



AGHS Queensland Branch Newsletter

October 2017

In this issue we bring you a report of a recent trip to the Currimundi Lake (Kathleen McArthur) Conservation Park, held in conjunction with the Annual Wildflower Walk held by Sunshine Coast Wildflower Preservation Society. The SCWP has also provided us with an annotated list of Kathleen McArthur's books that members might find interesting (see p. 5). Although Kathleen's books are out of print, there are copies to view or borrow in Sunshine Coast Libraries, and the State Library should also have them.

Queensland Branch

COMMITTEE

The committee next meets mid November, final date and venue to be advised.

COMMITTEE CONTACTS

Chair — Ann Wegener
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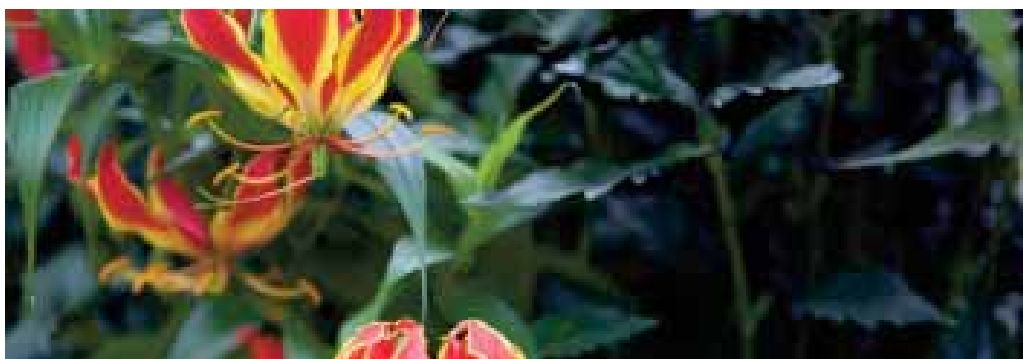
Members

John Taylor
Helen Mackay

A meeting of the new committee appointed at the 2017 AMG took place on 13 September, and a productive discussion about future events for the Queensland branch should ensure that the remainder of this year and 2018 have a range of activities that complement our mutual interests in gardening and gardening history.

Don't forget 'Hidden Treasures', the opportunity to visit Michael and Kim Rabbidge's garden on Monday 16 October, at 100 Railway Parade, Norman Park, 10 am – 11 am. Cost: \$10 — pre-purchase tickets by Wednesday 11 October via email: info@ffbgsa.org.au. We appreciate the invitation to join with Friends of Brisbane Botanic Gardens and Sherwood Arboretum for this event.

The next social event is our Christmas party, to be held on Sunday 10 December at 4 pm at the home of Lois Closter, 20 Comus Avenue, Ascot. The cost of \$15 per member will cover catering (including GF food), but please bring your own drinks. Reminders will be sent to members closer to the date.



Note from the Chair

At the AGM in August Queensland members decided to continue the Qld Branch. I look forward to working with the committee and particularly welcome new participants Helen McKay, who has moved from Armidale to Brisbane, and Roberta Blake, who offered to take the role of newsletter editor. I'm sure you'll find the Newsletter interesting.

The committee intends to offer a small number of activities over the next 12-month period, including day and weekend visits and lectures.

Unfortunately, I am unable to attend the annual conference this year, having previously made plans to travel to Tasmania to enjoy some of their spring. I look forward to meeting up with members at the Christmas party.

Ann Wegener

Laurel Bank Park, Toowoomba

In 2013 the Queensland branch completed a survey of 'Heritage Gardens of Queensland — a survey of Queensland's parks, gardens, trees and other designed landscapes', which was undertaken with a grant from the Jani Haenke Charitable Trust (Jani was a member of the Society). The aims of the study included informing people of the importance of heritage gardens and landscapes, and getting more gardens onto the Queensland Heritage Register. The study listed places that we should nominate for the register, but unfortunately little progress has been made.

Now the good news is that we have a volunteer who is taking on this job. Tania Metcher is a landscape architect who has completed a masters degree in cultural landscapes and is interested in getting heritage gardens on to the Register. Tania is working on the nomination of Laurel Bank Park in Toowoomba. This is a beautiful park with an interesting collection of trees and many



colourful beds of shrubs and annuals. The park was given to the Council in 1932 by S.G. Stevens, who had purchased the land block by block over 20 years and planted it up. During World War II it was occupied by the U.S. Navy for rest and recuperation of submariners. The park is well maintained by Toowoomba Regional Council.

We hope that Tania's work will restart the process of getting the gardens identified in the survey as having high heritage values onto the Heritage Register.

AGHS Wildflower Walk: Currumundi Lake (Kathleen McArthur) Conservation Park

Queensland members of the AGHS enjoyed a relaxing wander through the Currumundi Lake Conservation Park on Saturday, 2 September, stopping frequently to identify the wildflowers and birds, with help from Jude Crighton, a volunteer with the Sunshine Coast Wildflower Preservation Society, which is celebrating its 50th year. Some of the flowers we saw are shown below.

Kathleen McArthur (1915–2000) first became aware of the need for conservation of the beaches she knew after World War II, when she saw the difference it made after the barbed wire entanglements were removed. As she said in an article in the *Women's Weekly* in 1982, 'The barbed wire protected people from the threat of invasion; it also protected the beaches from people. When the wire was taken away, people went back on the beaches and practically destroyed the vegetation and no one — least of all the local councils — seemed to care.

'Every local authority seemed to want beaches in the neat image of Sydney's Manly ... to knock down the dunes, plant a row of Norfolk Island pines and have a concrete parking area behind. I tried to get them to respect and protect the dunes, but of course I was the laughing stock of the place.

'In the summer of 1945–46 we were having trouble on the Sunshine Coast with very wet swamps being drained. Australians needed to be educated to the importance of their wetlands, as well as their beaches. During the war, the Americans had brought in exotic, mosquito-eating fish which were destroying our native fish.'

In 1962, with Judith Wright, David Fleay and Brian Clouston, Kathleen founded the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland (now Wildlife Queensland), and in the following year the Caloundra Branch (now in its 54th year as WPSQ Sunshine Coast and Hinterland Inc.). With the Society's support, Kathleen wrote regular articles for local newspapers, exhibited her wildflower paintings, ran a volunteer native plant nursery at her home *Midyim* in Caloundra, and organised popular wildflower shows that continue as the annual Sunshine Coast Wildflower Festival.



Wallum tea tree (*Leptospermum semibaccatum*)



Showy parrot pea (*Dillwynia floribunda*)

Outstanding among Kathleen McArthur's achievements is her contribution to conservation campaigns on the Sunshine Coast. Her rapid grasp of the relevant science and a capacity to convey ideas in many ways allowed her to energise the community to fight for the protection of places that would have been swallowed up in sandmining, grazing and housing development. The intactness of Cooloola, the Pumicestone Passage and the Coast's beaches are testament to her skills.



Devil's rice (*Conospermum taxifolium*)

Sustaining this activity throughout the 1970s, 80s and 90s, Kathleen added talks to school students and community groups. 'Lunch Hour Theatre' presentations entertained while delivering a strong message about the value of history in informing the present. Her 1989 book *Living on the Coast* records much of Kathleen's work and experiences.

In 1996, James Cook University of North Queensland conferred on Kathleen the degree of Honorary Doctor of Educational Studies in recognition of her outstanding service to community education.

Continuing her legacy is the Sunshine Coast Daily Kathleen McArthur Memorial Scholarship, established in 2003 to encourage and support a University of the Sunshine Coast student with an active interest in the environment.



Fern-leaved banksia (*Banksia oblongifolia*)



Woolly aotus (*Aotus lanigera*)

Kathleen McArthur's Publications 1959–1989

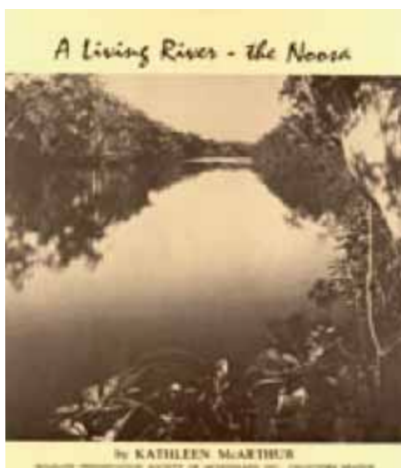
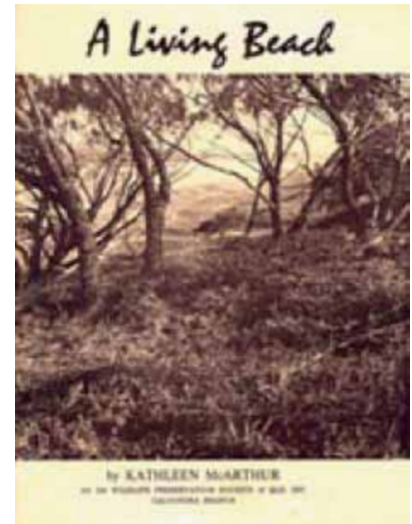
1959, *Queensland Wildflowers: A Selection*, Brisbane, Jacaranda Press/Kathleen McArthur

It was a battle to publish a book of specifically Queensland wildflowers in the 1950s, such was the great and largely unconscious lack of appreciation of wildlife in this state, and the general view of those in other states that there was little of value in anything originating in Queensland. Kathleen McArthur had taught herself to paint wildflowers, and this exquisite book was the beginning of her life's work in encouraging others to see the beauty and point of natural environments, and so conserve them.



1972, *A Living Beach*, Caloundra, Qld, Kathleen McArthur for the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland, Caloundra Branch

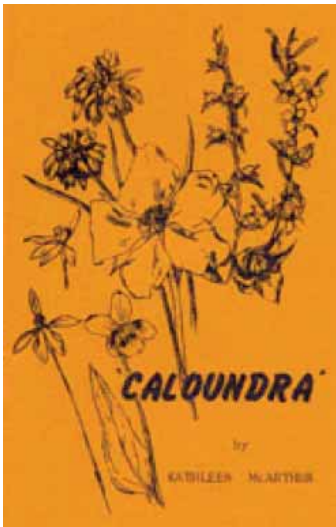
Described by Kathleen as a 'telling story in pictures', this series of black and white photographs shows the importance of dunes and native vegetation in coastal protection. The booklet was in response to the uninformed approach to coastal development in the 1960s and 70s and was widely distributed to fight an application to mine the beach from Point Cartwright to Currimundi. South of Point Cartwright, sand dunes levelled for roads in 1971 were spectacularly breached by high seas during cyclones in early 1972. While pristine dunes to the south quickly recovered from severe erosion, those reduced by human intervention showed no natural repair. Along the stretch of beach north from Currimundi Kathleen recorded in photographs the natural cycles of sand build-up, depletion during heavy weather, and renewal. Each part of the dunal system is illustrated, from the Spinifex foredunes to the well-adapted she-oak glades of the high dunes to the quiet, dense forest and freshwater tea-tree swamps in their lee. Kathleen argues her case in a thorough introduction, and lists scientific and common names for birds and plants.



1974, *A Living River: The Noosa*, Caloundra, Qld, Kathleen McArthur for the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland, Caloundra Branch

Modelled on *A Living Beach*, this booklet takes the reader from the secret sources of the Noosa River in sand mass, forest and swamp, down lakes and mangroves to the sea. It followed through on the successful campaign to save Cooloola (gazetted as a national park in 1973) on the principle that raising awareness of natural and human history leads to a valuing of special environments and a desire to preserve them.

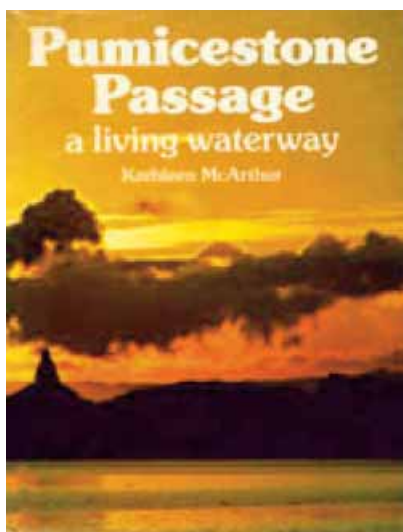
1977, *Bread and Dripping Days, Caloundra, Qld*, Kathleen McArthur [15 pages] see below for 1981 edition



1978, *Caloundra, Caloundra, Qld*, Kathleen McArthur

Caloundra's famous Lunch Hour Theatre of the 1970s, 80s and 90s produced this notable and popular script by Kathleen. In paying homage to the natural beauty of the place, Kathleen delights in uncovering the secret places of low tide rocky shores, the spectacular views of Moreton Island and the Passage from Little Mountain, and the precious diversity of plant life from dune to river. Stories of the early settlers, including William Landsborough and his family, are full of humour and sympathy. Visitors include the writers Vance and Nettie Palmer and artist Kenneth McQueen, all under the spell of a beautiful place. Locals include the fishermen, where winter heralds the excitement of the mullet runs and the chance for a fine feed for the willing helpers on the beach. Moments in local history are vividly recorded: sacks of peanuts washed ashore — to the amazement of local children

— from the ship *Eastern*, run aground in 1910 en route to Brisbane; and the forced landing of the newspaper aeroplane on the Bar in 1935 with no lives lost. The drama of the 1931 tidal surge across Bribie and Golden Beach, and the incongruity of a high rise tower in a village of small houses are a reminder to those of us who love Caloundra to treat our special place with care.

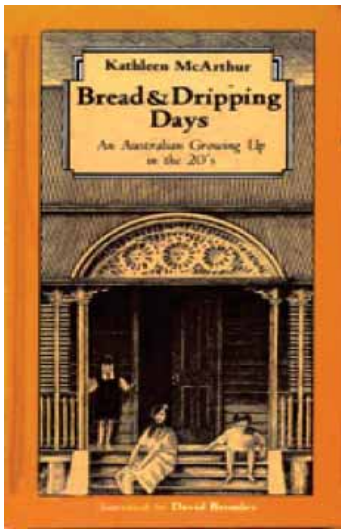


1978, *Pumicestone Passage: A Living Waterway, Caloundra, Qld*, Kathleen McArthur

Driven by her passion for the Pumicestone Passage environment, Kathleen McArthur presented her book as a submission to the Australian Heritage Commission for the inclusion of this waterway on the National Estate Register. It is a history, documenting Aboriginal culture and European settlement and industry, and details bird and mammal species, place names and biographical notes of those associated with the Passage. Ultimately it is an argument against complacency when protecting natural environments:

'Concerned people will need to harvest the talents of the poet and the painter to present the values of the intangibles which are not given consideration by the developers and those of like mind in government who back them, because, for them, there is no awareness of them; intangibles such as the relationship between the winter honey-flow and the annual migration of honeyeaters from the south; the wallum, with its swamps and lagoons which succour the nomadic birds driven out of the back country by droughts; pairs of osprey fishing by dropping on to the water with a splash and neatly rising again with talons holding a wriggling fish, always with head to the front ...'

Kathleen speaks further of the seasons of departing northern hemisphere waders, of the blood-woods blooming, and the ground orchids, 'all important as the intangibles that make this part of the world worth loving and worth careful, studied and sympathetic management' (pp, 92, 93).

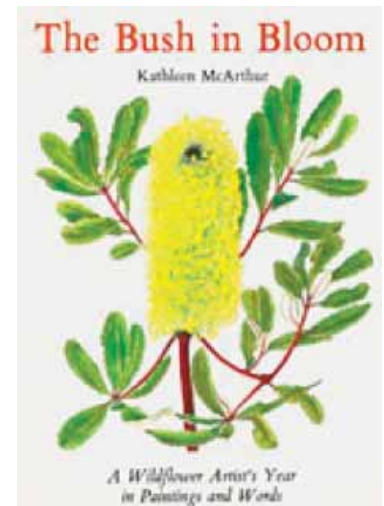


1981, *Bread and Dripping Days: An Australian Growing up in the 20's*, illustrated by David Bromley. Kenthurst, NSW, Kangaroo Press

Hard work and lots of love went into Kathleen's family life in the 1920s. From her perspective, it was one long adventure. With her sisters and brother there was fishing for 'lobbies' in the local creek, sliding in the bath, travelling by tram halfway across Brisbane for school basketball matches, and holding your nose when opening up your slate-rag tin. Lives were marked out by the household routine: washing on Monday, 'damping-down' the clothes on Tuesday, cleaning on Wednesday and mending on Thursday. Friday was baking for the week, Saturday for hair washing (a touch of kerosene in case of head-lice), while Sunday was church, a big dinner, then visiting or off for a drive in the car. These lively recollections of a time when bread and dripping from the Sunday roast was a treat, are a treat for today's reader.

1982, *The Bush in Bloom: A Wildflower Artist's Year in Paintings and Words*, Kenthurst, NSW, Kangaroo Press

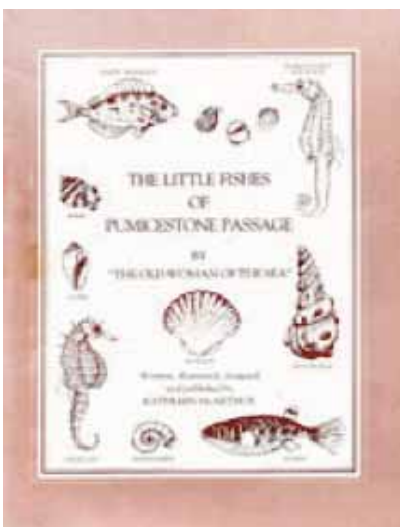
Natural and human history are interwoven in this monthly 'diary' of over 60 flower paintings and drawings representing more than 90 species. The sense of loss of many plants to development and exploitation is strong in many entries, particularly in that of 'Allan Cunningham & the Swamp Orchid'. Find out about *Midyim* (*Austromyrtus dulcis*) — the namesake for Kathleen's house at Kings Beach — and the birds, dingoes (and dogs) that relish their aniseed-tasting fruit; then grow them in your own garden.

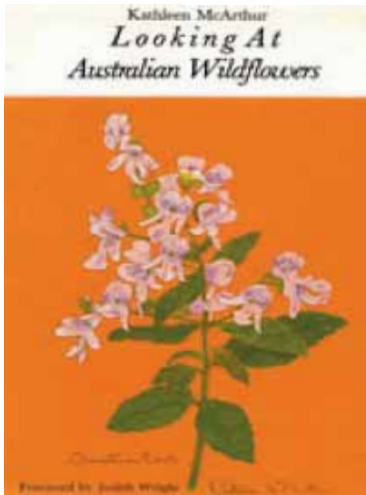


1985, *The Little Fishes of Pumicestone Passage*, by 'The old woman of the sea', written, illustrated and designed by Kathleen McArthur. Caloundra, Qld, Kathleen McArthur

Inspired by the response of students at Golden Beach State School, and seeking to educate rising generations of coast dwellers in the value of intact waterways and their wildlife, Kathleen adopted the 'Old Woman of the Sea' persona to spark curiosity in the creatures of the Pumicestone Passage. The pages are enlivened with whimsical stories of animal and human

behaviour, and make clear the vital connections between natural waterways, the fish that breed and live there, and the birds that feed on the fish. Few words and lots of pictures was the Old Woman's strategy.



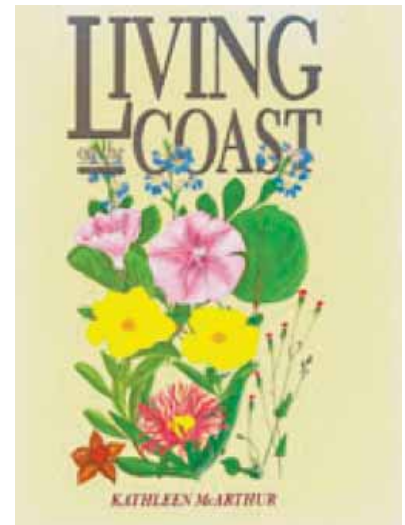


1986, *Looking at Australian Wildflowers*, Kenthurst, NSW, Kangaroo Press

Casting a wider net, Kathleen journeyed throughout Queensland and New South Wales painting and delighting in new and old plants, recording details of their Aboriginal names and uses and their discovery by European botanists and explorers, as well as local stories. The many fine illustrations showcase a confident artistic skill and botanical knowledge.

1989, *Living on the Coast*, Kenthurst, NSW, Kangaroo Press

Not 'your average autobiography', *Living on the coast* unrolls Kathleen McArthur's fruitful, at times frustrating, years of painting, campaigning, and educating on the Sunshine Coast. Her wicked humour and her withering opinion of 'toothless tigers' in high places may lighten the mood, but never obscure her serious purpose. Look in this book for the detail behind beach protection campaigning, the reservation of natural habitat within the town of Caloundra, action on saving birds affected by oil spills, and the fate of flowers that once dominated our coastal plains. Superb plates of watercolours, and photographs with the immediacy and value of fine news reporting inform this last and most comprehensive of Kathleen McArthur's published writings.



Find this list and read more about the life and work of Kathleen McArthur in the CD-rom ***When the mind opens the flowers bloom: a selection of paintings, writings and photographs by Kathleen McArthur***; compiled and with introductions by the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland, Sunshine Coast & Hinterland Inc, Caloundra, Qld, 2009

The above books are out of print, however copies – and the CD-rom – are held in Sunshine Coast Libraries, Noosa Libraries and the State Library of Queensland.

For information on WPSQ Sunshine Coast & Hinterland Inc and its activities, contact sunshine@wildlife.org.au and visit the Wildlife Queensland website wildlife.org.

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