

August 2004

Friends of Warrandyte State Park



Newsletter

Friends of Warrandyte State Park (FOWSP) Inc. P O Box 220 Warrandyte 3113

Welcome to our August missive, put together (roughly stitched?) by Joan with help from friends Julie Bishop and Lee Speedy. Hope nobody gets indigestion from tasting too many printing styles, fonts etc.

We hope you've been enjoying the rain which surely must have soaked into the driest of soils.

Pat and Mike have returned from their idyll in the tropics which you can read about on page 7.

Pat is looking forward to returning to the editorship of our highly regarded publication and I know she greatly appreciates lots of contributions being delivered to her letter-box. So don't hold back folks, keep pen and paper handy, and when anything even vaguely relevant enters your mind transfer it to

paper (or that electronicky stuff) and get it moving. Remember our motto, "keep pat happy!"

Two bits of good news this month:

- 1) On your behalf and with help from Marg Burke, Pat and Mike applied for and were granted over \$4000 dollars worth of computer gear. Included is a snazzy digital camera which will be great for newsletter articles as well as botanical snaps and more serious research projects.
- 2) We have organized a Sunday activity with ranger Dave (van Bockel). This gives everybody the opportunity to contribute to post-fire recovery at the Harris Gully Rd. burn site. Please see page 8.

Happy reading, Joan

Sunday 18th July - Stane Brae

By Ben Gottlieb

Over 60 people, family members, friends, park staff from Warrandyte and Uluru, previous employer(s) and members of Fowsp attended a memorial event for Matt LeDuc at Stane Brae on Sunday 18th of July. Matt, a former head ranger at Warrandyte, had more recently been at Uluru, Mootwingee and Portland.

The grass was green, the Yarra water flowed freely, the sun shone, food was eaten, drink was drunk and people spoke. Short 'addresses' were given by Andy Nixon, Don Saunders, Steve Anderson, David van Bockel, Joan Macmahon and Ben Gottlieb.

The memorial seat was made of reclaimed red gum from Portland and reclaimed yarra gum from Warburton, all bolted together with reclaimed S.E.C. bolts. The seat is beautifully engraved with an appropriate inscription.

The people present, the place and the praise were all fitting tributes to one of our best.



Cecelia and Ethan Le Duc

Welcome Back Andy

Our head ranger Andy Nixon has recently returned from a 6 month secondment so I thought it a good idea to introduce him to the many folk who've recently joined us.

He's been in charge at Warrandyte for 7 years now and is very pleased to be back. In his early days he tried quite a variety of jobs - in mining camps, boat building, hydrography, recreation and youth work. He's been nearly 20 years in the park service and has worked all over Victoria - in the Dandenongs, Mornington Peninsula, The Lakes, Cathedral Range and for the longest period (8 years) in the Alpine National Park where his main focus was on Mt Buffalo. Now the family thing - he's married to Lesley who's recently rejoined the police force and they have two children, Jane in year 7 and Daniel in year 11.

The secondment came about as a result of the recent massive bushfires in our alpine areas. Andy's many years of experience up there made him a 'must have' for the repair operation. Based in Woori Yallock, he travelled up to alpine areas every couple of weeks. He was mainly focused on the manmade side of things - restoration of bridges, buildings, signs and co.

One special project was the remarking of the Australian alps walking track - it starts in Walhalla and the Victorian section finishes on the Murray near Tom Groggin (only about 10 more kms to Kosciuszko!).

His last 6 weeks were spent focussing on the cultural values area. Exciting things have

been discovered post fires. Extensive archaeological surveying was done last summer and many hundreds of new aboriginal sites located (More than 330 in less than 10% of the burnt area!) These discoveries have lead to a big shift in our understanding of the way aboriginal people occupied the alps. Instead of sporadic visits it looks as if much larger numbers of people were present for much longer periods. Andy's job was to liase with members of the local aboriginal communities and to organise rapid protection for the sites.

His passions? He loves working in a field that contributes so directly to earth repair and is really committed to improving the professionalism of rangers - hence his links with rangers world-wide through his involvement with the International Rangers Federation.

He also loves both sorts of skiing, bushwalking and rock climbing (favourite climbs are at Mt. Arapiles.)

Did you know that ranger staff based at our park depot have responsibility for many other reserves and bit's 'n pieces of crown land? Some of these very special and precious places include Boomers, One Tree Hill, Rifle Range, Dodds St., Peter Franke, Long Gully, Queenstown Reserves, Watson's Creek and Sugarloaf Reservoir Park. The latest addition to the list is The Hochkins Ridge Flora Reserve in North Croydon, until recently under the wing of the city of Maroondah. You might like to check out its floral treasures next time you're over that way. (melways 37 K7)

Good news re Gardening Guides

Thank you to Jan Smids who has taken over from Joan the distribution of our popular gardening guides. The Blue Bicycle Café in Yarra St has changed hands and the new owners are very happy to continue selling them for us. Check out the coffee and cakes and for a hot day the ice cream! And thanks to an enthusiastic neighbour of mine, Trish Karadimos, IGA are also stocking them. Jan has been busy and now Scandles and the South Warrandyte Store have joined our growing list of outlets. We do have Warrandyte pretty well covered! But with over a thousand copies left to sell we would love outlets in Wonga Park and Park Orchards. If you can help arrange that please give Jan a ring on 9844 1002.

Thursday 15 July - Norman Reserve

Saw a group of fowspians heading for the Bradleys Lane Peninsula. There was Marie, Lyn, Ray, Ken, Roseanne and myself. As well we had one of our new rangers Jodie with us - just happened to bump into her at the depot and she had a bit of time to spare. Lovely! It's not often these days we manage to have a ranger along. Actually we were spoilt today as one of our former rangers, Steve Anderson also appeared! He was down from Uluru, had dropped into the depot to visit old mates, heard about our planting session and wanted to help. An additional treat was the four local residents who turned up keen to give us a hand. We started down in the Fern Site, which is a lovely shaded area on the right as you enter the car park. It's had a heap of work over recent years and now that the pittosporum forest's been culled the muttonwoods, (shiny, almost tropical looking shrubs), are growing in abundance. The soil was moist and easy to dig so we soon had about thirty-five ferns and a dozen or more tassle sedges well bedded in.

We moved back up to the edge of the carpark to plant out about sixty grasses and shrubs. This area has also had lots of t.l.c., mainly from Pat Coupar in her capacity as park spraying contractor. She has worked hard to keep that troublesome grassy weed, panic veldt, at bay. We put in snowy daisy bush, silver wattles, prickly moses wattle, lots of that strap-leafed plant lomandra (for the butterflies) and the very robust purple-sheath tussock grass. This wonderful plant develops into a large clump and if you encourage it to spread can take over quite an area and keep those weeds at bay. With so many hands on deck we were finished by 11.30 - well pleased with ourselves! Thanks folks.

P.S For those with a special interest in ferns we were planting ground-fern, maidenhair, rasp-fern and tender brake.

Wet Wonderful Day at Warrandyte Market

Great fun was had at our August market stall, despite being overcast and rainy, the market was quite busy. Getting bigger and bigger! Josh had provided heaps of plants for sale, mainly magnificent pots of greenhood orchids. Even though they were \$10 each, they walked away!! Also quite a few members came for their free plant - don't forget to come and get yours on Saturday 4th September.

Committee Stuff

We would like to thank Sue Shepherd for being our Assistant Treasurer for over a year. Sue and Ray made a great team, however Sue has now stepped down. The committee wish to welcome Dick Thomson as her replacement. May he enjoy his new role.

What animals are in our Park?

Cam Beardsell has done a great job, updating our list of vertebrates for the park. It's got birds, mammals, reptiles, frogs and fish. It includes all the introduced species, a code for conservation status, distribution & status and frequency of occurrence (phew!). If you'd like a copy, they're available at the Ranger's office.

Great result from Gold Memorial Drive/ Anderson's Creek fire

Since the fire last November, there's been a marked change for the good in the ratio of weeds vs. indigenous plants. Check out the fabulous germination of tussock grasses, silver wattles, blackwoods and lots of other goodies. Pelargoniums and geraniums have also thrived. As well late last May on a Thursday morning a bunch of FOWSPians and a couple of blokes from Indigenous Design planted approx. 2000 purple-sheathed tussock grasses, mostly close by the road. A fabulous morning's work - helped by the fact that all the plants came as divots rather than in tubes - so much easier to put in!

I Spy

Jodie In July

Jodie Godfrey was making herself known in her first week as a ranger at WSP. She has completed a science degree at Monash (mainly zoology) and has worked with 'Parks' for the last 4-5 years. We are sharing her half and half with Westerfolds!

July Jazz

Helping at the Nursery, Mark Shepherd was pricking out *Grevillea rosmarinifolia*s. Ex-Eltham College, he is currently in his second year at Deakin, doing an Environmental Management course. After next year, Mark will be looking for a job, hopefully in revegetation! The Jazz Connection? He plays a double bass, generally jazz.

Cuff Clarified

The indecipherable word in last month's I Spy (i.e. ca???) was meant to be cuff.

Ethanol Ethics

"And expanding sugar production on a promise of a bio-fuelled future is unlikely to receive much public support, given perceptions of sugar as an industry that has resulted in widespread clearing of the wet tropics, and environmental damage to rivers, mangroves and the Great Barrier Reef". (Editorial, The Canberra Times, 2004).

Quoted from an article in ECOS, Apr-Jun 2004, "Ethanol, what's it all about?" Steve Davidson.

Caring Cars (Ibid above)

"If you are seriously looking to help the environment, you could just buy a smaller car and drive it around a bit slower".

David Kimble, Environmentalist 2002.

Notice Board Noticed

Justin Welander and Brian Phefley were maintaining a presence at the Depot on July 23rd, when I Spy arrived looking for Andy. The notice-board headed "Staff Movements" listed Andy, Cam, Dave, Justin, Brian, Colin, Kay, Conrad, Jodie and "Josh".

Pipe Piercer

Who was the FOWSP member who drove several steel posts into the ground (at home) piercing an "aggie" pipe in several places, and didn't feel the difference and had to get a plumber to replace the pipes. Methinks his name will definitely NOT appear in Smokey Joes column.

Cuppa Corner

The nursery potting area has a new arrangement for morning tea facilities for volunteers. A small table/bench, urn and a neat self-contained set of shelves. Well done.

Cypress Supports

The large nursery shade have has fifteen new "Horricks Cypress F7" posts, better supporting the roof rafters. All perfectly vertical and well-bedded in the ground. A good job.

Manningham Management

Seen on the Depot public office bench, a copy of the Manningham Land Management Guide, with photos of Alan Noy, Kate Sutherland, our own Cathy Willis and Josh Revell. It includes many photos of frogs, birds, flowers, foxes and horses, also lots of printed matter to read. Look at page 76, for the names of other known contributors.

Flora and Fauna

Did you know that the Victorian State Emblems are:

Leadbeater's Possum, Helmeted Honeyeater, Common (Pink) Heath and the Weedy Seadragon. Yes? And there are some bookmarks featuring these, available on the WSP depot office bench. They are put out by Information Victoria (1300 366 356).

Cryptic Captions

On the Nursery Blackboard, many captions are hand-chalked. Fascinating things like education, product development, market, customer service, ferns, orchids, rare species, garden beds, PV, plantings, walks, Thursdays etc. What does this all mean? Is it for a cryptic crossword??

FOWSP THURSDAY PROGRAM

We meet for propagation and other nursery activities every Thursday morning at 10.00am at the Warrandyte State Park depot, Pound Bend Road, Warrandyte (Melway 23 C10), unless otherwise stated below. No prior experience necessary – there's always someone available to show you the ropes.

The nursery is open for plant sales every Thursday 10.00am to 12.00pm and the first Sunday of each month 2.00pm to 4.00pm.

Important Notice

Please note the nursery is only open for plant sales during the above times. If you find it impossible to come during official opening times please contact our nursery manager.

New Prices

Members: 60 cents per forestry tube
Non-members: \$1 per forestry tube



Thursday Afternoon Walks

On the fourth Thursday of every month there will be a short walk (about one hours duration) somewhere in the Park. If you would like to attend either bring your lunch and stay on after the propagation morning or meet at the nursery at 1.00pm.

Walks will take place on:

August 26th
September 23rd

October 28
November 25

Next Committee Meeting

Wednesday 1st September 2004 at 8pm, at Karen Reynold's house,
305 Menzies Road, Kangaroo Ground. All welcome!

We welcome member's involvement – please don't hold back if you would like to take an active role in Fowsp events or join our committee. Contact any of us with your ideas, offers of help.

Currently we'd like some person or persons (much preferable) to help organise social events and more weekend planting activities in various interesting locations. There are currently too few of us to provide a reasonable coverage. This is an opportunity for anyone who'd like to get to know our precious natural remnants more intimately. Enthusiasm is the main requirement!

Your Committee 2004

Pat Coupar	9844 1650	Newsletter Editor
Ray Clarke	9841 8507	Treasurer
Dick Thomson	9850 9867	Ass't Treasurer
Peter Curry	9844 0958	Secretary

Wildlife Rescue
Julie Pryor 9722 1117

Market Stall
Marie Krause 9712 0498

Lee Speedy	9437 0894	Membership Secretary
Geoff Speedy	9437 0894	
Mike Coupar	9844 1650	
Melanie Birtchnell	9833 3913	
Karen Reynolds	9712 0797	
Michelle Hanslow	0402251577	

Park Office
9844 2659
Nursery Manager (Josh Revell)
0408800026



Come to the Pub!

2nd September - Suzie Moore "Wetland Ecology and Management"

Suzie will explore every aspect of wetland ecology and reveal key driving processes behind these fascinating ecosystems, as well as outlining general principles of their management.

Dr Suzie Moore is a Director of Ecos Environmental Consulting. Suzie has worked in the areas of aquatic ecology and water quality management for over 15 years. Her doctoral research focused on the ecology of herbivorous Australian waterbirds and identified important waterbird habitat requirements of wetlands.

**The seminars are free and you don't need to book.
(Supper provided!)**

Time: 7:30pm

Venue: The Function Room Grand Hotel 120 Yarra Street, Warrandyte. (Melways Ref. 23 E11)

To join us for dinner before the seminar, book a seat in the Bistro on 9844 1199.

For further information contact:

Cathy Willis on phone: 9840 9122 or cathy.willis@manningham.vic.gov.au

Deadline for September Newsletter is Tuesday August 31st

Please send to Pat's place, 143 Brackenbury St. or e-mail to ian.coupar@v.c.p.monash.edu.au

Flying Pens!

Your committee has recently been busy trying to publicise the confused messages coming from Manningham council with regard to environmental weed control. Two opportunities presented themselves at about the same time.

This is our submission to the Warrandyte River Reserve Draft Management Plan.

"We are greatly concerned by the enormous number of environmental weeds in the study area. Most of them are well illustrated in council's own weed identification and removal booklet.

Our organisation knows that some weed reduction work has occurred. However the bulk of the community would not have noticed. To most people all shades of green are equal!

How can we expect the community to remove weeds on their own properties when council is not making an all out effort either to educate the public to understand the issues or remove weeds?

A particular area of interest: the confluence of Anderson's Creek with the Yarra (Birrarung).

An aboriginal elder recently pointed out that where waters meet was traditionally a site for ceremony/camping etc. In other words a place of spiritual significance. We believe it is time to show some respect for the magnificent heritage embodied in this site. Currently it is a 9 star weed scape (10 being the worst imaginable!) The most obvious weeds are rampant honeysuckle, angled onion, wandering tradescantia and a pot-pouri of grassy weeds. Some of the honeysuckle stems were cut and poisoned a few years ago but regrowth was so strong the initial control was a waste of time and \$\$\$\$\$\$.

After viewing this weedy panorama what message does the public take home?

We believe this is such a high profile site and being a relatively small area it is an obvious choice for an education zone. (We are aware of the theory that it's logical to leave downstream works until all areas upstream are treated. Working on this basis means most of us may be long gone before anything starts to improve!)

Previous enquiry to council re this site elicited that Melb. Water had 'control' of the bed and bank area. We understand Parks Victoria is responsible for the Tarroona Reserve side.

Would it be possible for these folk to agree to some improvement? (FOWSP is willing to give what help we can.)"

Now for the Yarra St. Urban Design Framework process which covered a smaller area (from the post office shops to Whipstick gully carpark). Even so we thought it a good idea to let council know our concern.

"We write on behalf of our 300 members to support the Warrandyte Community Association submission to the Yarra Street Urban Design Framework study.

Most of our members live in the Warrandyte area and are working hard to enhance biodiversity on their properties by removing weeds. Most of our members are aware council encourages weed control on private land.

How frustrating then for us to observe masses of known weeds continuing to grow and spread from council controlled nature reserves and roadsides. We are aware of the argument that limited funds are best spent on the higher quality (usually less public) areas. Most members of the community do not know this.

The fact is that roadsides act as education zones, and current practice – to allow weeds to remain in place without explanation – is teaching residents and visitors alike that these plants are ok to retain in your garden.

Our members are sick of having their gardens reinvaded by weeds.

We believe a much more effective campaign to control weeds is needed. It would require a high public profile as could be obtained by articles in local papers.

To be really valuable it would need to be a cooperative effort involving Parks Victoria, Shire of Nillumbik as well as the city of Manningham. We understand there is already a Warrandyte Land Managers Group who presumably would be involved."

From feedback we've had about the second public consultation meeting other people raised the same concerns.

Lest anybody think we are being critical of the on-ground staff looking after these areas, we definitely are not. They do a great job with their limited resources. What we seek to do is encourage council to publicly clarify their future intent and at the same time put more resources into the task of bringing nature in Warrandyte closer to its original condition. If that can be done without a rate increase we'll be ecstatic!

News From the Nursery - by Julie

Bishop

1); Last week at the nursery a customer returning a polystyrene box and forestry tubes noticed she had a tiny frog with her. Josh identified it as *Littoria ewingi* (Southern Brown Tree frog) and Julie gently placed it amongst our frog-friendly water plants.

We are currently increasing our selection of local aquatic plants, so anyone interested in establishing a frog-friendly garden, come to the nursery for some good advice.

2); After the seminar by Jeff Jeanes at the pub on the fifth of August, many were inspired to head down to the nursery to purchase their own special local orchids. We have a beautiful selection of orchids in bloom and for sale.

These include *Pterostylis nutans* - Nodding Greenhood, *Pterostylis curta* - Blunt Greenhood, *Pterostylis concinna* - Trim Greenhood. (We won second prize for our *Pterostylis concinna*!)

We were paid an unwelcome visit by a mob of sulphur-crested cockatoos who made a meal of some of the orchids. So don't delay!

In My garden - from Julie bishop

I've noticed lots of fresh correa flowers on the ground below all my correas. Puzzled as to the cause I have finally found the culprits - two glorious crimson rosellas, methodically nipping the flowers off at the base then dropping them. I wonder if it's nectar or seed they are extracting?

Sunday Search party at Harris

Gully Burn Site

Come on Sunday September 19th to our 'green treasures search party'. Dave van Bockel needs your help to find and mark with bamboo stakes as many newly germinated treasures as possible. A great chance to learn to recognise many 'goodies' at the delicate seedling stage and prevent them being damaged by herbicide. The regenerative force of the bush is powerful, and we humans can increase this if we use our intelligence in a tender and caring fashion.

We'll start about 11 and go till about 1. Dave is so keen for our company he's promised a bbq plus cuppas!

Please check next month's newsletter for exact meeting spot.

What's in a Name?

Anderson's Creek's had quite a few mentions this month. After I had my eyes opened back in May by Uncle Max to the significance of the confluence of the creek with the river I wondered if anyone knew it's aboriginal name.

A quick e-mail followed to Glen Jamieson, local expert on all things natural who lives in Everard Drive not far from the creek. Sure enough he knew.

He thinks its name is Bie-al having been told this by Isabelle Ellender an archeologist who's done a detailed study of our area.

He suggests when the park management plan appears we might ask for Tarroona Reserve to be renamed Bie-al.

What think you? I think it's a great idea. It'll add greater depth to the experience of living in this part of Australia. (Personal opinion only, of course!)

Another Wonderful Creek

This one's in North Warrandyte and is called Stony. It even has a friends group who would love some more help.

They meet the last Sunday of the month from 1 'till 4 and the gathering spot is at the Colan Rd. bridge. (melway 23 E6) This creek and it's vegetation and wildlife are just waiting to blossom.

One day it will be stunning. The great news is that already platypuses have been seen and there's a walk happening soon through the famous Professor's Hill.

Call Josie Lee on 0414 960 274



Living in Paradise

By Pat and Mike Coupar

For the last two months we have been living another life in a different State – Queensland. In early June we drove up to the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS) where Mike was going to be working for eight weeks.



AIMS is located at Cape Ferguson, 55 kilometres south of Townsville in the heart of the Bowling Green Bay National Park. The Institute lies at the end of the road behind locked gates and the public are only allowed in for a limited time on special guided tours once a week from March to November.

We were staying in one of only six houses on site. Our induction took up most of the first day and involved a lengthy video, a tour of the labs with explanations of all safety procedures, a talk with the OH&S officer and a detailed questionnaire requiring a 100% result before we were given a pass.

During our first week we realised just how paranoid AIMS is about security. Once an hour - day and night - a security guard drives a set route that covers every corner of the complex – he got to know us very well, as outside working hours we liked to wander.

Fire is another major concern and I counted no less than 16 fire hydrants dotted around the grounds, how many were located inside the buildings is anyone's guess. There were back up generators, pumps and all sorts of other humming machinery. What's it all about? Well, AIMS is the site of secret science from the sea, research and extraction of chemicals from known and unknown marine organisms with the potential for medicines and other uses. Perhaps the most publicised work of AIMS is research into Great Barrier Reef issues such as Crown of Thorns outbreaks and coral

bleaching. Needless to say, the hi-tech equipment, labs and two ships used to investigate these sciences is an extremely expensive investment.

All permanent staff have their own AIMS car. It always amused us to see the fleet stream in at quarter to eight in the morning and out again at quarter to five, for the gates are only open for 20 minutes morning and afternoon.

For those old enough to remember, we felt like Patrick MaGooheen in the TV series 'The Prisoner' - the only difference being we didn't want to escape, and anyway we had a magic magnetic card that got us in and out.

It was paradise. While Mike worked I wrote. AIMS has its own harbour down the road and its own beach – a five minute walk from the house. Locals say that it's the best beach in Townsville – and it is. And, for a couple of hours each day around lunchtime, it was an irresistible distraction.

There is a canteen nestled amidst the palms – a hive of activity during the day, but after hours it is deserted. Some evenings we would amble down there and use the barbeque. Lounging back in the comfortable patio chairs with our steak and wine, it was like being at a resort and we the only guests.

Being in the dry tropics the weather is much more settled and predictable than further north around Cairns, with clear blue skies and a comfortable temperature around 27 degrees every day. For eight whole weeks we lived amongst wallabies, brush-turkeys, stone-curlews, friarbirds and small grass yellow butterflies.

We settled into a routine that was incredibly relaxing. But this is winter and it is very very dry, many trees are losing their leaves. Summer and the wet would be quite different, less comfortable with high humidity, but interesting nevertheless to see the bush responding to the heavy rainfall. However, potentially lethal marine stingers return to the waters and mosquitos numbers escalate. Paradise, I suspect, is only transitory.





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Ewing's Tree Frog
(Litoria ewingii)

Also known as the Brown Tree Frog, this little frog occurs all the way up the east coast of Australia. It is often found hiding under pots in the FOWSP nursery. Like all frogs, its colour is variable, but is usually a pale creamy brown with a darker brown or black stripe from the snout, through the eye to the shoulder.

The "weep eep eep" call of the males can be heard at night particularly during the cooler months.

FOWSP Membership Form

Name

Address

.....

Tel. no.

Family \$20

Single \$15

Concession \$10

Send to: FOWSP PO Box 220, Warrandyte 3113

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