

FRIENDS OF BRAESIDE PARK NEWSLETTER

January 2011, no. 1



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The opinions expressed in this
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The New Editor

From the Editor

As Val mentioned in the last Newsletter she is retiring from her position as Editor and moving to the country. Val has been a fantastic editor over the last five years and I am stepping into her shoes with some trepidation! I am sure all members of the Friends group would like to wish Val best of luck in her new venture and hope that she will take some time out from her country retreat to visit us occasionally.

A little background on me for those of you that don't know me. I moved to Australia from the UK ten years ago (so please excuse the pommie accent!) and have spent the last four years living in Ballarat! I have just completed a Diploma of Conservation and Land Management and was fortunate enough to spend my six weeks work placement in 2010 working at Braeside Park with the Rangers. I have been a member of the Friends group for approximately two years and over that time have been involved in some planting and nursery activities when studies and time allowed. I am currently in the process of relocating to the Bayside area and have just started work with a Bushland Management company working mainly with their weed crew but also spending some time in the nursery.

I do not have a background in editing, but thought that I would give it a try when Des mentioned that Val was no longer able to continue in the role. If any of you have an interest in writing an article that you think would be interesting to the Friends group or if you have read an article that is worth sharing please feel free to email me at jane@stquintin.net at any time.

Wishing everyone a very happy and prosperous New Year
Jane St Quintin (*Editor in training—still on my Red P's!!*)

Wednesdays with Ernie's 'A Team'

By Bev Bancroft

Our group has been very busy.

Grasslands: Several mornings have been spent slashing, mowing and weeding. It has been a very successful year with a huge increase in the regeneration of grasses, chocolate lilies, pimelea **and** the **purple diuris**. This year there has been an increase of 20 new purple diuris plants, a fantastic reward for all the hard work put in by Ernie and his 'A-Team' which includes planting over 5,000 grasses last year. A visit from Port Phillip Catchment Management Authority ended in a tour of the grasslands, then a conducted tour of the Heathland.

Governor Road: Plantations have been tidied, weeded and some tree guards & frames removed.

Break Up: On the 15th December we had a tour of Suregro, a business in Dingley which caters for all types of products for revegetation, land management etc. We had morning tea and all received a "product bag" which included gloves, mug, beanie and other samples. The day finished with a very enjoyable barbeque.

Extra help is always needed for a variety of jobs: meet at the Park Office, Wednesdays 9 am - 10.30 am morning tea (3 "C"s - Cuppa, Cake & Chat)



A Purple Diuris (One of Ernie's babies!)
Photo J. St Quintin.

Thanks To The Helpers

Those who helped produce the newsletter:

Elsie Anderson
Bev Bancroft
Ian Parsons
Park Rangers

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Friends of Braeside Park

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

Activity	Time/Day	Feb	Mar	April
Committee Meeting	4th Monday, from 1.00pm at the Visitor Centre	28	28	18
Community Garden	9.30 - 12.00, 3rd Sun of the month at nursery	20	20	17
Community Projects Weekday	9:00 - 12:00 noon Wednesday at the Park Office	2 9 16 23	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27
Nursery open for plant sales	10.00 - 12.00 3rd Sunday of the month	20	20	17
Plant Propagation Nursery Facility	10:00 - 12:00 noon 1st Sat & Mon 3rd Sun	5 7 20	5 7 20	2 4 17
Plant Propagation Nursery Facility	1.00pm - 3.00pm Wednesday	2 16	2 16 30	- - -
Water Quality Monitoring Meet at the Park Office	9:00 - 12:00 noon 3rd Tues	15	15	19
Community Projects Weekends	9:00 - 12:00 noon, follow the signs	-	-	-
Special Activities	Times to be advised	-	-	-

Wednesday Afternoons at the Nursery—want to learn more?

Author Bev Bancroft

Work continues in the Community Garden Area. Plant propagation etc. More help is needed. If interested please join us at 1pm.

In 2011, we will have a new group from Mentone Girls Grammar to maintain their garden area.

Visit by Friends of Cranbourne Gardens

The group arrived late morning in time to enjoy a lunch in the Visitors' Centre followed by a walk in the Heathland. The highlight of their day was coming across a long-necked tortoise laying at least 12 eggs in the middle of the path.

Braeside Park Bird Group survey report, May - August 2010

From data compiled by Ian Parsons and the Bird Group

With the return of good rains, the wetlands are overflowing and the reeds and weeds have grown prolifically! Unfortunately this has meant that surveying has been limited, but the water birds are back and breeding. David Stabb reported in January large numbers of immature ducks, grebes, cormorants, moorhen, swamphen and coots, as well as good numbers of adults, so the Park is fulfilling its role as a haven for birds of all kind.

Highlights include an Australian Bittern in January, 71 Superb Fairy-Wren and 67 Golden Headed Cisticola in September and 39 Reed Warblers in November

We farewell Val LeMay from the group as a keen member and thank her for her work. I also thank the other survey members Margaret and Ian Langdon, Bev Bainbridge and David for their untiring attitude and cheerful carrying out the surveys under trying conditions.

	September	October	November	December	January
Total Species Seen	49	52	55	20	47
Total bird numbers	668	327	892	226	845
Species in highest number	Common Starling(103)	Silver Gull(23)	Silver Gull (282)	Grey Teal duck (50)	Chestnut Teal duck(127)

Bird Banding - July 2010 to December 2010

From the report from Malcolm Brown

These are the results of the banding since July, 2010.

Bird Name	Caught	New	Retrap
Superb Fairy-wren (<i>Malurus cyaneus</i>)	14	5	9
White-browed Scrubwren (<i>Sericornis frontalis</i>)	5	3	2
Eastern Yellow Robin (<i>Eopsaltria australis</i>)	1		1
Common Blackbird (<i>Turdus merula</i>)	3	3	
Brown Thornbill (<i>Acanthiza pusilla</i>)	4	2	2
Spotted Pardalote (<i>Pardalotus punctatus</i>)	1	1	
Grey Fantail (<i>Rhipidura sp.</i>)	1	1	
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike (<i>Coracina melanops</i>)	1	1	

The Black faced Cuckoo Shrike was the first bird of this species ever caught at Braeside Park and that's after 20 years of banding in which over 2,300 birds have been caught.

Nursery News

By Marj Seaton

Seed Collecting: this continued even on Christmas and New Year's Eves by a couple of dedicated Friends. We have collected some *Lomandra*, small amounts of *Eucalyptus pryoriana* (Coastal Manna-gum) and *Eucalyptus radiata* (Narrow-leaf Peppermint) from the Heathland; *Acacia dealbata* (Silver Wattle) from the western picnic area; *Carex appressa* (Tall Sedge), *Poa labillardieri* (Common Tussock-grass) and *Themeda triandra* (Kangaroo Grass) from the car parks as well as *Indigofera australis* (Austral Indigo) and *Themeda triandra* from the community garden. The main collection of *Lomandra* will happen at the beginning of February.

We've missed much of the *Austrodanthonia geniculata* (Knead Wallaby-grass) this year as most of the seeding plants tended to congregate on the roads in the heathland and these were slashed for firebreaks before we could get to them.

Dianella, *Austrostipa* and *Trachymene composita* (wild parsnip) have made particularly good shows in the heathland this year, and Tiger orchids (*Diuris sulphurea*) popped up in many places at the end of spring. The wedding bush (*Ricinocarpos pinifolius*) hung on for quite a long time and had a resurgence after earlier good rains. It's fascinating to see how well the plants respond to the extra moisture.



Trachymene composita flower. The Heathland was full of these flowers through late spring/early summer with most of the flower stems over 1.5mtrs tall—a stunning sight.

Photo: J St Quintin

Orders: a huge list of plants has been requested to satisfy the Park and also the Climate Change organisation this year. We are in a bit of a panic at present, as we can't see how it is possible to propagate so many plants in such a short time with so few workers. Over 9500 Eucalypts and 5000 grasses are enough to make anyone panic.

Help Needed: If anyone out there can spare a couple of hours occasionally, we would love some help pricking out and preparing cuttings (no experience is required). The first Saturday and Monday of each month as well as the third Sunday are when our working bees are held, 10am until around noon at the nursery. Even the washing of tubes would be a great help.

Hardening Off Area: benches and sprinklers have been installed in the second hardening off area and should be ready for us when summer nears its end.

Around the Nursery: the school gardens and the community gardens have come on wonderfully, and there are still areas to be planted. The Goodenias are thriving and will be useful for many cuttings – their bright green colouring is a change from many of the duller colours of much of our foliage. *Indigofera australis* flowered well this year and have given us plenty of seed. The pond has grown with the extra rains and the occasional frog can be heard. There are some good reflections possible for the photographers among us.



Indigofera australis flowering at the community garden near the nursery.

Photo: J St Quintin

VNPA "Caring For Nature" Picnic Day

By Bev Bancroft

Over 100 friends attended. The days activities included bird watching (Friends of Braeside & Conservation Volunteers Australia), a nature walk led by Leon Costermans, "What is happening in the Park" with Ranger in Charge Des Lucas and a historical re-enactment relating to the early history of the park. Everyone who attended had a thoroughly enjoyable day.

Help is at hand for injured wildlife: call **AWARE** (Patterson Lakes Branch) on **0412 433 727**

A Frogs Life!

By Glen Oliphant, Ranger



Rain! Rain! Glorious rain!!!..... as I was walking the other morning, the sounds that wafted on the still morning air, were simply a symphony. The frogs have responded to the rejuvenation of the wetlands, calling with vigour from every nook and cranny in order to find a mate. The spotted marsh frog *Limnodynastes tasmaniensis* and the striped marsh frog *Limnodynastes peronii* have been calling around mid morning. To the North

American Indian, the frog is the symbol to refresh and cleanse the soul and the ribbet call the pulse of life renewed. Do you know what a polliwog is? No! it is not a character out of Noddy and dare I say it..... Big Ears Umm not sure..... Well neither am I, but I have been informed that it is a tadpole!

The other member of the marsh frog group has also been calling, this is the *Limnodynastes dumerili* the banjo frog, this call isn't a ribbet it is a bonk! The bonking all night is from no..... not what you think..... but this frog. This frog must be on Viagra to keep bonking all night and all morning. The pulse of life renewed??.....umm I'll leave that for you to decide!

And on that completely trivial note we end.



A Striped Marsh Frog
Photo: J Chapman

Night Walk

Conservation Volunteers Australia (CVA) held a night walk in the Park recently. Highlights of the walk were seeing two sugar gliders, ring tail and brush tail possums and lots of birds including a Tawny Frogmouth.



Pair of Tawny Frogmouths, taken at
Moonlit Sanctuary.
Photo: J St Quintin



Sugar Gliders, taken at Moonlit
Sanctuary.
Photo: J St Quintin

New Citizens go Native

From the editor

The City of Greater Dandenong council purchased 100 native violets (*Viola hederacea*) from the Friends nursery to present to new citizens receiving their Australian citizenship on Australia day. The violet was chosen as it will grow just as happily in a pot as in the ground so would suit those with and without gardens.

The Joy of a Native Garden

By Jane St Quintin

Little did my partner suspect when we met a few years ago that meeting me would have such a profound effect on his garden - Yes his garden! The message was brought home in a big way about a year ago when he arrived home from work to find his front garden decimated and me standing in the middle of the destruction with a big grin on my face and a chainsaw in my hands! (Not a recommended action for positive relationship building - fortunately he has a very good sense of humour!). Now began the task of replanting the exposed space with appropriate species.

Fortunately I hadn't completely lost the plot with the chainsaw exercise and had left in place a couple of mature callistemon's, a small melaleuca and a prostrate banksia and grevillea; which were a great starting point for the planting scheme. Not to mention two beautiful mature eucalypts in the back garden.

A great help when planning the garden was being able to pick the brains of the various knowledgeable members of the friends group whom I meet when helping out at the propagating mornings and the book *Indigenous Plants of the Sandbelt* which can be purchased from the Friends group (contact Bev Bancroft) and is an excellent reference source. Plants were sourced from various native nurseries (including the Friends nursery) and whilst I would have liked to use completely indigenous species, I did bow to my partners wishes and used some non-indigenous natives (after all it is his garden!). When choosing non indigenous species I was very careful to ensure they were not a potential weed threat, as we are very close to a Ramsar protected wetland.

Most of the plants were purchased as tube stock, which reduced costs and planting took place in April/May last year and to be honest just eight months later the tube stock plants are just as big as those that came from larger pots (a tip for anyone who wants to save a little money and has the patience to live with smaller plants initially).

Planting was followed by the addition of lots of native wood chip mulch and a couple of small trunks of trees that had fallen prey to the chainsaw were strategically placed as habitat for insects and reptiles. The excellent rains of the last six months have given the new plants a fantastic start and meant that no additional watering was required.

In addition to planting up the front garden the back garden has gained a small frog friendly pond, weedy species such as English ivy and spider plants have been removed and lots more native plants and grasses have been added. I'm gradually adding a bit of a frog corridor around the pond area using tussock forming native grasses. The frogs love it and it looks good too!

The end result of all this hard work, which if I'm honest is much more pleasure than hard work - and yes that includes moving 3 cubic metres of mulch with just a shovel and small wheelbarrow - is an influx of additional fauna to the garden. We have had the privilege of a pair

of Spotted Pardalotes taking up residence and raising not just one but two broods of chicks. Its an amazing experience to be pottering around in the garden only to be buzzed by a tiny little pardalote on its way to or from the nest, sometimes with them diving between your legs. At peak feeding time mum and dad were coming and going every couple of minutes. A Little Wattlebird has raised 2 chicks and just the other week we heard a striped Marsh Frog (the first time we have heard one in the garden) near the pond and now there are tadpoles in the pond, so we all know what he got up to!

There are also regular visits by ringtail possums, who fortunately seem happy to stay up in the trees and just stampede across the tin roof at the back of the house but don't take up residence inside! I swear they wear hobnail boots for the stampede!! Future plans, include the possible addition of a second larger pond incorporating a bog garden, a couple of nesting boxes in the trees and lots more native plants.

So if you don't already enjoy a garden filled with native flora and fauna why not give it a go. You don't have to become a mad woman with a chainsaw like me but can start in a small way with the addition of a couple of plants at a time.

If you are unsure where to start why not come down to the nursery and help out on a propagation morning (see the activities calendar on page 3 for dates) and whilst spending a pleasurable couple of hours helping out with pricking out or pot washing you can pick the brains of the other people there. Or go for a walk in the park and be inspired by the community garden areas and don't forget the nursery is open for plant sales on the 3rd Sunday of each month from 10am to 12 noon. In no time at all you too can be having babies in your back garden!!



Pardalote on his way to feed the babies.

Photo: J St Quintin

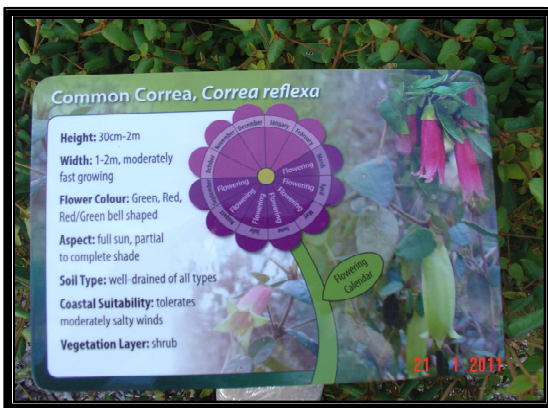
Park Report

From Ranger in Charge Des Lucas' monthly reports

Staff: Summer Ranger Felix Bowman-Derrick has commenced and has completed the first 6 weeks of his 12 week period at the park.

Nursery Management: The 4th tank purchased by the Friends group has been installed and due to the good rains is full – fantastic news going into summer with full water tanks.

Parks Victoria Grants for 2010/11 - Community Garden-Interpretive information, interactive hopscotch and creek bed: 6 plant interpretive signs have been developed and manufactured but are yet to be installed. Materials for the Hop Scotch will be purchased over the coming month followed by materials for the creek bed.



One of the interpretive plant signs
Photo D Lucas

Pest Animal Program - Rabbits:

SSAA Program: The program concluded on the 22nd December for 2010 and will recommence in 2011 in mid to late February.

Ongoing Program: Planning is well advanced for the delivery of the baiting program for 2011.

Climate Positive Planting: Site maintenance has been occurring with spraying of weeds and over 95% of the plants planted in October are surviving. The main casualties are the *Allocasuarina littoralis* (Black She-oak) which doesn't seem to like the unusually wet conditions of the paddock.

Burn Program: The burn for the Heathland will occur when the fuel material is suitably dry and the weather conditions permit. This could be anytime over the next 3 months.

Wetland: The Wetland has been full for the last 3-4 months – there have been 4 pairs of blue billed ducks breeding on the wetland as well as many other species. The view from the birdhide has improved and the azolla has dissipated.

Melbourne Water Grant Application – Great News!!: The friends have been awarded a \$9,445 grant through the Melbourne Water River Incentive Program and a \$1000 grant for group support, which will provide support to the group for postage, advertising, stationary and printing.

The \$9445 grant will help to rehabilitate a 100 metre section of the Dingley waterway and racecourse dam. This project will involve the control of erosion, some fencing to exclude cattle from the Dingley waterway, weed control, the purchase of potting mix, heavy duty frames and tree guards and the planting of Indigenous aquatic plants.

BBQ Replacement: The 4 BBQ's have been replaced and are working very well - there are still concrete apron works to complete on each.

Picnic Tables: There are 10 new permanently fixed picnic tables to be installed in the next few months with five of these going into the Federation Picnic Area.

Road works: Planning has commenced for repair to the road system throughout the park. The work is likely to happen in late March – early April 2011

Christmas – New Year Period: Braeside Park experienced a very busy Christmas Day with over 5000 visitors to the Telford Picnic Area. Unfortunately this high usage had a rather negative result the following morning which required the attention of the park cleaner and two ranger staff for **3.5 hours** to clear away the litter and tidy the site to make it suitably presentable for visitors to the park.

Unfortunately there has also been an increase in dumping of litter and pets throughout the park with pet dogs, rabbits and chooks being removed from the park by park staff.

Braeside Park Rainfall: The rain experienced during the week of 11-15 January 2011 has added to the damage to the trail system throughout the park caused by the rainfall events in November/December 2010. Areas already eroded have eroded further. Signage has been placed throughout the park advising visitors of the surface changes until repairs are carried out. A portion of the Cypress drive is rather rough to travel over.

There have been many sections of the park inundated with water with the excellent rain of the last 4 months. There have been several portions of the park which many regular visitors have never seen flooded or with water inundation. If you've never seen the southern portion of the wetland full of water, now is a great time to visit the park.

Braeside Park Rainfall 2010

