

Heritage and the Land

By Su Wild-River

The small town of Braidwood celebrates its 175th year in Autumn 2014. The event is being marked by picnics, walks, a heritage parade, art prizes and more. Uncle Max Dulumunmun Harrison, initiated Yuin elder, was at the Heritage Picnic to give the welcome to country for the celebrations. He shared messages about rivercare and landcare which are as important now as they were for over 40,000 years of earlier heritage.

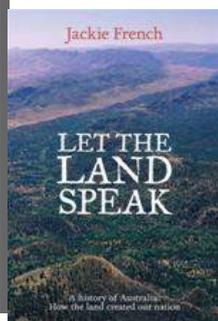
Uncle Max urged us to watch the waterways. We may barely notice the Shoalhaven, Mongarlowe or Deua Rivers as we speed across them in cars. And the same for their many tributary creeks like Monkittee, Flood, Jembaicumbene, Majors, Tantulean, Mulloon, Jerrabuttgulla, Back, Reedy Windellama and more. But these waterways are a whole other set of pathways connecting all of the land, providing water and carrying fish and other aquatic life, as well as nutrients and sediments. There's value in remembering how it all fits together.

Aboriginal landcare architecture is still in the local landscape today and you'll see it if you know where and what to watch for. Uncle Max told how the land kept Aboriginal



Uncle Max Harrison and Bronwyn Richards at the Braidwood Heritage Day picnic.
Photo by Alex Rea, Braidwood Times.

people warm in dwellings that were dug into the ground like giant wombat holes. Jackie French's describes other Aboriginal architecture in landscape plantings in her 2013 book *Let the Land Speak*. It is still possible to follow the walkway of spring flowering clematis which shows the way to stands of stringy bark traditionally used to make waterproof fishing line, string and other woven products. The path and others showing food and medicine resources are marked by the woody-descendants of signposting trees planted by Aboriginal women hundreds and thousands of years ago



There is a lot for modern Landcarers to learn from this ancient wisdom. For one thing, if you can learn to read the signposting in the Aboriginal plantings, you may still find the bounty they signal. And it's wise to think, watch and learn before transforming landscapes, because the changes can last generations, and mistakes may be impossible to undo.

Farming the generations

Pete Harrison, Mayor of Braidwood, spoke at the Heritage Picnic about the exceptional endurance of the local colonial people. He described a property in the local area that is perhaps the only original colonial land holding held and farmed continually by the one family since first acquired in the early 1800s.



Julie Baker's artwork "Braidwood Yesterday, Today Tomorrow" from the Heritage Art Exhibition at the Braidwood Re-

The Heritage Art Prize included a painting celebrating a similarly long local family farming history. The painting by Julie Baker lists John Buckle Bunn as the patriarch of seven generations.

The description of the work is as follows.

"The Land the everlasting, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow.

The People, Seven Generations.

Living off the Land, Through the Land, With the Land, On the Land.

The Land was there before they were born.

It is there now supporting their lives;

And it will be there after they are gone;

Still continuing its vigil of creation, destruction, resurrection,

Changed by the contact but existing forever.

A reminder of Braidwood and its Creation Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow".

Detail from Julie Baker's artwork listing seven generations of local land custodians.

