

FRIENDS OF BRAESIDE PARK NEWSLETTER

July 2010, no. 4



BRAESIDE PARK

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The opinions expressed in this
newsletter are the authors' and
do not necessarily reflect those
of Parks Victoria or its staff.



Editorial Opportunity

Wanted: any member who is interested in journalism, writing, or publishing, and who is keen to take on and refresh the Friends of Braeside Newsletter.

After nearly five years editing the newsletter, your editor has decided it's time for a change. The November 2010 issue will be the last under my editorship.

Mentoring and advice will be available as needed for any member interested in taking on editorship. An option would be to co-edit the first edition for 2011 and take over from then.

Please contact Val La May on 9598 6355 or Braeside Park on 9265 7300 if you are interested in helping the Friends in this way.

Ernie's A Team achievements

The Wednesday workers on The A Team have been very busy; Park visitors should notice the improvements the group has completed.

Visitors' Centre The gardens around the Centre have been tidied, weeded and planted with 400 ground cover plants. The red and green Correas are flowering and the Lomandras and Bidgee Widgee help complete a great garden.

Grasslands It has been too wet to mow, so about 800 native grasses have been planted in the area.

Car Park 2 (Kestrel) Plant guards and frames were collected, to be re-used in the Salinity area for the July Community Planting.

Federation Picnic Area This area has also been weeded and tidied.

Other jobs Some helped with chipping and mulching, while others searched for rabbit warrens, which were marked with GPS coordinates for later destruction.

Wednesday afternoons All welcome to help us in the Community Garden area on Wednesdays from 1pm till about 3pm.

Join The A Team any Wednesday at the Park Office at 9am; morning tea with the 3 C's: Cuppa, Cake and Chat is included.

NATIONAL TREE DAY PLANTING Saturday 31st of July 9.00am to noon

Follow the arrow signs to planting site

Committee Members Needed

The Friends of Braeside Park welcome any members who would like to participate in our Committee. Help us to plan activities and projects in the Park—new ideas are always valued. We meet once a month on the fourth Tuesday at 1.00pm.

To obtain a nomination form, please ring our Secretary, Elsie Anderson, on 9583 6099.

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**

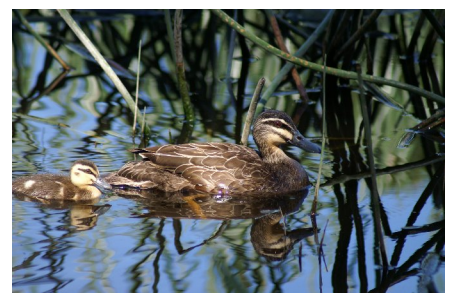
Activity	Time/Day	July	Aug	Sept
Committee Meeting	4th Tuesday , 1.00pm at the Visitor Centre	27	24	28
Community Projects Weekday	9:00 - 12:00 noon Wednesday at the Park Office	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 28
Plant Propagation Nursery Facility	10:00 - 12:00 noon 1st Sat & Mon 3rd Sun	3 5 18	2 7 15	4 6 19
Seed & Cutting Collection Meet at Robin Car park	10:00 - 12:00 noon The Fri. before the 1st Sat. of the month	2 July	6 Aug	3 Sept
Water Quality Monitoring Meet at the Park Office	9:00 - 12:00 noon 3rd Tues	20	17	21
Community Projects Weekends	9:00 - 12:00 noon, follow the signs Morning tea provided	Sat. 31st Nat'l Tree Day Planting	Sat 28th Planting Day	Sun 12th Planting Day
Special Activities		Dean Smith Sat. 10th Natural History Displays Visitor Centre 2:00 –3:00pm Gold coin donation	AGM Sun. 22nd 2:00—3:30pm Melanie Smith Melb. Water	Spring Heathland Walk Sun. 26th 2pm Visitors Centre

Annual General Meeting: How Good is Our Water?

How do we monitor the Park's water quality? Come along on to our AGM Sunday 22 August and meet Melanie Smith, Melbourne Water's Water Watch Coordinator. Melanie will tell us all about the Park's water quality. Melanie will also bring the Water Watch Trailer, which features microscopes to look at tiny water creatures, a frog call demo and lots more.

The 'business' part of our AGM will be brief as usual, allowing plenty of time to hear about our water quality and to have a good look at the trailer. Scrumptious afternoon tea will follow the meeting.

**Annual General Meeting and Water Talk
Sunday 22nd August, from 2pm till about 3.30pm
Visitors' Centre
Arvo tea included!**



Black Ducks enjoying the Park's water.
Photo: J. Chapman

Vale Ron Pearson



Ron at work at the Nursery, about 1996.

Ron died peacefully on the 25th of May 2010 at 87 years 6 months and 4 days. Ron's wife, Phyllis who died on New Years Day this year, lived for exactly the same length of time. Ron had been at Ripplebook On The Park in Clarinda, due to his failing health and for this man who had so much to live for, this period was frustrating and difficult.

Ron had an interesting and full life, spent with the loves of his life, Phyllis and their children: Carole, Ken and Philip and their families. He was a man fascinated with learning, with a scientific and meticulous mind which he utilized to its limit.

Ron admitted he was a very shy person who found it difficult to talk to people and make lasting friendships. He loved to discuss and argue a point, which, he said was often mistaken for obstinacy. He loved challenging people's assumptions and viewpoints.

A story that demonstrates Ron's shyness was when his mother, a keen gardener who grew colourful dahlias, gladioli etc., one day insisted he take a bunch of flowers to his teacher. Very unwillingly with the flowers wrapped to resemble a parcel with no flowers visible he took them. The teacher was so delighted that she made him parade them to every classroom in the school. He was mortified and he said it took him 40 years to recover from the ordeal. It might be fair to say though, that he inherited his love of anything botanical from his mother!

Ron, with help from his father built their house and 13 months later the family moved in. After a long career with the ICI Ron decided it was time for a change and he and Phyllis bought Dixon's Hardware in Springvale. They were a great team and both loved working in the business. After a serious illness Ron semi-retired and both developed an interest in art through the Beaumaris Art Group. Ron became a very good painter and loved to paint scenes from the local area. The family's involvement in this group continued for many years.

Ron had a keen community spirit revolving around conservation, preservation and education. He belonged to numerous groups including:

- Society of Instrument Technology Australia
- Moorabbin State School Council
- Beaumaris Art Group
- The Field Naturalists Club of Victoria
- The Society for Growing Australian Plants
- Mordialloc Beaumaris Conservation League
- Friends of Braeside Park

A love of native plants had been established during his happy marriage and the entire family became involved in the Society for Growing Australian Plants. Ron drew on his love of anything scientific and turned this hobby into almost another full time job. Over the years the family was taken on trips all over the state and NSW and South Australia, searching for seeds from indigenous and threatened species.

Ron became involved in the establishment of Karkarook and Bradshaw Parks, the Cranbourne Botanical Gardens and he fought for the preservation of Chiquita Park.

He was instrumental in establishing the MMBW Park at Braeside. He and Phyllis worked tirelessly for this cause and to his credit there is now a thriving community who work to save seed, plant and foster the growth of native plants and share this all with the community. The potting sheds and igloo are still an integral part of this community and Kim, Philip's daughter, has proudly worked as a volunteer at "Ron Pearson's Nursery" through her school's community service programme.

Ron never lost his zest for experimentation or his love of nature. Whether he was digging holes to place the stumps for his own home or cataloguing indigenous plants and seeds, he maintained the highest standards. He took pride in setting the benchmark high and he must have felt a great deal of satisfaction in his achievements. *[Excerpts from Ron's eulogy given by his son Philip Pearson.]*

Taxidermy 101, a talk and demo by Dean Smith

Senior Curator, Museum Victoria

How do you preserve Sam the Koala for all time? Call in one of Museum Victoria's curators and allow about two weeks' work, that's how.

On Saturday 10th of July we were fortunate to have a return visit from Dean Smith, whose role is to help prepare the display specimens at the Museum. (Dean has also prepared most of the specimens on display in our Visitors' Centre.)

Dean brought the Discovery Van chock-full of specimens, both faux and real. These treasures ranged from eucalypt leaves preserved in glycerine, through a fake Aboriginal shield, to a real dinosaur bone.

Getting back to Sam (who was actually a female), Dean's slides omitted the 'gory bits', but showed us a step-by-step depiction of one method of taxidermy. The process starts off with recording the appearance of the original specimen, since each animal's face is individual. Photos are taken and a mould is made of the nose area or of the entire face.

The process continues with skinning the animal, tanning the hide (to keep it soft and preserve it), assembling the skeleton, sculpting a model of the body over the skeleton, making a plaster mould of this 'mannequin', and filling the mould with foam to make a cast of the model. The preserved skin is attached to the foam body and details such as glass eyes are added. Sculpting and painting are needed to create features such as eyelids, and other soft parts of the body. This is where the mould of the nose area is used, to re-create the animal's distinctive appearance.

For birds and reptiles or for very small mammals, curators employ other methods, such as freeze-drying or use of a wood body model covered with string.

Throughout his talk, Dean passed around examples of preserved specimens, some half-finished, so we could examine them closely. The kids especially loved the fake dinosaur poo. They also loved making plaster casts of their fingers after the talk.

One purpose of preservation is to conserve the original specimen, while allowing a realistic, light-weight replica to be used in displays and on talks in the community. Thus, Dean's daughter Laura had no difficulty carrying around a replica dinosaur thigh-bone nearly as tall as she is; whereas she wouldn't have been able to budge the original bone.

A most informative and entertaining glimpse into the life of a curator, many thanks, Dean.



A few of the specimens from the Museum (the Koala isn't Sam). *Photo: VL*



Emergency markers in Braeside Park

You may have recently noticed posts with markers in the Park, shown in the photo to the left (taken by Bev Bancroft). These markers are located in strategic sites throughout the Park.

The emergency markers are part of a state-wide scheme to aid emergency personnel. The markers' locations are now indicated on Park maps. This scheme was organised by ESTA (Emergency Service Telecommunications Authority), which is responsible for the Triple Zero emergency call system.

In the event of an emergency, find the nearest marker and, when you ring emergency services, quote the number—with the BSP prefix—which is printed vertically on the blue metal plate. The number is linked to the ESTA database with GPS coordinates, and will help rescuers to find you more quickly. For more details, see the Parks Victoria web site at http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au/1process_content.cfm?section=184&page=2.

Nursery News

By Marj Seaton



Bracken and Sword-sedge We are growing five bracken plants at the back of one of the igloos, hoping that these will both take and spread so that there will be stock in the nursery for any future requirements. At the last seed collection day, several Sword-sedge *Lepidosperma concavum* plants (pictured) were dug up and taken to the Community Garden. After planting it is expected that they will die down but hopefully send up new shoots from the rhizome at some time in the near future. These plants can be difficult to get started – we've failed from seed in the past, so fingers are crossed. They are clumping plants which can give an 'architectural' touch to a garden and make quite a good edge.

Stock We still have a good number of Allocasuarinas left after the last planting day, but eucalypts and wattles are depleted. Most of our stock is now comprised of grasses, Ficinia and Lomandra for filling in car parks and plantations around the Park. There are still plenty of these available for future planting days and for the Wednesday Project Group's activities.

Watering Liz has taken over the task of looking after our watering system. We have been losing plants due to over-watering, so she has considerably cut back the watering in all areas and is monitoring the results.

Plug trays These have proved particularly useful for grasses and will be our preferred containers for grasses in future, though tubes will probably still need to be used for community planting days. We have to be careful not to sow seed too early as the potting mix has only a small amount of fertiliser which is readily depleted and the plants die off. Over-watering has caused losses this year too, particularly with Wallaby Grass (*Austrodanthonia racemosa*).

Plants for sale If members wish to buy plants they are welcome to attend the nursery on one of the days we are present (see the Activities Calendar in this issue). Most tubes sell for \$2 each. We have quite a lot of native violets, which do well during our winter but need to be in shady spots for summer. Bidgee-widgee and Dichondra (Kidney Weed) are also well represented.

Park Report—

From Ranger in Charge Des Lucas' monthly reports

Revegetation Program

So far this year, close to 6,000 plants have been put in to the Park by the 'A Team' and during Community Plantings.

**The National Tree Day planting is on
Saturday 31st of July
from 9am to noon.**

Follow the arrow signs to planting site.

Nursery Management

With the aim of attaining water self-sufficiency, planning is underway for a grant for three more rain-water tanks, e.g. for the office complex. The vehicle shed roof catchment is now plumbed into the rain-water tanks. The tanks are currently two-thirds full.

Grants

Among projects included in the 2010-11 Parks Vic grants application are improved interpretation at the Bird Hide, a dry creek bed in the Community Nursery area, and further Burgan and woody weed removal.

Pest Animal Program—Rabbits

The ongoing program to control rabbits has resulted in the removal of 661 rabbits from the Park, during twelve control sessions so far.

Pest Animal Program—Foxes

Seven foxes were also removed during the pest control sessions.

Wetland Works

The water level in the wetlands has risen by more than 300mm following the works funded by the Friends group. A big thank you to the Friends for this funding.