



MOGGILL CREEK CATCHMENT GROUP

P.O. Box 657, Kenmore. 4069

www.moggillcreek.org.au

MCCG NEWSLETTER: 20th BIRTHDAY ISSUE (WINTER 2017)

All pictures this page date back to 1998, and are courtesy Gordon Grigg. See inside (page 3-5) for some reminiscences from our first Chairman on the 20th anniversary of the founding of the MCCG.



TOP LEFT: John Smith, our first Vice Chairman.

TOP RIGHT: The Late Frank Rudd, the first MCCG Secretary. Sadly Frank passed away in December 2016.

ABOVE LEFT: Kenneth McClymont from Brisbane Rainforest Network shares his bushcare knowledge with our members.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Bruce Noble from (then) Brisbane Forest Park addressing MCCG members on a field excursion.

Chairman's report

In my AGM report last November I commented that 2017 was the 20th anniversary of the founding of the MCCG. Bryan Hacker and Gordon Grigg's articles (pages 3-5) nicely summarise the motivation of the founding members and the challenges they faced..not so long ago!

The Brookfield Show has come and gone—another milestone event for the year. The Show is an important opportunity for us to showcase our work and talk directly to local families about the MCCG. With many people so busy with their daily lives it gives us a moment of their attention, to tell them about the wonderful natural environment we live in and how they can help to make it better. This Show was closely followed by another successful *Kids' Day at the Cottage*. Numbers were down a little from last year, but the kids who attended were no less enthusiastic.

Many adverse comments are made about “old news” but much of the information contained in our Newsletters remains quite current, no matter when the article was published. A look at our website under “Newsletters” shows an index containing about 1,300 references to our flora and fauna. For instance, the last article on Chinese elm/Chinese celtis (*Celtis sinensis*), a very common and aggressive weed tree in the catchment, was in February 2001. The description and the treatment remains much the same today. Bryan Hacker reminds us all not to take the presence of this weed for granted, but to take action to control its spread.

The brief article by Michelle Johnson, our web manager, is a fascinating update on the good work by Jim Butler and his colleagues who document the birds of the Moggill Creek Catchment. Of course it's more than a list, as we are building up a picture of how the changes to the landscape influence the survival and growth of our feathered friends. As a catchment group, we need to have a solid understanding not only of what's in the catchment—the good and the bad—but also how the various parts interact with each other. It's a never ending task, and it's up to us to understand and record it.

Warren Hoey

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Editorial

*Hi. I hope you enjoy Gordon Grigg's reflections on our early years as much as I did. And I hope that members do take the time not only to reflect on the activities of our founders, but also to **share your thoughts** on the next twenty years... It would be great to hear from new contributors—young and old—so do get writing and send me your ideas for future articles for YOUR newsletter.*

*Can I also remind you of the request for **urgent help** by the photography committee. None of us want to see 2017 as the final year of this iconic MCCG event, so if you can spare a few hours across the year, the photography team would love to meet you (see page 7 for details).*

The first photography competition took place thanks to the initiative and hard work of Judy and John Gower. John has also been a constant presence in the production of our newsletter—providing printing services that have ensured we have been as cost-effective as possible when keeping members up to date over the years. The Autumn issue was the last to be printed by John, and we thank him for his support and hard work to produce so very many, many issues of this newsletter. We also thank Judy White at The Print Shoppe, Kenmore, for printing this and future issues (www.printshoppe.com.au).

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: Warren Hoey.

Secretary: Cathie Mortimer.

P.O. Box 657, Kenmore 4069 mccgsecretary@live.com.au

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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. *Please email your ideas direct to mccgeditor@outlook.com.au.*

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Dedicated to a better Brisbane

Happy Birthday! MCCG celebrates the first 20 Years

Yes, the Moggill Creek Catchment Group (MCCG) was founded in 1997, following the Council's publication of the 75-page *Catchment Management Plan for Moggill Creek* (June 1997). The BCC plan commented that "a broad appreciation of catchment issues has been identified by community members active in revegetation" (p. 50).

Encouraged and supported by Cr Margaret de Wit, a small fledgling group was soon formed and a committee was elected (meeting in the early days in Cr de Wit's office, to plan the way ahead).

A major problem of invasive exotic weeds was soon seen as a priority, and we were fortunate to win a substantial grant from the Natural Heritage Trust to address this problem, partnered by Brisbane Forest Park. This cooperative arrangement enabled us to build our Nursery at the end of Gold Creek Road, as well as fund a Catchment Coordinator, Michael Rief, who was instrumental in getting the Nursery going.

Soon groups developed aiming to restore native habitat along our creeks and most of these groups still continue the task, supported by Habitat Brisbane, BCC. Another early initiative was conducting tours to appropriate properties, such as Smith's Scrub (2005 trip, pictured below).

From modest beginnings, our newsletter has grown from a single page monochrome to eight pages, two in colour; our Nursery from a modest start to giving 12000-15000 local native plants annually to members and our membership to around 500. We now also have an annual Photography Competition, 'Kids' Day' and Platypus Survey, as well as regular creek health monitoring and other activities serving the community. We are proud of what we have achieved!

Bryan Hacker



MCCG's first two Years: Reflections from our first Chairman

As we celebrate the first twenty years of the MCCG, Gordon Grigg (our first chairman) provides what he describes as "a thumbnail account of the MCCG's first two years." Gordon has drawn on the original *Minute Book*, and adds that his comments are "partly from my recollection and from reminiscing over old photographs."

Early in 1997 BCC's Catchment Management Unit developed a comprehensive Catchment Management Plan for Moggill Creek (pictured, right). Many local residents were interviewed and some participated in workshops. However, when presenting the 75 page plan at a June public meeting in Brookfield Hall, the Council representatives advised that there was no funding to implement any of the plan's actions, and no intention to. Several people, a bit surprised, proposed forming a local volunteer group—a suggestion warmly supported by (then) Councillor Margaret de Wit.

Over several meetings, with nine of us squeezed into Margaret's office, we discussed what structure the group should take—helped by Brian Sait (Save our Waterways Now, SOWN) and by Peter Armstrong (Downfall Creek Bushcare Centre), who shared their experience with us. Shortly we had a set of proposals to put to a public meeting, so formalising the Group.

The public meeting was held on 22nd October 1997, in Brookfield Hall. Forty-five people attended, and we agreed to form the Moggill Creek Catchment Management Group. The meeting also agreed for the Group to become incorporated, to join Landcare, to have a \$5.00 annual membership fee and a logo based on the local Water Dragon (maggill), to seek funding to enable the appointment of a field officer, and to hold a field day on November 16 with demonstrations of re-vegetation and rehabilitation.

A committee was elected: Gordon Grigg (Chairman), John Smith (Vice-Chairman), Frank Rudd (Secretary), Marie Kuipers (Treasurer), and a further ten committee members (Margaret de Wit, Andrew Willsford, Judy Gower, Bryan Hacker, Gordon Wilkinson, John Rogers, Chris Mackey, Felicity Coffey, Joan Nissen and Jack Greenwood). I think the large size of the committee probably reflected ongoing discussions about dividing the catchment into geographic areas, each under a Section Leader who would recruit local volunteers. The minutes of the meeting record that the group's objective "should be to restore the catchment to a state as practicable as

possible to the fauna and flora existing in 1788.” Committee meetings for the next ten years were held monthly in the Brookfield Showgrounds Trustees’ Room, and so the new committee began implementing the agreed actions.



1998 was a year of achievement. Too many actions to detail, these included mapping the catchment into 13 geographic areas (by John Smith) and identifying leaders for 11 of the new sections. Frank Rudd teamed up with Brad Wilson (pictured above). Brad was in charge of the then Brisbane Forest Park [BFP], which at the time was one of the Sections. Together, Frank and Brad applied to the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) for funding for a field officer. Our incorporation occurred and our membership of Landcare was accepted. Section Leaders commenced work on their areas. Several field days were held, with valuable input from both Bruce Noble (BFP) and Kenneth McClymont (Brisbane Rainforest Network). In March another public meeting was held, attended by 105 people. BCC updated the audience on the Land for Wildlife Programme before the meeting split into groups to plan activities with the Section Leaders. By May we had 105 members, \$2 logo-ed bumper stickers went on sale, and we shared a stand with REPA at the Brookfield Show.

The first Photographic Competition was held in August – run by Judy and John Gower, and judged by Dr Joseph McDowell. I had the pleasure of presenting the prizes at Kenmore Village Shopping Centre.

By October we learnt that we had been successful in our NHT grant application. The funding was for three years: approximately \$75,000 p.a. to pay the salary for a field officer, as well as for the lease of a vehicle and to contribute towards the establishment of a nursery. Original and subsequent NHT grants were a joint arrangement between MCCG and BFP. This meant that the BFP provided office facilities and administrative support for the field officer, and ensured that we were able to establish our all-important plant nursery at Gold Creek Dam. Thus our volunteers were freed up to undertake the vital rehabilitation work. Prior to this there had been limited contact between BFP and the local community. So, through John Smith and fire management and Brian Leahy with his historical knowledge of the backblocks of Gold Creek and Enoggera Dam, this new association was seen as a positive step in part of the BFP charter to encourage environmental awareness by rehabilitating wildlife corridors. The 1998 AGM was attended by 52 members, where Brad spoke about “Brisbane Forest Park: Part of your community.”



1999 brought the first Newsletter, the appointment of Michael Reif as our Field Officer (pictured above), and the establishment of the MCCG nursery. Michael reported in April that the nursery already had hundreds of plants, as well as a storeroom, an herbicide room and an office. Sections reported to monthly committee meetings, and there was certainly a lot of news to report. In May planting by ‘Section 2’ (with the help of kids from three local schools), around a very large fig tree off Cromarty St., was filmed by “Totally Wild.” There was also a working bee at Resthaven (now Carinity), while Michael Reif and Stephanie Cumming undertook photographic monitoring of regeneration sites. And at the AGM our name, for brevity, was changed to the Moggill Creek Catchment Group.



Pictured (above): This area alongside Gold Creek Road was slashed and then planted during 1998. Only a year later (below) the same area showed satisfying growth.



A big change occurred very early in **2000**. Tom McHugh, an officer with Brisbane City Council was instrumental in arranging for most of our Sections to become BCC Bushcare Groups under what is now the Habitat Brisbane (HB) programme. This provided Sections with additional support for their work on public land; materiel (tools, herbicide etc.) plus access to a diversity of training programmes. Significantly, this means that our Sections can work on public land as HB groups, *and* on private land as MCCG groups. Additionally, many of our members are on acreage properties and qualify for Land for Wildlife membership which means that they can apply for direct assistance with their 'on-property' environmental work under BCC's CCA programme.

As I reflect on our first two years I am struck by how much we managed to set in motion in that short time. Every year the nursery gives out thousands of plants to members, the photographic competition runs, Section Leaders still hold regular working bees, and we still aspire to *restore the catchment to a state as practicable as possible to the fauna and flora existing in 1788*. We still have a very active association with BCC. Our membership has grown

considerably (now about 500) and additional activities such as the Creek Health Management Programme and Kids' Day are now in our annual calendar.



Pictured (above):The same area alongside Gold Creek Road (left hand side), and (below) enjoying the shade of the 1988 planting (both pictures taken in 2017)

I was interested to realise that five of the people who were active in those first two years are current committee members (Bryan Hacker, Malcolm Frost, Michael Humphreys, Adrian Webb and myself). Sadly, in the last year we have lost two of the "originals," Frank Rudd and Graeme Wilson. With more space I could highlight more of our current activities and salute the people who contribute so much to the modern MCCG.



But I have to admit, it is very satisfying to visit places that were bare ground 20 years ago and walk in the shade of trees that I remember as seedlings. Now 15-20 metres tall, they bear fruit, and seeds, for birds to carry off and drop elsewhere.

Gordon Grigg

The most inspirational tweets

A month ago I was searching for some information on Fairy Wrens (I'd like to know how to attract them back into my garden), and came across a wonderful set of information ... on the MCCG website. So it was great to hear from Michelle about work afoot to provide even more of Jim Butler's bird information on our website...

Have you had enough of politicians' tweets? Then perhaps you should tune into the world right outside your door. We have some of the world's most inspirational tweets right here in our catchment... tweets of the avian kind, that is.

And we're excited to announce that soon you'll be able to view local info about the birds that create these tweets in an easily accessible online guide.

A comprehensive list of all the birdlife known in our catchment, complete with photos and links to *Feathered Fascination* articles, will soon be released on the [MCCG website](http://www.moggillcreek.org) (www.moggillcreek.org).



Have you wanted to learn more about some of the birds that visit your backyard? Or do you see certain birds that intrigue you when you're out and about, walking on our wonderful bush trails?

Our revised bird list offers a quick and easy identification tool that you can check at those times when you need to know more, and when you need to know it straight away. The list has been painstakingly created by Jim Butler, author of the popular *Local Bulletin* column, *Feather Fascination*. Jim is a bird lover with a detailed knowledge of our local birdlife. And because it's now online, you can check it on your computer or your mobile.

For example, if you spot a fan-tailed cuckoo (pictured above) you will quickly discover the following: it "perches to take prey in flight or on ground Insects (more information from articles dated [January 2013](#) and [January 2016](#)). 27cm, it is a common resident, partially migratory. Prefers rainforests, forests,

woodlands. Best place is around Reservoir. Has a beautiful voice that is often heard. When observed usually flies a few metres and then perches and looks back at observer."

A standout feature of the list, which will make bird identification SO much more simple, is the gallery of photos kindly shared with us by Ed Frazer (see for example, Ed's picture of the Fan-tailed Cuckoo). These remarkable photos have all been taken within our catchment, so they are a very unique and valuable reference indeed. And we are grateful also to Bernard Milford who assisted in preparing the many images for online use.

So, residents of the Moggill Creek Catchment, keep a bird's eye view on our website! We're hoping to release this unique list of our very own birds online towards the middle of the year.

Michelle Johnston

Welcome news

Joanna Yesberg (Treasurer) has provided some information to supplement the AGM presentation of our audited accounts, and to give us an early view on the current financial year.

Thanks to the generosity of a number of members, 2017 has not been a typical year. Normally we have very little 'donations income,' but this year we have a very healthy \$7,628.50 in donations. So a big thank you to everyone who responded to the January request for support.

Our income line has also benefited from a BCC Admin grant (\$8,800) and, recently, in connection with the Green Army revegetation work. So far, the combination of grant, donations and plants means that the year is looking better than budgeted.

Aside from these two sources of funds, our main income is usually from membership fees (plus a small amount of interest and some plant sales). We have also benefited in past years from BCC Administration grants. This meant that, when we did not receive a BCC grant in one year recently, we had to draw on a significant amount of our accumulated surplus.

As a volunteer-run organisation, our major expenses include the standard office items (such as insurance, electricity, phone, internet, website, photocopier, stationery). Our other major areas of expenditure are the print and postage costs for the newsletter, and our participation in events such as the Brookfield Show. During the financial year to date, the combined PR activities and office admin costs already exceed \$9,600.

In addition, we fund the costs of running the nursery, and support the Section Leader-led working bees. The photography competition continues to be self-funding (thanks to the support of our sponsors).

We are therefore grateful to all members who elect to read the newsletter online, as this helps to keep our costs as low as possible. In addition, the committee has this year taken steps to reduce our outgoings wherever possible. This focus on costs-reduction, combined with the increased donations, will be reflected in a surplus for the year. This is particularly pleasing after reporting several years of deficits.

Joanna Yesberg

HELP URGENTLY NEEDED. Our Photography Competition team REALLY needs new helpers. Contact mccgphoto@gmail.com for more info.

DATE CLAIMER: Kids' Day at the Cottage, 10th June 2018

MCCG is happy to offer the popular *Kids' Day at the Cottage* FREE to the local community, thanks to the support of our new sponsor, Seqwater. We are delighted that Seqwater are joining our current supporters to ensure this popular event continues to be free (see one of the pictures by Dale Borgelt, below, of some of our visitors enjoying the filtered water refills). We are also most grateful for the continuing support of the Lord Mayor's Suburban initiative Fund and the Pullenvale Ward Councillor, and the Brisbane City Council Creek Catchment Program.



The *Kids' Day* is a popular feature of the local calendar, but we are making one change for next year. It appears that the final weekend in May is one of the busiest weekends of the year for wildlife presenters. So, from 2018 onwards, the *Kids' Day at the Cottage* will move to the 2nd Sunday in June. Moving our event a few weeks, into June, will avoid clashes with other

major environmental events attended by Martin Fingland and Geckoes wildlife presentations. Most importantly, it will ensure that there is never again a clash of bookings with events at Gold Creek Dam Reserve (avoiding consequent parking difficulties along Gold Creek Road).



The volunteer presenters at the *2017 Kids' Day at the Cottage (28th May)*, made sure they had new activities, as well as old favourites, to attract interest, involve and entertain the young (see picture, above, of the popular giant burrowing cockroaches).

The focus as always is on sharing information about the natural environment. At different stands, kids learnt about the different features of native flora and fauna—having fun when looking at, and sorting, tracks, shapes, seeds, and shells.

Kids of all ages also learnt as they enjoyed close-up contact with the real thing. Wonderful displays and presentations, as always, including all the wildlife Martin Fingland brought along with him for his Geckoes presentations.

There were many happy minds, hands and fingers engaged in colouring, make and do, art and craft activities. Kids wore home-made neckwear (created using natural products), and some even modelled their Richmond Birdwing Butterfly 'light-captures.'



There were so many happy faces at *Kids' Day at the Cottage 2017*. Lovely to see new visitors, and also some very familiar faces. Thanks in particular to those who now come to enjoy, and also to help. See you on Sunday 10th June, 2018). *Dale Borgelt*

Weeds: Chinese celtis (*Celtis sinensis*)

There always seems to be yet another weed to describe, and to provide useful information on. Obviously some weeds are more of a problem than others. The most serious, obvious and invasive weeds had the greatest attention in our early newsletters. With little doubt, the worst of our weed trees is Chinese celtis (*Celtis sinensis*). An article describing this species, and means for its control (probably written by our Field Officer, Michael Rief), appeared in November 1999 (in what I believe was our very first newsletter). Nearly two years later, in February 2001, an article covering Chinese celtis and several other weed trees was published. In both of these articles the common name of 'Chinese elm' was used. However, Chinese celtis is the preferred name, as *Ulmus parvifolia* is referred to as Chinese elm (this being a different species, and not a problem in Queensland). In the sixteen years that follow, Chinese celtis has had scant mention (except for the last issue, with Steve Csurhes' article on the Celtis Leaf Beetle).



Apparently Chinese celtis was purposefully introduced as an ornamental or as shade tree for cattle. It is native to China, Korea and Japan, and is in the same plant family, Ulmaceae, as the English and other northern Hemisphere elms. Leaves are alternate, 4-6.5 cm long and 2.5-3.8 cm wide, slightly serrate and are characteristically borne in a plane (see picture, above). Fruit are globular, 7-8 mm long. The tree can grow to a height of 15 m, and is mainly a problem along riparian areas (although it can also be found on upper slopes). Control of established trees is by cutting and poisoning with 50% glyphosate, although some re-sprouting can occur. Caution is recommended where trees are in flood-prone areas or on steep slopes. It is suggested that trees should be cut back to a stump (to prevent flowering and seeding but allowing the root system to hold the soil) and native trees to then be replanted in the immediate area. Meanwhile, every effort should be made to control the Chinese celtis seedlings, which are easily recognised and generally easy to pull out by hand if they are less than 1 m tall.

Seeds: Tulip wood (*Harpullia pendula*)

For a number of reasons, tulip wood, *Harpullia pendula*, must be one of the more significant tree species provided by our MCCG Nursery, and we usually have plants in stock. Tulipwood is a rainforest tree growing to a height of 12 m. When grown in the open—in moderately sunny conditions—it is quite dense in appearance. It therefore makes an ideal species if wanting to plant a screen between



neighbouring properties—perhaps in combination with red kamala (*Mallotus philippensis*) and one of the *Acacia* species. It is also remarkably widely adapted, generally growing well in areas previously under rainforest but also when

planted in eucalypt woodland—as shown in the photograph (above).

It is commonly grown by the Council as a street tree, as it is an appropriate size and is attractive both in early growth and when mature.



Leaves of tulipwood are pinnate, usually with 4-6 leaflets (see photograph, above). Flowering and fruiting is in autumn and winter, the flowers greenish-yellow, the petals 7-8 mm long, followed by orange fruit which are 2-lobed capsules, in appearance like two joined marbles, each about 1 cm in diameter. These open when ripe, each potentially revealing a single shiny, black seed, although they are often empty. Tulipwood occurs naturally from northern NSW to north Queensland.

Bryan Hacker