

FRIENDS OF BRAESIDE PARK NEWSLETTER

May 2011, no. 3



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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.



Climate Positive Having a Positive Effect on the Park

From the editor

Over the years the land that is now Braeside Park has had a multitude of uses, including market gardening, racecourse training facility and a sewerage works. This has resulted in major changes to the vegetation within the park with what would have originally been Red Gum Grassy Woodland, Heathland and ephemeral wetland turned into mainly pasture. Since Braeside Park came under the management of Parks Victoria work has been undertaken to remove weeds and restore the original vegetation which would once have covered the area, this is a time consuming and costly business.

Climate Positive are a company who offer services for companies or individuals who want to offset carbon emissions and offer "Positive planting projects to restore biodiversity and to begin addressing historical carbon debt." As part of this scheme Climate Positive have worked with Braeside Park to plant and protect several acres of paddock on the west side of Cypress Drive. This work has included fencing the entire area with rabbit proof fencing (any regular visitors to the park amongst you will know the park has a healthy rabbit population) and the planting of 6000 plants so far. All the plants have been grown by the Friends group from seed collected from within the park to ensure the local provenance of the vegetation is retained.

The first planting occurred in October 2010 with 2000 plants put in the ground, for this planting "islands" were sprayed out with a non-specific herbicide and then planted. In May this year a further 4000 plants went in and this time the entire paddock area to be planted was sprayed before planting. Follow up maintenance has included brush cutting around the planted islands and spot spraying within them. So far the results are looking fantastic with a 95% survival rate from the first planting, which is all the more surprising considering the amount of rain we have had which has resulted in part of this paddock becoming extremely soggy! There will be a further planting in October this year which will push the numbers up towards the 10,000 mark. This scheme is a very positive step in helping to turn the park from paddock back into native vegetation.

If you would like to know more about Climate Positive visit their website www.climatepositive.org or take a walk down Cypress drive and take a look at the paddock on the west side between Cypress drive and Howard Road Trail.

Wednesdays with Ernie's 'A Team'

By Bev Bancroft

Ernie is back after 4 weeks Annual Leave.

GRASSLANDS

Mowing and weeding has continued. Over 1200 grasses have been planted around the perimeter - lots of rain will increase plant and grass regeneration, so we will be looking forward to Spring.

GUARDS & FRAMES

Trailer load after trailer load of guards and frames were collected for the June & July community planting days.

MULCHING

Car parks numbered 5 & 6 were sprayed and mulched in readiness for planting by the community.

MENTONE GIRLS GRAMMAR

A new group started this term and were given a talk and a tour of the Park with Ernie.

More help is always needed and everyone is most welcome.

- meet at the Park Office, Wednesdays 9 am
- 10.30 am morning tea provided

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	August	September	October
Committee Meeting	4th Monday, from 1.00pm at the Visitor Centre	22	26	24
Community Garden	9.30 - 12.00, 3rd Sun of the month at nursery	21	18	16
Community Projects Weekday	9:00 - 12:00 noon Wednesday at the Park Office	3		
		10	7	5
		17	14	12
		24	21	19
		31	28	26
Nursery open for plant sales	10.00 - 12.00 3rd Sunday of the month	21	18	16
Plant Propagation Nursery Facility	10:00 - 12:00 noon 1st Sat & Mon 3rd Sun	1	3	1
		6	5	3
		21	18	16
Plant Propagation Nursery Facility	1.00pm - 3.00pm Wednesday	3		
		17	14	19
		31		
Water Quality Monitoring Meet at the Park Office	9:00 - 12:00 noon 3rd Tues	16	20	18
Community Projects Weekends	9:00 - 12:00 noon, follow the signs	Community Planting Day Sunday 28th	Spring Planting Sunday 11th	
Special Activities	Times to be advised	Sunday 21st AGM	Heathland Walk	Bird Walk

AGM - Sunday 21st August

From the Editor

The AGM will be held on Sunday 21st August at Braeside Visitors Centre starting at 2.30 pm and finishing around 4pm.

After a short business meeting, at 3pm **Des Lucas, Ranger in Charge at Braeside Park** will present a Visual Display on **Changing Faces at Braeside Park**. Hear about the many happenings at the Park and view some marvellous pictures of its varied landscapes plants and wildlife.

Everyone is invited and afternoon tea will be provided, please come along and learn a bit more about your park.

A Healthier Heathland

From report by Liz Mynes

For over eight years the Friends, helped by a grant from Parks Victoria, have been working to restore the natural biodiversity in parts of the remnant heathland where Burgan (*Kunzea ericoides*) has become dominant, overwhelming other plants.

Some time ago Liz Mynes, a ranger at the park, wrote about what is being done to tackle this problem. Here is part of what she wrote.

"The population of burgan in the heathland at Braeside Park has increased dramatically over the last ten dry years. Where Burgan is dominant very little light, space or moisture is available to other plants, thereby forming an unhealthy monoculture. This would not be much of a problem if heathland vegetation still existed over thousands of hectares across the suburbs. However we have so little remnant vegetation left that we need to actively manage the heathland to achieve maximum biodiversity.

A targeted Burgan removal program began at Braeside several years ago. This program involves cutting and physically removing the Burgan and applying herbicide to the stumps to prevent regrowth.

The Friends of Braeside Park have been involved in many aspects of the project, including helping to physically remove the Burgan plants and chipping out small Burgan plants. The Friends group has also propagated important heathland plant species and revegetated areas left bare by Burgan removal.

Recently both the Friends and Park staff have seen the heathland flourishing as a result of Burgan control. On your walk take the time to look closely at sites where Burgan has been removed several years ago. With the extra rain species such as Correa, Sword sedge, Bundled guinea flower, Wild parsnip, Wedding bush, Greenhood orchids and Cherry ballart are all regenerating naturally. These places are now healthy and diverse once again. Such sights are more than enough to reward everyone for their efforts.

Thank you to the Wednesday working group and the Propagation group for the many hours of work they have contributed to the project".



Sword Sedge Flower in Heathland
Photo: J St Quintin



Tiger Orchid in Heathland
Photo: J St Quintin

Nursery News

By Marj Seaton

We are midway through the planting season and holes are starting to appear in our stock. There are still tiny seedlings growing in the igloos and hopefully the weather will remain dampish so that they have a chance to grow big enough for planting before hot weather sets in later in the year.

We have had an excellent supply of *Patersonia* this year and some have been swapped with Karkarook for other plants we needed at Braeside.

We have been having trouble with one of the heat beds and either it will need replacing or new wiring if we can get the appropriate wire. There are three others and they will suffice for this year's crop.

Grubs are starting to appear in the shade house, a bit earlier than last year maybe, and we'll have to keep an eye on them so they don't denude the wattles and gums. With so many plants growing in close proximity, the grubs think they are in heaven.

Seed collecting continues through the cold months, but mostly for *Eucalypts* as there is not much else around. The rest of the time we look at what is happening to some of the cleared areas, for example whether the burghan is coming back with vigour, or if some of the little plants like *Hibbertia* and wild parsnips are getting their chance to shine. At our last inspection, the billabong planted up a couple of seasons ago is full of water and doing famously. Of course, the weeds are having a wonderful time too. The Wednesday Project team does its best to cull out the wild passionfruit and coastal wattle, but they are only just holding these weeds back. Large coastal wattles on the golf course next door disperse large quantities of seed and the birds carry many of these into the Park.

Weeding and the remaining pricking out are our main preoccupations in our current sessions. When we look at how well the plants are growing around the Park, it is thought to be all worthwhile. Hope you agree.

New Artwork at the Visitor Centre

By Glen Oliphant



There are some wonderful new paintings to view in the Visitor Centre. These paintings were done by a young man called Shakib Mohammadi from Noble Park Primary Grade 3/4. There has been an initiative to involve young people and different communities in the park and one of the results of this are these fabulous paintings by Shakib. Shakib is a very quiet unassuming young man with a prodigious artistic talent, in fact the whole family are all very talented. We would like to thank Shakib and his family for this fabulous new artwork now being displayed.

Black Cockatoos, painted by Shakib Mohammadi

Photo: Glen Oliphant

Annual Spring Walk

By Elsie Anderson and the editor

The annual Spring Walk in the Park will be held on Sunday 16th October 2 - 4pm and will be led by Ranger in Charge Des Lucas. This year we will not only visit the restricted area of the Heathland to view the wedding bush in flower but also cross over to our area of native Grassland where there will be much colour from early nancies, milkmaids, riceflowers and many other grassland flowers. The walk will be about 3 km of flat but rough ground in a part of the Park not usually open to visitors, **all** are welcome.

Editor's blurb now follows...

This is a fabulous opportunity to visit the Grassland block which has been the subject of intense activity by Ernie's A-team over the last few years. Grasslands are one of the most endangered vegetation classes within Australia and this small area is very important in the preservation of remnant Grassland vegetation. Without all the hard work put in by the Friends group and the park rangers this small piece of priceless vegetation would probably no longer exist.

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

Bird Sightings in the Park, May—July

From report by Steve MacDonald

First record of the Diamond Dove in May

A pair of Wedgetail Eagles have been sighted for the fifth week in a row. Possible drawn to the rabbit carcasses from the shooting program. The Australian Shoveller has also been sighted after a long absence. Blue bill ducks are still on the wetland.

Flame robins sighted in the Heathland other sightings in the Heathland , Fantail Cuckoo and a male Golden Whistler. There has also been an overflight of Little Corellas.

Birds of Prey sighted over these months the Wedge Tailed Eagle, Hobby or Little falcon, Swamp Harrier, Black shouldered Kite, Nankeen Kestrel , Brown Goshawk and the Brown Falcon .

Bird Banding - May and June 2011

From the report from Malcolm Brown

Only two birds caught in May (the weather was awful!) but in June, 24 birds caught and lots of re-traps, (more than half of the birds caught). Details of the birds caught on both mist netting days are below.

These are pretty good results for Braeside. It's good to get a few birds but the re-traps are very interesting. It's not uncommon to get a swag of re-traps in one go and also for some to be old. Two Superb Fairy Wrens were over 5 years old which is a good indication the population should survive in an isolated remnant, especially considering what they have been through during the past drought. Whilst the Spinebills would have been passing through, the Eastern Yellow Robin is more than likely home.

Some of the past revegetation projects in the Heathland are also looking pretty good, no doubt due to recent rain. The coming breeding season for birds in Braeside's Heathland will be important and interesting to monitor.

Bird Name	Caught	New	Retrap
Superb Fairy Wren	10	2	8
White-browed Scrub Wren	5	2	3
Brown Thornbill	4	3	1
Eastern Spinebill	4	4	0
White-plumed Honey Eater	1	1	0
Eastern Yellow Robin	2	1	1

Bird Surveys - Help Required

From the editor

Are you a budding twitcher or would you like to improve your bird ID skills? If you have an interest in birds maybe you could become part of the Friends birds surveying group. All that is involved is taking a walk through the park and recording all the birds that you see over a 1 to 2 hour period - the time taken is dependant on how quickly you walk as there is a set route that is used! If you are not sure if your ID skills are up to it or just want to know what is involved you are welcome to join one of the current observers to get an idea of how it is done.

You can carry out the survey at a time and on a day that is convenient to you and ideally you would be able to commit to one survey per month but any time that you have available will be greatly appreciated.

If you are interested please contact Bev. Bancroft 9551 4578.

Annual Spring Walk continued...

Continued from page 5

The Grassland block is protected by rabbit proof fencing and is the subject of hand weeding, brush cutting, monthly mowing and extensive planting. The result of all this hard work is an extension of the original remnant area and a massive improvement in the quality of vegetation.

The introduced pasture grasses are gradually being reduced and replaced by indigenous native grasses and flowers. In Spring it is a beautiful sight with waving sheaths of *Themeda triandra* (Kangaroo grass) and other native grasses and lovely spring flowers such as *Arthropodium strictum* (Chocolate Lily), *Burchardia umbellata* (Milkmaids) and of course the centrepiece is the lovely orchids.

I have been lucky enough to spend some time working in the Grassland block during spring and also just spending time enjoying the wonderful sights and being let loose with my camera! My work is involved with ecological restoration and it is a joy to see such a lovely piece of native grassland, they really are few and far between. I would highly recommend taking part in the Spring walk and seeing the Grassland in it's prettiest season. If you are really lucky the orchids will be starting to flower and hopefully there will be even more this year than last year.

If you do participate in the walk, please take the time whilst you are enjoying the sights to remember all the hard work that has gone in to getting the Grasslands into such fabulous condition. Of course in order to maintain and further improve the condition of this area lots of future hard work is required. I call it hard work but actually it is a pleasure to sit with other members of the Friends group and hand weed or even to chuff around with a mower. So if you have a spare Wednesday morning and are motivated by what you see on the Spring walk why not join Ernie's A-team and add to this lovely area of the Park.

All photo's below by J St Quintin



The Rabbit proof fence



Native grasses waving in the wind



Milkmaids



Milkmaids and Chocolate Lilies

Park Report

From Ranger in Charge Des Lucas' monthly reports

Staff: Most staff members have been exposed to the cold/flu over the last few weeks which has impacted on the delivery of Park Services.

Pest Animal Program: - Rabbits:

SSAA Program: Since the program commenced in April of 2010, 2020 rabbits and 19 foxes being controlled throughout the park.

The Baiting program did not occur this year with activities focusing on harbour removal, warren fumigation and destruction.

Roadworks: Major road works have been completed which included resealing two portions of the Telford Access road the first opposite the ibis car park and the second just past the kookaburra car park and past rosella. The entrance of Robin car park has been totally rebuilt.

Climate Positive Planting: Planting stage 2 undertaken on 18th May with 4000 seedlings planted.

A further planting will be arranged for spring – mid October.

Automatic Gate: The new automatic gate was commissioned in mid June.

Wetland: With the continuing rainfall the wetlands have been continually topped up including Long Swamp.

The Suggestion of placement of a sign has been taken up by the park and will be installed in the near future – depending on other park priorities.

Link Road: The link road will be re opened in the near future with the installation of in-ground spikes and also a gate at the eastern end.

Still awaiting the installation of a couple of signs.

Heathland Gate: A new gate is to be installed into the Heathland to assist with Fire Access to the Park.

Upgrade of Trails: The Howard Road Swallow Car Park Trail Link will be upgraded in the coming few months along with the Telford Picnic Area trails.

Waterwatch Results from July.

From Glen Oliphant

This months results from waterwatch

	Dingley Waterway	Bent Bridge	Sherrys Bridge	Ng Yallock	Wetlands
Air Temp	12.5	14	13.5	NA	NA
Water Temp	12.7	11.1	10.6	NA	NA
Turbidity	10	10	10	NA	NA
PH	7.2	7.1	6.4	NA	NA
Conductivity	1.0	0.20	0.20	NA	NA
Dissolved Oxygen	8	10	8	NA	NA
Phosphate	0.25	0.25	0.15	NA	NA

Ng Yallock and the Wetland are overgrown so no results are available. Sherrys bridge recorded a PH reading of 6.4 this is in the acidic range and may be the result of fertilising or top dressing of fairways in the Southern golf Course. The water temperature can be higher than the air due to the dense nature of water. Air being a gas will heat up and cool down quicker than water which is a dense liquid, this will show sometimes in our results .

Overall the results show the waterway is in reasonable health The phosphate readings are high overall and this may be due to many factors e.g. oils from the road surface, fertilisers, etc .