

# FRIENDS OF BRAESIDE PARK NEWSLETTER

April 2009, no. 2



**BRAESIDE PARK**

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**[www.braesideparkfriends.org.au](http://www.braesideparkfriends.org.au)**

The authors' views expressed  
in this newsletter do not  
necessarily reflect those of  
Parks Victoria or its staff.



## Dedication

This issue of the newsletter is dedicated to all those who suffered as a result of the February bushfires.

## Friends Group outings and activities coming up

### Star gazing night at The Briars, Mount Martha

On May 1st, we are having an astronomy night with the Mornington Peninsula Astronomical Society. There is less light pollution at The Briars than at Braeside, so viewing should be terrific. Saturn in all its glory will be the feature attraction. A fee, paid on the night, is used to improve the observatory. A talk and tea/coffee are included. Don't worry if it's raining in our area that night, as it rains less down there. Once in The Briars Park, drive past the turn-off to the restaurant, and continue up the hill to the Observatory.

**Star night, Friday 1st of May**  
**8pm till about 10pm**  
**Adults \$8, children \$4, family \$20**  
**The Briars Historic Park, Mt. Martha**  
**Melways 145 D-F / 151 1E**

**Bookings: Elsie Anderson 9583 6099**

### Bird Group Heathland walk, Sunday 3rd of May

After autumn rains (hopefully), the Park's Heathland reserve should be looking great. Join us as we see what bird-life is about. And we'll search for wildflowers too. Morning tea after the walk. Just turn up on the day, no need to book.

**Bird walk in the Heathland**  
**Sunday 3rd of May**  
**Visitors' Centre 9am**

### Community Garden Open Day, Sunday 17 May

The first major planting in the Community Garden will occur on Open Day, Sunday 17th of May. Follow the signs to the Garden, which is just past the Park Office.

**Open Day & BBQ**  
**Sunday 17th of May**  
**9am till midday**

## FIRST COMMUNITY PLANTING DAY

### Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> of May

**9.00am to noon, tea/coffee available**

Follow the arrow signs to planting site  
 We need a volunteer to serve tea, please ring the Park if you'd like to help out.

### Black Snake Productions—a croc in the Park!

See a baby croc, a python, spiders and other creepy crawlies up close. You'll be able to handle the non-dangerous animals that are passed around the audience. Children of all ages invited for an informative and entertaining afternoon. Gold coin donation requested. A light arvo tea will be provided.

**Black Snake Productions animal talk & demo**  
**Saturday 27th of June,**  
**2.30 to 4pm—afternoon tea included**



Eastern Brown Snake photo © Black Snake Productions, Inc.

Thanks To The Helpers  
 Those who helped produce the newsletter:

Elsie Anderson  
 Bev Bancroft  
 Ian Parsons  
 Park Rangers

### FRIENDS OF BRAESIDE PARK Inc.

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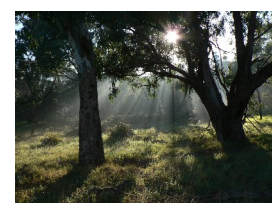
# Friends of Braeside Park

## Activities Calendar

Activity	Time/Day	April	May	June
Friends Group Committee meeting	4th Monday, 1:30pm at the Visitor Centre	<b>May 4-note change</b>	25	22
Community Projects weekday	9:00 - 12:00 noon Wednesday at the Park Office	1 8 15 22 29	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24
Plant Propagation Nursery facility	10:00 - 12:00 noon 1st Sat & Mon 3rd Wed & Sun	4 6 15 19	2 4 17 20	1 6 17 21
Seed & cutting collection Meet at Robin Car park	10:00 - 12:00 noon The Fri. before the 1st Sat. of the month	3	1	5
Water Quality Monitoring Meet at the Park Office	9:00 - 12:00 noon 3rd Tues	21	19	16
Bird Group			<b>Heathland walk 9.00am Sun. 3rd May Visitors' Centre</b>	
Community Projects weekends	9:00 - 12:00 noon, follow the signs		<b>Sat. 30th May Autumn planting</b>	<b>Sun. 28th June Planting day</b>
Special activities			<b>Astronomy night The Briars Mt. Martha 8-10pm Fri. 1st May Bookings: 9583 6099</b>  <b>Community Nursery Open Day &amp; BBQ 9am-noon-ish Sun. 17th May</b>	<b>Autumn Mystery Tour 9.30am Sun. 7th June Park Office</b>  <b>Animal demo &amp; talk 2.30 pm Sat. 27th June Visitors' Centre</b>

## Photos wanted please

Have you got digital photos or videos of Braeside Park that you'd like to share with other Park visitors? We are preparing an audio-visual display for the Visitors' Centre and could use a wide range of material. For example: photos/videos of Park plants, birds, reptiles, mammals and of activities or events that have taken place over the years.



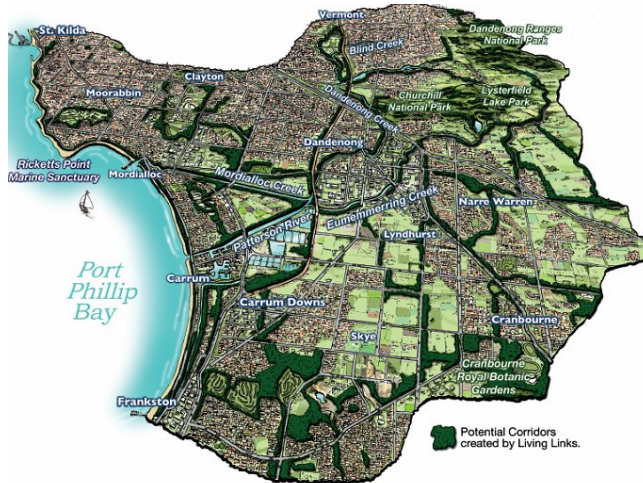
Please post *unedited* material on CD to the Park, addressed "Visitors' Centre audio visual program" Braeside Park, PO Box 608, Braeside Vic. 3195.

## Living Links—a project for south-east Melbourne

*From the Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority brochure and web site*

Living Links is 'a master plan for a web of living parks, wetlands, pathways and open spaces' in Melbourne's south-eastern suburbs. The project is a coordinated approach to transforming the south-east into a 'world-renowned place to invest, live, work and visit'.

Based in the Dandenong Valley catchment, the project area encompasses the Cities of Kingston, Whitehorse, Maroondah, Monash, Casey, Bayside, Knox and Frankston. Other partners include the Shire of Yarra Ranges, Bushwalking Victoria, Landcare Australia Limited, Parks Victoria and Bicycle Victoria. Community groups will be involved in planting days and other developmental work.



Artist's impression of potential Living Links corridors.  
© PPWCMA

Some of the project's aims are to:

- Develop new and enhance existing vegetation corridors along roadsides, waterways, public open spaces and coastal zones
- Improve the accessibility and connectivity between environmental, social and recreational assets
- Increase community participation, knowledge and investment in environmental protection and restoration projects
- Protect and enhance habitat for native fauna and ensure the retention of biodiversity in an otherwise fragmented and urbanised landscape
- Promote best practice in the management of stormwater run-off from sealed surfaces (roads, urban developments)
- Promote water sensitive urban design in existing urban estates and infill development across the catchment
- Develop further pedestrian and cycle paths throughout south-east Melbourne connecting major commercial and recreational centres

- Benefit the community through cleaner waterways, more desirable and accessible recreation areas, improved opportunities for environmental education, safer and more comprehensive pedestrian and cycling facilities.

Community consultation is currently taking place as part of the planning process. More information and a brochure are available on the Port Phillip and Westernport Catchment Management Authority web site. To be involved in this visionary project, contact the Project Coordinator at the PPWCMA on **8781 7900**

### Help save the Hooded Plover

The beach-nesting Hooded Plover is considered a delightful bird by all who are privileged to see it. In south-eastern Australia this bird is listed as 'Vulnerable'.

The plover's numbers are declining, mainly due to threats to its eggs and young on our popular beaches. Eggs are crushed by walkers or vehicles, chicks are taken or frightened by dogs, foxes, etc.

Though some of the plovers' breeding beaches are managed by Parks Victoria, dogs are allowed on the beaches. The dogs are meant to be on a leash, but this rule is often ignored.

Malcolm Brown, a former ranger in Braeside Park, is part of a group which monitors plover numbers. He has organised a petition asking the State Legislative Council to ban dogs from beaches where the Hooded Plover breeds, during the time that the plovers are nesting until the chicks are able to fend for themselves.

The petition is available from Malcolm, whose contact details are:

Phone: 0403 997 831 email: [seawish@aapt.net.au](mailto:seawish@aapt.net.au)  
PO Box 8, Rye, Vic. 3941

Or write to the State Government supporting the banning of dogs from these beaches.



Hooded Plover.  
Photo: Chris Tzaros

## Braeside Park's diminishing rainfall

*From a report by Ranger in Charge Des Lucas*

Park staff have been recording the amount of rainfall in Braeside Park since 1990. The graph below vividly demonstrates the downward trend in local rainfall over these two decades. Is this a 'drought' that will 'break' or is this the new rainfall regime? Only time will tell. (In March 2009, the Park received 40.6mm of rain, which was about 8mm above the average total for the month.)



## Westernport cruise report

*From the editor*

How do you get a boat un-stuck from the notorious Westernport mud? As the minutes ticked by with no progress, we were contemplating sending the tall members of our party overboard to give a push. Until informed that the mud is about a metre deep. Luckily, the tide was rising, so we soon floated free; it just required deft manoeuvring of the Tidemaster's engines and a bit of patience.

The thirty of us were enjoying a glorious calm day on the bay on Thursday last week. Some bird-watching was done, as a break from chatting with friends not seen for a while. Participants came from the Melbourne, Peninsula and Bayside branches of BOCA (Bird Observation and Conservation Australia), as well as from ours and other Friends groups.

We were perhaps a little late in the year to see many migratory waders, but you never know how long they will stay around. Birding highlights included a cooperative White-bellied Sea Eagle that stayed still long enough to be photographed hundreds of times. Also the eagle-eyes aboard spotted two Curlew Sandpipers, the male nearly in full breeding plumage.

Two tiny Red-necked Stints were also showing a bit of their red breeding colour.

For the day, our total bird-list was just over thirty species. We weren't overwhelmed with birds, but it was a lovely day to just 'chill out' and admire the wonderful scenery and the calm blue water.

Many thanks to Bev Bancroft for organising the cruise.



Enjoying the Westernport view. Photo: VL

## Nursery News—mystery of the fungus

By Marj Seaton

**Nursery changes:** At our March get togethers, we were without heat beds as Max beavered away at the igloo conversions. All heat beds will be housed in the one igloo, with the other two igloos used for storing pricked out plants. This is partly a water saving mechanism, as we are able to isolate the sprinklers of different rows of the new galvanised tables when not in use. When all set up, we will be in a good position for future propagation of all Park needs, including the requirements of the Community Garden.

**School visits:** Mentone Girls' Grammar School and Killester College have been setting up space within the nursery compound for their own gardens using plants they propagate themselves. It has been too early for planting this year, but they have spread mulch with gusto in preparation for when the weather and soil conditions allow planting. Killester also came seed collecting with us one Friday in early March.

**Pests, etc:** We have hordes of ants in the igloos at times but not so many bugs this year. We squash or spray any caterpillars as soon as we see them, resulting in few serious infestations compared with last year. From one box of Lomandra a large number of very pretty yellow fungi appeared one Saturday. The yellow faded quickly when taken into the sunlight and after

manual removal we've seen no more. Why only one box when there were several others adjacent and all used the same potting mix? Big mystery.



Yellow fungus in the Lomandra box (probably *Bolbitius vitellinus*). Photo: Marj Seaton

**Readiness:** We have thousands of plants ready to go. Some of the *Acacia implexa* and *Eucalyptus radiata* have failed to germinate and we will be battling to have these ready but most other species have done well and we are currently moving them from the shade house to the hardening off area. It's very satisfying looking at the array of plants waiting to go.

## Park Report—water savings

From Ranger in Charge Des Lucas' monthly reports

### Staff numbers

Due to fire-fighting, illness and leave, mid March was the first time in many weeks that staff numbers were near the full complement. This lack has had an impact on keeping up with Park management.

### Revegetation program

The yearly planting table has been drawn up, but an extra planting may be added on the first weekend in May if rainfall permits.

**Autumn community planting  
Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> of May 9am to noon.  
Follow the arrow signs to planting site.**

### Grants

Applications will be submitted for the ongoing Burgan and woody weed removal and the Salinity Revegetation Project. A new Burgan removal will be trialled, involving machine removal with mulching *in situ*.

### Pest animal program—rabbits

Rabbit numbers have increased substantially this year. Baiting programs will be delivered starting this month.

### Nursery improvements

Watering system improvements in the Nursery have saved an estimated 60% in use of water.

### Pest Plants Program

Spraying of woody weeds, blackberry, gorse, etc. has been completed.

### Federation picnic area plans

Planning is underway for stage 2 of the Federation picnic area. Some ideas are interactive gardens, human sun clock, giant chess board, sensory gardens, etc. Watch this space.

### Autumn Mystery Walk & BBQ lunch, 7th June

Join Des on a tour of the hidden corners of the Park. Sunday 7th of June, meet at the **Park Office at 9am**.