



MOGGILL CREEK CATCHMENT GROUP

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MCCG NEWSLETTER: Summer 2019-20

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ABOVE: Kathleen Walmsley (L) presenting Dale Borgelt (R) with flowers at the November 2019 AGM. For more from the AGM—and from Dale about the new 'MCCG Talks' program—*turn to pages 6 & 7.*



ABOVE LEFT: Golden Rain Tree fruit. For more *Seeds & Weeds* information (and photographs) from Bryan Hacker, *turn to page 5.*



ABOVE RIGHT: Mandy Watson's picture of a Parasitic Snail Blowfly was awarded a First Place in the 2019 MCCG Photography Competition (*Native Animals excluding Birds* category). Rebecca Bain's article about the Competition is on *pages 4 & 5.*

Chairman's report

2019 has been another very successful and eventful year for MCCG. The plant nursery has grown and distributed over 13,000 trees and shrubs—all native to the region—for planting by our members and volunteers throughout the catchment. Despite very challenging climatic conditions, our volunteer bushcare groups carried out 69 working bees during the year to June 2019 (performing around 2,300 hours of bushcare work to plant and water a further 4,500 plants, mainly on public land).

Regular outreach activities included our annual *Kid's Day at the Cottage* (attended by over 300 children) and the Photographic Competition (with more than 600 'people's choice' votes recorded at the Kenmore Village display). In addition, we held some very well-attended public meetings at Brookfield Hall, including presentations on the Preservation of the Richmond Birdwing Butterfly (Ian Gynther), Platypus Survey (Tamielle Brunt), and Wildlife Photography (Ed Frazer). This year, for the first time, we also participated in the October Brookfield Showgrounds Brisbane Plants and Gardens Expo.

We were successful in securing grants from Brisbane City Council (BCC) to cover some of our general expenses, as well as for materials for the native plant nursery and for costs to migrate the MCCG website to a new platform. We are currently awaiting the outcome of other grant applications (funding from the Federal Government's 'Communities Environment Program' and BCC's Community Conservation Assistance grants for weed control and re-vegetation projects across the catchment).

There are plans for further new initiatives in the future, but as usual we are still seeking more volunteers in all areas, including both on-ground support and administrative assistance. If you feel that you can assist in any way, e.g. with helping to develop future grant applications, IT support, equipment maintenance, assisting our creek health monitoring program (CHMP), helping out in the native plant nursery or by joining one of the bushcare groups, please contact our Secretary, [Kathleen Walmsley](#).

My thanks to all of our members and volunteers—and of course to our Committee, for their support during the year. I wish you all a very pleasant Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

Jim Pope

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Editorial

It is lovely to hear about some non-MCCG projects and people in this newsletter, including Froggin' reflections on the impact of 'Ric' Nattrass (page 3), and news about a Bulimba Creek Coordinating Committee project (recording roadkill, see page 7) and also about the aspirations and ideas shared in the Pollinator Link® project (page 6).

My thanks to our regular contributors—including Jim, Bryan, Ed, Michelle and Phil. I am really enjoying reading about the many Moggill Creek Catchment area residents, and the impact they have had when working their own 'Moggill Magic' (a great piece from Ed this issue about Tina and Kees Heybroek—turn to page 8). It is also interesting to read articles about some of the many problems we face in this country (and catchment), with articles about drought and about 'a cat problem.' Don't forget... if **YOU send me an article you have an excellent chance of seeing it in print!** The absolute deadline for the next issue is **10 March 2020**. So get writing now. I am sure EVERYONE has at least 100 words they could soon [email to me](#).... *Cathi*

Moggill Creek Catchment Group (MCCG) is a volunteer action group, aiming to conserve & improve the natural environment of our catchment on both private & public land.

Chairman: Jim Pope

Secretary: Kathleen Walmsley

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Articles of interest to Members are always welcome.

The Editor reserves the right not to publish any item submitted. Material will be edited for clarity, style and space. The decision of the Editor is final, and no correspondence will be entered into. **Please email your ideas direct to:**

Newsletter Editor: Dr Catherine A. Lawrence (Cathi)

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Froggin' Around: AEO "Ric" Nattrass

A slightly different Froggin' piece from Phil in this issue, reflecting on the impact of AEO "Ric" Nattrass (22 Dec. 1949 - 4th Sept. 2009). Some members may remember Ric, and others may also have visited the Ric Nattrass Environmental Park, Bellbird Park, Ipswich (named in 2006).

In writing this piece I have my Queensland Frog Society Inc. (QFSI) hat on. Recently I represented the QFSI at the *Threatened Species Day* event (held at Opossum Parkland on 7th Sep. 2019) that marked the tenth anniversary of Ric Nattrass's death. I had the opportunity to speak about Ric, and also about one threatened species, the vulnerable Tusked Frog.

Ric (*pictured, below*) had a long career as a ranger at QNPWS, the QFSI (which he founded), the Australian Dragonfly Society, and the Ipswich Koala Protection Society. Ric was an author (*Australian wildlife verses*), a brilliant guitarist (including recording "Blame it all on



God" with Daryl McPherson), wildlife expert (including featuring on ABC radio), a furniture-maker, cook, and storyteller.

I first met Ric in the late 1990s, at Moggill Koala Hospital, when I was involved in a koala project. We met again in December 2000, when I called him on finding a frog in the backyard. He came out one night to identify the said frog (by now deceased, and stored in a takeaway container in the fridge), and told me that my "frog" was a juvenile cane toad.

Ric was unperturbed, and pleased to have helped. He also said that, if I was interested in frogs, he was setting up a frog society. This was in response to a huge community interest in frogs, and a growing concern about the global decline in amphibians. Ric thought the aims of the Brisbane Frog Society should include a fostering and encouragement of all aspects of frogs, focusing public attention on the

environmental importance of frogs, and to undertake regular surveys to identify conservation needs.

Local 'frog people' at the early gathering at Downfall Creek, included: Ald Greg Stegman, Prof Gordon Grigg, Dr Glen Ingram, Greg Czchura, Lex Morley, and Martin & Hilary Boscott. The now-QFSI is nearing its 20th year, and provides funding for research into Queensland frogs through a \$1,500 Ric Nattrass Research Grant (awarded each February). Identified high conservation areas—such as Karawatha and the Redlands wallum froglets (*Crinia tinnula*)—recently received a \$70,000 Queensland Government Community Sustainability Action Grant to fund a three-year survey and monitoring of the critically endangered Kroombit Tinkerfrog and vulnerable Tusked Frog ([more at this link](#)).

Ric would have been thrilled.

Phil Bird

Some Reflections on the Drought

The ongoing drought in S.E. Queensland focuses the mind on factors causing it.

Water evaporates from the oceans, and water vapour in the form of clouds is carried over land by wind, where it falls as rain, returning to the ocean via creeks and rivers. This is known as the '**Large Water Cycle**', but it is only part of the overall picture, which of course is far more complex. Rising ocean temperatures, resulting from climate change, increase evaporation rates, so overall rainfall should increase. However, such rainfall is not evenly distributed, either in space or time.

Local precipitation rates appear to be more impacted by the '**Small Water Cycle**', which involves evaporation of water from the land to produce rain over the surrounding area. It has recently been estimated that over 50% of rainfall worldwide arises from this mechanism ([Widows, 2016](#)).

Deforestation, poor agricultural practices and urban development increase run-off, draining the land and increasing the severity of droughts. In degraded landscapes with little natural ground cover, soil absorbency is reduced, more carbon dioxide is released and there is little transpiration to produce mists and nucleate rain.

The loss of groundwater due to land-clearing is a significant factor in global desertification and climate change. The dramatic effects of land-clearing worldwide can be seen in a recent very short (107 second) [BBC video](#). It is certainly worth less than two minutes of your time.

Much of Australia's annual rainfall is lost because it runs off before it can infiltrate a carbon-deficient, compacted soil. By restoring ground-cover we can ensure that more of the rainfall soaks into the soil to the roots of the plants. This water will not only help the plants to grow but also will then be transpired through their leaves, back into the atmosphere—where about two-thirds of it will then fall again locally as rain. Healthy groundcover provides habitat for wildlife. Carbon-rich soil enhances the small water cycle, as more water is retained in a cooler soil. Carbon-rich soil thus generates greater local rainfall, reduces fire intensity and helps to enhance cloud cover—which all reduces global warming.

In urban areas, we need to recycle storm water, domestic wastewater, and the effluent from sewerage systems. Maximising vegetation coverage of our landscape (including our cities) will increase the small water cycle, whilst denuded landscapes reduce it.

There are many ways to restore the small water cycle, including slowing the movement of water, repairing the riparian zone, restoring wetlands and flood plains and revegetation of degraded landscapes. We can all participate in this process through the work of the Moggill Creek Catchment Group!

Jim Pope



Watch out for lots of bubbles rising to the surface, and often a stream of mud being brought up from the bottom of the creek. I find they surface about every 45 seconds while they are feeding.

If you are lucky one will stay on top of the water to chew on the creatures it has stored in its cheeks.

But there is plenty of other life up the creek.>>

To read more of Ed's article, which is brimming with stunning photos of the amazing variety of "other life" he has recently encountered (*including the Water Dragon, pictured above*), head to the [MCCG website](#) to read more—and to enjoy Ed's amazing photos.

Michelle Johnston

Bush Bites: Up the Creek

Michelle Johnston's marvellous [Bush Bites](#) initiative continues to attract some wonderful stories to our website. If you have a story to share, do email the newsletter editor, or [contact Michelle](#).

Ed Frazer has recently taken pen to paper to share his accounts of daytime encounters with the local Platypus in our latest website *Bush Bites* article. Here is a snippet of Ed's article:

<<With the dry so bad I have been concentrating my wildlife photography to the two large holes of Gold Creek that border our property.

Of course, the Platypus are the main interest. Now that the pups are growing, I am finding the mothers are out feeding frantically through the day. One was out at 2pm in the second week in November! As I write this article, now is definitely the time to go watching Platypus.

Find the best spots by looking at the locations where they've been sighted in our annual Platypus Survey. Take a chair and just sit quietly and wait. Early in the morning or the last hour before sunset are the times you are most likely to see them.

'MCCG Photo Comp' Update

Congratulations to our new Photo Comp Committee Chair, Rebecca Bain, and to the Photo Comp Committee, on another great display. Here's an update from Rebecca.

October has come and gone—which means that so too has this year's MCCG Photography Competition. Months of discussions and planning by our dedicated Photography Competition committee (Rebecca Bain, Geoff Lawrence, Malcolm Frost, Robyn Frost, Bruce Siemon, Janine Nicklin and Bostjan Kobe) culminated in a smooth and successful submission day, display week, and prize ceremony. Rainy weather on submission day may have



dampened the efforts of some of our would-be entrants, as entries were significantly lower than previous years. However, we ended up with 10 entrants submitting 43 photos for the open categories of the competition. Our first year of trialling the Young Persons (grade 1 to 6) competition as a digital



category saw 8 kids submit 13 photos, all of which were proudly displayed on the MCCG Facebook page and newly-established Instagram page. 262 votes (likes) were cast on these social media pages for the Young (YP) People's Choice prize (congratulations to Liam Kelly-Crawford, first place in 'YP' People's Choice competition, with 'The Matters of a Leaf,' pictured above). Our 'open' photos received a staggering 629 People's Choice votes between them (special congratulations to Ed Frazer, who won 1st, 2nd and 3rd in the People's Choice awards!).

Display week once again provided great exposure for our catchment group, and I'd like to thank all the members that helped man the display. The prize ceremony was also well attended, with judge Anne Pappalardo—and Cr Kate Richards and Dr Christian Rowan MP—providing kind words of support and encouragement to the photographers and to the MCCG. As always, big thanks to all of our wonderful local sponsors: [Pisces Enterprises](#), [Dr Christian Rowan MP \(Member for Moggill\)](#), [Cr Kate Richards \(Councillor for Pullenvale Ward\)](#), [Kenmore Bridge Club](#), [The Pet Chalet](#), [Café Fiori](#) & [Amcal+ Pharmacy](#).

Thanks also to [Kenmore Village Shopping Centre](#) for providing our display site and assistance. Congratulations to new entrant Mandy Watson, who took out the Chairman's Choice and also first place in the Native Birds and Native Animals (excluding birds) categories. Mandy's picture of a Welcome Swallow is shown on page 4 of this online newsletter). For a list of all of the winners, and to see some of the winning photos, visit the MCCG [website](#). We can't wait to do it all again next year!

Rebecca Bain

Seeds & Weeds

White cedar (*Melia azedarach*) is one of the very few species native to our catchment that is deciduous, losing its leaves in winter. The only others that I am aware of are red cedar and white fig.

White cedar is an attractive tree, occurring on rainforest margins—and, as a significant pioneer species, is well adapted to eucalypt woodland. Interestingly, white cedar is not a cedar. Cedars are conifers (*Cedrus* spp.), and have a very different appearance. Presumably the common name derives from the highly-figured white cedar timber, which has been used as a cabinet wood. The species name – *azedarach* – derives from the Neem tree (*Azadirachta indica*). A species in the same family (Meliaceae) has leaves which are used for many medicinal purposes.

As a seedling, white cedar is very similar to the weed species golden rain tree (*Koelreuteria elegans*). The main difference is that leaflets are opposite in white cedar, and alternate in golden rain tree. OCAR helps me to remember this (Opposite Cedar, Alternate Raintree).



Fortunately, the flowers and fruit differ greatly between the two—see [pictures of flowers on the Golden Rain Tree \(above\)](#), and [White Cedar \(overleaf\)](#) [Pictures credit: Bryan Hacker].

White cedar is an attractive spreading tree, growing to a height of 15m. Leaves are bi-pinnate, up to 42cm long. Leaflets are opposite, and up to 7 cm long.



Flowering is in spring, when the foliage also begins to develop (mauve flowers have 5 petals, about 1 cm long). Fruit are yellow, ovoid, and about 15mm long (and are poisonous). In contrast, the golden rain tree has yellow flowers. and large, reddish, three-sided fruit capsules up to 6cm long (*see front cover photo*).

White cedar can be seriously attacked by caterpillars of the White Cedar Moth. Although numerous in the past, I have not seen them on my trees in the last 20 years. I wonder why? Climatic effects?

Sadly we rarely have white cedar seedlings at our Nursery as seeds are reluctant to germinate. They germinate readily in the field, probably because the fruit has been eaten by birds, thus removing the flesh.

Bryan Hacker

Bringing the Bush to City Backyards

Not an MCCG project, but one of our members suggested that MCCG colleagues might like to hear more about the non-profit Pollinator Link®.

Do you love that flash of butterfly colour, the dawn chorus of birds or the mysterious buzz of bees in your garden? Many people love such experiences, but also love living in a city. Our non-profit Pollinator Link® project helps city-dwellers have the best of both worlds, with simple DIY projects delivering water, food and shelter for wildlife. Our ideas include:

Creating a City Wide Mosaic Habitat: Just 10%, one in ten, of Brisbane gardens providing water, food and shelter would create a city-wide mosaic of habitat, bringing birds, butterflies, bees and other wildlife back into our lives. Brisbane has 320,000 detached houses. So 10% means 32,000 gardens providing water, food and shelter—potentially creating 862ha of habitat and movement solutions for wildlife.

Food: Plant Local to Feed Locals: Why not use the Griffith University **GroNative** app to find out more about the plants that caterpillars of local butterflies are able to eat (enter your postcode to access lists of local native plants). Tallamy, in *Bringing Nature Home*,

reports that powerful defensive chemicals mean 90% of insect herbivores are only able to digest a very limited range of plant species. Butterflies and bees love common garden plants like basil, rosemary and lavender, and exotic citrus trees are food for Orchard Swallowtail butterfly caterpillars. Planting a mixture of *local* native plants, alongside common garden plants, creates a food market for local insects. [*Editor's note: Don't forget about MCCG Nursery plants*].

Share your DIY projects: Sharing information encourages others to act in their own gardens. The *Resources* section of our website includes copyright-free ideas and posters, ideal for sharing, and perhaps use in community engagement workshops (ideal for kindies, schools, community gardens, scout groups, etc). Our team also conduct regular workshops and organise displays to spread information.

Backyard Citizen Scientist: Anyone with a smartphone can be a Backyard Citizen Scientist (including kids). **iNaturalist** is the new, easy to use, front-end for Atlas of Living Australia, which means all data collected will help environmental researchers right across Australia. We encourage everyone to use the iNaturalist app, to collect research evidence—including for the new Guardian scheme. 'Guardians' (you!) can provide habitat—and contribute to research—in understanding the nesting habits and life-cycles of some of Australia's solitary bees.

Give urban wildlife a 'voice': Our vision for Pollinator Link® is to encourage customers to ask for "local natives" at retail nurseries (and that developers will want to use the brand to promote their new developments). We already have people asking about Pollinator Link® because they have seen the sign on a neighbour's fence. Our goal is to have 30,000 registered Pollinator Link® gardens across Brisbane. Representing 40,000 voters this will give our urban wildlife a voice with government and other decision-makers. If you are interested, you can find out more about Pollinator Link® at <https://pollinatorlink.org/>, follow project on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram: #waterfoodshelter @waterfoodshelter

Jake Slinger & Michael Fox

'MCCG Talks' Program

Following ten years of 'Third Thursday Cottage Talks,' it is time for a change. Instead, talks at Public Meetings in Brookfield Hall will now be a regular feature of the MCCG program—taking place on fourth Thursday evenings in March, June and September (as well as our November AGM and talk).

The Mid-Year Public Meeting in Brookfield Hall attracted an interested audience for the talk by Tamielle Brunt (*see the article in our last newsletter*). This June meeting was the first opportunity to use the motorised projector screen (donated by MCCG and installed by Brookfield Reserve Trust). In September, the screen gave the entire audience a great view of Ed Frazer's fabulous photos of the local area wildlife.

I will continue to open the MCCG's Environment Centre, the Cottage on Gold Creek Dam Reserve, on Thursday mornings for members and visitors to find out more about Moggill Creek Catchment Group and its activities, the catchment and its wonderful biodiversity. Although there are no more planned Third Thursday Cottage Talks, visitors and members are always welcome to drop into the Cottage on Thursday mornings. Come along for a chat, information, or to check out the MCCG library (but avoid the fourth Thursday committee meetings!).

I look forward to enjoying your company at future MCCG Talks in the Brookfield Hall.

Dale Borgelt

MCCG AGM Updates

The 2019 MCCG Annual General Meeting was held on 28th November, in Brookfield Hall. The meeting was attended by around 60 members and guests. In addition to the normal business (including the Chairman's Report, Treasurer's Report, and Committee Elections), attendees were treated to a very interesting and informative presentation on 'The Weed Spotter's Network' by Dr Melinda Laidlaw from the Queensland Herbarium.

MCCG remains in sound financial health and the new Management Committee bears a distinct similarity to the outgoing one, with only one notable change. After many years as Public Relations Officer, Dale Borgelt is standing down from the role. She is being replaced by newcomer Samantha (Sam) Bayford-Brown. Many thanks to Dale for her outstanding service. A warm welcome to Sam, who I'm sure will do a great job—especially with the ongoing advice and support from her indomitable predecessor!

Jim Pope

Bird on a Wire

Peter Koury's prize-winning MCCG Photograph Competition image, *Bird on a Wire*, features on the front cover of this issue.

On sending the photograph through for publication, Peter noted: *When I spotted this Butcher Bird with water*

dripping from his tail and rain ruffled feathers, he reminded me of someone caught in a sudden down pour taking shelter from the storm. I could almost hear him asking himself "Should I wait undercover or make a run for it?"

A Domestic Cat Problem

I love cats. BUT I believe we have a *domestic cat* problem in the Moggill Creek Catchment. On my property at least five cats feature regularly in my camera traps. One has a collar, and all five look well-fed and nurtured—which motivated me to buy a copy of "*Cats in Australia, Companion and Killer.*"

The authors are affiliated with the Threatened Species Recovery Hub of the National Environment Science Program. The book is extensive: cat origins and natural history; community attitudes; cat ethics, law and policy; and the impact of feral, stray and domestic cats on endangered fauna (~1,350 references).

Cats were one of the first exotic mammals to be brought to Australia, and by 1890 they covered 99% of Australia from Macquarie Island to Christmas Island. Recent estimates fluctuate between 2.1 and 6.3 million animals, far below the 18 million earlier guesstimates.

Cats in Australia deals sympathetically with pet cats, but it makes a strong case for containment indoors, especially at night. Domestic cats are a problem in our catchment, as feral cats (those that breed in the wild and only feed on animals they catch) are not very common here. Hunting is not the only threat to wildlife. The book covers Toxoplasmosis in detail—which is transmitted **only** through cats, is rampant in wild cats, and is dangerous to native wildlife. It is very likely that we have lost a number of species in the catchment, where cats have been a contributing factor (including the Spotted Quoll, Rufous Bettong, Long-nosed Potroo, Black-breasted Button Quail and probably several gliders, skinks, geckos and frogs). *Cats in Australia* is basic reading for all who genuinely wish to protect our fauna. I highly recommend this thought-provoking book. Once I re-read it, I'll donate my copy to the MCCG library.

Ed Frazer

PS: B4C Roadkill Recording

Information about Brisbane area roadkill will be presented to Council, to identify areas of a high incidence of roadkill and to help plan for actions to reduce it. Information on this Bulimba Creek Catchment Coordinating Committee project is available [online](#).

Bruce Dymock

Moggill Magic: Tina and Kees Heybroek

Another fascinating article, from Ed Frazer, about some of the many residents working their 'magic' on our local environment.

Few properties in the Moggill Creek Catchment encompass such a wide variety of habitats and range of species as Tina and Kees Heybroek's property in Upper Brookfield. Kees and Tina (L to R, pictured, below—picture credit Ed Frazer) have maintained and developed their 17 hectares of wet and dry rainforest, vine scrub, remnant wet and dry Eucalypt forest, and revegetated pawpaw orchard in what must be the best-recorded property development in Brisbane. They have kept extensive, and very detailed, records over the 45 years they have been developing the property. The property was heavily logged, from 1850-60, for softwood timbers (and again in the 1920s for hardwoods). Very few old trees were left, and from the 1930s the land was used to grow pawpaws. Kees' father purchased the property in 1956, and continued to grow pawpaws until 1968. Kees and Tina took over managing the property in 1974—first helping to remove the groundsel, which was the major weed concern of the

Council at the time—and, in 1978, they obtained title to 17 hectares of his parents' property. Initially Kees was intending to use the property for forestry farming, growing cabinet timbers, but soon realized the difficulties of such a long-term project.

In the 1990s, the Brisbane City Council's *Natural Environment Group* were actively recruiting landowners with significant natural assets who were seeking to preserve the environmental qualities of their land.

In 1998, the Council and the Heybroeks placed 12 hectares of the property under a Conservation Agreement, with the goal of restoring and maintaining locally native species and habitats. Under the terms of the Agreement, a Property Management Plan was agreed, outlining the strategies to be adopted for the



rehabilitation of the various areas. Remnant forest areas with both eucalypt and rainforest species and naturally revegetated farmed areas were included. In 2009, when State Legislation became available, this Agreement was formalised on the Land Title, with a Covenant which protects the natural environment on the property in perpetuity.

The Property Management Plan requires the development of a recorded knowledge base of flora and fauna on the property—as well as weed control (using methods avoiding erosion or habitat loss), maintaining old growth forest areas, and replanting for habitat and biodiversity. A large network of tracks has been developed to allow access to all areas.

Several botanical surveys have been undertaken, and many of the significant plants along the tracks have been identified (using a punched metal tag labelling system). Bird surveys have also been undertaken, and native and feral animals are monitored. Recently, Tina has kept a monthly photographic log (over a twelve-month period) of the plants, birds, animals and insects

noticed—providing a fascinating perspective on seasonal changes.

Much of the property has now been developed to the stage where it only needs maintenance work, which has allowed work to begin on the additional five hectares which are not included in the Covenant area. This area had been farmed and is heavily weed-infested (and it is also exposed to

adjoining grazed areas, containing exotic grasses and legumes). When working in this 5ha area, as elsewhere, Kees retains the Lantana (unless it is climbing up the trees), as it provides good habitat for Fairy-Wrens and other small birds and animals. Instead of quick removal of this weed, he establishes trees at a density that will form a closed canopy, anticipating that the Lantana will eventually die out through a lack of light.

Tina and Kees obviously love their work and have developed a wonderful example of the previous vegetation-types and habitats that occurred in Brookfield before it was developed as a farming and residential suburb. Their unselfish use of their Covenant will ensure that it will survive them into future generations.

Ed Frazer