



Shirleyanne Myers beside the Queensland Kauri (*Agathis robusta*, 50+m in height and 6m in girth) in the Albury Botanic Garden at the end of the 2010 Corryong tour.

Corryong and district

STUART READ writes about the recent tour in the mountains of northern Victoria and south-west NSW that had been organised by the Australian branch of the IDS.

Thirty-three members gathered for four days in late October near Australia's roof and sources of the Murray and Snowy rivers. After a decade-long drought recent rains were generous. The Hume Dam was brimming and creeks rushing. Classic Piguénit paintings of flooding landscapes unfolded before drunken eyes.

Well-grassed plains both sides of the upper Murray first ran European cattle in the 1830s, followed by settlers in the 1840s. Hamlets grew near crossings, with stock, horse and timber movements. A dairy industry gave way by the 1950s to hydroelectric power, forestry and nature-based recreation.

The Australian Alps National Parks and Reserves straddle the border with diverse habitats (scree, herb fields, cool-temperate moist and dry sclerophyll forests). **Kosciuszko National Park** alone (NSW's largest) is over 690,000ha with Australia's highest (eponymous) mountain at 2228m. A 2010-published flora survey discovered nine species not before recorded—(two mosses, four ferns, a tree—the black olive-berry—*Elaeocarpus* sp.—a climber and a sedge) and rainforest within 20km of the alpine zone. All firsts.

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From a base in Corryong we made trips. Corryong's spine is an Avenue of Honour of 100 trees from 1918 for locals who went to war. Despite gaps, Himalayan and Atlas cedars and pin oaks grace it.

First to **Bringenbrong Station** on rich river flats, the power of floods evident in damaged bridges, roads, culverts and debris up trees. Huge 1930s black poplars, a 1955 house and trees up its drive were our focus. Standouts: a "Tricolor" beech (leafing up in coconut-ice tones), silvery, stiff Spanish fir (*Abies pinsapo*), twisty hazel (*Corylus avellana* 'Contorta') and double Ghent azaleas.

Khancoban, a picturesque 1960 town for 'hydro' workers seems Scandinavian with ordered streets, houses, gardens and shopping centre, framed with hedge maples (*Acer campestre*) in a range of leaf form and chartreuse colour. We enjoyed the Lady Hudson Rose Garden, a memorial to workers, overlooking Khancoban Pondage, which is awfully grand.

Driving through forests of manna/ribbon gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis*) fringed with blanket leaf (*Bedfordia arborescens*) and tree everlasting (*Ozothamnus ferrugineus*) we toured Murray 1 Power Station. This is part of the Snowy Mountains Scheme—Australia's most ambitious project. 125,000 people from over 30 countries contributed to one of the world's most complex integrated water and hydroelectric schemes.

Discussion centred on how eucalypt associations vary with aspect, moisture



Planting Jane Hayter's memorial Atlas cedar at Tandara Gardens and Arboretum: Ross Hayter has just unveiled the plaque, *inset* and is standing between Tom and Thea Newton, owners of the young arboretum, while Brian Myers (and all the members) looks on, having just completed the planting with Roger Kitchen (just out of the picture to the left).

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level, altitude and soil. Major species include narrow-leaved peppermint (*Eucalyptus radiata*), brittle/red-spotted gum (*E. mannifera*), inland scribbly gum (*E. rossii*), mountain gum (*E. dalrympleana*), mountain (*E. regnans*) and alpine ashes (*E. delegatensis*). The latter being amongst Australia's tallest. Higher still grow snow gums (*E. pauciflora* subsp. *pauciflora* and subsp. *niphophila*).

Aquila outside Towong is a striking garden laid out since 1980 by Penny and Richard Barkas with panoramic views over a lush alpine valley. Two dynamos: she in terracing and planting a large site in bold, vivid colour groupings; he with his solar telescope. Highlights were a grove of Judas trees (*Cercis siliquastrum*, *C. chinensis* and *C. yunnanensis*), *Rosa* 'Frühlingsgold', 'Golden Showers' and 'Zéphyrine Drouhin' in profusion and impressive *Pandorea ricasoliana* up a tall pine.

Brian Myers gave a most interesting slide show on 'IDS tours of Ireland, England and California' (see pp. 117-123 and 131-145), with commentary on IDS 'strata' and contrasts between the lush Irish and climatic extremes in California, including the ancient bristle cone pine forests of its High Sierras.

Lochinvar at Laurel Hill north of Tumbarumba is an abandoned arboretum with magnificent *Eucalyptus delegatensis* and *E. viminalis*, western yellow pines, redwood, Douglas fir, sweet chestnut, walnut, beech and more. Established from 1912 by Mr J. Cunningham, it was sold to NSW Forests and Monterey

pinus surround it. We enjoyed adjacent **Asgard Nursery**, whose owners keep an eye on Lochinvar. Sadly it doesn't interest its owner and straddles the boundary of two shires: neither seems keen—both could promote it as an attraction. A bit of courting of a local newspaper—interviews with Heritage Victoria's and NSW's horticulture specialists—perhaps may raise public support and activism.

Pilot Hill Arboretum in Bago State Forest originated with John and Eliza Hides ca.1880 logging alpine ash. It was sold to NSW Forests and from 1924 experimental plantings of Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) and 51 species of pine, spruce, fir, cypress, larch and birch among others, made. We enjoyed a massive incense cedar (*Calocedrus decurrens*) (rare in Australia), flowering pepper berry (*Tasmannia lanceolata*) and 30cm long sugar pine cones (*P. lambertiana*) (1925). Even 'dwarf' Swiss mountain pine (*P. mugo*) here reaches 5m! Due to rain we glimpsed the cathedral-like sugar pine walk from the coach.

Lunch at the **Pioneer Women's Hut**, Glenroy, NSW brought delight at this rare celebration of Australia's better halves. Framed on a wall was claimed to be the world's largest gum leaf—ca. 75cm long—from the Victorian blue gum, *Eucalyptus bicostata* (syn. *E. pseudoglobulus* subsp. *bicostata*).

The AGM saw Brian Myers elected Australian Vice-President and a decision on 2011's get together for Northern Tasmania. Then the plant auction meant a late, satisfying evening as members bid for treasures old and new thanks to the likes of Bob Cherry's Asian explorations.

Rain and mud meant the 1871 **Towong Racecourse's** elms had to be enjoyed from the highway. Further up it was a pleasure to visit **Towong Hill Station**. A long drive led to a grand residence, outbuildings, garden, orchard and paddock plantings pre-1900. Not many survived various storms and a 1939 fire. Earlier-owner Jim Findlay (1854+) befriended Baron Ferdinand von Mueller, Director of the Melbourne Botanic Garden and together they made many trips in the mountains collecting. From 1934 author Elyne Mitchell (of 'Silver Brumby' books) lived here. Her son John and wife Sue maintain the 1880s Himalayan cedars, Bunya pines, *Podocarpus macrophyllus*, Bhutan cypress, silky oak, kurrajong, *Garrya elliptica* and a fruiting *Osmanthus heterophyllus*—like a holly with tiny 'olives'.

A highlight was skirting the **Jephcott Arboretum**, Kahbionba near Ournie (we could only enter part, due to 2009 bushfire and 2010 flood). This was started by Edwin Jephcott who from 1864 corresponded with von Mueller (keen to trial cool-climate exotics and collect and document local native species). Nearby Pine Mountain, one of the largest monoliths in the Southern Hemisphere has several endemics such as the Pine Mountain-, fan- and crimson- spider flowers (*Grevillea jephcottii*, (for Edwin), *G. ramosissima* and *G. polybractea*). Rich alluvial soil and periodic flooding means ideal conditions and one of Australia's finest coastal redwoods among other exemplars. Roger Spencer and John Hawker surveyed it for *A Horticultural Flora of South-Eastern Australia—volume 1—Conifers and Ferns*, citing many specimens here (*Pinus*

sylvestris, *P. canariensis* and *P. halepensis*, *Araucaria bidwillii*, *Sequoiadendron giganteum*). Despite damage, fire-tolerant species like *Pinus canariensis* are re-sprouting. We hope next winter is kind to aid recovery.

IDS tree plantings were made at our hosts the Newton's young **Tandara Gardens** at Corryong. Their collection was inspiring, beautifully located, arrayed, labelled and maintained. Among special trees planted on the occasion was a blue Atlas cedar to commemorate much-missed Jane Hayter.

Night sports included the photo competition with "Remarkable", "Huggable", "Humorous" and "Other" tree contenders from around the world. Another was a (some said) tough quiz by Jenny Happell—close-up photos of rare or unusual plants—requiring careful scrutiny. This was battled out by Vic./NSW's 'Heritage Tree' chaps, John Hawker and Stuart Read.

More after-dark treats were Nita Lester's talk on birds of the Brigalow, a massive belt of arid inner-Queensland and northern NSW. And Roger Kitchen's talk on the IDS tour to Kamchatka Peninsula in Russia—by army helicopter. A remote, striking place where trees battle the odds! (see pp. 146-158).

John Hawker reminded us in **Corryong's Uniting Church** yard about von Mueller's sending plants to churchyards, cemeteries, councils and botanic gardens across Victoria. This one sports huge *Photinia serrulata*, *P. glabra* and rare Mexican hybrid cypress (*Cupressus lusitanica* var. *benthamii*): with weeping tips, blue/grey scales and white-bloomed cones. He pointed out how second-generation cypresses are hybridising and acclimatising to local conditions.

A pull-over in Cudgewa under a 1917 Avenue of Honour brought a chestnut-leaved oak *Quercus castaneifolia* from the Caucasus (ca. 40m with upright form, weeping tips and corky, ridged bark), contrasting with the Chinese *Q. acutissima* in Corryong—more horizontal. Also 'Dutch' *Ulmus* × *hollandica* with pointed, smooth upper sided leaves contrasting with 'English' (European) *U. procera* with rounded, rough-upper sided leaves—more upright. Victoria has Australia's richest collection of Honour (WW1) and Memorial (WW2) avenues, mainly elms, Monterey pine, walnut, cedars and kurrajongs.

Then **Avondale Garden**, Shelley: 1950s grazier Derek and Peg Bird's home and heart of an 11,000 acre property used as 'summer relief' for lowland stock, now inside a forestry plantation and declared a recreation reserve in 1991. Victoria's highest railway station a while away brought plants from Melbourne or Bowral (NSW)—today it's an intriguing lesson in what will survive (*Crataegus*, *Photinia*, *Prunus*, *Arbutus*, *Ilex*, *Berberis*, *Betula*, *Viburnum*, *Cryptomeria*, *Chamaecyparis*, *Elaeagnus*, *Thuja*, *Tilia*, *Thujopsis*, *Forsythia*) and which are potential weeds (*Prunus*, *Crataegus*, *Cotoneaster*, *Sorbus*, *Fraxinus*). Pleasingly it is maintained by local volunteers.

On the road out we stopped by a grove of magnificent old eucalypts to identify which species—lively discussion on distinguishing *Eucalyptus viminalis* from *E. dalrympleana* and candlebark (*E. rubida*). The key is juvenile leaves: larger/ long, narrow, orderly arranged on smooth young stems equals



Australian IDS members take in the view of the bushfire-recovering alps from Scammell's Lookout.

E. viminalis: opposite, lanceolate, elongated equals *E. dalrympleana*. Helpfully intergrades of the two occur. Quote from Ross Hayter, challenged re specimens: "I wouldn't give you stub growth!"

A pull-off the highway near Koetong led us on a wildflower walk to view a railway trestle bridge (1916). Glory pea (*Chorizema* sp.), starwort, black-eyed Susan (*Tetradthea ciliata*), bitter pea (*Daviesia latifolia*), dolly bush (*Cassinia* sp.), bearded orchids (*Calochilus robertsonii*), guinea flowers (*Hibbertia* sp.) and bluebells (*Wahlenbergia* sp.) were distracting.

Finally, we visited **Albury Botanic Garden** with director Paul Scannell. Established in 1877, this is NSW's second oldest, with an elm avenue from 1877. Highlights are rainforest species: a 50m x 6m Queensland kauri (*Agathis robusta*), Australian teak/crow's foot ash (*Flindersia australis*), Bunya pines (one re-identified by us as *Araucaria angustifolia*—much rarer), Queensland nut (*Macadamia tetraphylla*), Australian red cedar (*Toona ciliata*), firewheel tree (*Stenocarpus sinuatus*), lemon-scented myrtle (*Backhousia citriodora*), black bean (*Castanospermum australe*), weeping lily pillly (*Waterhousea floribunda*), oaks, cedars, *Washingtonia robusta*, Mediterranean plants...and bladder nut (*Staphylea colchica*) fruits, rare in Australia.

Thanks Tom and Thea Newton, Brian and Shirleyanne Myers—who did a great job organising a stimulating and enjoyable trip.

The tour of Corryong and district took place from 28 October to 1 November 2010.

Participants, pictured above: John Hawker, Charles Allen, Diana Snape, Brian Snape, Ross Hayter, Keith Holmes, Thea Newton, Stuart Read, Derek McIntosh, Lyn Reilly, Peter Reilly, Bob Cherry, Roger Kitchen, Ed Adamson; Jocelyn Allen, Peter Levick, Sally Wing, Evelyn Raglus, Colin McDonald, Mary-Rose McDonald, Shirleyanne Myers, Nita Lester, Jenny Happell; Heidi Holmes, Margaret Levick, Brian Myers; *missing from photo*, Tom Newton (photographer), Derelie Cherry, Beverley & Jim Prescott, Penny & Richard Barkas.