HER Story is about Mallee botanist Hilda Eileen Ramsay, (1886-1961).

I have been retracing the steps of Hilda Eileen Ramsay’s pioneering work in the unique and complex eco-system of the Mallee in northwestern Victoria, a landscape that has evolved over millions of years.

Ramsay’s botanical collection created from the many specimens she collected on field trips in the region in the 1950s is now held at the National Herbarium of Victoria.

Ramsay’s field notes and nature writing both reveal a palpable sense of her intimate relationship with nature; she sometimes transcends the scientific, offering a glimpse into the realm where the sheer beauty of nature lifts the soul. Or, as French philosopher, Simone Weil writes, “attention taken to its highest degree, is the same thing as prayer.”

In the six decades since Ramsay’s death, her passion for the mysteries of the flora of the Mallee carries its own invaluable legacy and continues to inspire others, in botany, land conservation and regenerative agriculture. New plants are still to be found, some almost pre-dating time itself.