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Spring 2010

Nature farmers



Have you ever wondered what it's like to live and work on a remote Bush Heritage reserve? **Karen Graham** found out

Emma and Peter Ashton live a pretty different kind of life to most of us – they live on our Boolcoomatta Reserve, surrounded by vast treeless plains, silvery grey saltbush and prickly acacia shrubs. “There is such an incredible sense of space out here,” says Emma. “On a clear day we can see the curvature of the earth because we have a 180-degree view to the horizon.”

The views might be incredible, but they are well earned – Emma and Peter spend their days working to control pests, such as rabbits and foxes, and to encourage rehabilitation and revegetation of native species including the vulnerable Murray swainson-pea. All this work is aimed at improving habitat for wildlife, including the yellow-footed rock wallaby.

“I often refer to ourselves as nature farmers,” says Emma, “because we live in much the same way as any farmer but without the stock or crops.”

Wildlife often visits the homestead, which Emma says is wonderful for their children Jarrah and Indigo, albeit a distraction to their School of the Air classes. “You have to admit, not many students have kangaroos hopping by or emus strutting outside the window,” says Emma.

It's an unusual place to call home, spectacular, yet often harsh and unforgiving. And it's remote – 100 km from the nearest town of Broken Hill. But Emma and Peter live here because they have important work to do to help protect Boolcoomatta's precious animals, like the plains-wanderer and the dusky hopping mouse.

Emma and Peter feel privileged to have the support of people like you. Your support helps them in their daily tasks of weed control, rehabilitation and tackling feral animals. ■

Did you know?

Your support is making a difference on Boolcoomatta, where Emma and Peter have been hot on the heels of the feral rabbit population, with the help of two tireless volunteers. Wayne Lewis and Kim Ely mapped 1000 rabbit warrens around the reserves in June, bringing the total number of warrens mapped at Boolcoomatta to three thousand. Rabbits compete with native species for habitat and cause erosion. Reducing their population is a key part of our conservation goals at Boolcoomatta Reserve.

Thanks to the Native Vegetation Council for its support of rabbit control and other crucial conservation activities on Boolcoomatta.



On country in Cape York

Bush Heritage Ecologist Max Tischler recently spent a week with the Lama Lama Rangers, a group of ten traditional owners working on country at Running Creek Nature Reserve on Cape York. Thanks to Bush Heritage supporters, Max was able to work alongside the ranger group conducting preliminary ecological assessments that will help develop a conservation plan for the reserve. "Running Creek is a stunning part of the Cape and an area we're very interested in helping to protect. The reserve ranges from coastal lagoons and estuaries to melaleuca swamps and messmate forests. The high diversity of fauna and

flora found here make this an important area for conservation." Max said. The Lama Lama is one of several language groups we are working with towards conservation on the Cape, and is a key part of our partnership with the Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation.

Photo: Max Tischler



Learning from the locals

Bush Heritage's Simon Smale learnt from Noongar elder Eugene Eades during recent cultural heritage mapping on your newest reserve, Monjebup North. "Spending time with people who know the land as well as Eugene's people is just fantastic," Simon said. "You get the scientific information, but woven through that is the story of how the Noongar moved in these landscapes and how they managed their country." Simon and the team of archeologists found artefacts (like cutting and hunting tools), some in concentrated locations, which indicate cultural sites like camping and tool-

working areas. Results of the mapping, due to be released soon, will inform future plans for the reserve, such as access and ecological restoration. "Our work with the Noongar people focuses on restoring country that in a more intact natural state, sustained them for thousands of years."

Photo: Anne Sparrow

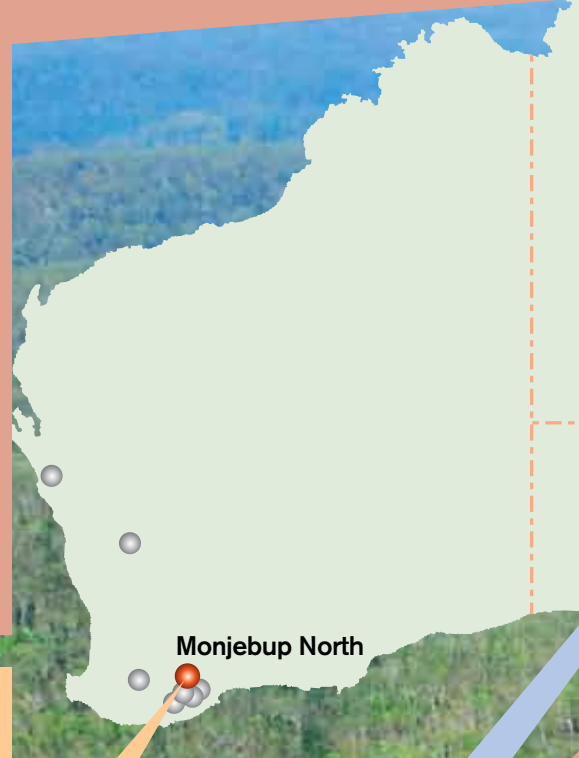


Enraptured with RAPS on Cravens Peak

Reserve Managers Mark and Nella Lithgow have been listening to a new sound at the homestead on Cravens Peak Reserve ... the sound of silence. The constant thud of the generator, which previously ran sixteen hours a day, has been blissfully replaced by the calls of birds like the chiming wedgebill, which nest in trees not far from the homestead. The generator was replaced in June by a Remote Area Power System (RAPS), which in its first month saved about 1600 L of diesel and 4200 kg of carbon emissions. "It's made such a difference to our quality of life," says Nella. "Now

it feels like we really do live in the country rather than in a noisy city suburb!" Bush Heritage thanks the generous donors who funded the system, and the group of volunteers who dug trenches, painted and built the shed to house the RAPS batteries.

Photo: Nella Lithgow



Bon Bon welcomes a visitor

It's a long journey to Bon Bon Station Reserve – for anyone. But in June, Reserve Manager Glen Norris saw a visitor arrive after an unusually long trip: seven years in fact. In the still quiet of an outback winter's night, Glen gathered with neighbours and Japanese scientists on a nearby property to watch the arrival of a capsule, measuring 40 cm in diameter, from the Hayabusa asteroid probe, launched in 2003 with the aim of collecting samples of dust from the surface of the asteroid Itokawa. The capsule fell to earth around 5 km from Glen's home at Bon Bon. "They tracked the capsule to Bon Bon and picked it up using a helicopter," says Glen. "We had helicopters flying around the area for days looking for other pieces of the spacecraft. It was amazing – I feel privileged to have witnessed such a landmark event."

Photo: Glen Norris



Running Creek

Around your reserves in 90 days

Cravens Peak
Ethabuka

Goonderoo

Bon Bon

Scottsdale

Homecoming

"So what's the story?" was the question we asked the young male desert short-tailed mouse (*Leggadina forresti*) when it turned up during a recent survey on Ethabuka Reserve. When research first began on Ethabuka 20 years ago, this species was a relatively common capture. But for the past eighteen years, according to the Desert Ecology Research Group at the University of Sydney, it hasn't been seen. Until now. "We're not sure where they've been," says Max Tischler, Bush Heritage Ecologist. "It's likely this species is strongly driven by rainfall. It maintains low numbers in small pockets of habitat during poor conditions and then erupts when conditions become favourable." We're hoping our conservation efforts on Ethabuka, made possible by Bush Heritage supporters like you, ensure species like the desert short-tailed mouse are given every chance to fully utilise 'boom' years such as this one, and have safe refuge during the 'bust'.

Photo: Max Tischler



What makes a difference to the working day of our reserve managers, partners and ecologists around the nation? A little help from their friends – that's you, our Bush Heritage supporters. Around the country, your support is helping our team to juggle the everyday work of protecting our wildlife and the land it relies on. Here's a taste of how you are helping around the nation.

Nail tail spotted on Goonderoo!

Ecologist Murray Haseler's good eyesight came in handy on Goonderoo Reserve in late June when a small, boldly marked macropod dashed by. Murray quickly identified the characteristic features of a creature that he and former volunteer caretakers, the Olive-Prothero family, have pursued for many months: the bridled nail tail wallaby. "I managed to get a clear view of this tiny kangaroo before it disappeared into the bushes," said Murray. "The nail tail was passing within 500 m of the house!" Although there is not yet evidence of a population on

Goonderoo, the sighting is a step in the right direction. "It's a reminder that the population, and the species, is critically endangered but that it's close by. We hope our work to restore the nail tail's brigalow habitat will eventually encourage nail tails onto Goonderoo."

Photo: Bush Heritage



Loo with a view

A visit to the loo has never been such a triumph ... twenty-first century plumbing arrived at Scottsdale Reserve in early June with the installation of a new composting toilet, which was designed and built by a small group of knowledgeable volunteers. "A loo might not sound like big news," says Volunteer Coordinator Heidi Fisher. "But it actually makes a difference to what we can achieve towards our conservation goals. Once you have a toilet that can cope with dozens of people, you can better involve people on a reserve for activities like tree planting,

weeding and seed collecting." Who would've thought the construction of a loo could help protect plant communities like Scottsdale's endangered box-gum woodlands, its threatened temperate grasslands and the creatures that depend on them?

Photo: Peter Saunders





The artesian springs of Edgbaston Reserve: home to the red-finned blue-eye Photo: Wayne Lawler

Mission ecological

Not everyone's job description includes 'save a species' as a key responsibility, writes **Lucy Ashley**, but that's what Adam Kerezszy signed up for when he joined Bush Heritage

If you'd been looking for Dr Adam Kerezszy in the past two years you may well have found him ankle-deep in water in the small springs of western Queensland's Edgbaston Reserve. In his hands, you might have seen a net and a bucket, and on his face a look of intense concentration.

Adam Kerezszy is Bush Heritage's Freshwater Ecologist. He is also a man on a mission – to protect and restore populations of a small native fish, the red-finned blue-eye. At present, it is struggling to survive in the only place it calls home: the unique environment of Edgbaston's freshwater springs.

The immediate threat to the blue-eye is from the invasive gambusia (mosquito fish), which was introduced in the 1930s to Australia's waterways in a failed attempt to control mosquitos.

"Gambusia probably travelled via floodwaters a number of years ago into the springs at Edgbaston and the problem is they seem to out-compete the blue-eyes," says Adam. "They are as destructive as carp to the Australian environment"

Adam's PhD work has focussed on surveying fish communities in western Queensland. Few scientists specialise in arid zone fish species and fewer still have such expertise in Queensland.

"Getting rid of a pest fish is one of the hardest things you can do. But I like a challenge. And it seemed like a good one.

"I recognised that it was going to take a lot of work. But I thought somebody's gotta do this job and it's probably a perfect fit for me. I was really interested in how these fish get by in a relatively harsh environment and I knew if we got a start on something positive we would have a good chance of saving the red-finned blue-eye."

The red-finned blue-eye is a unique species. Its closest cousins inhabit coastal draining catchments on the eastern seaboard. Somewhere back in the distant past, blue-eyes or their ancestors made the move to Edgbaston – and Edgbaston is where they stayed.

However their future is not so certain.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List contains arguably the most comprehensive worldwide listing of species and their conservation status. On its Critically Endangered list are iconic species like the western gorilla and Sumatran tiger. Alongside them, facing a similar likelihood of extinction, is the red-finned blue-eye.

The one thing in its favour? The fact that its habitat is within the protected lands of Bush





Heritage's Edgbaston Reserve. Right now, thousands of our supporters nationwide are getting behind Adam and his team's efforts to stop this tiny fish jumping from Critically Endangered to Extinct.

"We've done a lot of work in the last two years to protect this species from gambusia, much of it thanks to the support of our donors. If we were to stop now, the only place you might see one of these rare fish in years to come would be on the extinct list."

Gambusia give birth to live young while most fish – including the red-finned blue-eye – lay eggs. This gives them a huge competitive advantage. And the figures say it all.

"If we were to stop now, the only place you might see the red-finned blue-eye in years to come would be on the extinct list."

"Since 1990 the number of populations of red-finned blue-eye has declined from seven to four – although since Bush Heritage supporters helped us buy the property in 2008, these four populations have remained intact."

"In contrast, gambusia now inhabit 25 springs," says Adam. "The fact is that where there are now gambusia, there are no blue-eyes."

The springs at Edgbaston range in size from what Adam describes as a "small soak" to around the size of a public swimming pool. This means that a range of protection strategies are required to save the blue-eye.

For instance, in one of the smaller springs, Adam spent many painstaking hours hunched over the water catching and removing gambusia by hand using a small net – one of a range of techniques

Far left: The red-finned blue-eye

Top to bottom: The artesian springs of Edgbaston Reserve: home to the red-finned blue-eye; Our secret weapon: Dr Adam Kerezszy, Queensland's arid zone fish specialist; Feral gambusia at Edgbaston – pregnant females give birth to 50 young, nine times a year; Rain approaches in the grasslands of Edgbaston Reserve

Photos by Wayne Lawler, Mick Brigden, Adam Kerezszy and Mel Sheppard

Adam's team has been developing to protect the blue-eye.

That spring has now been 'quarantined' from reinfestation with a plastic buffer system. Adam has since returned to Edgbaston following the heavy rains in March and found no evidence of reinfestation.

Adam and the Bush Heritage ecology team are working on other strategies to eradicate gambusia and restore the populations of red-finned blue-eye. Working with endangered species is particularly complicated because an equal amount of effort needs to be directed towards dealing with legislative requirements and on-ground works.

"There are a lot of people who are understandably interested in our efforts to protect the blue-eye. Scientists don't work alone – we all learn from each other and there are so many elements to consider. What Bush Heritage has though, which is unique, is the opportunity to make it happen".

"If we save this species from the brink of extinction it will be an incredible accomplishment for all of us, especially our donors who are the ones who make this possible." ■

Adam and his team's work to save the red-finned blue-eye at Edgbaston Reserve is only possible thanks to the generosity of Bush Heritage supporters like you. Thanks for allowing us to continue protecting endangered species like the red-finned blue-eye.

Edgbaston Reserve was purchased for the purpose of nature conservation with the assistance of The Nature Conservancy and the Australian Government under the Maintaining Australia's Biodiversity Hotspots Programme. Thanks also to the Elizabeth Gabler Charitable Trust, managed by Trust Company Ltd. for their support of Adam's work in the last year.



Flying high

The sound of helicopter blades cutting the air above Yourka Reserve hails a new approach to the reserve's fire management strategy, as **Bron Willis** reports

It's a moment of nervous anticipation as Reserve Manager Paul Hales navigates the chopper pilot across Yourka Reserve. The property's northern border stretches out 150 metres below. Paul checks the map and gives a quick nod in the direction of the back seat.

An operator feeds an odd-looking device with what looks like ping pong balls. But these are no ordinary ping pong balls. Packed with flammable gel they fly out the chopper window, landing moments later among the grassy woodlands below, where they soon smoke and ignite.

For Paul – and for Bush Heritage – today is an exciting day. Yourka is the first Bush Heritage property to use the technique of controlled burning by helicopter. The technique, well-established in Australian land management practice, is perfect for the savannah woodlands and steep inaccessible hills of Yourka.

"Yourka is perhaps the most rugged property that Bush Heritage owns," says Paul. "Her hills and ridges make it tricky to get around and do prescribed burning by foot. There's also no vehicle access to a lot of places so the chopper gives us the ability to get to those areas."

This inaccessibility, combined with the rapid build-up of fuel in Yourka's tropical savannah woodlands means Paul and his team need to burn frequently and early in the dry season. Bring in a helicopter and effective, broadscale prescribed burning becomes achievable.

"The scale and quality of this burning would have taken months to do on foot," says Paul. "It would involve creating and

maintaining roads and walking many kilometres of very rugged country," he says. "Whereas with the chopper, we covered over 16,000 hectares in just under three hours."

Paul has spent the best part of three weeks preparing for today. He has covered kilometres of countryside, on quad-bike and on foot, strengthening the firebreaks around the reserve.

Bush Heritage Ecologist Murray Haseler and local fire ecology expert Paul Williams are also key pieces in the puzzle. They have spent weeks studying Yourka's vegetation to determine how best to manage fire in the landscape, and to set goals for burns and monitor their success.

At \$1300 per hour, helicopters don't come cheaply, but they pay for themselves quickly. As well as being cost-effective, Paul says burning by helicopter achieves a better burn. "The key is to break the country up," says Paul. "What you want is a mosaic burn, so that from the air, the countryside looks like a patchwork. It's so much easier with the chopper."

Steve Heggie, Bush Heritage Regional Manager, has also been crucial to fire

management on Yourka and other reserves in Northern Australia. "We've come a long way in a short time," says Steve. "A lot of people have put in the hard yards over many years to develop a strong reserve management approach. We have skilled staff and the organisational confidence to pull off a program like this. Our supporters should feel proud".

As the pilot points the chopper's nose homeward, Paul scans the horizon, triple-checking the firebreaks have held. It's a cold and blustery day, but Yourka still looks beautiful. Since Bush Heritage supporters pitched in to buy the property in 2007, this is the first time Paul has seen Yourka from the air. But with their continued support, he'll be in the air again next year, perhaps with another reserve manager in the back seat, showing them how it's done. ■

Yourka Reserve was purchased for the purpose of nature conservation with the assistance of The Nature Conservancy and The Nature Conservancy's David Thomas Challenge; Ian and Nan Landon-Smith; and the Australian Government under the Maintaining Australia's Biodiversity Hotspots Programme.

What about the animals?

Fire management is an integral part of protecting species on Yourka Reserve. Although plants and animals are well adapted to survive bushfires, controlled burning minimises the likelihood and impact of extensive and hot wildfires. Such wildfires leave few refuges for native animals like Yourka's gliders and rock-wallabies.

In contrast, controlled, seasonal burning provides refuge for native species if wildfires do occur in years to come. The patchier the burn, the more refuges are left for animals to take cover. Controlled burns help to germinate particular plant species, and also result in areas of vibrant, palatable groundcover for ground-feeding animals like bettongs, wallabies and bandicoots.

Yourka from the air Photo: Paul Hales



In the spotlight

Clever thinking and crafty techniques lured the elusive Eyrean grasswren into the spotlight at Ethabuka, writes **Charlotte Francis**

First described in 1875 but with no reliable sightings until 1961, the Eyrean grasswren is something of a mystery and has kept bird lovers guessing. Although it has a high-pitched call and is always on the move hopping, bounding or bouncing along, this reddish-backed bird is a tricky one to spot.

That's because it hangs out and hides in remote places where few people go. It makes its home and feeds on insects and seeds in clumps of dune cane grass in the eastern and southern Simpson and Strzelecki Deserts in South Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory. "And", says Dez Wells of Birds Australia Southern Queensland (BASQ), "it's only ever found on top of the dunes, never in between."

Excited about the possibility of spotting these elusive birds for the first time, fourteen volunteers took part in a recent BASQ survey at Bush Heritage's Ethabuka Reserve. Their aim was to identify the presence of the Eyrean grasswren as well as other bird species. Ethabuka lies at the northern end of the Simpson Desert on the Queensland-Northern Territory border and is part of an Important Bird Area (IBA) designated by Birds Australia.

Venturing out into the reserve's extensive dune system, the volunteers walked long distances in their mission to find the mystery bird and other species. "It's an amazing landscape of far-off horizons and orange-red earth dotted with dune systems up to a kilometre apart with spinifex or gidgee swale in between," says Dez.

Equipped with MP3 players with microphones and speakers, the volunteers used a version of a technique first used by Birds Australia North Queensland, having first received ethics approval for use of the innovative technique. At regular 200-metre intervals, they played back the Eyrean grasswren's call to entice the birds out of hiding.

"Without playback we probably wouldn't have found the birds," says Dez. "When we did first come across them, they would make large hops across the sand and vanish into the next clump of cane grass, so we modified our survey method slightly and looked not just for suitable areas of cane grass habitat but also for signs of footprints. Once we found those, we would play back the calls to see if we got a response."

Although Dez and his team surveyed less than five per cent of the dunes, they were thrilled to find Eyrean grasswrens at more than ten sites across the reserve. This suggests the grasswren is not only more abundant than previously believed, but also that its range extends much further north.

Sightings of the Eyrean grasswren were not the only cause for excitement; BASQ experts recorded 124 bird species on Ethabuka over ten days, bringing the total number of bird species recorded on the reserve to nearly 150. Many of these – such as the red-chested button-quail and the western gerygone – have never been sighted at Ethabuka before.

Dr Jim Radford, Bush Heritage's Science and Monitoring Manager, was excited about the results. "We've done surveys like this on Ethabuka before," Jim says. "But this is the first time we've joined forces with the IBA monitoring program. Being able to tap into the expertise of Birds Australia Southern Queensland and add that to our own is just fantastic." ■

Ethabuka Reserve was purchased for the purpose of nature conservation with the assistance of Diversicon Environmental Foundation and the Australian Government under the Natural Heritage Trust's National Reserve System programme.



Footprints in the sand helped to locate the elusive Eyrean grasswren Photo: Graeme Chapman

Species Profile

Eyrean Grasswren
Amytornis goyderi

Length: 140-165mm

Identification:

Cinnamon-chestnut above. Underparts, chin to belly are white except for flanks which are pale buff on the male but a deeper rufous-chestnut on the female. Face finely streaked black and white for male and female. Tail feathers brown, edged buff. Short finch-like bill is well suited for crushing the large seeds of the cane grass.

Distribution:

Canegrass- and spinifex-covered dunes in the eastern and southern Simpson and Strzelecki Deserts across SA, Qld and the NT

Nesting:

Breeds August to September

Threats:

Habitat loss due to changed fire regimes, and over-grazing stock and feral animals, particularly rabbits

Did you know?

Your support is helping to protect the cane grass dunes where the Eyrean grasswren lives at Ethabuka. Thanks to supporters like you we have been able to protect their habitat by reducing grazing from livestock and feral animals.





Fit for a king

The protection of a tiny island off the coast of Tasmania is the legacy of one remarkable man. But Henry Baldwin's legacy didn't end there, writes **Charlotte Francis**

Fringed by towering blue gums and white gums interspersed with pockets of coastal heath, scrub and grassland, King George Island lies just off the south-eastern coast of Tasmania on the Forestier Peninsula. When spring arrives on the island, the silver wattles are a riot of bright yellow flowers and the large, nectar-rich flowers of the blue gums are coming into bloom. With views across Norfolk Bay towards Mount Wellington and across King George Sound, this is the kind of place that makes you take a long, deep breath in, followed by a slow and steady exhalation.

Perhaps that's what the late Henry Baldwin did when he last set foot on his beloved King George Island. Those views were what Henry, a Hobart-based engineer and highly respected philanthropist who died in 2007 at the age of 87, loved most about this place – and in 2005, he took some extraordinary steps to ensure those views remained long after he was there to enjoy them.

Merrilyn Julian, Bush Heritage's Planned Giving Philanthropy Executive remembers her first meeting with Henry, after he had approached Bush Heritage about bequeathing the island to the organisation in 2005. "Henry was very frail but still very sharp," says Merrilyn, who visited his home 'Markree', in Hobart's Battery Point in 2005.

"I remember looking around as we walked down the hall and marvelling at the beautiful antique furniture, family portraits and paintings in every room, the porcelain, silver and other decorative objects on every surface. It was like walking into Tasmania's colonial history. Henry was a remarkable man and, just like King George Island, his house was an expression of his commitment to preserving Tasmania's cultural and natural heritage."

By all accounts, King George Island was very dear to Henry. He bought a holiday shack on the coast at Murdunna so he

could enjoy his own private view to the island's rocky shores fringed by blue and white gums.

"We were honoured that Henry approached us to carry out his wishes and ensure the tranquillity of the island was protected forever," says Merrilyn. "He was very clear that he wanted to protect the island from high-rise development and to maintain its natural values and beauty."

"Henry agreed to bequeath King George Island to Bush Heritage on the condition that a conservation covenant was placed on the property before it passed into our hands and that we would then sell it to raise funds towards our long-term conservation goals elsewhere. This was an extraordinarily generous gesture and we were delighted he entrusted us to work with his lawyers to ensure his wishes were met," says Merrilyn.

Henry Baldwin was perhaps not the only one to appreciate the island's views –

King George is home to a number of threatened species and communities. Bush Heritage Ecologist Matt Appleby has visited the island just twice, and suspects the white-bellied sea-eagle almost certainly perches there when foraging for food. "A nest site has been recorded on the mainland just across from the island," he says, "which means that the white-bellied sea-eagle is highly likely to use the island's blue gums as a vantage point."

Another threatened bird likely to visit the island is the endangered swift parrot. "The swift parrot feeds predominantly on the large blossom of the blue gum," explains Matt, "and so probably visits King George Island on its annual migration down the east coast of Tasmania after leaving its winter home in New South Wales."

Graham Baldwin, one of Henry's closest surviving relatives, remembers Henry as "a very private man, who never married, and who lived conservatively. Henry was a pillar of the church and he lived by his principles. He was extremely generous, with a strong sense of obligation to the community."

Prior to seeing Henry's Will, Graham didn't know his cousin owned King George Island, but he suspects Henry's wartime training as a maritime engineer was a key influence in his decision to buy the island. "He always loved ships and the Hobart harbour and Derwent estuary," Graham recalls.

Henry's sense of community has now become his legacy – not only will the island's silver wattles, golden pea and native cranberry bushes continue to support the native animals that call it home, but its sale will support Bush Heritage's ongoing work at reserves like Scottsdale, Goonderoo and Yourka.

Henry's philanthropy extended well beyond Bush Heritage – his bequests, which supported 21 different charities, demonstrated his commitment to future generations of Australians. He bequeathed his family home Markree, with all its contents and a substantial sum of money, to the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, who plan to open Markree as a museum in 2011.

In line with Henry's wishes, Bush Heritage assisted with the drafting of a conservation covenant to protect the natural values of the island. In the same way that our supporters enable Bush Heritage to protect the landscapes and wildlife on our reserves, the covenant will help to ensure the swift parrot and the white-bellied sea-eagle can continue to visit the island in the state that Henry left it, forever.

"There's something very magical about standing on top of the hill in the centre of the island and looking out over the water," says Matt Appleby. "It's so incredibly peaceful and private. I can see why Henry loved it here so much." ■



Henry Baldwin Photo: Courtesy of the Baldwin family



Photo: Matt Appleby



Have you dreamt of owning an island?

King George Island could be your home. This eighteen-hectare island off the coast of Tasmania's Forestier Peninsula, is now for sale. The island's conservation covenant allows for construction of one small building – could this be your dream home? The proceeds of the island's sale will go to Bush Heritage, to help us protect Australia's unique landscapes forever. For enquiries, call Alistair Dermer from Bush Heritage on (03) 6234 9607.

Every bequest to Bush Heritage, however large or small, helps us to protect the unique species that call Australia home. Leaving a bequest to Bush Heritage shows a very special commitment and is one of the best ways to support our ongoing conservation work. If you would like to speak to us about remembering Bush Heritage in your Will, contact Merrilyn Julian and the Planned Giving team on (03) 8610 9120.

Less than an hour's drive from Hobart, Henry Baldwin's precious King George Island is now for sale – proceeds will go to Bush Heritage's conservation work. All uncredited photos by Alistair Dermer



Supporter spot

Most days, **Dale Fuller** looks out from the homestead veranda knowing he's the only person for miles around. But earlier this year, he played host to a crowd of willing workers at Charles Darwin Reserve

One man. Sixty-eight thousand hectares. Not a soul for miles around. And a lot of work to do.

That's the reality Reserve Manager Dale Fuller faces every day on Charles Darwin Reserve. Or that's what he *usually* faces. But earlier this year, as Dale packed the ute for the day ahead, he found himself with eight fresh-faced volunteers, champing at the bit to get some station dirt under their fingernails and some country air into their lungs.

The team of volunteers had made the four-hour drive from Perth as part of RAC WA's sponsorship of Charles Darwin Reserve. Since 2008 RAC has provided funding for numerous projects at the reserve, ranging from fire management to the installation of solar panels.

The first impression for Britt Allen, one of the RAC employees, was the size of the reserve – and of Dale's task. "When you say the word 'conservation', all sorts of images pop into your head," she says. "But when we stepped onto the reserve, what struck us most was the sheer size of the property, and the amount of work that needs to be done to keep it in good shape. Dale is only one person on all that land – he does an incredible job."

The shrublands, salt lakes and claypans of Charles Darwin Reserve indeed keep Dale busy – nurturing the land back to health is an ongoing task. But on this particular occasion, Dale not only had eight eager helpers, but also what Britt suspects was his favourite toy – a front-end loader that RAC purchased for Bush Heritage in 2009.

"The loader has made such a difference to my working day," says Dale Fuller. "It makes a whole range of activities – like firebreak work, track work and erosion control – possible, which simply couldn't be done before or had to be done by contractors. The loader easily doubled the benefit of the work that the RAC crew did while they were here. It's a great asset for Bush Heritage. I'm pretty fond of that loader."

The loader couldn't do all the work, though, and the volunteers set to work with the day's task: building barriers of fallen timber and scrub from the bush to redirect water flow and prevent soil erosion.

"It was hard work but very satisfying," says Britt. "We all just mucked in together, finding a real group synergy."

Two days at Charles Darwin gave the RAC team a glimpse of what it might



RAC WA employees showing off Dale Fuller's favourite new toy at Charles Darwin Reserve. Photo: Liz Headland

be like in Dale's shoes. But after their backs stopped aching and the dirt had disappeared from under their nails, Britt and her colleagues kept something lasting – a memory of the 68,000 hectares they helped to protect.

"At lunchtime, sitting out in the bush with our blanket and picnic lunch, there was a moment when everyone was silent, just looking at the beauty of the landscape and we were all connected. No words were needed."

RAC is a patron of Charles Darwin Reserve. Thanks to their generous purchase of the front-end loader (pictured), Dale Fuller can carry out much-needed track work, erosion control and construction of firebreaks. RAC's support in a range of conservation activities helps protect the reserve's native species – like the malleefowl, the spiny-cheeked honeyeater and the crested dragon.



The view from the homestead at Charles Darwin Reserve

You help to protect it, so why not come and see it?

Look around you and see what you are a part of. Meet our reserve managers. And see the places that you – our generous supporter – have helped to protect. If you've got a day or a week up your sleeve, come and share your time with us.



Wildflower walks

Eurardy Reserve, WA

When: Friday 8 October (10 am or 2pm)

Join Eurardy Reserve Managers Elizabeth and Matt during the spectacular wildflower season on a guided tour and learn more about this magnificent West Australian property, located six hours north of Perth, near Kalbarri National Park.

This is a unique opportunity to accompany reserve managers as they take you through Eurardy Reserve at its most colourful. There will be plenty of time to get out among the flowers, so

remember to bring sturdy shoes. Pack a picnic lunch and enjoy a self-guided walk nearby the homestead.

Transport: Make your own way to Eurardy (2WD access). Transport on the tour is provided. Please arrive fifteen minutes before the tour begins.

Food: Coffee- and tea-making facilities available

Nearest town: Northampton (97 km)

Cost: \$30 or \$40 for non-supporters



Self-guided camping

For those who are self-sufficient with their own equipment and high clearance 4WD, camping is available at Carnarvon Station (Qld) and Charles Darwin (WA) from the beginning of April to the end of September each year. Campers need to be totally self-sufficient with their own camping, vehicle maintenance and safety equipment, food and rations due to the remoteness of the reserve. There will be limited contact with reserve staff. Up to 8 people with maximum 4 vehicles permitted per booking.

Cost: \$40 per vehicle for supporters / \$100 per vehicle for non-supporters per week.



Self-guided day trips

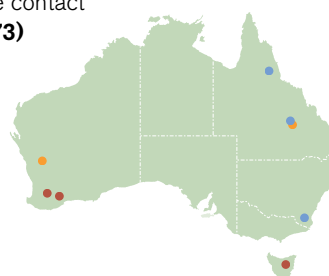
You can visit some of our smaller and less remote reserves as a self-guided day trip. Reserves include: Currumbin Valley Reserve (Qld), Liffey River Reserve (Tas), Chereninup Creek and Kojonup reserves (WA).

For information about visiting your reserves go to www.bushheritage.org.au/getting_involved_visit. Bookings are essential for all visits – to make a booking, please contact us on **1300 NATURE (1300 628 873)** or **(03) 8610 9100** or email visits@bushheritage.org.au.



Planning your holiday for 2011?

Get out your calendar and start planning! In 2011, we'll be running guided tours to Carnarvon Reserve (Qld) in April, Scottsdale Reserve (NSW) in May and Yourka Reserve (Qld) in June. For exact dates and details, look out for the Summer issue of *Bush Heritage News*.



Legend

- Self-guided day trips
- Self-guided camping
- 2011 Guided tours

In memory

Bobbie Holmes donated following the death of her late husband, **Henry ("Hal") Holmes**, fulfilling Hal's wishes to support the protection of Australia's unique wildlife. The McGlashan family donated in loving memory of **Ian McGlashan**. Friends and family donated in memory of **Ina Moss**. Mrs Helen Taylor donated in memory of **Ron Taylor**, "a keen-eyed bushman". Brian Martin donated in memory of his Aunt **Eileen Croxford** for her lifetime of work on native flora. Mr Warwick Mayne-Wilson donated in memory of **Mr Sydney James Mayne** who loved the Australian bush and its plants all his life.

In celebration

John Bardsley and Wendy Radford celebrated **Barb Pz's** 80th birthday with a gift to Bush Heritage. Friends and family donated in celebration of **Alexander Gosling**, as did Alexander himself. Ms Annelie Holden donated in honour of **Margaret Cowish's** 75th birthday and in honour of **George Waddell's** OBE award. Mrs Jenny A Deyzel donated in celebration of **Bernice and Ivor Metlitzky's** 50th wedding anniversary.

