YARNUPINGS

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE OFFICE NEWSLETTER ISSUE #1 MARCH 2022

Ku-ring-gai Council

The Council of the Municipality of Lane Cove

North Sydney Council

northern beaches council

Strathfield Council

Willoughby City Council

YARNUPINGS

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE OFFICE NEWSLETTER

ISSUE #1 March 2022

Welcome to the first issue of Yarnupings for 2022

We're so excited to be back in the swing of things.

Phil muses over being Lost & Disconnected, what it means and asks how have we become so disconnected. Karen writes about Summer, the different seasons and the fish that run at different times of the year. She has also compiled a list of summer words in language. Phil has been monitoring sites in the Ku-ring-gai LGA and writes about doing so during a La Niña summer. We meet a new volunteer and give thanks to a retiring one. For kids, there is a book review of 'Somebody's Land' by Adam Goodes and Ellie Laing, the D'harawal Calendar to print out and follow and a damper recipe to try.

Please enjoy the first issue of Yarnupings for 2022.

The AHO Team— Dave, Karen, Phil and Susan.

In this issue…

Breathe and Relax

This gorgeous photo was taken by our very own senior archaeologist, Phil Hunt on a field trip to monitor the sites in Ku-ring-gai.

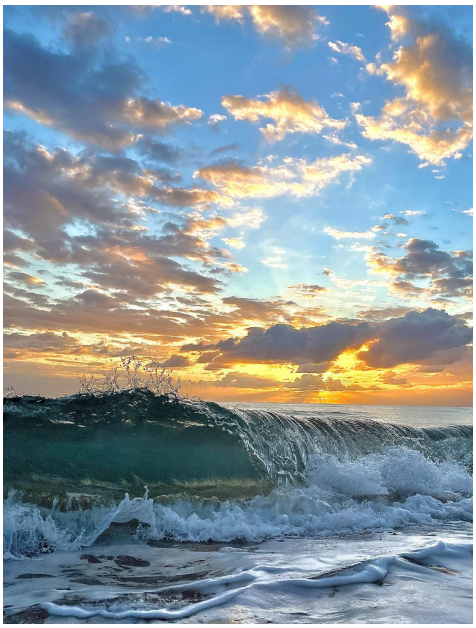
Scientific studies show that simply looking upon a lovely serene image of nature will help to lower stress. So, if you're having a day where you may not feel like you are able to get outside as much as you may like, take a moment or two to breathe deeply and enjoy the image. It's good for you.

Full image for you to enjoy on the next page.

International Women's Day

On International Women's Day, AHO Education Officer, Karen Smith spoke at the Yarning Circle at Lane Cove Council. She also gave an Acknowledgement of Country at the International Women's Day Breakfast. The guest speaker was world leader in social change Anyier Yuol. Anyier shared her story of resilience, which empowered and inspired guests.

Having been born in a refugee camp in Kenya, losing her parents as a child, and then moving to Australia at age 10, Anyier has a deep and extensive understanding of the tremendously uneven social landscape upon which we live.



Let us showcase your photos...

On the Yarnupings Newsletter Cover!

Hi Yarnupings Readers!

I know some of you are enthusiastic photographers. Some professional, some amateur, but all equally keen to capture the beauty of the stunning places we live. We would love to place your photo on the cover on Yarnupings. Our newsletters are sent far and wide across Australia.

Please email your feature photos to:
susan.whitby@northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au.

LOST & DISCONNECTED

Have you ever had that jolting, heart stopping feeling of being lost in the bush? The rise of panic as you no longer know which way to go or where you are? Older readers may remember it (or younger ones when there's poor data connection). Becoming lost was a legitimate and ongoing fear for anyone who ventured beyond the town's edge for the colonial period up to quite recently. Even when maps came in, the quality was poor. That's why local knowledge is so helpful. As we say at the AHO, the best way to find a site is to have been there once or twice before!

Even if you haven't been through a particular patch of bush previously, having been somewhere nearby helps with your mental map. Perhaps it is like some digital software that is plotting a framework in your mind and the bits you know help provide a context for the bits you don't. Being aware of what you don't know can be therefore just as important as being aware of what you do. Who can go past this quote?

> "…as we know, there are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns – the ones we don't know we don't know"[1].

How do we know what we don't know? If you look up a definition of *knowledge*, there are many facets to it even across different dictionaries. See if these fit with your experience.

> *the fact or state of knowing; the perception of fact or truth or principles, as from study or investigation; the state of being aware of something; information, understanding, or skill that you get from experience or education; apprehending truth or fact through reasoning; familiarity, as with a particular subject of learning*

What does it mean to be disconnected?

If you are lost, then in that frightening moment things don't seem familiar. Even for Indigenous people in their own Country people need to be careful. Not just from the physical but also the spiritual. Keeping *alert* for dangers is how an Anangu friend described it. Being mindful. And

LOST & DISCONNECTED

when there are difficulties, that's when your training and education, your *knowledge*, becomes important. If you have thousands of years of stories and education in your local area, that's a big help. If you have people across a continent each holding knowledge and that sense of responsibility for separate areas, that's a valuable asset, even if it doesn't come up in the GDP.

Fire practitioner Victor Steffensen[2] has suggested one way to describe most of us in modern society might be as the *disconnected*. Separated from nature. This might be like being lost without knowing it. Or lost without caring.

What does it mean to be disconnected? Or we can ask, what do we do that makes us disconnected?

A simple look around our environment may give us clues. Just check how much of any particular landscape do we take for ourselves (and however we define 'us' in a given space – nation, state, council, family, individual) and how much do we leave for 'nature' (every other species and non -'us'). A rural landscape with barely a tree and even the sides of creeks and rivers used for the primary benefit of the landholder. An urban lot where the vegetation is tightly controlled and of no particular assistance to any animal or insect. A city street where the trees are exotic and wildlife, animals that evolved here, are seen as pests. It is a place that seems largely oblivious to 'nature' unless it can provide some specific value. Even when nature is clearly beneficial, it is often sacrificed for much smaller objectives. Take the water view as an example and the war against vegetation that 'intrudes'.

Images: Examples of our struggle to share land with nature.

LOST & DISCONNECTED

Natural heritage conservation is considered largely a government role. But is this an outsourcing of our individual responsibilities of helping nature? And what happens if the governments don't keep up the level of support that is required? In an era of climate change, can government action alone ever be enough?

If we do have responsibilities, what then does it mean to act in a connected way? Victor Steffensen suggests good actions are those that are applied '*for the wellbeing of people, in a way that is culturally in tune with the natural world. An action that is applied to benefit the country and, in return, benefit ourselves*'[3].

How do we do this in the space where we live? In our small way we can **Refuse**, **Reduce**, **Reuse**, **Recycle**. What else can we do to reconnect? Let's go back to that question, how do we know what we don't know? As a start we can use that ancient skill, that tried and true technique that has been handed down from generation to generation in all societies. *Humility*. We dip our heads and acknowledge there are things that we don't know. This actually provides space and opportunity to learn. It also helps that internal mapping program to plot gaps that could be filled in later. Or not. It is not possible for each of us individually to know everything. Modern society is very complex. So is the 'natural world' (as if it were somehow separate). Perhaps it is more important to recognise that things are complex and that the connections between things are subtle and important than to necessarily know what they all mean. And to recognise that there are people

What do we do that makes us disconnected?

Being lost can be overwhelming and the best relief comes when you gain your bearings and can continue your journey with renewed confidence. Or if someone comes to your rescue. Being disconnected can actually be worse, especially as a society. We are in the Information Age, or increasingly the Disinformation Age. Even in the 21st century palm-of-the-hand world, information is still not the same as knowledge. The inner compass of hard won knowledge is more valuable than ever to guide us safely and help us reconnect.

References:

Donald Rumsfeld (US Secretary of Defense, 12 Feb 2002)

Author of *Fire Country*. See also Yarnupings 2021: 3 p.19

Fire Country, p.145

SUMMER

Words by Karen Smith

Education Officer AHO

How wonderful is Summer. The Summer storms, the warm glow of sun on our skins and the Northerly/ *Buruwan* and Easterly / *Buruwee* winds. In Aboriginal Culture, Summer is a warm season changing to a hot season, beginning with fruiting plants and warm nights in cool breezes, periods of storms and rain and then the hot dry. Aboriginal people in Sydney would have experienced six seasons. These seasons changed in larger cycles sometimes producing only 4 or 5 seasons. This year the season cycle changed, summer plants like the Gymea lily, *Doryanthes excelsa*, have been unable to flower in some areas due to no hot dry season. Aboriginal people were able to watch their larger environment and skies, the bush, the waters and the creatures around them to know what was going to happen with the seasons.

The Bureau of Meteorology calls it La Niña. "The increased rainfall and cloudiness in the western Pacific associated with La Niña usually means above-average winter–spring rainfall for Australia, particularly across the east and north."

The six wettest winter–spring periods on record for eastern Australia occurred during La Niña years. In the Murray–Darling Basin, winter–spring rainfall averaged over all 18 La Niña events (including multi-year events) since 1900 was 22% higher than the long-term average, with the severe floods of 1955, 1988, 1998 and 2010 all associated with La Niña."

Reference:

Bureau of Meteorology. What is La Niña and how does it impact Australia? www.bom.gov.au

In the 1930's or early 1940's, on hot nights my grandmother would take her family to Freshwater or Curl Curl Beach to sleep. They would take their food and water and spend the hot nights curled up on the soft sand, catching any prevailing breeze.

Recently on a guided walk I met a woman whose mother would take their family to the beach to sleep. I was pleased to see the tradition had at least continued for one generation.

I would like nothing more than to be able to do this again but don't feel safe to sleep on the beach in our highly populated urban neighbourhood.

I remember visiting Broome in pre COVID times when travel was an easy decision. Cable Beach is where the ritzy hotels are and, unknown to the tourists in their luxury apartments at one end, some Aboriginal people sleep on the other end of the beach in the hinterland bush or on the soft sand. All they need is a blanket. They are waiting for buses or doctors' appointments, perhaps they have no home or just catching a night- time breeze.

Obviously in the Northern Beaches, and other areas of Sydney, Aboriginal people would have had permanent cool sandstone homes, *Gibba Gunya*, sometimes positioned to catch summer breezes and shelter from summer storms. They themselves may also have slept on the beach in the hot season. Perhaps night- time fishing occurred, and people gathered to eat in the cool of the evening breeze.

Below is the D'harawal calendar found on the Bureau of Meteorology site. The language used is from the D'harawal group who created the calendar.

Find out more information on this seasonal calendar and have a look at other areas of Australia by accessing http://www.bom.gov.au/iwk/

Larger version on page….

Burran	Marrai'gang	Burrugin	Wiritjiribin	Ngoonungi	Parra'dowee
Hot and dry	Wet becoming cool	Cold and frosty	**Cold and windy**	**Cool becoming warm**	**Warm and wet**
January-March	April-June	June-July	July-August	September-October	November-December
Male kangaroos aggressive	Quolls seeking mates	Echidna seeking mates	Lyrebird building mounds	Flying foxes appear	Summer heat starts
Meat forbidden	Lillypilly ripens	Burringoa flowering (*Eucalyptus tereticornis*)	Marrai'uo flowering (*Acacia floribunda*)	Ceremonial time	Stable weather
Weetjellan (*Acacia implexa*) Blooming		Shellfish forbidden	Boo'kerrikin flowering (*Acacia decurrens*)	Miwa Gawaian in flower (*Telopea speciosissima*)	






Lycett 1817. Please remember that this painting is subjective. Aboriginal people did not wear cloth and it is telling a story of shelter in *Gibba Gunyahs* away from the storm. Can you see the lightening splitting the sky?

Artist: Watling

A NSWales native struck fish by moonlight while his wife paddles him along with a fire in the canoe ready to broil the fish as caught.

Seasonal Fishing

Fishing on the coast and immediate estuaries was seasonal with different fish

Bass runs November to April

Blue Trevally all year with short peaks throughout the year

Bonito December to April

Flathead April May to September October

Flounder April May to September October

Perch peak season November to February - March

Pigfish peak season November to March

Pink Snapper June to September

Salmon Peak season November December

Silver Trevally Peak Season May to September

Tailor November to February

Seasons may differ for inland estuary fish

Summer Language Words

Sea	Garrigarrang
Sun	Guwing
Lightening	Mungi
Thunder	Murungal
Rain	Walan
Daylight	Darrabarra
Heavy Rain -Rain Pour	Walan Yilaba

WORDS COMPILED BY KAREN SMITH

La Niña in Ku-ring-gai Council

by Phil Hunt

It has been Ku-ring-gai Municipal Council's (KMC) turn for a full site monitor and report update over the last six months. KMC has some wonderful reserves, with bushland, estuarine and river corridors providing different and spectacular scenery. With over 100 registered sites in the local government area (LGA) it is always a good challenge to try to get to all of the accessible sites. This year's extra moisture from the La Niña weather system made things a bit more interesting. Extra plant growth and more rainy days sometimes made it feel more like an aquatic rather than terrestrial experience!

KU-RING-GAI GALLERY

KU-RING-GAI GALLERY

IMAGES BY PHIL HUNT

Preparing and Reacting to Floods

We were about to send the newsletter out when the streets turned to water. The stories and images of flooding elsewhere changed to first hand. On 8th March 2022 it was our turn for the big wet.

From Karen:

> *Had to go to Manly – Raglan Street flooded, Central Avenue knee deep, post office underwater knee deep*
> *Took me hour to get home – Roundabout closed, Pittwater Road closed, Beachfront closed*
> *I final got to Rowe Street but the bottom was waist deep. I had to leave car on high grass verge and wade through water to get home. They opened other end of Waine Steet – so waded through water to get car and bring home*
> *Very stressful and so extra ordinary*

From Susan:

> *Hello from soggy Collaroy!*
> *What an afternoon. Our street got flooded. In fact, all the streets at Collaroy got flooded. There was great street spirit as everyone swept and bucketed water to curb the rising waters.*
> *We had to pick the kids up from school early as all around the school was flooded. School is cancelled today as it was in the evacuation zone. Walking on the footpath along Pittwater Road was almost knee high in some places.*
> *Some friends took 5 ½ hours to get from Manly to Collaroy.*

Elsewhere in the AHO partner Councils region, Roseville Bridge, high above Middle Creek, couldn't drain fast enough from the deluge and flooded *on the bridge*.

Stories of flooding are not new, of course. Those of the First Fleet saw the signs of flooding on their first visits to Dyarubbin (the Hawkesbury-Nepean River) in 1789. Governor Phillip reported:

> *The river, which I named Hawkesbury, after the Lord Hawkesbury, is laid down in the chart from an eye-*

Collaroy

Manly

Collaroy

Preparing and Reacting to Floods...continued

> *sketch made by Captain Hunter, as we rowed up it. The breadth of this river is from three hundred to eight hundred feet, and it appears from the soundings we had to be navigable for the largest merchant ships to the foot of Richmond Hill; but as the water near the head of the river sometimes rises, after heavy rains, thiry feet above its common level, it would not be safe for ships to go far up;*[1]

The power and strength of recent floods made an impression on Captain John Hunter too:

> *[W]here any of these trees have been strong enough to resist in* <u>any degree</u> *the strength of the torrent … we saw in the clifts of the branches of such trees vast quantities of large logs which had been hurried down by the force of the waters and lodged thirty to forty [9-12m] above the common level of the river. And at that height there were great quantities of grass, reeds, and other such weeds as are washed from the banks of the river, hanging to the branches.*[2]

Ten years later Hunter reported that Aboriginal people warned of upcoming floods in 1799, and spoke of earlier floods, including one around 1780 where *"people climbed the tallest trees to escape but were swept out of the branches by the deluge."*[3] On top of the fires, floods and COVID since 2019, we know the lessons of the past need to be augmented with the lessons of the present. As one commentator remarked, it's not Climate Change, the climate has already changed. Unprecedented should now be the Unfortunately Expected. Plan for the worst, hope for the best.

Governor Arthur Phillip to Lord Sydney, 13 February 1790, in *Historical Records of Australia*, series I, vol.-, pp. 155-6.
Captain John Hunter, in Grace Karskens, 2020, *People of the River Lost Worlds of Early Australia*, p259-260
Grace Karskens, 2020, *People of the River Lost Worlds of Early Australia*, p.27

Eroded midden

Manly

Flood waters

Volunteer News

Meet Christine Asmar

In 2020 I was given the exciting opportunity to contribute, as an AHO site monitor, to the preservation of Sydney's precious heritage of Aboriginal sites. Some of the sites are truly wonderful, and I enter them with a sense of privilege and awe.

As an academic, my field of research - in collaboration with an Aboriginal colleague - was Indigenous issues in higher education. In Melbourne I coordinated a Summer School in research skills for Indigenous PhD students. Retiring back to Sydney, I found myself only metres away from Tranby Aboriginal College in Glebe, who kindly welcomed me as a volunteer.

On the outdoor scene, my husband and I often search out Aboriginal rock art in Sydney's bushland, guided by Stanbury & Clegg's classic book, *Aboriginal Rock Engravings*. Near a site in Terrey Hills, we saw a notice calling for Bushcare volunteers, so we signed up. That work is mostly pulling out weeds, but when another Bushcare member learnt of my interest in Aboriginal sites she put me in touch with the AHO, who trained us in monitoring skills. I feel the least we can do, as whitefellas, is to respect and conserve the cultural heritage of Aboriginal Australians. I'm grateful to the AHO for this opportunity. And now I can identify weeds that threaten the sites, so it has all come together!

Thank You, Ian Rannard

How I became an Aboriginal Heritage Site Monitor

It was almost by chance. In the early 2000's I had made myself the Honorary Historian of a large residential development being built in the valley of the upper part of Sailors Bay Creek in south eastern Willoughby. This mainly involved persuading the developer the site was not 'waste land' as described in some of the early proposal papers, but a place where people, mainly families, had lived and worked for well over a hundred years, and that this should be remembered in the naming of any new streets and the preservation of the few pieces of evidence of their activities.

I even suggested local Aboriginals may have passed through the site as anecdotal history said the old track down Sailors Bay Creek was made by Aboriginals travelling from their middens on the Bay's foreshore to hunting grounds on the forested Willoughby plateau. So one day while out on a morning walk I called in to the AHO office, which was then located in Northbridge, to ask if they had an evidence that this was so. In short they hadn't but asked if I was interested in joining the Aboriginal Heritage Site monitoring programme. I was obviously in the right frame of mind to immediately see the value and interest in the proposal. I joined up and attended the next available training course before setting out on the 19th November 2010 to find the rock shelter.

Descriptions of the site and some blurry photos on the AHO Re-Recording Form gave me a pretty good idea of what I could expect to see. Even the name given by the archaeologists 'Red Gum Crevice Cave' was descriptive. What I found was a place, because of its relative isolation, suspended in time. A fire scar was clearly visible on the sandy floor. Seafood shells were exposed at the drip line. It was as though the last Aboriginal people who had lived there simply walked away only a few years before. This clearly wasn't the case and my excitement of the discovery was soon replaced by sadness at the thought the people and families who had lived there over tens of thousands of years. What were their names? Who were their children? What route did they use to get to the foreshore? How did they cope with the European intruders after 1788?

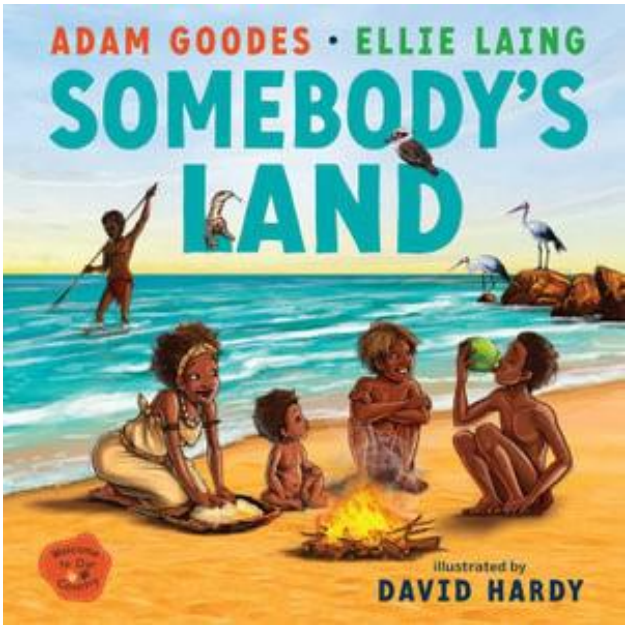
The spirit of this shelter is not easily conveyed by words. It is strong and I experienced it on every subsequent visit. I hope few people visit the site and that the shelter remains undisturbed and protected forever.

Later I monitored four other shelters. It was a privilege to do so and I will be always grateful to the AHO for giving me the opportunity to monitor them.

Book Review

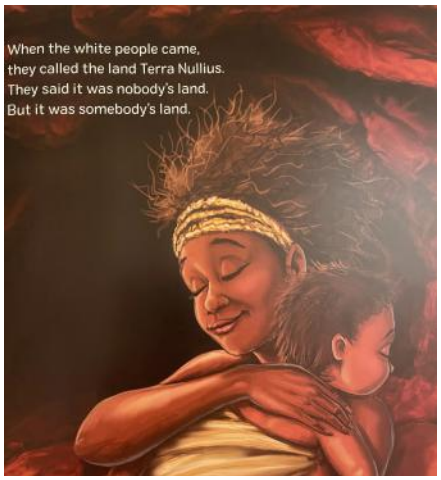
Somebody's Land

Adam Goodes & Ellie Laing



Oh my gosh! Such a beautiful book! My kids and I love this book so much! We read it a lot. A simple, gentle way to explain that it wasn't Terra Nullius, "it was somebody's land".

Let me tell you how it goes in my home. We all sit down together, eagerly looking for our favourite page. (This one is mine.)



Then we all agree we should start from the beginning. We talk about how the families are together and the kids are playing and people are hunting and fishing. We talk about foods that you could eat from the land. We talk about the homes they created and the stories that were told. We talk about how people have always been story tellers and how special it is to share our stories. We talk about the stars and the moon, then have to go and check what the moon looks like that night.

Then we come to the pages when the white people arrived when, "they called the land Terra Nullius." My littlest says, 'but it wasn't empty, Mum. There were people here. The Aboriginal people still live here?" and we have chats about that too.

Grab a copy of this book for the kids you know—including the big kids. It is a beautiful way to discuss our past and our present. I've reckon that reading this book with your kids, grandkids, neighbours kids… whomever… allows them to talk about what they know about Aboriginal people and their culture. Reading 'Somebody's Land' gives kids an opportunity to discuss ideas and ask questions which help to form a more inclusive, open and educated next generation.

This book helps to teach everybody that ;

"It was Aboriginal Land.

It is Aboriginal Land.

And always will be Aboriginal Land."

Review by Susan Whitby.

D'harawal Calendar

Burran	Marrai'gang	Burrugin	Wiritjiribin	Ngoonungi	Parra'dowee
Hot and dry	Wet becoming cool	Cold and frosty	Cold and windy	Cool becoming warm	Warm and wet
January-March	April-June	June-July	July-August	September-October	November-December
Male kangaroos aggressive	Quolls seeking mates	Echidna seeking mates	Lyrebird building mounds	Flying foxes appear	Summer heat starts
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			Gentle spring rains		






Pig Face—*Carpobrotus glaucescens*

Bright green chunky leaves. Hot pink flowers. This plant grows in the sand dunes and coastal cliffs along east coast Australia.

Every bit of this plant can be used. The leaves can be used like aloe vera to soothe a sting or burn. The leaves can also be eaten both raw and cooked. The fruit, when ready to eat, turns a deep red and is not dissimilar to the texture of a strawberry. If you want to add pigface to your meals, just give it a wash before you eat it. Pig face combines well with mushrooms, eggs and seafood. Pig face is really important to the coastal environment. So if you decide to try some, please make sure you leave enough for the animals and insects who need it.

http://tasteaustralia.biz/bushfood/pig-face/

https://www.milkwood.net/2014/01/30/snacks-for-salty-sea-dogs-foraging-pigface/

http://www.owlet.com.au/2017/02/pigface-jam.html

Bunya Nut Damper

By Karen Smith

Beware Summer is the season of Bunya Nuts

I was given one to use and spent a long time searching on how to use. I popped the Bunya Nut on the scales, a small one at 4 ½ kilos. They can be as larger than 10 kilos. So do not stand under Bunya Nut trees when they are dropping these large cones.

The first directions I read said you need an axe, a vice and a pair of tree loppers. This is just for breaking the cone open and extracting the nuts. Having none of these. I pondered the problem for so long the cone dried out and I was able to break it open by dropping on concrete and I got over 40 nuts in their husk. I had read boiling was the best way to cook them so I did this, hoping the husk would open. Three boils later I took to them with a pair of garden shears and much later I gave up having released 3 cups of nuts. I looked for a Damper Recipe in Mark Olive's Outback Café A Taste of Australia. I found Flash Damper to which I added Bunya Nut.

Dinner Size Damper with Bunya Nut

2 cups Self raising Flour

2 cups Plain Flour

2 cups Bunya Nuts

50 g Butter

1 cup milk

1cup water

sea parsley

dried saltbush

salt pepper

Preheat oven 180 Celsius
Combine flours and all herbs in a bowl
Add Bunyah nut
Melt butter - don't burn- add milk and water- don't boil
Add slowly to flour mixture
Turn out on floured board and Knead lightly
Roll the damper into dinner size rolls – place on tray
Brush with milk

Bake for 20 mins or until Golden brown
Makes 6- 8 rolls

Slightly Lumpy dinner rolls due to Bunyah Nuts and use of some Rice Flour. Mark Olive's rolls without Buyah nuts and rice flour are much smoother