

FRIENDS OF BRAESIDE PARK NEWSLETTER

June 2012, no. 9



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.



2012 AGM

This years Annual General Meeting will be held on Sunday 12th August, beginning at 2.30pm and scheduled to finish approximately 4pm. There will be a short business meeting followed by a presentation on "*Braeside's Murky Past*". The talk promises to be very interesting and will cover the story behind the remnant buildings and earth works in the Park. If you are not aware of the Park's history or would like to learn more about it this is a good opportunity to expand your knowledge.

Prior to becoming a metropolitan park under the management of Parks Victoria, the land that we now know as Braeside Park has been the site of market gardens; a horse training facility where the famous Pharlap was once stabled and a sewage treatment plant built during the post-war expansion of the area. As the urban area continued to expand the sewage treatment plant was moved to Bangholme (the South East Sewage Treatment Plant).

The meeting and presentation will be followed by Afternoon Tea, giving everyone an opportunity to catch up with old friends and/or meet new fellow Friends of Braeside Park.

Wednesdays with Ernie's 'A Team'

By Bev Bancroft

Whilst I have taken some time off to circumnavigate Australia, the "A" Team have been really busy.

GRASSLANDS

Several days have been spent weeding and mowing. Our new Mower donated from the Friends funds has been a great success. Over 1,800 grasses have been planted.

VOLUNTEER WEEK

This was celebrated with morning tea including muffins and apricot slice. The highlight for all being pinned with volunteer badges and congratulated for all of the work our volunteers do.

VISITORS CENTRE

More tree-guards and frames have been removed, some shrubs have been pruned and more planting has taken place, it's looking good.

MULCHING

A great job has been done in Pelican and Robin car parks

SCHOOLS

Mentone Girls Grammar School have completed their first half of the year. Many thanks for the large number of grasses they have helped us provide for the grassland project. A new group will start soon.

Keysborough Secondary College have also completed their assignment. Many thanks for all the hard work they did around the Propagation area.

More help is always needed for a variety of jobs - everyone is most welcome.

- meet at the Park Office, Wednesdays 9 am - 12 noon.
- morning tea provided

Wednesday afternoons are continuing 1pm - 3pm in the Friends Community Garden for anyone that may be keen to learn about propagation.

Thanks To The Helpers

Those who helped produce the newsletter:

Elsie Anderson
Bev Bancroft
Marj Seaton
Park Rangers

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Friends of Braeside Park - ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

Activity	Time/Day	July	August	September
Committee Meeting	4th Monday, from 13.00 at the Visitor Centre	23	27	24
Community Garden	09.30 - 12.00, 3rd Sun of the month at nursery	15	19	16
Community Projects Weekday	09:00 - 12:00 Wednesday at the Park Office	4	1	5
		11	8	12
		18	15	19
		25	22	26
			29	
Nursery open for plant sales	10.00 - 12.00 3rd Sunday of the month	15	19	16
Plant Propagation Nursery Facility	10:00 - 12:00 noon 1st Sat & Mon 3rd Sun	7	4	1
		9	6	3
		15	19	16
Plant Propagation Nursery Facility	13.00 - 15.00 Wednesday	18	1	12
			29	
Seed & Cutting Collection. Meet at Robin Car Park	10.00 - 12.00 Fri before 1st Saturday	6	3	31st Aug
Water Quality Monitoring Meet at the Park Office	09:00 - 12:00 3rd Tues	17	21	18
Community Projects Weekends	09:00 - 12:00 noon, follow the signs	National Tree Day Planting Day Sun 29th	Community Planting Day Sun 26th	Spring Planting Festival Sun 9th
Special Activities	Times to be advised		AGM 12th Sunday 2:30 - 4:00	Spring Walk - Heathland & Grasslands Sunday 23rd

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

Community Open Day

By Des Lucas (Ranger in Charge)

The Community Garden Open Day was held on Sunday 20th May from 9.00am – 2:00pm.

The cool but dry late autumn morning provided a pleasant backdrop to the activities of the day.

Group members commenced with a quick tidy up of the nursery and garden precinct and preparation of display boards and information panels. The day was well attended by several family groups as well as individuals and members of the friends group. The Open Day was also officially attended by Lorraine Wreford MLA - the State Member of Parliament for Mordialloc District.

Visitors were given a tour of the nursery and propagating area with members answering questions as required. There were a number of plants purchased and the day was capped off with a free sausage sizzle and a cuppa. A great day was had by all.

The pictures below Friends members and visitors enjoying the day.



Master class in propagation techniques. At the table from left to right; Bev Bancroft, Lorraine Wreford, Judith Sise and Dorothea Kassell
Photo: John Burns



More hints and tips. At the table from left to right; Judith Sise, Dorothea Kassell and Marj Seaton
Photo: John Burns

Nursery News

By Marj Seaton

Planting has started so one of our jobs each time we meet is to move plants between the shade house and the two bird cages (hardening off areas). It gives us a good feeling to see these outside areas full of mature plants. We're still pricking out and doing a bit of dividing of *Dichondra repens* (Kidney Weed).

SEED COLLECTING: We've had the occasional extra person coming with us in recent times – thank you, especially Peter and John. Although we don't always collect any seed, we do try to take some cuttings most days when we visit the Heathland. Correas always, sometimes Billardiera, Bossiaea, Dillwynia and we've added a few Ozothamnus this year.

In June, Bill and I were trying to avoid a very wet grassy track in the Heathland, a fairly rough process, when we came across a new plant (to us). On investigation, it appears to be a type of heath. It is in an area which the Wednesday group doesn't visit so the plant has had ample opportunity to grow into a large bush, approximately 5metres by 5 metres. The rangers have been told. It doesn't appear to have cast off little ones so it probably isn't Spanish heath. The rangers are going to let it flower, possibly within the month, so they can have someone identify it.

NURSERY PROBLEMS: One of our staples, *Lomandra longifolia*, has not been germinating this year, despite the use of fresh seed. Occasionally we see a leaf pop up, but it seems that ants or some other nasty beast has been eating the seed. We have seen ants on the heat bed, but by the time we see and treat them, the damage has been done.

A box of the native grass *Hemarthria uncinata* (Mat Grass), a grass spreading by stolons, has been prepared using samples taken from the grasslands area, but this too has had leaves nipped off at surface level. The box has been taken off the heat bed and shifted into one of the igloos– not an ideal situation in the cold. It would be good to have this grass establish outside of the grasslands area, perhaps to make a small lawn. Those who have visited Cranbourne Gardens will have seen this grass growing in front of the 1950s house, and it is being used to cover part of the open area at the Ian Potter precinct in Stage Two.

OPEN DAY: The Community Garden Open Day went well. We had quite a lot of visitors and sold a few plants. Des's sausages always bring a crowd!

The Community Garden is looking well at present. The Mentone Girls' Grammar class has planted up the northern side of the pond with 'pretties', which will make this area even more attractive in time. This is an ephemeral wetland so does not always have water, but since the drought ended it has mostly contained some water – no guarantees for the future of course.



Hemarthria uncinata

Photo: www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au



Billardiera scandens
Photo: J St Quintin

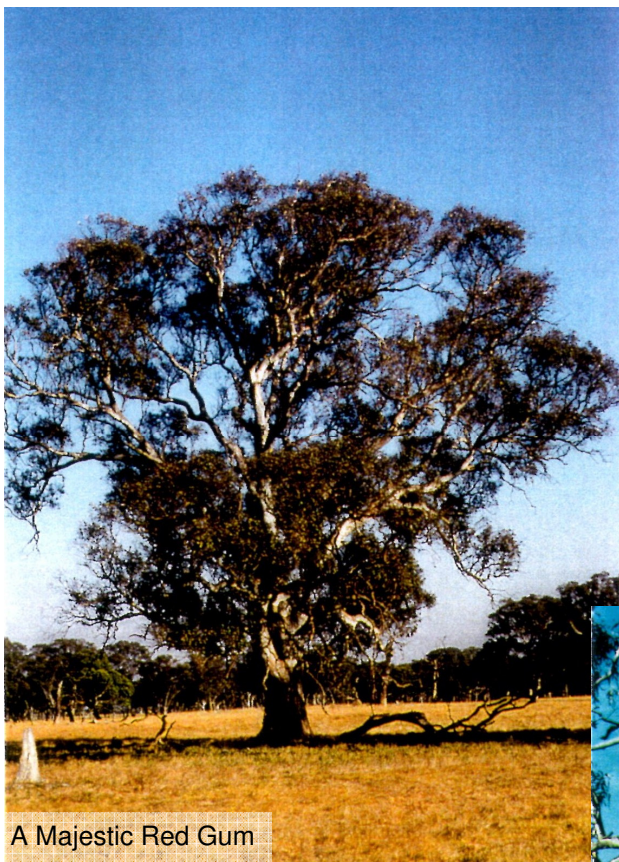
Red Gums and our Stump

*Information from Friends of Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands.
Research by Dorothy Meadow*

It is hard to realise the grandeur of mature River Red Gums (*Eucalyptus Camaldulensis*) - most in our Park are relatively young. Mature trees have huge twisted trunks battered by centuries of weather with many hollows where branches have fallen and a vast canopy, home for many birds, insects and mammals. These were once the source of food and materials for the Bunurong people who used this area before white settlement. These trees grew in the rich silt between dunes left by the retreating sea. The hollows filled with water in winter to make the Carrum Carrum swamp but dried out in summer - ideal for the river reds.

White settlement and the advent of western style farming meant most were cut out and used for railway sleepers, breakwaters or fuel. An aerial photo taken in 1983 shows a giant survivor between the sewage beds in the days when parts of the Park were a Treatment Plant for the growing post war suburbs south of Moorabbin.

The tree died, probably because of the altered drainage of the area which removed the regular flooding Red Gums need and also increased salinity.



A Majestic Red Gum

Meantime an area of Edithvale-Seaford Wetlands had been fenced at the urging of Bird Observers and flora and fauna groups; a bird-hide had been built and with the help of Braeside rangers a large stump from the dead tree was taken to near the bird-hide. It had been sanded and treated so that visitors could admire its size. We are told that Red Gums do not put on regular growth rings. In bad years they may not put on any - so it is impossible to tell its age except by expensive carbon dating, however it was certainly 500 years old or more. They can last over a thousand years.

The bird-hide at Edithvale is currently closed due to structural problems. The stump remains in its old position and its future is unclear. We will keep you posted. It can always return to Braeside.

The Park still has two fine very old gums along the Dingley waterway which are regularly visited by groups touring the conservation bush area of the Park.



A Scar Tree

Coming events in the Park

By Elsie Anderson

National Tree Day

Help further beautify the Park by planting on National Tree Day, Sunday 29th July, from 9am - 12noon. Enter from Lower Dandenong Road and follow the signs. If you can't make the National Tree Day there is a Community planting day on Sunday 26th August, help while the ground is damp and the plants get a good start.

Spring Walk

This is an annual event which gives attendees an excellent chance to view bush flowers after a good winter. This year it will take place on Sunday 23rd September. Meet at the Visitors Centre at 2.00pm, the walk will take approximately 1.5 hours and will be followed by afternoon tea.

Breakfast with the Birds

This walk will take place on Sunday 14th October and will be led by Ian and Margaret Langden. Meet at the Visitors Centre at 7.30am and enjoy a stroll through the bushland viewing birds. You will return to the Visitors Centre for a free BBQ Breakfast about 9.30am

Kingston Seniors Festival

Look out for interesting activities during Kingston Seniors Festival in October. We will have ranger talks and short walks, a bus tour of the Park and activities in the Plant Nursery

Mystery Walk

Des Lucas will lead a Mystery Walk in the Park on Sunday 25th November, followed by afternoon tea. Des is a mine of information about the park and his walks are always great fun and very informative so keep the date free, details will follow in a later Newsletter.

Braeside Walkers

Don't forget the Braeside Walkers do the Park circuit every Tuesday and Friday morning leaving the Visitors Centre at 9.30 am and returning about 11.00am. Walk at your own pace with friends and enjoy morning tea afterwards if you wish.

Calling All Photographers

By the Editor

The Friends of Braeside Park are developing an additional computer based presentation for the visitor centre about Braeside Park. To complete this project the Friends are asking the membership and the wider community to contribute to the content of this presentation.

Do you have 5 high quality digital - really great photographs of Braeside Park that you think have the wow factor, it could be a bird, animal, plant or landscape.

Please send your digital photo's to the following des.lucas@parks.vic.gov.au

If you feel there is a need to provide a short description about your photographs then please add text into your email with a relevant link to the photograph.

Many thanks for your support on this exciting project.

Extract from Friends Network News

Extract from Friends Network News Number 79 May 2012.

Parks Victoria staff industrial dispute

This was circulated early April by an anonymous Park ranger involved in the long-running dispute over wages and conditions for Parks Victoria employees. One action in the dispute has been closure of some parks by locking their entry gates to exclude the public. As of mid-May, this is still ongoing. Is this affecting any Friends' activities? What is your experience of the current state of park management – are they starving for lack of money and lack of enough rangers to properly care for these public lands? Please add your contribution to the next issue of *FriendsNET*.

Dear Park Friend,

Your local park may be one of the many parks closed across Victoria today. It is with great sadness that Parks Victoria rangers, who normally love to share our natural open spaces, wildlife and the bush with you and your families, have had to take this action to temporarily close parks, to ensure Parks Victoria has adequate funding into the future for parks and parks staff. I am asking for your understanding and support.

Parks are starving. More and more park area has been given to Parks Victoria to manage without an equivalent increase in general funding for operating costs and salaries. Across some parts of the organisation vacant staff positions run to 25-50% as there is no budget to fill them. The remaining staff are stressed and struggling to meet demands of keeping visitor sites safe and nice to visit, keeping pests and weeds down, wildlife protected and managed, and park volunteers engaged, with little funding to spend on essential works.

Victorians need good parks to rest, recharge and enjoy holiday time, and the tourism industry needs good parks to draw in the tourists that contribute millions of dollars to the Victorian economy.

The Baillieu Government has capped public servant wage increases below the rate of increase of everyday living costs. Rangers, who due to the time demands of weekend work and 12-hour shifts for planned burning and emergency bushfire fighting, are the usually the principal breadwinners in their families, and most earn around \$50,000 per year. The Baillieu pay offer puts rangers even further behind the average wage of Victorians and closer to the poverty line. The government inherited a surplus and is looking to increase this for what? Funding establishment of a new department for duck shooters, throwing good money after bad challenging the Federal EPBC Act decision to stop alpine cattle "science" and handouts to the terminally ill horse jumps racing industry... where are its priorities?

STOP PARKS STARVATION!!

The Victorian public deserves better!! Park Rangers deserve better!!

You can help by:

Forwarding this message to a friend

Follow the effects of public service cuts at www.cpsu.org.au

Speak up! Email your local politician, or all of them at once at <http://www.fairpay4fairwork.com/>, asking Mr.Baillieu to

(1) come to the negotiating table with a realistic pay offer that reflects the true value of parks and park rangers, and

(2) asking for sufficient budgets for managing parks to meet the needs of Victorians

If the above fails - simply vote for someone else at election time

Have a safe and happy Easter,

The Lone Ranger