



# FRIENDS OF BRAESIDE PARK

FEBRUARY 2006 No 1&2

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BRAESIDE PARK



Melbourne  
Water

**Parks**  
VICTORIA



City of  
KINGSTON

**BRAESIDE PARK**

Ph 9265 7300

LOWER DANDENONG ROAD,  
BRAESIDE 3195

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



## EDITORIAL

**Best wishes to all for 2006.** It's wonderful to be back in Victoria after 2 weeks in sultry Far North Queensland! This year, the newsletter will be bi-monthly; to start off the year we have an article from Bill Jackson to refresh you from the summer heat.

This newsletter belongs to all members of the Friends of Braeside Park. Please help make it *yours* by sending your stories, anecdotes, observations and reminiscences about Braeside Park. If you don't have a burning desire to become a writer, just send in notes or outlines to be written up by the ed. I would just love to have the 'problem' of too much to write up for this newsletter.

Paper contributions can be sent to the park, addressed to the newsletter or editor. Electronic contributions (photos too, please!) can be emailed to the following address:

[fofbraesidepark@yahoo.com.au](mailto:fofbraesidepark@yahoo.com.au)

## FRIENDS' NEWS CORNER

### FRIENDS' REPORT

#### Our nominee for VNPA Park Friend of the Year

The Friends Committee have nominated Eric Mitchell for the Victorian National Parks Association 'Park Friend of the Year' for 2005. Eric was Foundation President of the Friends from 1989 to 1993 and edited this newsletter from its foundation until mid-2005. Eric also happens to have Friends membership **number 1**, so he is truly a pillar of the Friends of Braeside Park.

### Propagation Nursery Improvements

Work has started on improvements to the Nursery hardening off areas. The northern shade-cloth area is being revamped and covers added to this and the large southern area. This work will significantly augment the space for hardening off seedlings prior to planting out in the park.

### Nursery Handover

The Friends are experiencing another changing of the guard. After founding the Propagation Nursery and leading it for 15 years, Ron Pearson has reluctantly decided to hand on to others. More details on the Nursery's history and who's taking over will be in the next newsletter.

### THANKS TO THE HELPERS

*Those who helped with producing the newsletter:*

Elsie Anderson

Bev Bancroft

Ken Cusack

Margaret Hunter

Ian Parsons

Park Rangers

*Apologies for the lateness of this Newsletter. Ken Cusack was away with the CFA Fire Commanders for 2 weeks !!*



### INTERESTING BIRD REPORTS

A regular Braeside bird-surveyor has recently spotted a Caspian Tern in the park. The Barn Owl was heard calling by at least 2 people in early January.

## FRIENDS OF BRAESIDE PARK Inc.

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# FRIENDS OF BRAESIDE PARK - 2006 PLANNING CALENDAR

To find the location for the community day plantings please follow the signs in the park.

Activity	Time/Day	Mar	Apr	May	June
Committee Meeting	4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday – 7.00pm Visitors' Centre	28	25	23	27
Community Projects Weekday	9:00-12:00 Wed Park Office	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28
Plant Propagation	10:00-12:00 1 <sup>st</sup> Sat & Mon 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wed & Sun	4 6 15 19	1 3 16 19	1 6 17 21	3 5 18 21
Seed & Cutting Collection	10:00-12:00	3	31 Mar	5	2
Water Quality Monitoring 'StreamWatch'	9:00-12:00 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tues	21	18	16	20
Special Activities		Stargazing 24 <sup>th</sup> 7:30 for 8:00		Mystery Walk	

## Display at the Dingley Neighbourhood Centre

In November, the Dingley Neighbourhood Centre celebrated 150 years of European settlement in the area. The Friends of Braeside Park's display of bird and mammal specimens and park information attracted great interest. Thanks to **Bev and Elsie** (below) for organising the display and attending on the day.



## A WALK IN THE PARK FOR BIRDS

13 NOVEMBER 2005

Spring in Braeside Park is a glorious time for birds. A small but keen group of 8 Friends met at the Governor Road car-park for the spring bird-walk, led by Ian Parsons. We didn't have to move from the car-park to get great telescope views of 3 different bird-nests.

In a gum tree on the eastern side, we spotted the nest of a Grey Butcherbird with 3 lively youngsters. In the 'scope, we could see that these chicks were close to leaving the nest, as they were testing their wings. Only a few metres away was the flimsy nest of the Noisy Miner. We could not see any chicks; perhaps the birds were still sitting on eggs. To the west, in a tall Red Gum, we found a well-camouflaged Crested Pigeon on its nest. The walk's start boded well for the rest of the morning. Indeed, it seemed like every other bird in the Park was breeding.

We explored the circuit around the back of the wetlands, thanks to the Park Rangers mowing the track a few days earlier. The soil in this section was so moist and fertile you could practically see the reeds growing back to obliterate the track. A long trudge over stubble and mud, but well worth the effort! We remarked on the number of Grassbirds calling, their faint mournful sigh forming a sound-track for our journey. Clamorous Reed-warblers loudly called from the reeds so close we could have touched the birds, if we'd been able to see them. And Golden-headed Cisticolas kept popping up all over the place, flying straight up and dropping with their curious tail-down attitude.

Baby birds and cygnets on every wetland—the ducks with chicks included: Black Ducks, Australasian Shovelers, and Chestnut Teals. Swans shepherded cygnets of all sizes. Both Australasian and Hoary-headed Grebes were resplendent in their breeding plumage; we also saw them sitting on their floating nests in the southernmost and the middle wetlands.

Curiously absent most of the morning were Ibis and Welcome Swallows. Also, the Magpie Goose eluded us. But there were plenty of viewing highlights: Blue-billed Ducks in the middle wetlands and the pond near the Bird-hide, a Swamp Harrier swooping low over the middle wetlands, and a Black-tailed Kite sitting only a few metres away from our track. A Grey Shrike-thrush cheered us along as we began to flag and to hope we weren't far from morning tea.

After a reviving cuppa and Tim-Tams (thanks Elsie!), we headed back toward the cars, via the Bird-hide. From the hide, we had great views of Superb Blue Wrens, including a male who made a peremptory dash at his reflection in the window.

We had another look at the southern wetland before returning to the cars. A Black-winged Stilt was sitting on a nest, not far from a Hoary-headed Grebe on its nest. (We hadn't realised that the Stilts nested here; in fact, according to *HANZAB*, in Victoria these birds breed west of a line running north from Westernport Bay.) Still no Magpie Goose, unfortunately, but we did get great views of a White-faced Heron. Finally, we arrived back at the cars around midday, truly ready for lunch.

### Postscript

At the walk's end, a quick look for Tawny Frogmouths 'beyond the black stump' was unsuccessful, but I just happened to spot 2 in a tree not far from the car-park. Sadly, everyone but Ian had departed by that stage! Later, while I was showing the Frogmouths to 2 Bayboca members we'd encountered earlier, we saw a raptor soaring very high above us. Its tail was too short for a Goshawk or a Swamp Harrier and the dihedral and lack of wing-pattern ruled out Whistling Kite. Consulting a bird-book did not resolve the bird's identity. Later research indicated that it may have been a Brown Falcon, which Ian reports he used to see regularly in the Park. And, on my way out of the park, soaring above were the tardy Ibis, both White and Straw-necked.

We saw a grand total of 52 species, if you count the Buff-banded Rail I saw before the walk, at the pond near the southern park entrance, and the 4 species we saw after the 'official' end.

Many thanks to the Park Rangers for their assistance, to Elsie Anderson and Bev Bancroft for organisation, and to Ian Parsons for leadership and lugging the telescope.

1. Blue-billed Duck	27. Silver Gull
2. Black Swan*	28. Spotted Turtle-dove
3. Pacific Black Duck*	29. Crested Pigeon*
4. Australasian Shoveler*	30. Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
5. Grey Teal	31. Rainbow Lorikeet
6. 'Chestnut Teal'	32. Eastern Rosella
7. Hardhead	33. Red-rumped Parrot
8. Australasian Grebe*	34. Tawny Frogmouth
9. Hoary-headed Grebe*	35. Superb Fairy-wren
10. Little-pied Cormorant	36. Red Wattlebird
11. Little Black Cormorant	37. Little Wattlebird
12. Great Cormorant	38. Noisy Miner
13. Australian Pelican	39. Grey Shrike-thrush
14. White-faced Heron	40. Magpie Lark
15. Cattle Egret	41. Willie Wagtail
16. Australian White Ibis	42. Grey Butcherbird
17. Straw-necked Ibis	43. Australian Magpie
18. Black-shouldered Kite	44. Little Raven
19. Swamp Harrier	45. European Goldfinch
20. Brown Falcon (?)	46. Welcome Swallow
21. Buff-banded Rail	47. Clamorous Reed-warbler
22. Purple Swampphen*	48. Little Grassbird
23. Dusky Moorhen	49. Golden-headed Cisticola
24. Eurasian Coot	50. Common Blackbird
25. Black-winged Stilt*	51. Common Starling
26. Masked Lapwing	52. Common Mynah

**Reference:** Marchant, S., & P.J. Higgins (Eds), *Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds*, (HANZAB) vol. 2: *Raptors to Lapwings*. Melb. Oxford Uni. Press, 1993.

**Bird List (\*=breeding birds)**

## HISTORY VIGNETTE No. 1:

# ESTABLISHMENT OF BRAESIDE PARK

The newsletter will feature a series of articles on the history of the park and the surrounding area. What better way to start off the 'History Vignettes' than with the reprinting of an article by the redoubtable **Ron Pearson**, of Braeside Park Plant Nursery fame. When Ron wrote this article in 1987, he was the Secretary of the Field Naturalists' Club of Victoria and also on the FNCV Council.

This article reveals the farsighted planning that went into forming the park, such as revegetation using the propagation of locally indigenous plants. Reprinted with permission of the author and the editor of the FNCV journal *Victorian Naturalist*.

### “Proposed MMBW Braeside Park”, by Ron Pearson

Reprint of an article published in *Victorian Naturalist*, vol. 104, no.4 (1987).

Following the closure in 1980 of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works sewage treatment farm at Braeside, 25km South-East of Melbourne, the Board decided to convert the area into one of their series of Metropolitan Parks.

The land has an area of 295ha, being approximately half of that bounded by Lower Dandenong Road, Springvale Road, Governor Road, and Boundary Road. Prior to its acquisition by the Board of Works in 1928, the land was used as a grazing property by a number of users.

Arising largely from interest shown by a number of individuals and groups concerned with the flora and fauna of the area the Board decided to investigate the possibility of converting it to a park which placed special emphasis on the natural features of the area.

To assist in the planning of the park an Advisory Committee was appointed comprising Board Officers, members of five local Councils and four local interest representatives.

Now that the Committee has been sitting regularly for 18 months, and after consultation with the general public a plan has been prepared for the development of the park. It will be developed progressively over the next 5 years aiming towards the concepts in the prepared plan:

- (a) to upgrade the existing heathlands and woodlands by allowing the natural regeneration of certain areas, and where plausible in other areas, by revegetation utilising plants raised from seeds collected locally. Revegetation will be designed to conform to the natural species composition. The Heathland area, because of its ecologically sensitive nature will be fenced and entry will be by a permit system. A heathlands education centre will be erected adjacent to the entry to the Heathland area. This total area comprises about 30% of the park.
- (b) the wetlands which initially were the northernmost arm of the former Carrum Swamp were used as part of the system for sewage disposal during the period the MMBW used the park as a sewage treatment farm. Over the years this area has become a favourite haunt for many species of birds. It is planned to extend the wetlands, encourage [plant] growth in and around its boundaries and provide observation points and low key bird hides. This area comprises about 20% of the total area.

- (c) in the centre of the park, an area of about 25% of the park, mainly grazed woodland will be fenced to provide a marsupial grazing area.
- (d) the remaining 25% of the park, largely adjacent to main roads, will be used for picnic areas, car parking, park maintenance facilities and buffer plantings of indigenous trees and shrubs.

Surveys have been conducted which record over 330 vascular plant species in the park, of these about 200 are native. Among the native species a number are considered to be rare in the Melbourne area:

*Eucalyptus pauciflora* [Snow Gum], *Diuris punctata* [Purple Diuris orchid], *Monotoca scoparia* [Prickly Broom-heath], *Ricinocarpus pinifolius* [Wedding Bush], *Acacia ulicifolia* var. *brownei* [Heath Wattle], *Trachymene anisocarpa* [Native Parsnip] and a naturally occurring hybrid of *Leptospermum myrsinoides* [Heath Tea-tree] and *L. laevigatum* [Coastal Tea-tree]. About 100 bird species have been recorded in the area, as well as 9 mammals, 8 reptiles and 5 amphibians.

Note that several of the above scientific names have been changed since 1987. Also there are now over 170 species of birds recorded in the park. The increase is likely the result not only of the large amount of planting in the park but also the accumulation of many observers' reports since the founding of the park.



# PARK NEWS

## PARK REPORT by Des Lucas, Ranger in Charge

### New Rangers

Two new Rangers (**Iris Curran & Alison Bromley**) have commenced employment with the Park in mid December and will be employed for a six month period.

Projects they are involved in delivering include: pest animal programs with a focus on rabbits and foxes, pest plant programs with a focus on any weed throughout the park, maintenance spraying of revegetation areas, tracks and trails and around signs, buildings etc, delivery of the revegetation programs for both Braeside & Karkarook Parks, assist with volunteers programs, assist with ongoing compliance in relation to OH&S issues, management of contractors, water quality monitoring programs for Karkarook Park, patrolling, visitor education and enforcement, working rostered weekends, asset monitoring, collection of visitor data, development of grant application for Fish stocking at Karkarook in late 2006, production of maps for reports which include, the Park Fire plan, grazing strategy, fox scat analysis, possum survey, rabbit survey and bait lines, revegetation works and many more. There is many more projects which could be added to this list but this provides an insight into some of the tasks being delivered.

### Rainfall

Braeside Park recieved 636.2 mm of rainfall for 2005. There were eight occasions where rainfall events were over 15 mm with seven of these occurring from August to December. The February event over two days produced 86 mm of rain with a monthly total of 118.8 mm. May was the driest month with a total of only 13 mm.

### Revegetation 2005

Revegetation throughout the park has continued with visitor nodes and environmental areas all having work completed within them. Overall the Braeside Park Community Nursery produced 14600 plants and a further 2330 were provided by contractor Mark Elliston for the grasslands project. There were several community planting days on weekends which were well attending. The Spring planting activity had just under 50 people attend and 2500 seedlings planted and about 10 meters of mulch moved and spread. The Wednesday group also undertook several planting days and addressed grants and environmental area revegetation projects. Work for the Dole Program The Work for the Dole program which is delivered through Destiny Church in Dingley commenced in November 2005.

Participants have been provided basic training Equal Opportunity and Occupational Health and Safety. Several projects are well under way including spreading of mulch through the Federation Picnic area, hand mowing & uplifting of vegetation in the Telford Picnic Area. The group has a supervisor and between 6-10 participants.

### Agistment

A strategy is currently being worked on in relation to removal of cattle in some areas, selective grazing and protection of existing vegetation. Further to this a program will be developed to address enhancement works for the existing vegetation. The program is likely to take in excess of 20 years to deliver. Some of the early work in the strategy has been the development of two new gazing paddocks on either side of the cypress drive. This has helped to reduce the Park operational costs in relation to cutting grass in these areas. Sewer Line Upgrade South East Water have over the last two months completed a sewer line upgrade in the south eastern section of the park. This work was required after the sewer line broke in June of 2004. There has been minimal disruption to the park operations whilst this work has been undertaken.

### Fire Plan

The Braeside & Karkarook Fire Plan for 2005/2006 has been endorsed by the City of Kingston, CFA, MFB & Parks Victoria Management. Key actions within the plan have been delivered with fire breaks being slashed, communications with emergency services undertaken including several familiarisation tours of the parkland areas for the local fire services. Ranger staff also attend the quarterly Municipal Fire Prevention Committee Meeting and the next meeting will take place within Braeside Park on 15 February 2006.

### Park Phone Number

**Please note that the Park Phone Number has changed to: 9265 7300**

Young Duckling in the Park

B/W photo by  
Danielle Gorham



## A COOL STORY FOR SUMMER

Long-time member **Bill Jackson** has traveled to Antarctica three times and to the Arctic twice. He's kindly written up his latest 3,870 nautical mile trek, of November last year.

My friends are sharply divided. Mention Polar regions and some say 'But isn't it cold' and change the topic. Others are really interested. Allow me to tell you about such a trip.

This was for one month commencing in mid November. Visiting Buenos Aires and Iguazu Falls, then to the extreme south of the country to spend 19 nights on a ship to The Falklands, South Georgia and the Antarctic Peninsular, visiting some of sites of Ernest Shackleton's epic journey.

**Iguazu Falls** (big waters) are located in the north of Argentina forming the border with Brazil in hot, humid, semi-tropical rainforest. While being quite different to Niagara or Victoria Falls they do rate with them. They are a group of 275 falls stretching along 4 Km and having a drop of up to 70 meters. This is a lovely area, better than expected, with rich flora, beautiful birds and hundreds of butterflies ready to land on your hat or sleeves. The Argentinian side has a high level walk along the top of some of the falls and a low level walk beside and around the tumbling water. A close up encounter is also available. Cameras, wallet and other personals into a waterproof bag, climb into a zodiac (rubber ducky) and you are headed up river for some circuits under the falls. Completely soaked but it is warm and you dry out over the next hour – good fun. The Brazilian side has broader vistas, the grand view and walkways out over the water. It too is spectacular.



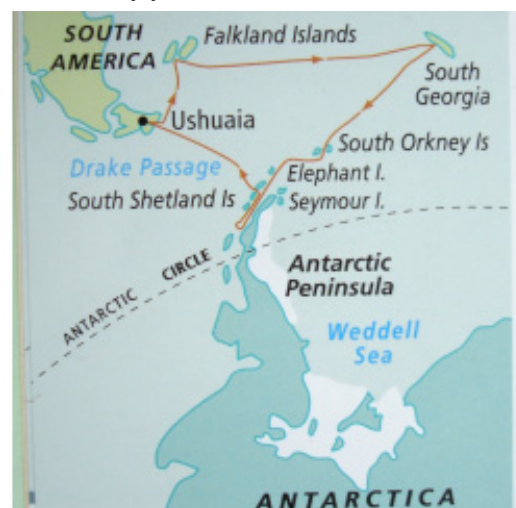
**Ushuaia** is at the other end of Argentina, at the bottom end of the Andes. The most southern town in the world, the port from which ships leave for Antarctica. Ushuaia is somewhat a frontier town growing fast, becoming touristy with lots of backpacker accommodation through to top of range hotels. Population about 50,000 but seasonal.

It is here we boarded the Polar Pioneer a Russian ex-research ship currently chartered by Aurora Expeditions for use in the Antarctic, Arctic, around Scotland and up the length of the Amazon. Polar Pioneer is 72 meters long, ice strengthened, can carry 56 passengers with a Russian crew of 20.

This is not a luxury ship but very comfortable with a bar/lounge, lecture room, dining all at one sitting, far too much food with excellent variety prepared by expert chefs. A doctor and small hospital are available. Access to the bridge is allowed anytime.. When near land or ice there are usually two or three landings a day using five zodiacs. Everyone can go in a few minutes. This is my sort of ship.

**Falkland Islands** in the southern Atlantic have a population of 2,913 people and 600,000 sheep. Land area is 12,173 sq km with two large islands and 700 small ones. Sovereignty has been British since 1833 except for three months of Argentinian occupation in 1982. Argentina still strongly believe they own the Falklands (Malvinas) and South Georgia as well as a slice Antarctica. Our first landing was at remote Sea Lion Island. A customs officer processed us then onshore to meet the locals; gentoo, rockhopper and burrowing magellanic penguins, steamer & russet-headed ducks, oystercatchers and seals. Then overnight around to explore Port Stanley. A bit more British than Britain. Diesel Land Rovers everywhere and pubs. A town stretching along the coast and up the rise. Bright colours and fresh white paint. It could easily be a transplanted English sea-side town.

A couple of days at sea admiring Cape, Giant and Wilson's Storm petrels, Cormorants, soaring Black-browed, Royal and Wandering albatross plus the occasional dolphin. While the experts debated the difference in tail feathers of the Royal and Wanderer I was quite happy watching these magnificent birds in effortless flight around the ship, skimming just over the water. These are true sea birds only coming to land every year or two to breed.



**South Georgia Island** is banana shaped about 160 km long. It is also mountainous with peaks of up to 4000m, snow, glaciers, birds, seals a rather spectacular place. As well as all this we had another interest, this is where Shackleton came for help. This is where he had to climb over the previously unclimbed mountains to reach the whaling station. Our voyage was one in which climbers can try to repeat that climb. Often there are ten or so but this time there were only four brave souls plus Tashi Tenzing to guide them. The ship took us into King Haakon Bay where Shackleton had landed and commenced his climb. Our climbers departed onto the glacier to follow his long lost footprints. Others followed for a while before returning, most simply explored the coast and tried to piece together what had happened there so long ago. Standing there in our modern clothing and a ship within sight we could only marvel inadequately at the bravery, tenacity and determination of those men from another age.



From here the ship went to the northern side of the island looking at sites of historical interest especially Shackleton's grave near the Grytviken whaling station which has recently been made safe. Oil tanks, boilers, whale chasers, a lovely renovated church, shop/ museum and some British barracks buildings. Only about four people seem to live here, apart from any who may be at the barracks from time to time.

That evening we moved to Fortuna Bay to meet the climbers on the north side of the island. They had good conditions and made excellent time. Many joined them for the end of their climb over a steep ridge from Fortuna Bay to the old whaling station at Stromness. This is where Shackleton finally found help and was able to arrange rescue for those left on the south of the island and the twenty two still stranded at Elephant Island. The following day was spent making other landings on South Georgia before turning south for Elephant Island.

*[To be continued in the next newsletter.]*

## And Now For Some Current News

### BRAESIDE PARK RUNNERS

There are many unheralded groups which are long-time users of the park. One windy Sunday in December, while driving down to the Propagation Nursery, I pulled up behind a row of T-shirted gents jogging down Cyprus Drive. Since their shirts were emblazoned with the logo 'Braeside Park Runners', I had to know more.

It seems these guys have been jogging in the park since before it was a park; they used to sneak in before the park officially opened. Mature-aged men all, about 10 turn up every Sunday, with numbers sometimes swelling to 2 dozen. Their 'spokesman', Ken Hough, also organised the Lindsay Thomas Fun-Run in the park on January 18<sup>th</sup>. This Fun Run has been held in Braeside Park for 14 years.

The group expressed their thanks to the park Rangers and to Melbourne Water for cooperation and assistance in using Braeside Park over the years.



# FRIENDS' OF BRAESIDE PARK

INVITE YOU TO AN

## ASTRONOMY NIGHT

AN EVENING WITH :

**The Astronomical Society of Victoria**

**When:** Friday 24th of March

**Time:** 7:30pm for 8:00pm start

Brief presentation in the  
Visitors' Centre before stargazing

**Cost:** \$2 per person.

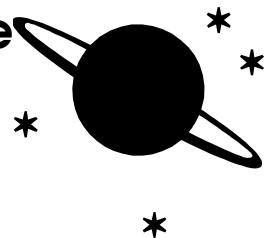
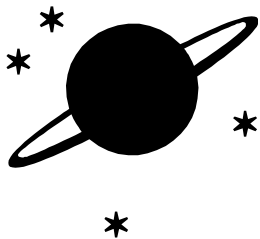
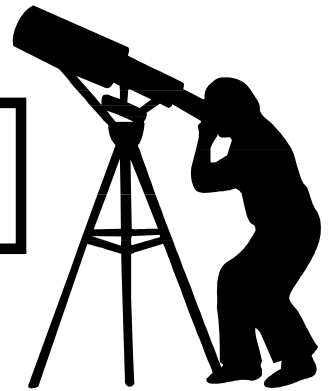
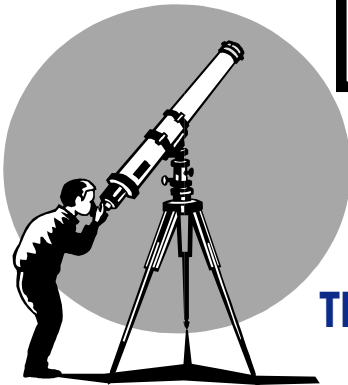
Proceeds to the  
Astronomical Society to fund

*"Astronomy for the People"*

If weather is inclement, please ring the  
Park on the day for information

9265 7300

**ALL WELCOME**



BRAESIDE PARK

