The 2010 Katandra Open Season is proving to be very successful with a good number of visitors. Early in the season the colour in the bush was dominated by the *Eriostemon australasius* (Pink Waxflower) and *Acacia ulicifolia* (Prickly Moses) while the purples of *Boronia pinnata* and *Boronia mollis* and the yellows of *Pultenaea flexilis*, *Platylobium formosum* and *Gompholobium grandiflorum* have been dominant of late. Other plants that have put on a good show include *Epacris longiflora*, *Woollsia pungens*, *Grevillea sericea*, *Pimelea linifolia*, *Ricinocarpos pinifolius* (Wedding Bush) and *Lasiopetalum ferrugineum* (Brown Velvet Bush or Rusty Petals).

The importance of preserving areas of native bushland such as Katandra has been highlighted a number of times recently. A female Eastern Pygmy Possum was recently released into the relatively safe surrounds of the Sanctuary after it had been nursed back to health following an attack by a domestic cat. The recent launch of the Powerful Owl Project was a result of the discovery of a nesting pair of Powerful Owls nearby in Bayview. A number of recent sightings of individuals within Katandra have been passed on to the project. No doubt the Sanctuary is part of their regular territory. A recent visit by members of the Australian Native Orchid Society resulted in the discovery of another species of native ground orchid that had not previously been recorded in the Sanctuary. It is exciting to know that floral species are still being identified within Katandra, as it reinforces the fact that there is still a lot we don’t know about our local native bushland. See inside for more information about these three events.

We look forward to seeing you at Katandra’s Christmas party on Sunday 5th December. Yes it is that time of year already!

David Seymour
Vale Bill Conroy – “the Tick Man”

The community lost a committed and inspirational environmentalist when Bill Conroy passed away recently. Bill, often referred to as “the tick man”, did a lot of research at Katandra. At one time discussions took place to set up a tick research centre at Katandra following the Sydney Olympics. While this did not eventuate, Bill was a frequent visitor and strong supporter of the Sanctuary. His love of being in the bush at Katandra was mentioned in the eulogy at his funeral. But even when he did not come to the Sanctuary, a number of Katandra’s ticks were delivered to the foam esky beside Bill’s letterbox in Avalon for his research.

Our thoughts and best wishes go to his family.

Eastern Pygmy-Possum (Cercartetus nanus)

A female Eastern Pygmy Possum (Cercartetus nanus) was recently released into Katandra after being nurse back to health following an attack by a domestic cat. When found and passed on to WIRES, she was in very poor health, injured, covered in ticks and weighed just 11 grams. After reaching a healthy weight of 21 grams, the temporary hollow log nest used by her foster carers was attached to a tree in the hope that she will find a safe home in the Sanctuary. She was unable to be released in the area where she was found due to the busy roads and the presence of a large number of cats.

During warmer months, the Pygmy Possums accumulate body fat and the base of the tail becomes swollen and carrot-shaped. In winter, when food is scarce, it spends time in a state of “torpor”. Its small size means that the animal has, in comparison to its body volume, a lot of skin through which to lose body heat (i.e., a high surface area to volume ratio). Torpor is a means by which an animal is able to reduce energy expenditure by lowering its metabolism. The possum curls up in a tight ball with its ears covering its eyes and its nose tucked into its chest. In this state the pygmy possums body temperature drops to almost the same temperature as the air around it, thus conserving energy. Unlike true hibernation, torpidity generally only lasts for a few days at a time.

The breeding season for the Eastern Pygmy Possum is from August to April and two litters are usually raised in a year. The Eastern Pygmy-
Possum is listed as a vulnerable species as it is likely to become endangered unless the circumstances and factors threatening its survival or evolutionary development cease to operate. These factors include land clearing that results in habitat loss, loss of nest sites and fragmentation and predation by foxes and cats.

The Ant Orchid
(Chiloglottis formicifera)

The Ant Orchid (Chiloglottis formicifera) is indigenous to Australia and New Zealand, however it is thought to be extinct in New Zealand due to over-collection. Like a lot of Australia’s ground orchids, the presence of the Ant Orchid is often missed amongst the leaf litter and grasses of its habitat. It usually grows in a colony of small, scattered plants with two broad oblong leaves, bearing a spike 45 to 60 mm high supporting one small green flower with brown or purplish markings and other exquisitely detailed features during September to October. The flower is pollinated by male Thynnine Wasps.

While the great majority of animal pollinated plants secure the services of their animal pollinators by providing food rewards such as nectar or pollen, some plants achieve pollination by deception. Many orchids lure animal pollinators to the flower by false promises of food, but do not provide any. They are ‘food deceptive’, falsely advertising the presence of food by bright colours and sweet scents.

The Chiloglottis genus of orchids is amongst a group of orchids in which pollination is achieved by sexual deception. In these cases, male insects are sexually attracted to the flower by a floral scent that imitates the sex pheromone used by the wingless female Thynnines to attract a mate. The flower even has the appearance of a female wasp to further add to the deception. Pollination occurs when the male attempts copulation with the flower. In this way, pollination is achieved without the production of costly floral rewards. Fascinatingly, each orchid species tends to attract only a single pollinator species. Such strong specificity suggests the possibility that sexually deceptive orchids have co-evolved with their pollinators.

These photos were taken in Katandra after the orchid was discovered in the Sanctuary during a recent visit by members of the Australian Native Orchid Society.

The Powerful Owl Project

The Powerful Owl Project has been launched to track threatened powerful owls on the northern beaches. Initiated by Bayview resident Kristen Hardy, the project aims to compile as much information as possible about powerful owls on the northern beaches, including sightings, photographs, injuries or fatalities. The public are asked to help by reporting any sightings and sending any photographs with the date, location and time of sighting to: p.owlproj@gmail.com
Katandra website:
www.katandra.org

KATANDRA BUSHLAND SANCTUARY
Foley’s Hill, Lane Cove Rd, Ingleside NSW
Department of Lands Reserve No 86487
Founder: the late Harold Alfred Seymour
Managed by Katandra Bushland Sanctuary Trust.
Phone: 9979 8077

OPEN: Every Sunday: July, August, September, October
HOURS: 10 am — 4 pm
ADMISSION: $3 donation

KATANDRA BUSHLAND SANCTUARY TRUST
PO Box 365 Mona Vale NSW 1660

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Vice-President: David James
Secretary: (acting) David Seymour
Treasurer: Jenny Talbot
Minutes Secretary: Lachlan Laurie
Maintenance co-ordinator: Tim Thurston
Bushland News Editor: Lyn McDougall

(Cover Design by the late Walter Cunningham)

Enquiries: phone 9979 8077

DIARY DATES 2010

CHRISTMAS PARTY
Sunday 5th December, 4.30 pm

Enjoy a summer evening under the trees with Friends of Katandra. Cold meats, salad and drinks will be provided. Please bring a plate of savouries to share before the meal’ or cakes / slices for “afters”.

SANCTUARY MAINTENANCE 2010
(3rd Sunday March–November)
- 9 am Sunday 16 May
- 9 am Sunday 20 June
- 9 am Sunday 18 July
- 9 am Sunday 19 September
- 9 am Sunday 17 October
- 9 am Sunday 21 November

PUBLIC OPEN DAYS 2010
Each Sunday of July–October
10 am – 4 pm

Katandra Bushland Sanctuary Trust
PO Box 365 Mona Vale NSW 1660