

THE NATIONAL MINT

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Newsletter of the Prostanthera & Westringia Study Group

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Patron



Brian Timmis

STUDY

GROUP

Membership

Fees Now

\$10

Due June 30

2006

Welcome to another edition of the National Mint.

I hope you have all been well and are enjoying your gardens and bushland remnants.

It has finally rained down here. This has reduced the burden of watering and allowed many more mints to be planted. As you can see I have been able to finish the Newsletters.

Further exciting successes have occurred in the long-term development of the Grevillea Park. Recent favourable media coverage has seen a significant increase in visitation and therefore plant sales. The funds raised enabled the old leaking irrigation system to be replaced. With hard work over 2 km of new irrigation lines were installed underground by the volunteer team.

The successful release of Grevillea "Bulli Beauty" has inspired investigation and possible release of a number of other cultivars including forms of *Westringia fruticosa* (details page 3).

On the downside there is a serious possibility that the developed section of the **Grevillea Park will be bulldozed** by the NSW Roads & Traffic Authority (details pages 7&8).

Jeff Irons (Heswall England) has sent an article published in September 1916 in *Irish Gardening* which discusses the cultivation of *Prostanthera lasianthos* (see Correspondence p.5).



The Illawarra Grevillea Park Open Days

2006 Open Days: (opening times are 10am until 4pm).

September 23, 24 & 30 October 1

Working Bees: To assist in the maintenance of the Grevillea Park are held most Mondays. Volunteers are always welcome but should contact **Robert Miller on 42 846768** or **Ray Brown on 42 849216** to confirm, before attending. **Web site address :** <http://www.grevilleapark.org/>



Prostanthera "gilesii"

Do you know where a Prostanthera or Westringia grows in the wild?
Why not document its location by taking part in

ATLAS OF PROSTANTHERA & WESTRINGIA

For an electronic copy of a survey sheet e-mail me at janrob@fishinternet.com.au

ASGAP STUDY GROUP COORDINATOR

Nita Lester, has received a job offer to good to refuse and as a result is retiring as Study Group Coordinator. The Prostanthera & Westringia Study Group wishes Nita all the best with her job offer and look forward to an update.

Nita has informed me that **Philip Robinson's** name has been placed with the ASGAP committee for nomination. We look forward to his appointment.

WOW WHAT A DIFFERENCE A NAME MAKES ILLAWARRA GREVILLEA PARK GETS 600 LABELS

600 UV resistant plastic labels with inscribed plant names have been placed throughout the Grevillea Park garden beds making identification of many plants easier. This was made possible by The Grevillea Park Trust receiving a grant from the Australian Plant Society to purchase name plates. The Grevillea Park Trust provided additional funds to purchase stakes which were pop-riveted onto the name plates.

Many plant species still require labels including all of the Prostanthera & Westringia collection. It is hoped that the Grevillea Park Trust will be successful at a future date in receiving additional funding for these extra labels.

WHAT'S ON

Hunter Regional Botanic Gardens www.huntergardens.org.au/

The Hunter region contains a diversity of mint-bush species. *Prostanthera* is the dominant genus of native Labiate in the living collection. The mints displayed are mainly from the Hunter Region with a few *Plectranthus* and *Westringia* species in the gardens also.

COMING EVENTS: **August:** Thursday 17: Night Walk. **September:** Sunday 3: Fathers' Day - Live Music & Free Mini Golf, Thursday 21: Night Walk, Sunday 24: Newcastle Permanent Spring Fair - Live Music, Kids Entertainment, Market Stalls **October:** Thursday 19: Night Walk



Anvil Hill Project Watch Association Inc Presents

Dr David Suzuki Last Australian Tour

4th September 06 at the Enmore Theatre, Newtown

Supported by African Tribal Drum Group "Karifi -The African Experience" & "Les Saxby of Yidaki Didj and Dance"

Doors open 6pm for 7pm sit down/show start. Dr Suzuki on stage at 8.10pm.

"The Challenge of the 21st century, Putting the World Back Together"

Dr David Suzuki will be personally signing copies of his autobiography that will be on sale on the night.

Tickets on sale through Ticketek Agencies 13 2849 or www.ticketek.com.au for bookings from Monday 31 July. **Ticket prices** are \$71.90 per person or concession card/group rate of 6 or more = \$61.40 per person. Concession is for pensioners, senior cardholders, students, and unemployed.

All it takes for evil to flourish is for good men to do nothing about it.

HELP NEEDED!

NAME THESE EXCITING NEW WESTRINGIA CULTIVARS!

The Illawarra Grevillea Park Trust has selected and is trailing a number of decumbent to prostrate **Westringia fruticosa** forms. It is anticipated the best of these forms will be released into the nursery trade providing a further funding source for The Illawarra Grevillea Park's on-going development.



To date, all plants have proven to be outstanding ground covers. The form, height, width and texture of each cultivar vary and an appropriate name for two of these forms is now being sought.

Cultivar one: This beautiful form is extremely compact and very prostrate growing normally under 10cm tall and to 1m in diameter. It can be used for great effect as an edging plant, waterwise lawn alternative and as shown below (front right) spilling out over a rockery.

Cultivar two: Is a slightly more vigorous decumbent low shrublet, which is anticipated to grow between 20-30 cm tall (shown left) and 1-1.5m diameter. Relatively large flowers are conspicuous over extended periods.

Keeping in the theme of the successfully released **Grevillea 'Bulli Beauty'** we are seeking a name which incorporates the prefix **Westringia 'Bulli**'. Names already suggested include: *Westringia 'Bulli Cascade'*, *Westringia "Bulli Carpet"*, *Westringia "Bulli Cushion"*, *Westringia "Bulli Compact"*, *Westringia "Bulli Border"*, *Westringia "Bulli Magic"* and *Westringia "Bulli Windswept"*. Any further suggestions would be graciously received!

THE PROSTANTHERA & WESTRINGIA IDENTIFICATION & CUTTING EXCHANGE SERVICE

For those of you who do
want to know

"what plant is that?"

Its easy!

For plant identification send as complete a specimen as possible - preferably fresh; including material suitable for cuttings. These can be wrapped loosely, in lightly dampened absorbent paper enclosed within a milk carton. Prior notice by phone is advisable before dispatch via overnight post. Alternatively, a dried specimen can be posted between sheets of stiff card. In both cases, origin details, size and features such as flower colour should be included.

LASIANTHOS

**Contribution to our
publication *Lasianthos* is
always welcome.**

Members can forward articles for publication electronically to my email address janrob@fishinternet.com.au or on disk. Hard copies should be preferably typed, hand written short articles are also accepted.

Contribute now!

**Your observations are
important!**

CORRESPONDENCE

Steve Clemesha writes:

I sorted out that question of which plant was *Prostanthera* Poorinda Theme. The description fits exactly—some leaves are plain and others are cruciate *P. staurophylla* X *P. rotundifolia*.

I have found that cuttings of *Westringia fruticosa* & some *Prostanthera* sp. will form roots standing in a bottle of water. The roots are very brittle unless left until they get long. It is easy to check on them to see when roots are about to start.

I get my cuttings from Moonee Beach Nature Reserve. *Westringia fruticosa* is not native to here. It does not extend north of Taree. There was a house in this area before it became a nature reserve. When it became part of the National Park Estate the house was demolished. National Parks made one attempt to get rid of the *Westringia* but failed to do follow-up and now there are more plants than ever. I am going to cut one back so it will produce long shoots suitable for cutting grafts.

I tried cutting grafts with *P. saxicola* var. *major* on to *P. nivea* and *P. scutellarioides*. It does not seem to be compatible with *Westringia* or the local *P. ovalifolia* varieties. Before they got far I grafted the *P. nivea* and *P. scutellarioides* onto struck *Westringia*. Most are still alive. I have not tried taking the bottles off yet but there is a good chance these will work if the *P. saxicola* var. *major* is compatible.

Regards

Steve

LEADERS COMMENT: Steve has touched on a number of topics in relation to grafting. The type of material selected for use as the rootstock and scion material will have a significant impact upon the outcome of the graft, both initially and in the long term. There has been little research into selecting specific outcome clones (dwarfing, extended flowering, regional suitability), although such character traits are widely used throughout the horticulture industry especially in fruit production.

Grafting of Australian plants is in its infancy but rapidly evolving thanks to the pioneering work of ANBG staff, and people like Merv Hodge and others. Merv for example has noted: "I have found that rootstocks can effect flowering, e.g. *Prostanthera magnifica* flowers for longer periods when grafted to *P. striatiflora* than it does when grafted to *Westringia fruticosa*. There is little or no shooting below the graft on the *Prostanthera* rootstock, but there is frequent shooting below the graft on the *Westringia* rootstock (an inter-generic graft)."

I am endeavouring to collate information on grafting for future newsletters. It would be great if members could forward articles, a few notes and/or their success or failures on the subject.



**SHARE YOUR
IDEAS, TIPS
&
STORIES
WRITE TO**

Robert Miller

13 Park Rd

Bulli NSW 2516

Or email

janrob@fishinternet.com.au

BUT

for written replies please

include a stamped self

addressed envelope .

CORRESPONDENCE

Jeff Irons writes: Dear Robert

The photocopy overleaf may be of interest. Rostrevor is a garden (now owned by the National Trust) in County Dawn. It has winters about the same as those where I live (Heswall, England) and wetter summers. Although I have not checked, I think that the years 1910-20 must have been a time with warm winters.

I've tried two clones of *Prostanthera lasianthos* outside here, one with small leaves the other large leaved. Like seedlings from 1500ft in Tasmania, they would not survive the winter outdoors. A couple of seedlings from a garden at Longley, Tasmania have survived the past two winters outdoors here, so with reputed global warming on the way, I live in hope.

Yours sincerely

Jeff

IRISH GARDENING

A MONTHLY JOURNAL DEVOTED TO THE
ADVANCEMENT OF HORTICULTURE AND
ARBORCULTURE IN IRELAND

SEPTEMBER
1916

VOLUME XI
No. 127

Editor- J.W. Besant

Notes on Shrubs at Rostrevor House

There are a few shrubs in flower at present in the grounds of Rostrevor House, and it may be of interest to some readers of IRISH GARDENING to know that they are growing out of doors and seem to be hardy; many of them have not even got the protection which a wall affords but all, of course, are placed in sheltered positions. During the past few years many plants supposed to be tender have been tried in the open in favoured districts, and generally speaking the results have not been unsatisfactory, though many sad disappointments too often occur. It is to be hoped that these experiments will be continued; and it will probably be found that many handsome and desirable shrubs are hardier than hitherto been thought to be the case. The list now given is by no means complete of the hardy plants growing here, but it may serve to show that the attempt to acclimatise them is an interesting and useful occupation.

Prostanthera lasianthos, a native of Australia, is now some 13 feet high, and is a

sheet of bloom. It is a handsome evergreen with sweet smelling leaves, flowers, in closely packed clusters, white, each the third of an inch across, with purple-marked throat. A branchlet is sent herewith; it was got in 1907 from Messrs. Gauntlett, and was at first planted against a south wall, but it grew so vigorously that it was soon, transplanted to a place under the, shelter of some large laurels, most of which have now been cut away, and those that remain serve to screen it from cold winds. Near by there are some Acacia of which *A. calamifolia* seems to be always in bloom; a branchlet herewith. *Senecio hectori* is some 7 feet high, with a spread of nearly 9 feet, and has flowered here for the first time this year; the large bunches of daisies which it produces, each bloom about an inch wide, contrast well with the broad light green foliage, and give the plant a very pleasing appearance; the leaves are also somewhat uncommon, being provided at the base of each with many leaflets that add to the peculiarity of the species.

Wish to book a talk on *Prostanthera* and *Westringia*?

Groups can email me at janrob@fishinternet.com.au to arrange a suitable date.

Chris Phelps e-mails

Hi Rob,

Anvil Hill Project Watch Association Inc have secured the assistance of Dr David Suzuki in our efforts to combat the Anvil Hill Open Cut Coal Mine proposal. He is appearing at a fundraiser for the Anvil Hill Project Watch Association group.

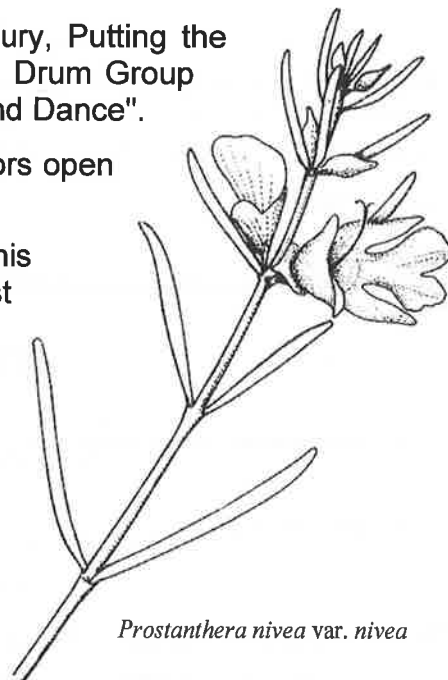
The name of the evening is " The Challenge of the 21st century, Putting the World Back Together". Supporting artists are the African Tribal Drum Group "Karifi -The African Experience" and "Les Saxby of Yidaki Didj and Dance".

Date is 4th September 06 at the Enmore Theatre, Newtown, doors open 6pm for 7pm sit down/show start. Dr Suzuki on stage at 8.10pm.

Dr David Suzuki will be personally signing copies of his autobiography, which will be on sale on the night. This is his last Australian Tour.

Christine Phelps
President
Anvil Hill Project Watch Association Inc.
Lot 12 Wybong Hall Rd. Wybong
02 6547 8011 Mobile 0418 478 011

Leaders Comment: Christine Phelps and others have contacted our Study Group several times for assistance on the identity of *Prostanthera* that are growing at Anvil Hill (refer National Mint June 05). The area shown below like many other bushland remnants, from Lithgow to the Hunter Valley, are seriously threatened by open-cut & long-wall coal mine proposals. Anvil Hill consists of a mosaic of vegetation types and includes one endangered ecological community, six endangered plant species, two vulnerable plant species and the recently discovered *Oligochaetochilus* (*Pterostylis*) sp. aff. *praetermissus* (ORG5019) endemic to one small site comprising of 40 plants. Two of the endangered species *Pomaderris reperta*



Prostanthera nivea var. *nivea*

(2 known populations c. 500 plants) and *Commersonia rosea* (3 known populations < 200 plants) are endemic to upper Hunter Valley. Colin Gibson & myself discovered one of the sites for *Pomaderris reperta* at Myambat and the beautiful *Commersonia rosea* at Mount Dangar.

Prostanthera nivea and *Prostanthera ovalifolia* s. lat. (probably an undescribed taxon) have also been observed to grow in the area.



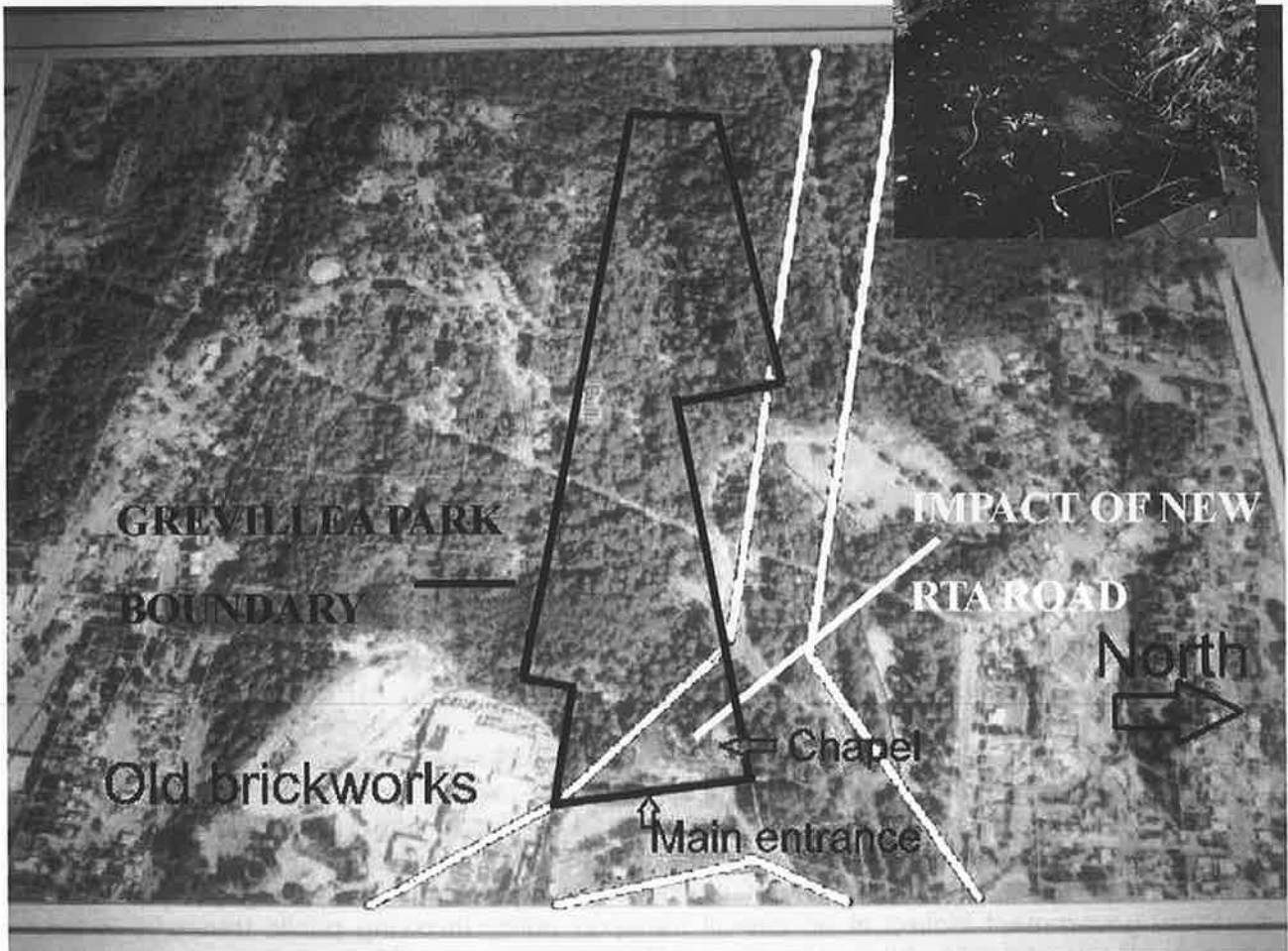
Visit The Study Group Web Page

It can be viewed at <http://farrer.csu.edu.au/ASGAP/mints/>
Be patient, the front page opens slowly with some browsers.

SECRET RTA PLANS TO BULLDOZE ILLAWARRA GREVILLEA PARK

The following article is modified from the Grevillea Park Web-site. I have included photos to clearly show what is at stake. These photos show what the RTA plans to bulldoze. Its time for public outcry to save the park!

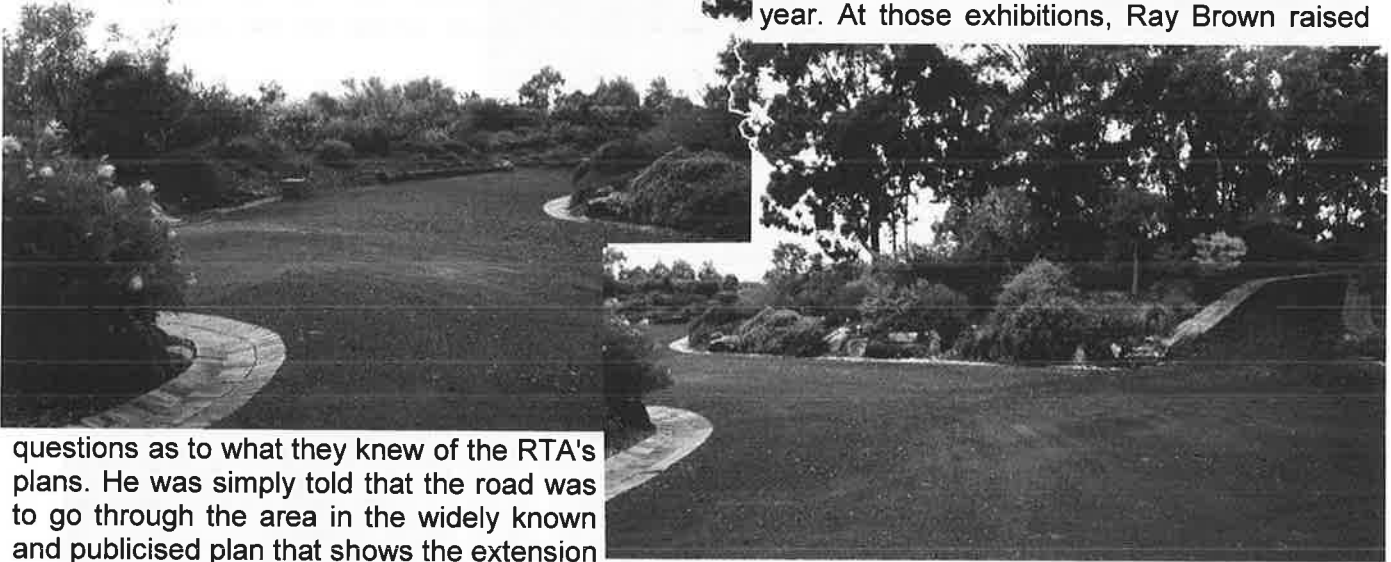
It was only by co-incidence that the Grevillea Park Trust learnt of a secret RTA plan that would destroy the majority of the developed section of the park. Ray Brown contacted the RTA on Wednesday the 24th August 2005 about this; the Illawarra Mercury published details about the plan the next day. Since the Trust had not contacted the Mercury, it can only be deduced that the RTA went into damage control and decided it had better publish to fulfil some notion of accountability. The following week the Northern Leader ran an article on the matter in its



September the 1st 2005 edition and the aerial photo is taken from that article. The Illawarra Grevillea Park is a community organisation, started in 1987 and officially opened in 1993. During this time the possibility that an extension to the Northern Distributor would entail the loss of the front car park has always been known. Notwithstanding this issue, the Park has rehabilitated the car park area and opened it up to community use (and indemnified the RTA), providing convenience to motorists as well as community members, at no expense to the RTA. Of course this has not been without expense to the Park. The community has only now become aware of the secret plan to put a new road and a Californian Spaghetti interchange through the Park on land leased from Wollongong City Council. Such RTA plans were also not known to adjoining landowners - Multiplex nor the Village Building Company, as they were not exhibited at their open

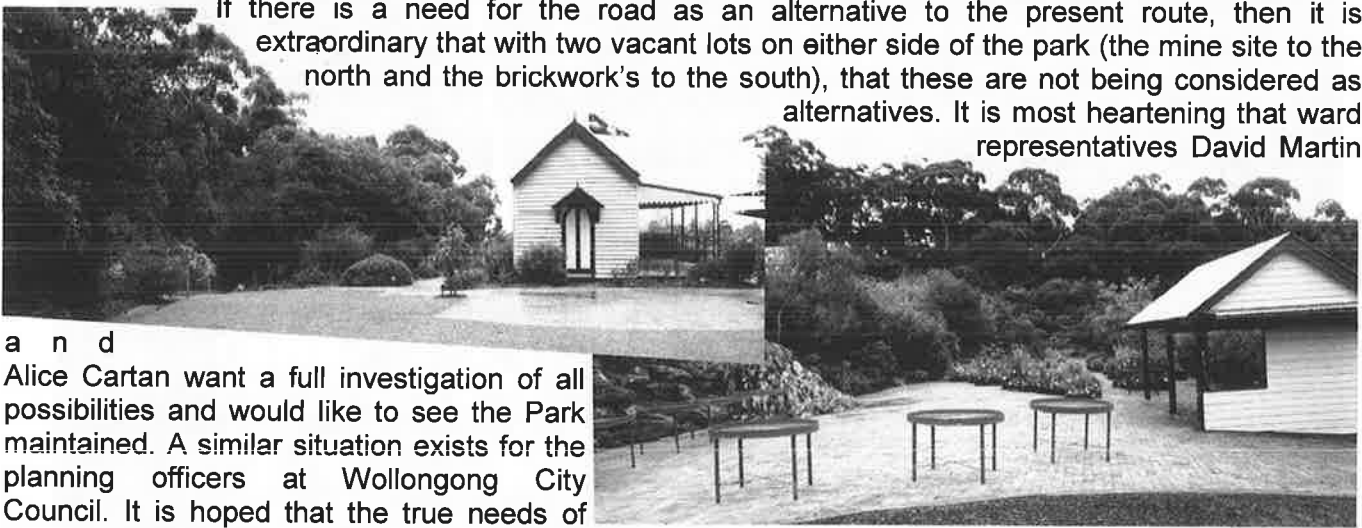


landowners - Multiplex nor the Village Building days of community consultation earlier this year. At those exhibitions, Ray Brown raised



questions as to what they knew of the RTA's plans. He was simply told that the road was to go through the area in the widely known and publicised plan that shows the extension to the northern distributor through the front car park area.

If there is a need for the road as an alternative to the present route, then it is extraordinary that with two vacant lots on either side of the park (the mine site to the north and the brickwork's to the south), that these are not being considered as alternatives. It is most heartening that ward representatives David Martin



and Alice Cartan want a full investigation of all possibilities and would like to see the Park maintained. A similar situation exists for the planning officers at Wollongong City Council. It is hoped that the true needs of

the community and the adoption of Greenplan aims will be taken into account when decisions are made. With close to \$8 million invested in the park it would be nice to see community debate before the RTA draws a few lines on a map, which will result in the permanent loss of what up to, now has been a nationally renowned Australian asset. With rising petrol prices and global warming, perhaps it is time that the State government looked at an overall transport policy involving public transport instead of supporting an all powerful RTA oblivious to community concerns and problems.