

Scrub Club...Oh what fun we had!

With over 50 children inhouse these last holidays there was lots of fun things to do, not to mention catching up with some friends that the kids hadn't seen since last year. Everyone had an exceptionally fun time enjoying the days learning.

Everyone had an exceptionally fun time enjoying the days learning about the endangered Bilbies and our very own Long-nosed Bandicoot. Children searched for the missing chocolate Bilbies hidden around the guesthouse and made their own biscuit Bilbies. The afternoon was topped off with the creation of clay Easter baskets and bunnies. The children's work was on display in the Games room and it was like walking through an art gallery. Also during the holidays a group of

children found and caught a huge elephant beetle hiding under a log. To the children's delight it later became a star performer in O'Reilly's latest Documentary which is currently being filmed by David Warth.

Scrub Club is a fun creative way for children aged 5 and over to spend time at O'Reillys. Children's activities run every weekend and on school holidays. They are based on environmental education concepts that incorporate learning about the rainforest and it's weird and wonderful inhabitants with fun games, arts and crafts. We're looking forward to introducing the next intake of children to the wonders of the rainforest during the September school holidays.



Canungra Valley Vineyard Update

Interest rates up - Canungra Valley wine prices down!

Ok so there is no correlation between these two major events, but at least one of them is good news! Yes Canungra Valley now has four pack specials priced at between 7 and 10% discount off the normal retail price. We have also introduced 6 pack prices with a minimum of 10% discount and dozen prices with a minimum of 20% discount. Platinum members still get their 25% off of course. Prices are applicable to straight buys or mixed and offer great value if you want to replenish your own cellar supply.

Brisbane Wine festival – 3 bronze medals!

Last year the Violet Cabernet won a bronze medal at this Australia and New Zealand wide wine festival. This year we managed bronze medals for the Shane O'Reilly Shiraz, The Platypus Unwooded Chardonnay and the Platypus Chambourcin Shiraz. A great result by all accounts.

Wines on the way!

Remember the long awaited sparkling red I was talking about last issue? Well we are still waiting. The wine is named "Sparkling Argyle" and it is being delivered in the next few weeks. The champagne house in the Hunter has had delays beyond our control. Platinum members will be notified of the launch date and details - others who are interested are welcome to ring the vineyard as we will be having some mini-launches after the main member's launch.

Our first straight estate Semillon is being bottled in the next two weeks and will also be launched with the sparkling. While making no promises I am hoping our Chambourcin port may be ready by then as well. Our premium reds from 2001 vintage are ready to be bottled, but unlike last year we intend to keep them in storage for a few months after bottling to allow them to develop further. If you have tried last year's reds recently, you will realise what a difference a few months

in the bottle can make.

Other news!

Canungra Valley has a new manager - Howard Mitchell. Howard has seen the light and headed up to Queensland to work at the vineyard from Sydney. He has introduced a new Sunday menu and now has a variety of bands that rotate over the month. We also have a broader range of merchandise including some cheeky shirts!

Free next Sunday afternoon? Why not come out and relax on the grass with a picnic and a glass of award winning Queensland wine? Remember life is too short to drink bad wine!

Late Breaking News

Canungra Valley Vineyard's Shane O'Reilly Reserve Shiraz has just won a silver medal at the prestigious San Francisco International Wine Show.

**Cheers,
Shane O'Reilly**

Family Snippets

by Greg O'Reilly

It seems like only yesterday.....

The eldest children of both Vince and Peter's family have recently turned 40! (and aren't they pleased I am publicising the fact in the bowerbird) Congratulations to Shane and Kerry for making it this far.

Almost at the other end of spectrum, Tom, who is the second youngest in Vince and Lona's family, has recently turned 21. Family, friends and fellow staff congregated in Gran's bistro for dinner and a few drinks to celebrate the occasion and remind Tom of some of his childhood antics.

The family keeps growing with Mick and Jodie O'Reilly recently announcing that Jodie is pregnant with their 3rd child. Fortunately, Mick is a carpenter, because in true O'Reilly fashion, their house now needs to be extended.

Jane and Tony Davis have produced grandchild number 10 for Lona. Matthew Joseph Davis was born on April 11 at a healthy weight of 7 pound 15 ounces All involved are well, if not a little tired, with 'big sister' Molly remaining at her mischievous best.

And finally...

Never one to stand still for too long, Woo has traded the heat and humidity of Darwin, for the crisp air of Canberra. Catching up with her at Tom's party, Woo has settled in well and preparing for an increase in family visits once the snow season starts.

Annette O'Reilly's eldest son - Brett Walton - recently announced his engagement to Annette Greenhow. Both are familiar faces at the guesthouse. We congratulate Brett and Annette and wish them well for the future.

Exciting News!!!!

The displaying of the family tree has prompted much discussion regarding the lack of marriages and offspring from the "Peter O'Reilly family". Shane, Tim and Woo are pleased to report the subtle offers of advice and gentle prodding can now cease, as Peter O'Reilly (jnr) and Megan Toohey have recently announced their engagement. Before we had the chance to pop the champagne corks and say "it's about time", they proceeded to announce Megan is pregnant! Congratulations to both Peter and Megan. I am sure all bowerbird readers join us in wishing them the very best for the future.

Staff Snippet

by Matt Perry

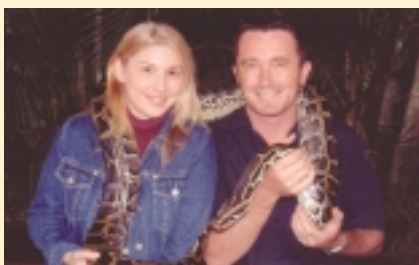
Congratulations to Emma Murphy from the Guesthouse Dining Room. Emma is the latest winner in our quarterly staff awards. After having started with us only five months ago, Emma has settled in well and you will see her cheery face around the dining room. Make sure you say hello next time you're here.



You may recall in the last edition of Staff Snippets, we introduced you to Marc Hay our new Front Office Manager. Marc has settled in well and is even better now that partner Kirsten Pohl has joined him on the mountain. Kirsten hails from Germany and has joined Joan in our reservations department - apart from her great experience and sales skills, it's an added bonus to have a German-speaking employee on the team.

A big welcome also to Howard Mitchell, our new manager at Canungra Valley Vineyards. Howard has moved back to Queensland from Sydney with wife Danielle who is expecting their first child. Drop in and say hello next time you're passing by the vineyard.

Some farewells for long-serving employees this edition as well...Mark and Kathleen Griffiths (nee Green) head off to England in July. These two have been loyal employees and great ambassadors for us over the past four years. Mark has held various senior positions in the kitchens and Kathleen has worked in both dining room and front office. They got married here in October last year (which I failed to mention back then and got roundly chastised for - sorry guys), and they will both be sadly missed. Hopefully they might return some time in future. Speaking of weddings, marketing assistant Amanda Tidmarsh ("Bob") has announced her engagement to



boyfriend Mark. Congratulations "Bob", and we wish you all the very best for the future.

Congratulations also go to John Stephens in our purchasing department and Samantha Dusting from Canungra Valley Vineyard. John and Sam have just purchased a home in Canungra and are expecting their first child in September. Congratulations to you both.

Finally to someone many of you will know well - our Maintenance manager Rob South. After 17 years with O'Reilly's in the capacity of maintenance manager, Rob retired on July the 5th. Hopefully he'll get to spend more time enjoying life with wife Jacqui, and of course he'll always be welcome on the mountain for a visit anytime. As a special thank-you to Rob, we've invited him back for O'Reilly's 25th annual Birdweek in November. Rob and Jacqui are both keen birders, and it'll be good for them to experience the mountain as guests again, as they first did many years ago.



Editors Apologies

It appears I made a few errors in the last edition of the Bowerbird. My apologies go out to the following people.

Patricia Ryan - whom I mentioned had a sister named Ellen. Patricia does in fact have a sister Ellen, but the reference was actually to "Eileen", sister number two.

Lyal and Heather Lock - you are quiet right the Little Button Quail has previously been recorded on the mountain. Big Peter will be looking out for it again at this years 25th Birdweek.

Regards Ed.



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THE Bowerbird



A collection of stories, news and anecdotes from O'Reilly's Rainforest Guesthouse

New Boardwalk for O'Reilly's

On Sunday June 9th, Minister for the Environment, the Honourable Dean Wells officially opened the long awaited "Booyong Walk".

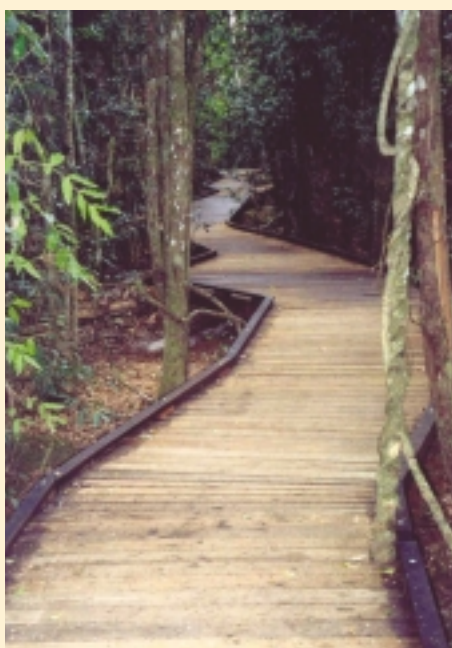
The Booyong Walk leads you into Sub-tropical rainforest, an enclosed world of lush green foliage and soft light. It bears the name of the Booyong, a large rainforest tree encountered along the way.

As you walk along you have a unique opportunity to experience the rainforest first from the logrunner's perspective – at ground level, then from a Paradise Riflebird's – in the rainforest canopy, from O'Reilly's Tree Top Walk.

Along the way, interpretive signage helps you to identify what a logrunner looks like and allows you to meet the impressive Black Booyong.

Leading to the Tree Top Walk you will then find yourself in a sunlit world where the trees and vines of the rainforest canopy flower and fruit.

The boardwalk has been constructed by the Green Mountains Natural History association for the benefit of all visitors. Come for a visit soon and let us know what you think.



Pictured above: Booyong Walk

Autumn birding...



While autumn is not generally regarded as the peak time for seeing birds, we've proved that there's still plenty out there if you're willing to look. We ran our Autumn Birdwatching programme from April 14 – 19, and recorded almost 150 species just on the mountain and the surrounding Kerry and Canungra valleys.

Glossy Black Cockatoo

Once again the week was ably led by the inimitable Dave Stewart, who learnt the hard way from Barry Bucholtz never to promise that we WILL see any particular species. And while Barry's nemesis Sooty Owl appeared in voice only, we were treated to a beautiful Marbled Frogmouth, appearing cooperatively on a large rainforest limb as a choir of his colleagues performed eerily in the background. Other Lamington specialities were also on display, such as the Albert's Lyrebird that gave us an unusual view as he decided to go up to roost right beside the bus on Duck Creek Road. And the famous poor table manners of Glossy Black-Cockatoos made them easy to locate as they chewed noisily in the she-oaks.

In keeping with the philosophy of Autumn Birding,

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inside

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Eric Brier

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Autumn birding...

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we enjoyed some of our favourite activities from our November Bird Week as well as trying a few different strategies. One successful new venture was our Kerry Valley barbecue trip; our lovely dinner under the stars was capped off by a couple of beautiful Barn Owls, seen only twice in 24 previous Bird Weeks. The contrasting time of year also tends to turn up the odd different bird as well, such as the Glossy Ibis at Boyland, another occasional visitor to our Bird Week lists, not seen since 1994. This was sighted on a day in which we saw 112 different species, a great tally at any time of year.

Autumn Birding has plenty to offer the novice birder and the expert ticker. So if you like relaxed birding in a great location, why not join us up here in Autumn 2003.

by Tim O'Reilly

Memories of O'Reilly's

When I arrived at the Guesthouse for my annual holiday this year I was surprised to receive a letter from the O'Reilly family and staff congratulating me on the sixtieth anniversary of my first visit. Accompanying the letter was a bottle of Argyle Blanc de Noir made from grapes grown in their Canungra Valley Vineyard. That evening I was also presented with a beautiful cake commemorating the occasion. It was a moving experience to be so honoured. Since those days sixty years ago many things have changed but the spirit of the mountains and the warmth and generosity of the O'Reilly Family has not changed over the three generations whom it has been my privilege to know.

At the time of my first visit I was a young engineering student. Two friends from University had decided to take a short holiday and I joined them. There were very few holiday places available at that time and young men who were not in uniform were looked down on. O'Reilly's seemed a good choice. Access to it was by service car from Brisbane twice a week. It travelled up Lahey's timber road, which was little more than a rough narrow track with hairpin bends and sheer drops below. It terminated at the edge of the rainforest some 6km from the guesthouse at a spot known as "The Dump". There was an elderly couple in the car as well as us three students and we arrived at the end of the road as dusk was falling. I will never forget the experience.

A figure dressed in trousers emerged from among the buttresses of a huge tree and introduced herself as Rose. She had six riding horses and two pack horses with her. As the service car moved away we offered to assist in the loading of the baggage on

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Growing up on



Tom & Bert

People would be forgiven for thinking that growing up on a mountain would be completely different to growing up in suburbia. Not huge amounts of fun, but huge amounts of learning as we'd search for new bowers, burrows and nests. Well, we tried - but our backyard is over 20,000 hectares of rainforest - and there is a whole world of fun, chasing pademelons and turkeys and trying to step on the tails of unsuspecting Crimson Rosella's. Tom and I hung out with friends, we went to dances, and we learnt to swim and to ride bikes. Granted, our friends were our brothers and sisters, instead of disco's we had bush dances, we learnt to swim with eels and crayfish and instead of riding bikes in a skate park, we rode through a National Park.

Being the youngest children of ten, we really were doomed from the beginning. We had big shoes to fill - reputations to follow. Naturally, we had to be better at "Nights, Mounts and Cavalier's" than Jane and Woo, and I'm sure that we were the youngest to walk down the driveway and not cringe and cry after stepping on the dead gympie leaves. Yep, we were tough - and we had to be. Around the dinner table, we were often targets of practical jokes. Whilst still quite young and in highchairs, we were fed pieces of lemon, so that our so called family could watch our faces squish and squirm with the bitterness. Apparently this was quite funny as they would continue to feed us the lemon until their sides hurt so much from laughter that they could no longer bear it. We therefore, had to find people younger than us to corrupt. Nieces and Nephews.

Michael and Frances joined us and we

Glen's Photo Tips

by Glen Threlfo



During the cooler drier months the mountains at O'Reilly's look majestic in rich green against the clear blue sky. What a time to visit and experience this beautiful world! But under the canopy it's a different world and sunlight only

illuminates sections of trunks and foliage, making photography quite difficult. However all is not lost for the keen shutterbug. Up in the canopy the strong sunlight produces a picture of its own - palm fronds, stinging tree leaves and tree ferns blend to create a world of mosaic backlit green. But the light exposure must be spot on. Zoom up and get the correct light meter reading on the backlit leaves and use that reading for the overall picture. If your camera is automatic then zoom to the backlit leaves and you could be pleasantly surprised. Happy clicking.



n the Mountain

were often seen roaming the bird-feeding area leaping from bird to bird, hoping for the prize of tail feathers. We were known amongst most as the "Awesome Foursome" There were many visits to the swimming hole at Moran's Creek, where we would try to catch the infamous 'speed boats' and slide down the rock waterslide into the pool. Of course an adult would be present, but someone only had to mention the sight of an eel and we would swim faster and more capably than any child learning the delicate art.

Bike rides were always the most interesting journeys. We were commonly seen riding furiously along the border track taking advantage of the few daylight hours left after school. I doubt anyone who was unfortunate enough to be sharing the track with us would have seen any birds. The only calls that would be heard on those afternoons were the lines of 'Crocodile Rock' which we would sing at the top of our lungs.

Being in a rainforest, rain would be a common occurrence. Rather than sit inside, we devised a little game that involved our bikes, wet paths and damp leaf litter - skidding competitions. One afternoon, when the leaf litter was particularly damp, Tom had set an early lead. Bert had displayed her usual dismal effort, while Michael at the ripe old age of four did the unimaginable. Whilst bringing up the tail, Michael took the corner a little too fast and, to our sheer horror, disappeared with a crash and a scream off the edge of the track. We don't remember discarding our bikes, only peering over the side of the track and staring down at Michael who was crying as he lay beside his bike. You can imagine - a pair of children, both under 10, had just watched their only nephew disappear from view, off what felt like the side of the earth. How were we going to explain this to Mum?

Thankfully, he was fine, just a bruised ego, and needless to say we didn't ride there much after. Nowadays, if ever you venture out along the border track, take note of the 'no bikes allowed' sign and think of those three little crazy O'Reilly's living out a 'normal' childhood.

by Bernadette and Tom O'Reilly

Memories of O'Reilly's

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to the pack horses but our offer was firmly refused and we were all ordered to mount the riding horses. The elderly lady had not ridden before and was greatly embarrassed when her dress came up around her waist. Her husband, despite the fact that it was a cold evening immediately took off his coat and spread it over her legs before he too mounted his horse. Once we were all on horses, Rose gave the order and the animals moved off in single file into the jungle. Inside it was pitch black and one couldn't see one's hand if held in front of the face. We had not gone far when the woman called out "George! George! your coat is slipping. What shall I do." A voice in front of me replied "Hang on to it."

There was no further conversation as we moved slowly through the forest for the next hour and a half when we emerged on to a cleared paddock to the north of the guesthouse. The moon had just risen and a cold southerly wind was blowing. When we reached the guesthouse we were met by Joe O'Reilly, Rose's younger brother, who was carrying a hurricane lantern. He took control of the horses and told us to go inside where Molly had tea ready for us.

In those days the guesthouse was very much smaller than it is today. At the far end there was a small office next to the kitchen, which opened on to the dining room-come living room. A small verandah ran along the northern side with a couple of bedrooms opening on to it. Behind these there was another two rooms. A set of steps lead down from the southern side of the dining room which gave access to several more bedrooms on the right and a bathroom and toilet below the kitchen on the left. Molly was a warm friendly lady who managed the kitchen and guest rooms. Rose managed all the horses and the fowls with Joe's assistance and organised supplies. Together they made their guests feel part of the family and ensured that everyone was enjoying themselves.

As energetic young men we spent most of our time exploring the forest tracks and boasted that we could keep up a walking pace of 4 miles per hour all day. We particularly liked the border areas beyond the graded tracks towards Mt Throakban and became known as the Throakban Terrors.

We enjoyed our holiday so much that we returned regularly when ever we

could find the time during the next three or four years.

After the war Bernard returned to the Guesthouse for a short time, then moved down to the Albert Valley but later came back up the mountain. In the early 1950s Mick, who was Molly's elder brother and father of Vince and Peter (Sr) took over the management.

For a number of years I moved about a lot in connection with my work and I had little contact with the O'Reilly's. However in the late 1960s I decided to take my family there for a holiday and my wife Hallett and I have been regular summer visitors ever since.

Bernard, still a legendary figure thirty years or more since he had rescued survivors from the Stinson air crash, was there, but due to ill health took no active part in the guesthouse affairs except for attending most meals in the dining room with Viola, his wife, and going to barbecues out at Lukes Bluff. Guests liked to talk with him because he had such a great love of the rainforest, such intimate knowledge of its plants and birds.

It was at the beginning of the 1970s that someone called Ismey took charge of the office, remaining in that position until 1989. She was a wonderful person for the job, very efficient, yet gracious in manners. With the support of Vince and Peter (Sr) she ensured that all guests were well looked after and enjoyed their stay.

Today the guesthouse is managed by the sons and daughters of Peter (Sr) and Vince. It is much bigger and the standard of accommodation is high. It has a large, well trained and efficient staff and a well organised program which ensures that all guests are very well provided for but despite the changes the same spirit of service and friendliness which has always been part of the O'Reilly culture prevails. There is much more I could relate about the happy and amusing incidents which I have experienced over the years. The O'Reilly Family brought the true Australian pioneering spirit to the mountains. It did not matter who or what you were, if you needed help it would be given. There was an underlying feeling of being part of a large family where friendship and cooperation enable every one to enjoy the beauty of the mountains, the rainforest and the many birds and animals which have inhabited it for thousands of years. This will not change with time and I sincerely hope that the O'Reilly tradition for hospitality which has been handed down through three generations will also continue unchanged.

by Eric Brier

Coming Events

Silver Jubilee Birdweek

3rd -10th November 2002

It was Peter O'Reilly's dream back in the 1970's, and now, 25 years later it's a birding tradition. Big Peter, as we know him, is making it his last Bird Week before handing over to his sons Tim and Pete. He is keen to make it an event to remember and celebrate 25 years with many birding friends.

A record 230 species were sighted last year. Highlights included: nesting Albert Lyrebird and Noisy Pittas, sighting Bailons Crakes and Little Bittern. The mountain comes alive when the birds arrive. Share with us the excitement the humour, the interest and the enthusiasm. It's all part of the special atmosphere that is Bird Week.

This year there will be a special guest appearance by Dr. Michael Archer, a well know Palaeontologist and Director of the Australian Museum in Sydney. Mike is an entertaining speaker and we are looking forward to hearing his lectures throughout the week. Birdweek packages start at \$ 1 250.00 per person for a seven night stay, including all meals and accommodation. A registration fee of \$140 is also payable to the Natural History Association



Frog Week 2002 - It's HOPpening Again!!

8th - 13th December 2002

On these cool, winter nights the sound of a deafening frog chorus after a hot day and a summer storm seem a world away. With only six months to go until O'Reilly's 8th annual Frog Week, however, you could be out getting to know our amphibian buddies sooner than you think.

Frog Week is gathering momentum as the years unfold and we aim for this to be our most successful ever. With over 30 native species found in Lamington National Park, it provides the ideal backdrop for anyone wanting to see and understand more about frogs.

Our enthusiastic experts will be on hand to take you through the many aspects of a frog's life from their calls and breeding behaviours to identifying tadpoles and all in between. It is certain to be a full five days with lectures, field trips and plenty of other activities to ensure you learn all about frogs while enjoying the company of others who share your passion for them

Don't forget the fantastic offer provided by O'Reilly's for all Australian Geographic members; stay three nights and get a fourth night free. This means you can stay for all five nights of Frog Week for 20% less - certainly worth thinking about. You don't have to stay for the duration of frog week, shorter stays are most welcome.



Writers Rainforest Retreat

12th -17th January 2003

A great way to spend your holiday. An even better place to write.

Have you ever dreamt of putting pen to paper? Would you like the opportunity to spend a week with one of Australia's best fiction writers and teachers of writing, in a beautiful sub-tropical rainforest retreat with magnificent views of South East Queensland?

O'Reilly's Rainforest Guesthouse together with, The Queensland Writers Centre, will host our first Writers Rainforest Retreat, with Kate Grenville, author of Lillian's Story, Dark Places and winner of the 2001 Orange Prize with The Idea of Perfection.

This is a great way to retreat from the heat of

summer with all your needs catered for as you develop your writing skills. Kate Grenville will present 14 writing sessions. There will be free time to write or roam in the rainforest, and fun-filled evenings with literary games, a film night and discussion, readings at Moonlight Crag and wine tasting and farewell luncheon at The Vineyard. Packages with all meals and all literary activities start from \$1 304.00 per person for a five night stay.

For more information on the program of activities and Kate Grenville contact the Queensland Writers Centre on 07 3839 1243 or email qldwriters@qwc.asn.au

