

# He was nature's wonder



## Kooloonbung Reflections

In memory of ROYAL PULLEN

THIS week's column is written at a time of great sadness.

The usual author Royal Pullen passed away on the weekend, after a week in Port Macquarie Base Hospital surrounded by loving family and close friends.

Most residents would have read one of Royal's articles at one time or another. Some keen readers never missed his weekly Reflections.

His stories of the Kooloonbung environment, the history, the plants and the animals have been a regular feature in the Port Macquarie Express for more than 10 years.

The Friends of Kooloonbung were very lucky to have met Royal and Val when they retired to Port in 1990. Both became active members of the group.

They were regularly visiting the park; involved with working bees, meetings and tour guiding. After Val's passing, Royal was still a regular at working bees, often visiting Val's commemorative seat on the park's eastern path while on site.

In the past few years a stroke and Royal's 80-year-old body restricted his duties down at the Kooloonbung, but not his enthusiasm. Unable to participate in working bees, he still wrote his weekly articles and advised on many draft environment plans of management and proposed development plans for our region.

Since retiring from the CSIRO, Royal utilised his scientific skills well on the Mid-North Coast.

He sat on the Estuary Management Committee and the Weeds Advisory Committee and always reported findings back to group meetings.

He was the publicity

officer with different groups, and often chaired meetings in the absence of the group president. Only a few months ago he proof-read the botanic naming and text for the new signs in the Kooloonbung arboretum.

His botanical knowledge was remarkable. Not many plants could flower or fruit down at the Kooloonbung without Royal noticing and writing about it the following week.

It also made him a valuable member of the Australian Plants Society, where he was always a wealth of knowledge during native plant identification and discussions at monthly meetings.

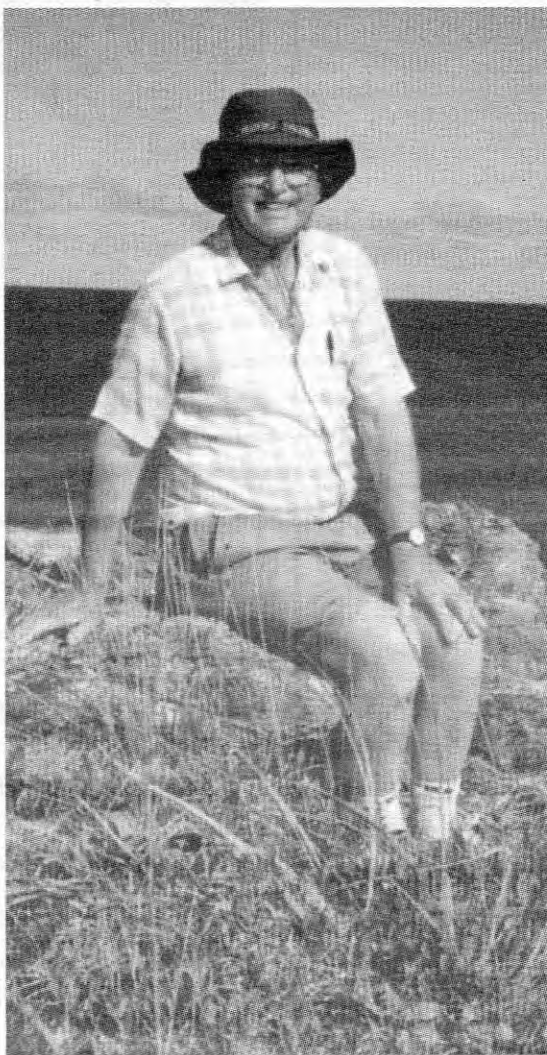
Schoolkids from all over the state have been privy to Royal's guided tours of the park over the years. There was always a lot of information shared on all ecosystems, be it on the flora or the fauna. All the senses were aroused.

There was the smelling of sweet nectar in native flowers, looking for the illusive koalas, feeling the roughness of sandpaper fig leaves, listening to numerous bird calls, and licking salty mangrove leaves.

Royal was a member of several local "green" groups. He would regularly attend meetings and outings with the Australian Plants Society and National Parks Association.

Many elderly ladies were grateful to Royal, who often drove them to evening meetings and, on longer day journeys, to bushwalking destinations – merely in return for a cup of tea and biscuit.

Anyone present at one of Royal's slide nights would be dazzled with his tales of time spent in



■ Royal Pullen: A champion of the environment.

Papua, nearly 50 years ago. His adventures would take him away from his wife and young family for months at a time.

It was always hard to believe that the quietly spoken gentleman before us was the same man who spent a lot of time trekking around primitive rainforests, surveying the unmapped landscape, identifying new plants and insects; all while meeting villagers who had never seen a white man before – or avoiding the cannibal tribes.

Royal will be missed by all those who knew him at the Friends of Kooloonbung Creek Nature Park, the National Parks Association, and the Australian Plants Society.

Members' condolences go to his daughter and three sons, and to all his dear friends in Port Macquarie.

JANET WATSON