

PNHA NEWS



Pittwater Natural Heritage Association - thinking locally, acting locally

Pittwater to Ocean Walk

In Pittwater we've a good choice of short, interesting walks through a variety of vegetation types. The Pittwater to Ocean walk does require a reasonable level of fitness but has marvellous views, interesting native flora and a good opportunity to spot some of our local wildlife. Keep your eyes open for native pigeons (perhaps Topknot pigeons), King parrots, and other birds resting in the dark under-canopy of trees in both McKay and Hordern reserves.

This track crosses the spine of the peninsula at Palm Beach and encompasses Spotted Gum and She-oak forest on the Pittwater side and littoral rainforest at Hordern Park on the ocean side.

Climbing the steps above Barrenjoey Road (entry opposite Iluka Road) takes you through the Spotted Gum (*Corymbia maculata*) and She-oak (*Casuarina torulosa*) forest of McKay Reserve. These She-oaks have deeply furrowed trunks and hard woody fruits that provide seed for some of our larger cockatoos. Shrubs of the peaflower, (*Pultenaea elliptica*) and *Zieria smithii*, with its strongly scented foliage, are common here, together with the climbing plants, Native jasmine (*Morinda jasminoides*) with its masses of bright orange fruit and Snakevine (*Parsonsia straminea*). In one spot a stunted Port Jackson fig (*Ficus rubiginosa*) can be seen growing out of a large sandstone rock. This fig species is one of the foodplants for the larvae of the attractive black and white crow butterfly (*Euploea core*) so you may see several nearby.



Blechnum Ferns on Pittwater to Ocean

The track climbs and emerges into a grassed area and then out onto Pacific Road near the corner of Canara Place. A ten minute walk along the road takes you to the downhill path to Hordern Reserve (entry opposite Ebor Road). This section features some well used old sandstone steps and one wonders when they were originally built. (One for our historians.)



Along the track

At the bottom on Florida Road and to the right, there's an interesting piece of remnant native vegetation next to the road, which contains a couple of our less common shrubs, both of the peaflower (Fabaceae) family. *Daviesia squarrosa* has prickly heart-shaped leaves that look

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YHA WEEKEND May 29-31

About 65 people worked over two mornings on the dreaded Asparagus Fern on Pittwater Council and NPWS land near the Pittwater Youth Hostel at Morning Bay. We did an estimated total of 240 hours work, despite rain which fell conveniently outside our work hours. The hostel was just about fully booked, so some people just came for the day.

We enjoyed delicious meals, companionship, talks about the local vegetation, the history of the hostel and local birds.

Guests kayaked, walked and just enjoyed the lovely bushland when not hard at work.

Many thanks to all who made it such a success: Our wonderful volunteers who came from all over Sydney & Morning Bay Bushcare group; Sarah Polomka and Michael Dogherty, Pittwater YHA managers and Fanny Gueguenan intern from France studying ecotourism; the anonymous local resident who paid for one night's hostel accommodation for everyone, matched by a similar contribution from YHA; Penny Gleen of Church Point Ferries; Ricki Coughlan, ornithologist; Hawkesbury Nepean CMA, Pittwater Council and NPWS.

PNHA Activity: July 26 Sunday, 9am-3.30pm. Get to know Plant Families.

Pittwater has lots of bushland with lots of native plants - all green. Would you like to understand it better? Introduction to major plant families at CEC & half day field trip in the afternoon. Meet at CEC 9am. Notes & morning tea provided. Bring lunch and a drink. Car sharing for field trip. Bookings: CEC Ph: 9970 1675. Cost: \$10.00

Inside: Friends of Narrabeen Lagoon; Volunteers for McCarrs Ck; Careel Bay Marina update; PNHA update; Lots of Moths; Report and Congratulations!

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amazingly like the foliage of an Epacris (heath) species. It bears masses of small red and yellow flowers in spring and is used by our native bees as a food source. The other is the broad-leaved wedge-pea (*Gompholobium latifolium*) that has tri-foliolate leaves and large yellow flowers.

A short walk along Florida Road leads you to Hordern Park and immediately to your right is a low sandstone wall that was probably built to direct water into the creek. It is nicely built and almost provides a formal entry to the park. Cabbage tree palms, (*Livistona australis*), Spotted gums and Sandpaper figs (*Ficus coronata*) are common here but next the path a tall tree that stands out is a Kurrajong (*Brachychiton acerifolius*). This rainforest tree with its lobed foliage and sparse spreading canopy could be twelve to fifteen metres (estimated) in height but in the "Field Guide to the Native Plants of Sydney" by Les Robinson, (Kangaroo Press) it tells us that this species can even grow to thirty five metres. Hordern Park also has a loop track that takes you under Sandpaper figs and Lillypillies across several foot-bridges and back to the main path. At the bottom the track emerges into a picnic area and on down to the ocean. A little time for lunch and you're ready to retrace your steps. This walk would probably take most people forty minutes or so one way, but if you enjoy a more casual stroll a return trip may be a nice way to spend a couple of hours.

Gary Harris

SEEKING BUSHCARE VOLUNTEERS FOR McCARRS CREEK

Two new bushcare groups have started work in the McCarrs Creek area. The volunteers will work in foreshore bushland at Bothams Beach and Brown's Bay.

Pittwater Environmental Foundation (PEF) received a grant for work at **Bothams Beach** from the Federal Government Coastcare program. Most of the money will be spent on contract bush regeneration work in spectacular Spotted Gum forest along the shore from Holmeport Marina. PEF is a charity set up by the Council to help fund environmental projects and can receive tax deductible donations. Pittwater Council will upgrade the foreshore access track and dinghy storage facilities at Bothams Beach, which will assist with the restoration works.

The Bothams Beach group will meet on the first Saturday every month from 9am until 12 noon.

Local residents of the **Browns Bay** area are also reviving the Browns Bay Bushcare group to carry out bush regeneration at Browns Bay. They will meet on the first Monday of each month from 10am to 1pm.

Each group will have a bush regeneration officer with them on site and will be provided with training, tools and afternoon tea.

Local residents who have a few hours to spare a month and would be interested in joining either bushcare groups can call Ben Coddington at Pittwater Council on 9970 1367.

Want to receive the Pittwater Council monthly Cooe Newsletter? Contact Katherine Keighren at Pittwater Council if you'd like it posted, or visit:

www.pittwater.nsw.gov.au/environment/get_involved/brochures_and_newsletters.

Careel Bay Marina— the fight goes on

Pittwater Mayor David James announced on June 23 that Council is committed to continue working with the community on ensuring that any future development of Careel Bay is conducive to its sensitive environment.

Cr James' statement follows a recent ruling by the Court of Appeal on a point of law in favour of the applicant Austral Monsoon.

In February 2006 the NSW Planning Minister refused a Development Application by Austral Monsoon for expansion of the Marina in Careel Bay. Austral Monsoon appealed this refusal and in March 2007 Pittwater Council supported its community and resolved to participate with the NSW Department of Planning in the court hearing of the appeal.

Cr James said the decision of the Court of Appeal on the point of law is a setback but Council will continue to vigorously support the Minister's decision to refuse the application as he expected the community would also do.

"The Court of Appeal's decision means that the application will be referred back to the Land and Environment Court to consider its merits."

"Council will continue to work with the NSW Department of Planning to demonstrate that the development is inappropriate in line with the Minister's original refusal," added Cr James.

Austral Monsoon's proposal includes a new marina building with a 24-berth floating marina.

Mayor James acknowledged the local community in their continued fight to prevent over development at Careel Bay.

PNHA will continue to oppose this development.

FRIENDS OF NARRABEEN LAGOON CATCHMENT

We had 115 people attend our Forum in May and it was a great night. We're making good progress in our efforts to persuade those in authority to provide permanent protection of the remaining bushland in Narrabeen Lagoon Catchment. If you were at the Forum - thank you - and our thanks also to our excellent panel of speakers.

There's more ...check out our brand new June newsletter - www.narrabeenlagoon.org.au/Newsletters/news14.pdf.

It contains reaction to Planning Minister Keneally's 10 year delay on the development of four key sites in Oxford Falls Valley, plus why you'll want to be at our next Forum on August 24 (you'll want to bring your family).

We've got the inside story on the \$4m Federal Government Grant for the pathway around the lagoon - and new dates for bushwalks, tag along tours and our special Spring Awakening events in September and October.

If you are not a member of our group we urge you to sign up now. Annual membership subscription is as little as \$10 - and the larger our membership the more credibility we have with those in power. Complete the coupon in the newsletter and return it to us now.

With best wishes from all of us on the Executive—Tony Carr President.

Canary Island Date Palm

(*Phoenix canariensis*)
Pittwater Council has produced a brochure about these trees with help from PNHA. This palm is now on the environmental weeds list and will also be put on the undesirable plants list in the near future, so that permission to remove it will be unnecessary. Go to the Pittwater Council website to see the brochure. Palms pictured are at Avalon. Many of their progeny are coming up in the surrounding area.



Bilgola Plateau Public School

The Department of Commerce is proposing to remove about 20 large Angophoras and other trees from the school playground to provide a terraced play area with artificial turf. Drainage would be upgraded and the existing concrete pathway adjacent to the existing school building would be extended to provide vehicular access to the netball courts.

This proposal was notified to nearby residents, with a plan of the proposed works too small to be read even with a magnifying glass. This work may be carried out without the consent of Pittwater Council

PNHA has objected to the work, arguing it is unnecessary, that it sets a very poor example in

environmental management and education and should not proceed. It is adjacent to Duffys Forest endangered ecological community (present in Plateau Park) so the Department of Environment and Climate Change should be consulted.

Governor Phillip Park Masterplan

Display of Pittwater Council's Masterplan for redevelopment of the playground area at the southern end of Governor Phillip Park prompted another letter from PNHA to the Council on the issue of choice of plants in landscaping. The species listed for planting included Phoenix palms and also Tuckeroos which we believe are not native to the Pittwater area. We considered many other species on the list were not suited to the area.

We also raised again the issue of planting in other areas of Pennisetum species such as Fountain Grass *Pennisetum setaceum* and Swamp Foxtail *Pennisetum alopecuroides* because of their weed potential. These websites give information:

http://www.weedscrc.org.au/documents/wmg_pennisetum.pdf

<http://www.anbg.gov.au/gnp/interns-2003/pennisetum-alopecuroides.html>

We contended the landscaping works are inconsistent with the Pittwater 2020 Strategic Plan *Our Sustainable Future*. Mayor David James arranged a meeting between members of the PNHA committee with General Manager Mark Ferguson and senior Council staff at which we discussed these issues. We were assured after Newport, no more Tuckeroos will be planted and that the grasses are no longer used. As several Tuckeroos are now seeding and young ones coming up in littoral rainforest and dunes, and there was no discussion of removing the grasses already planted (eg near Mona Vale library and Avalon near Old Barrenjoey Rd), it remains to be seen if they are become future weeds or not.

Moths

Butterflies and Moths are closely related, both in the insect order Lepidoptera (Greek for scaly wings). Butterflies, being active during the day and colourful, are more noticeable. But in Australia moths number many more species (20,000-30,000 moths but only about 400 butterflies), perhaps because moths are better adapted to our arid conditions. Moths show greater diversity in their lifestyles. A few species fly during the day, but most are active during the darker hours and have cryptic colouration to protect them from predators. Those with bright colours as larva (caterpillar) and



Indian meal moth *Plodia interpunctella*

adult may be poisonous to predators, or may mimic wasps.

Moth species eat a wide variety of foods. Some moth larvae eat leaf litter, reducing risk of bushfires. Excessive hazard reduction burning may destroy them and exacerbate the fuel load problem.

Pantry moths. One is The Indian meal moth. This introduced pest lays eggs in almost anything in the pantry from flour to curry powder. It can gnaw through a plastic bag to reach food. The grubs grow to about

1cm long, then emerge from the chrysalis as a moth about 1cm long with two-tone brown wings held along body.

Clothes moths. Nine introduced and one native species may attack wool, feathers, fur, carpet and down.

Scribbly Gum. The scribbles you see are the mines of *Ogmograptis* moth larvae made beneath last year's bark. This year's larvae are gnawing unseen. The different *Ogmograptis* moth species feed on different eucalypts. One adult moth has a wingspan of only 8mm. Very little is known about their biology.

Leaves are popular with many larvae. Our local Native Grape (*Cayratia clematidae*) is a host plant for a beautiful Hawk Moth caterpillar and also the colourful day flying moth *Agarista agricola*.



Larva of *Agarista agricola*
(Royal Botanic Gardens)

References:
Moths of Australia. I. B. Common
Melbourne University Press 1990
A Guide to Australian Moths Paul
Zborowski & Ted Edwards CSIRO
Publishing 2007.
www.ento.csiro.au/an/c/moths.html

Reports Reports Reports

Endangered Ecological Communities April 26

We looked at Themeda Grassland on coastal headlands at Mona Vale and Warriewood Wetland Swamp Forest but ran out of time to visit more because we were having too good a time looking at plants and birds.

Breakfast with the Birds: Winter Birds at Warriewood Wetland June 7

The Swamp Mahoganies are flowering. Our 25 participants had good views of Musk Lorikeets relaxing in a tree, within a couple of metres of relaxed Rainbow Lorikeets in the same tree.

(Musk Lorikeet Image by Tim Williams at www.ozanimals.com)



Asparagus Fern Out Day Plateau Park June 13

The Northern Beaches Asparagus Fern Steering Committee conducted another successful asparagus fern blitz on Saturday 13 June 2009, this time at Plateau Park, Bilgola Plateau.

This delightful park is home to one of the few occurrences of Duffys Forest endangered community in NSW and features the superb Waratah along with other treasures. However, it is plagued by much weed infestation, most notably the dreaded asparagus fern.

32 brave souls turned up to do battle, and once more the deadly foe received a bloody nose, with 31 bags of asparagus fern removed.

The weather did the right thing, the ticks were *in absentia*, and we were able to make big inroads into some heavily infested areas.

Sponsorship from David James' Mayoral Fund, DATS Environmental Services and much assistance in staff time and material from Pittwater Council did a great deal to ensure

Congratulations

Friends of Bungan, winners of the Hawkesbury Nepean Catchment Management Authority Coastcare/ Estuary award for 2009. The Friends of Bungan supported by Pittwater Council have been restoring Bungan and Betty Morrison reserve for many years. Grants and donations have enabled the group to employ contract bush regenerators to support the volunteers' efforts.

Karen and Bryan Penny, winners of the Pittwater Council 2009 Bushcare Volunteer award, are active in many bushcare groups in Pittwater and beyond. For dedication and tenacity they are hard to beat.



the success of the day.

The Plateau Park Bushcare Group will be carrying out follow up work. If you would like to join this group we meet on the first Saturday of the month, 8.30 am to 11.30am or part thereof. Give Ken or Marita a call. Co-convenors Ken Hughes (9918 9170, kchughes@swiftdsl.com.au) Marita Macrae (9918 3368).

Ken Hughes and Ben Coddington (Pittwater Council Bushcare Officer) organised the event like an army exercise, planning and mapping work areas and organising logistics, food, and even toilets.

Mona Vale Hospital Moths - Gary Harris

It's odd sometimes where you find insects.

While trying to find a water leak on the top of the sixth floor of the hospital I noticed what I thought were wings of a dead moth. When I went to pick them up I realised that they were actually a pair of small (12-14mm long) moths mating.

Looking around I saw another mating pair and a single moth. A strange windy place to breed perhaps but then I'm not a moth. Having a look around the roof I found in total of eight mating pairs and another fourteen individuals. With black and yellow markings they certainly appeared to be a tiger moth species.



Tiger Moth *Eutane terminalis*

On further inspection, I realised how many patches of blue grey lichen there were on the roof and putting two and two together I thought that maybe the larvae of the moth could be feeding on the lichen and completing their life cycle on the roof of the hospital although I've also seen plenty of lichen on *Casuarina glauca* close by.

Later at home I found in *Moths of Australia* by Common (Page 437) a likely suspect in *Eutane terminalis* and the images in the **Moths on Line** website looked like a good fit. A couple of days later I could only find three individual moths on the roof so maybe emergence and breeding is a fairly rapid process. This only makes me wonder what the eggs and pupal cases look like.



Lichen

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