



Dr David Robinson (far right) with Dr Stuart Crombie (centre) and Don Devlin from Dwellingup SID, discussing the management and effects of fire in the jarrah forest. The blackboys in the background have 'skirts' of dead leaves reaching almost to the ground, a legacy of nearly 60 years without fire.

Photo by Robyn Bowles.

Doctor in search of a wild Irish gum

DWELLINGUP Science and Information Centre recently hosted a visit from Dr David Robinson, a senior Irish horticulturalist and journalist.

Dr Robinson has more than 40 years' experience in using chemicals for weed control in crops and gardens.

Although retired, he still lectures in urban horticulture to students in Berlin and in Ireland.

His two-month visit to WA was based at the University of Western Australia, and included a seminar on the principles and practice of chemical weed control, which he delivered at Kings Park.

A highlight of Dr Robinson's trip was a visit to Dwellingup, where he saw an area of jarrah forest that had not been burnt for nearly 60 years (see picture) and to the George Block arboretum with its 290 plots containing more than 80 species of eucalypts.

He was also shown measures taken by CALM to control *Phytophthora cinnamomi* (the organism that causes dieback disease), the Disease Risk Area Forest Quarantine System and a split-phase logging operation.

Lunch was at the Long Gully railway bridge over the Hotham River. This bridge, originally built to carry the timber

by Robyn Bowles

tramways from Banksiadale and Dwellingup into the jarrah forests of the Harvey area, has recently been restored by the Harvey Shire Council.

Dr Robinson was much impressed by what he called "Western Australia's great good fortune" in having so much forest still in a near-natural state with so little pressure (compared with Europe) from tourism, timber harvesting and so on.

An additional purpose of Dr Robinson's visit to WA was to develop a cold-hardy flowering eucalypt for European horticulture, by hybridising the red flowering, but cold sensitive, *Eucalyptus ficifolia* with a more cold-tolerant species.

He has already grown several species of eucalypts in his 4.6-hectare home garden near Dublin.

Dr Robinson's home is on a peninsula in the Irish Sea, where it benefits from the warming effect of the Mexican Gulf Stream. This natural green-house enables Dr Robinson to grow several species of eucalypts and other warm-climate species in these generally colder climes.

A blackboy (*Xanthorrhoea preissii*) is a prized recent addition to his garden, and the investment of several thousand dollars in this one plant is protected by a tin roof to keep it from being damaged by winter snows and ice!

The garden is classified as a National Plant Heritage Garden by the Irish Government, and was featured on the St Patrick's Day special on Burke's Backyard, screened last year on Channel Nine.

MOST of us are great at making excuses for not exercising. We are so good at it, in fact, that excuses are one of the biggest reasons many of us do not get enough exercise. So what's your excuse?

"I don't have time to exercise."

This is the most common excuse for not exercising, yet surveys have shown that people who do not exercise have as much leisure time as physically active people. It is true that we are all caught up with time restraints and deadlines that never seem to let up. That is why it is important to make time for, and schedule exercise. 'Freetime' to exercise will never materialise.

The lack-of-time excuse may actually hide a more