dark green above and the small flowers are sweetly scented. Apparently young plants can be used as indoor plants. I found the seeds germinated readily.

Scentless rosewood is in the Meliaceae family, which also includes white cedar, red cedar, Crow's apple and the *Dysoxylum* species. This is a species we should be planting more widely in our area as it is very attractive as well as being a good food source for frugivorous birds.

Bryan Hacker

## Drying of Urban Hinterland Catchments

The Winter 2007 Newsletter provided a most interesting record of precipitation measured at Smith's Rainforest Nature Refuge, Upper Brookfield. Bryan Hacker has drawn attention to a long term drying trend attributable to climate change.

As a set of rainfall records is available, the Moggill Creek Catchment is very well suited for additional monitoring towards understanding and management of a drying tendency affecting other major urban hinterland catchments. It would be good if catchment monitoring in the Moggill Creek Catchment could be extended to several locations and include additional factors such as soil moisture and haze.

NASA, the Scripps Institution, the American National Science Foundation, and the Maldives Government have supported a study which has just shown that "brown" haze can match the thermal effects of greenhouse gas emissions. Haze layers may also be a direct cause of drying-out of catchments, particularly in their upper parts with their beneficial rainforest, scrubs and woodlands.

A photo of haze over Brisbane (p.5, cross marks CBD) illustrates this possibility. Solar energy is scattered and absorbed in the upper parts of such haze layers, particularly if the haze is brown with photochemical products, soot and carbon. Air moving inland over such layers may warm and become drier before impinging on the upper parts of catchments which consequently lose moisture and become fire prone. Cooler air beneath haze layers is also less likely to rise through overlying warm, dry air to generate rain clouds.

Eric Heidecker

## MCCG Committee 2007-08

Position	AREA	Name	Phone
Chairman		Richard Woodhead	3374 4691
Vice-Chairman		Malcolm Frost	3374 0649
Secretary		Gaynor Johnson	3378 2339
Treasurer		Shona Fisher	3374 4880
Publicity Officer		Christine Hosking	3374 3453
Nursery Manager		Graeme Wilson	3374 1218
Newsletter Editor		Graeme Wilson	3374 1218
Landcare Adviser		Bryan Hacker	3374 1468
Section 1	Pullenvale/Moons Lane	Richard Woodhead	3374 4691
Section 2	Lower Moggill Creek	Judy Petroeschevski	3378 3348
Section 3	Huntington	Malcolm Frost	3374 0649
Section 4	Showgrounds	Damien Egan	3378 5199
Section 5	Haven Road	Tina Heybroek	3374 1401
Section 6	Upper Brookfield	Daryl O'Brien	3374 4964
Section 7	Gold Creek Reserve	Tom McHugh	3407 0050
Section 8	Wonga Creek	Graeme Wilson	3374 1218
Section 9	Upper Gold Creek	Gordon Grigg	3374 1737
Section 10	Lower Gold Creek	Lou Mackey	3374 1676
Section 11	McKay Brook	Bryan Hacker	3374 1468
Section 12	Gap Creek	Michael Humphreys	3374 1467
Section 13	Mt Coot-tha Park	Tom McHugh	3407 0050
Coordinator		Greg Siepen	0408 774 631

### Two Giant Grasses

You can be pretty sure that any grass in our Catchment exceeding 2 m in height is exotic. Other than bamboos (yes, bamboos are grasses), the only candidates are elephant grass (*Pennisetum purpureum*) and giant reed (*Arundo donax*).

By far the commoner of the two is elephant grass (see photo on p. 5). Apparently the variety of elephant grass common along Moggill Creek is the one known as Bana grass. This is a strong stemmed variety commonly grown in a single row around horticultural crops as a wind break in southern Queensland. I have been told that somebody established it on a creek bank in Upper Brookfield for erosion control. It has certainly been effective in achieving this purpose, but it is such a pity that he didn't plant lomandras instead! The two species *P. purpureum* and *A. donax* are quite similar until they flower, when they are readily distinguished.

*Pennisetum purpureum* is a tussock-forming grass up to 7 m tall, probably not exceeding 4 m in our Catchment. Flowering stems bear up to 20 leaves. The inflorescence is a narrow but dense spike-like panicle up to 30 cm long, with long bristles extending on either side.

*Arundo donax* (see photo on p. 5). is a tussock-forming grass that can grow to a height of 6 m. Flowering stems have numerous rather short leaves alternating on either side. The inflorescence is a showy, open panicle up to 70 cm long and perhaps 40 cm across. A variegated form, with longitudinal pale yellow stripes along the leaves, is known as var. *versicolor*. This also occurs in our catchment.

Both species prefer moist situations and both generally propagate vegetatively. Lengths of stem washed downstream with a flood lodge in moist soil and new plants sprout from the nodes. Soon riparian areas are covered with the exotic weed, precluding other species from establishing.

Elephant grass can be controlled quite easily with roundup. Cut the clumps back to 30 cm or so (a rice sickle is ideal) and allow to sprout. Spray with 1% roundup when growth is active. My guess would be that giant reed could be similarly treated. To avoid serious soil loss in times of flood, treat alternating 10-15 m strips along the creek, leaving 2-5 sections for erosion control. It is also important to revegetate promptly to avoid soil loss; lomandras are ideal.

*Bryan Hacker*

### STOP PRESS!!

2008 Wild West calendars now available @\$12.50 ea. Local photos of plants and animals. A great gift for friends here and OS. Proceeds to MCCG operation. Add Postage of \$3.00 for 1-4 calendars. No credit card facilities. Only cash or cheques/money orders accepted before delivery or collection

Contact: Secretary, MCCG, PO Box 657 Kenmore Qld 4069; Email: mccgsecretary @iprimus.com.au or Greg Siepen on 0408 774 631.