

Centenary and District Environment
 Action Incorporated
PO Box 432
 Mount Ommaney Qld 4074
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Dedicated to a better Brisbane

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This is a special issue. The "trees" theme from Issue 51 will be continued in the May Issue, when we will discuss the tree canopy and "significant trees" in the Centenary district.

World Environment Day is celebrated annually on 5 June and is the United Nations' principal vehicle for encouraging awareness and action for the protection of the environment.

Put **Sunday morning, 5th June, 2022** in your calendars because this promises to be another major local event.

The 2022 theme – '**Only One Earth**' – will highlight the possibilities for shifting to more sustainable, greener lifestyles. See Issue 50 (October, 2021) for details of the 2021 celebrations. More information will be provided in the May Issue.

VALE NOEL WILSON

In this special issue of the CDEA Newsletter, we celebrate the life of Noel Wilson and his contribution to the environment of the Centenary and surrounding suburbs.

We would like to thank Noel's family and friends for their contributions to this issue.

REMEMBERING A LIFE WELL-LIVED

Noel Douglas Wilson

03 December 1929 - 09 February 2022

Friday 18 February 2022 - 9.00am
 Centenary Memorial Gardens
 Federation Chapel
 353 Wacol Station Road, Sumner

Celebrant
 Andrea Taylor

Live Stream Pin
 9672



Noel Wilson was the much-respected and admired leader of the Jindalee Bushcare Group for 16 Years (1997-2013) and President of Centenary Riverfront Advisory Committee (CRAC, forerunner of CDEA) for 5 years (1998-2003). (Cover of Noel Douglas Wilson's funeral program, 18th February, 2022)

THE LIFE STORY OF NOEL DOUGLAS WILSON

(Presented by Andrea Taylor)

Noel Douglas Wilson was born on 3rd December, 1929 just one hour before his much younger sister, Marjorie/Kinchi. He lived at 18 Oxlade Drive, New Farm, Brisbane until his marriage to Claire in 1957.

“How did you meet grandma?” his granddaughter asked.

”On a boat trip!! Every year the Royal Queensland Yacht Club would organise a boat trip for nurses to Bishop Island. On the second occasion I went, a brown eyed brunette took my fancy. Some time later I went to the Ipswich Hospital Nurses’ Christmas dance and afterwards took Claire and another nurse back to their quarters. Soon after that, on a Gladstone Yacht Race I met the other nurse who told me that Claire was handing out programs at the Brisbane Exhibition Grounds. So I went along one evening and there was Claire in a neat green uniform and cap. Phone numbers were exchanged and the rest is history.” Noel and Claire became parents to Peter, Tim and Kate and eventually proud grandparents.

Noel spent the major part of his life living either on or within sight of the Brisbane River at New Farm, Chelmer and Jindalee before moving to Bribie Island recently.

He was first educated at Miss Mackenzie’s Private School, then on to New Farm State School where he and his sister were immediately put up a grade because they knew EVERYTHING.

High school was completed at Brisbane Boys College.

First fulltime job at 17 years of age was as JUNIOR mail boy at the Queensland Trustees delivering mail around the city.

In 1949 Noel joined the family firm – Martin Wilson Brothers. This was an expectation for family members. He filled several positions over his years there.

2 However in 1972, Noel decided to leave the rat race and started his own “Lawn Mowing Contractor” business as a stop-gap income earner until he got a “real” job. He remained in the business till he retired in 1995.

Noel’s interest in Army life began as a School Cadet at BBC. Later he joined the CMF (Citizens’ Military Force) where again his love for the water led him into the Water Transport Unit. He spent 2 months on a round trip to Japan in 1959 and later several weeks in Vietnam. In 1979 he retired from the Army Reserve with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

Love of the water was a common theme throughout Noel’s life, starting in childhood with holidays on the family yacht, “Viking”. As a keen rower in 4’s both at school and with the Toowong Rowing Club he had varying degrees of success. He eventually became owner of a “tinnie” which provided many happy fishing adventures on Moreton Bay and beyond.

One of Noel’s greatest loves was music. As a teenager he knew all the words of the latest pop songs - this was the era of the Big Bands and their great songs. Classical music was constantly in the background throughout his life.

Noel loved his choirs – Ignations at Toowong, State and Municipal Choir, Brisbane Chorale. He loved the Hallelujah Chorus, operettas by Gilbert and Sullivan and musicals like The Piano Man.

Noel practiced singing while he was mowing and that became a well known fact with the locals. Even in these later days we’ve heard reports of him singing in the shower.

Noel loved bush walking and was involved in local bushcare for many years.

He visited Wolston Park Hospital for about 2 years where he met regularly with patients in discussion groups.

He was a member of Brisbane Rotary Club and helped form their first Rotaract Club.

He was involved in various churches over the years. His major involvement was with Church of England Boys' Society at St. David's Anglican Church at Chelmer, where his leadership was so successful that there was a waiting list of boys keen to join.

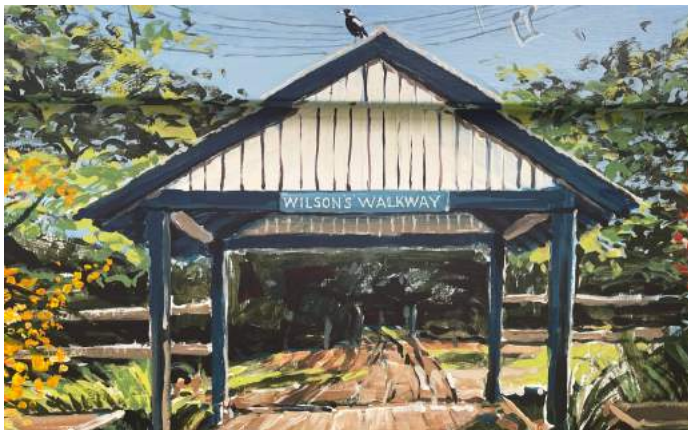
Noel had decided to be confirmed at St. Thomas's Anglican Church at Toowong not long after he and Claire were married.

He was baptised by immersion together with Claire after her conversion when she was 41.

After being "born again" in his forties, Noel's Christian walk was of major importance to him for the remainder of his life.

My reflection on my last meeting with Noel was at Point Lookout on North Stradbroke Island holidaying with Claire, Peter and family and Kinchi: When it was time to leave, being the gentleman he always was, Noel got up for the goodbyes. Our conversation went something like this – "Goodbye Noel, I do hope to see you again but if not here on earth then I will see you in heaven". Noel replied emphatically, "Well it has always been my hope since I believed that Jesus on the Cross paid for my salvation." Then he looked me straight in the eyes, patted my shoulder and said, smiling, "Be of good cheer."

IT WAS A PROFOUND MOMENT.



Painting on end of Noel Wilson's coffin in Chapel of Centenary Memorial Gardens. This shows the Wilsons Walkway sign in Summit Place, Mount Ommaney (Ralph Wilson (Noel's nephew), Kim Wilson (Noel's niece) & Peter Anderson (Kim Wilson's husband) all contributed to the decorating of the coffin, assisted by Noel's daughter Kate).

If you look closely at the photo, you will see that "WILSON'S" has two apostrophes. Apparently, the artist put an apostrophe between the N & S, but was told that Brisbane City Council adhered to the modern practice of dispensing with apostrophes, so there wasn't one - and besides, this walkway was named after both Noel & Claire, so the artist added an apostrophe after the S because it was too difficult to erase the first apostrophe, which would leave an obvious gap. At least the artist did know where the apostrophe should be placed, depending on whether "Wilson" was singular or plural.

HISTORY OF JINDALEE BUSHCARE GROUP

(Noel & Claire Wilson)

This article was published in **Issue 17** (February, 2010). As a tribute to Noel's legacy, it is being "republished" with two additional photographs. Over the years, Noel has been the author of a number of articles of interest to CDEA members and supporters:

- **Issue 1**, May 2006, p 3 – "Wildlife Corridor Research"
- **Issue 2**, Aug 2006, p 4 – "Have You Lost Any Branches Lately?"
- **Issue 2**, Aug 2006, p 6 – "CDEA – a new name reflecting a broader approach to environmental protection"
- **Issue 6**, Sep 2007, p 2 – "BYE BYE TO BAMBI?"
- **Issue 9**, Feb 2008, p 2 – "Visit to Mount Ommaney Walkway by the Honorable Tim Mulherin, to see deer damage first hand"
- **Issue 15**, Aug 2009, p 3 – "New Horizons for Jindalee Bushcare Group" (with *Claire Wilson*)
- **Issue 20**, Nov 2010, p 2 – "Jindalee Bushcare – coincidence"

Readers are advised to consult the Index of CDEA Newsletter articles that include Noel Wilson as a subject (10 articles from 2006 to 2020). Shealagh Walker wrote about "NOEL AND CLAIRE HONOURED WITH THE NAMING OF WILSONS WALKWAY!", published in **Issue 36**, Nov 2018, p 5. This includes a photo of Noel and Claire under the Wilsons Walkway sign. *(Editor)*

How to become a Bushcare Group co-ordinator

After 38 years living in Chelmer we moved to Jindalee in Nov 1995. From our new address the construction of Mt Ommaney Walkway was very apparent.

When the Walkway was finished, the then-Councillor for Jamboree, Christine Watson, initiated action for the formation of a volunteer group to care for the remnant bushland along the walkway.

An interest meeting was held at the Mt Ommaney Drive entrance to the walkway, including demonstration planting. Informative advice and encouraging words were provided by Christine, BCC Bushcare Officer Mike Noble, and Walter Wood, President of the Centenary Riverfront Advisory Committee (CRAC, eventually to become CDEA).

Subsequently Christine convened a meeting of interested persons at the Jamboree Ward Office. The result was unanimous agreement re the formation of a Bushcare group....BUT a deathly hush when Christine proclaimed the need for a volunteer to fill the role of Group Coordinator.

Having absolutely minimal botanical knowledge but recently retired after half a century or so in commerce including various management positions, 30 years in the Citizen Military Forces and winding up operating as tea boy to CEO as a self-employed grass cutter, I offered to organize the first working bee. Sighs of relief all around....but for me an inner voice saying "You'll be sorry!" Claire had already volunteered to be publicity officer.

I fully expected to be replaced almost immediately by a more competent person: Thirteen years later and no-one has come forward!!

A Good Thing

As you can imagine this was a very good thing for us - newly arrived in the district but placed in contact with a bunch of wonderful people with a great variety of backgrounds but a common interest in bushcare.

In military style, Claire took charge of administrative aspects while I became operations officer.

4 Mike Noble, the BCC Bushcare Liaison Officer (long before the term 'Habitat Brisbane' was invented) was a tremendous help offering suggestions for task priorities, major weed threats, plant procurement etc.

An early drama involved a huge pile of mulch from BCC which appeared one day on the street front of the bushcare site, spilling onto the footpath. A day or two later and before the upcoming working bee, a fair lump of the mulch disappeared. I thought that the BCC had realized that there was too much for our current requirements and had reclaimed about 25%. NOT SO – apparently some local citizens felt entitled to an unofficial rebate on their rates and helped themselves!!

When in doubt

Plant identification was not a strong point with the group in those early days. Someone brought up the catch phrase "*When in doubt don't pull out*". Fortunately it was not long before Shealagh Savage joined the group followed some months later by Chris Wiley, giving the group an excellent on-the-spot panel to pass judgment on "keep" or "destroy".

With Chris's remarkable knowledge of birdlife, we were soon ordering and planting seedlings appropriate to the district but with the added characteristic "food for birds".

The Notice Board

An early acquisition was a BCC Notice Board set up at the Jindalee entrance. Claire, who is not impressed with out-of-date information on notice boards, has made an excellent contribution in keeping the notices current and interesting. It is gratifying to see track users pausing to check out the information and photos.



Planned position for Jindalee Bushcare Group notice board at Summit Place entrance to Wilsons Walkway (Photo © Vaughan Kippers 11:07, 23rd November 2021)

Morning Tea

Our BCC mentors advised that social functions were a good thing for group cohesion. JBG tried a couple of events without stunning results. It seemed that our volunteers allocated a certain time per month for bushcaring and didn't see the need for extra socializing.

Then June Rudd, bless her, said, "I can't really do the physical stuff but suppose I make morning tea?" WHAT A WINNER! More recently, members volunteer to provide the goods but it is wonderful to see the weary workers, after a busy couple of hours, enjoying a cuppa and sharing their activities from the previous weeks.

Expansion

In 1999, under pressure from Chris, work started on clearing a weedy gully just off Summit Place, Mt Ommaney at the southern end of the walkway. Chris had identified the site as a good place to develop a "dry rainforest". Naturally in my ignorance I thought he was pulling my leg until other people assured me that there is a flora type that fits that heading.

Dry rainforest is a term used to describe vegetation, where rainfall is low because of topographic conditions (sometimes referred to as rain-shadow). Other terms used to describe variants of dry rainforests are dry vine forest, dry vine scrub, softwood scrub, Brigalow scrub, bottletree scrub, Hoop Pine scrub and microphyll (small-leaved) vine forest. At the drier extreme these vegetation communities sometimes grade into what is known as semi-evergreen vine thicket, or SEVT for short. A feature of some dry rainforests is that many of their tree species have the capacity to shed most or all of their leaves as a strategy to survive long periods of drought (this is where the term semi-evergreen is derived from). Compared to wetter types of rainforest in higher rainfall areas the dominant canopy height of dry rainforest is considerably lower.

At first we did not include this activity as part of JBG's programme. "Not to worry" said Chris, as he just bullied myself, Claire, Shealagh and his mother and father, to name a few, into spraying the weeds, spreading mulch and even planting a few seedlings. The then-



Dry rainforest between Mount Ommaney Creek and Summit Place. This photo was taken after the recent flood. (Photo © Vaughan Kippers 16:41, 15th March 2022)

Habitat Brisbane officer, Trish, gave full support to this extension.

It soon became apparent that the rocky dry slope off Mt Ommaney Drive didn't need so much attention, so we started sharing time with Summit Place, soon to be named by the Group "Wiley's Scrub". The transformation has been astounding – from weedy gully to an expanding patch of dry rainforest which has become a bird habitat listed on Birds Queensland brochures.

BCC support

Firstly, acknowledgment for the assistance given by the Jamboree Ward Office right from the start with Christine, followed by Felicity Farmer and now Matthew Bourke. The office maintains a mailing list enabling printed Working Bee notices to be mailed each month to group members via the BCC mailing system.

Secondly, let's hear it for the fabulous Habitat Brisbane Officers Mike, Trish, Kylie, Keren, Melinda and Rob! Plus a number of temporaries filling in when regulars were unavailable. All have been most co-operative in procurement of tools, materials, advice, encouragement and whatever.

Feral deer

I don't want to talk about it!!!