



THE FRIENDS OF BRAESIDE PARK NEWSLETTER

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braesideparkfriends@gmail.com



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

President's Report

By Judith Sise

May

John Harris of Wildlife Experiences Pty Ltd delivered an excellent Bat and Nocturnal Night experience on Saturday 13 April at Braeside Park, funded by the Friends' Group.

The night was still and warm when the twenty-two visitors met at the Visitors' Centre before proceeding to the Heathland Reserve to set up the Harp Traps to capture insectivorous bats.

For those who have never seen or set up such nets, this is in itself most interesting. The traps are named "Harp" traps because there are a series of fishing lines threaded onto a rectangular metal structure, similar to the strings on a Harp. Beneath the strings hangs a canvas bag, which has inside a plastic flap where the bats sit after flying into the fishing lines and sliding unhurt into the canvas bag. The trap is placed beside a bat fly-way, often near water where insects are found.

Back at the Visitors' Centre, John delivered a most interesting talk with appealing slides on the various bats found in Braeside Park. He pointed out that the Park has resident at least one-third of the total microbat bat species in Australia, based on past surveys. The most abundant species of bats are insectivorous. There are 16 species in Victoria and Southeastern Australia. Insectivorous bats are generally tiny, unlike the fruitbats that regularly fly over the Park. People are not usually aware of their presence due to their nocturnal behaviour and their ultrasonic calls, which are inaudible to the human ear. He listed the possibility of seeing: Little Forest Bat, Chocolate Wattled Bat, Gould's Wattled Bat, Lesser Long Eared Bat and White-striped Freetail Bat. We saw the Little Forest Bat (2) and Lesser Long Eared Bat, caught in the 2-hour period the nets were up. The Little Forest Bat weighs in at about 4 grams, less than a 10-cent piece and it can comfortably sit on one's thumb! These little bats are commonly seen flying around our suburban streets consuming at least half their body weight in insects nightly. Between May and September, the bats go into a sort of torpor. Loss of habitat is affecting bat numbers. No one who witnessed the little bat held momentarily in John's gloved hand could not failed to be charmed.

It was a fascinating insight to these tiny bats and for the majority; it was their introduction to the microbats. John and the children present managed to find more Ring-tailed and Brush-tailed possums than the guides did on the Nocturnal Walk on the Friday 12 April!

When we arrived to find the Little Forest Bats and Lesser Long Eared Bat in the Heathland, we were greeted with a Tawny Frogmouth perched on the top of the Harp Net. John commented on the bird hearing the tiny bats and waiting patiently for dinner! We did not release them until we moved its predator on.

At nine o'clock, the activity ended as planned and the small children were more than ready to go home to bed to dream of little bats.

Combined with the Nocturnal Night Walk on the Friday 12 April, this was a successful start to our autumn and winter activities. Thanks to Margaret, our Secretary, who takes and organizes the booking for these activities.

A reminder to all that this year's Annual General Meeting on the Sunday 11 August is rather special being the Friends' Group's 30 year. Please record the date in your diary.

President's Report (cont.)

By Judith Sise

June

On the morning of voting for the Federal Parliament, I cannot but feel a sense of dread for the outcome. Whatever party wins, the environment will lose.

Over its 30 years, the Friends' members have battled against the common belief that all open space should actually house people; be bulldozed into infrastructure; or graded as sporting fields.

The Friends' Group still runs an Indigenous Nursery. It continues to monitor the health of Dingley Drain and small creeks within Melbourne Water's WaterWatch programme - reliant on volunteers such as us. The Friends runs surveys of bats, bird, and frogs, native wildlife that continue to live in the Parks.

The Friends are also increasingly picking up the Rangers' roles as Parks Victoria cuts back on funding and staffing to the Park. Two Rangers, Ernie and Digger, are on leave without replacement. This leaves Des and Andrew to do the job of four. Most workplaces replace workers on Long Service or WorkCover leave but not it seems Parks Victoria!

Both Labor and the Coalition offer many sweeteners but none offer to fund the environment wholeheartedly.

Labor says it is for Climate Change but they also offer Premier Daniel Andrews a huge budget to build invasive transport infrastructure rewarding the State Government's pledge to an overflowing population policy that eats into the Melbourne food basin and green open spaces. Neither will commit to stopping the Queensland coalmine development. Neither will commit to protecting the old growth or indeed any forests or open space anywhere in Australia. Neither seem to have any regard for the value of our unique but rapidly disappearing Australian biodiversity. Indeed "My name is **Ozymandias**, (substitute Premier Andrews, Prime Minister Shorten or Morrison) king of kings: Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"

Our mission to preserve the remaining indigenous biodiversity is important today as it was in 1989. The Friends of Braeside Park's liaison and lobbying with the Council, Parks Victoria, VicRoads and the broader community on matters environmental continues. The quality of life, which residents enjoy, depends upon their environment. The environment depends upon the quality of government. The quality of government depends upon who is prepared to be bothered with it. It is still that simple.

Editor's Note

In April we celebrated Braeside Park opening 30 years ago.



Above: From the left Bev, Frank, Judith, David, Des, Rosemaree, Eileen, Margaret and David.



Park Activities

Fungi

As winter has taken hold, fungi season has arrived. During the last two weeks of June we spotted a large number of fungi that are worthy of a mention. These include bolete mushrooms and the Ghost Mushrooms.

Even though they don't look yummy or like the supermarket mushrooms, the boletes are generally ok to eat. The ghost mushrooms on the other hand are toxic and should be left alone.



By David MacLean

Park Activities (cont.)



Bolete mushroom



Ghost Mushrooms



Ghost Mushrooms



Photographing ghost mushrooms requires dedication and a degree of madness. Hot coffee is also good.



By David MacLean



Ghost Mushrooms at Night

Park Activities (cont.)

Our City in Nature

Overall, the theme seemed to be that Nature is in our City and we should look for it and enjoy it. The speakers forgot to add that insects have all but disappeared and the consequence of that alone will affect Melbourne's flora and fauna. What is left copes with US, the human species and our bad habitats. There is no place for bandicoots or the many other small mammals, reptiles, ground dwelling or specialists' birds. Nature is still on the losing end in Melbourne when our present Premier is hell bent on increasing the population, building infrastructure into the sensitive western grasslands and southeastern wetlands. He continues to cut budgets to Parks Victoria or any environmental agency.

I am not sure who was trying to convince whom that Our City in Nature is a reality. Was it the various departments convincing each other that they were doing a great job or trying to convince the Government that they are doing a good job? Certainly, the few volunteers who asked extremely pertinent questions did not seem convinced!

By Judith Sise

Other Activities

Margaret and David B represented the Friends at a Parks Victoria recognition event for volunteers at Healesville sanctuary.



Photos by David Boldiston

Park Activities (cont.)

2019 Night Walk Program

The Friends night walk program will once again be operating in 2019 with expected bookings via 2 methods – text/phone to 0417 323 460 or email to braesideparkfriends@gmail.com. The dates are April (to be determined add when available), 5 July, 2 August, and 6 September. We take a maximum of 15 to 20 people per walk only for safety reasons and to ensure that the animals can be sighted in a quiet and welcoming environment. Sturdy shoes and appropriate clothing are essential, with a gold coin donation to the friends.

By Margaret Hunter

Our City in Nature

EXPLORING MELBOURNE'S RELATIONSHIP WITH ITS FLORA AND FAUNA
TUESDAY 21 MAY 2019

The one-day conference opened with a short rather one-sided debate between Professor Sarah Bekessy and Rob Gell arguing the pros and cons of Climate Change. Rob Gell easily won!

Doctor Scott Rawlings, Officer of the Commissioner for Environment Sustainability, spoke of the first comprehensive report of the state of environment. He said there are three stories in the report. They are about the current health of Victoria's natural environment; the adequacy of our science and future science focus on what we need to know. The report read many other reports to ensure there was a framework referenced on United Nations International Frameworks. It is like reviewing the stable after the horses have bolted.

The Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio, Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, Minister for Solar Homes, arrived 5-7 minutes late, and left promptly after delivering a short pre-prepared talk. She thanked all and sundry before confirming how precious the environment is to the government and celebrating our volunteers. She spoke of the government investing \$20 million each year for on the ground in the 6 500 Parks and reserves, bringing in tourism and equal opportunity for all. It was a bit of an "Uncle Tom Cobble and all" 20 minutes with lots of motherhood statements which promptly left my mind 5 minutes later.

Parks Victoria's Chief Conservation Scientist, Mark Norman, spoke entertainingly about streetscapes and the challenge-managing cats, foxes, deer, Mediterranean Sea star, fan tubes etc. and how native animals are trapped in small habitats and how people are disconnected from Nature. He was talking to the converted.

John Thwaite's, Melbourne Water, spoke a reduction of 35% in water entering our creeks with Climate Change and that one-third of our water will come from desalination. He said if we are finding it tough water-wise, then nature is finding it tougher! He spoke clearly no doubt the result of a few years in politics.

Jenny Gray, Zoos Victoria, began by playing the final haunting call of the last pipistrelle on Christmas Island. She seems committed to fighting wildlife extinction. Zoo Victoria are committed to the recovery of 21 native threatened species, as well as broad-based conservation programs in six countries, seven grass-roots community conservation campaigns and more than 50 research projects. Unfortunately, 21 species is a drop in the pan considering the extinctions happening on a yearly basis in Australia alone.

Lunch for vegetarians was meagre!

Various Councils, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Parks Victoria, Port Phillip Western Port Catchment Management Authority, Melbourne Water, Agriculture Victoria representatives made up the majority of the afternoon round table discussions. Parks Victoria table was about providing everyone from 8 to 80 with a place to play. This does not auger well for keeping Braeside Park from becoming another Jells Park. I have nothing against Jells Park as a huge grassed, noisy, backyard for families and dogs. I just do not find it relaxing. However, Braeside Park offers a different bushland setting. It is trying to convince Parks Victoria, who once was a state agency to conserve natural fauna and flora, that it is valuable. We have sunk a long way since 1970.



Friends of Braeside Park

ABN: 72 959 503 118 INC N0: A00242027B

2019 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

EVERYONE WELCOME

Where: Braeside Park Visitor Centre

When: Sunday the 11th August 2019

Times: Registration at 2:00pm, AGM Meeting at 2:10pm

**Presentation at 3:00pm for
the 30th Anniversary Celebrations**

**Afternoon Tea & Socialising from 3:15pm
Everyone welcome and concludes at 4:00pm**

**Enquiries/Further information contact
Margaret Hunter, Secretary on 0417 323 460**

Website: www.braesideparkfriends.org.au

"WEDNESDAYS - A TEAM"

This last month we said good bye to Ernie, and wished him well for his big adventure.

The Wednesday began with a presentation of Volunteer Pins.

Then off to "The Nest" for coffee, cakes, photos and a presentation of "Explore Australia" Book which will be very useful on the big trip.

We all enjoyed remembering what we have accomplished during Ernie's tenure.

Guards & Frames

Our favourite – too cold but a little work done. This was followed by morning tea in the Big Shed (out of the cold).

Propagation

General tidy up.



Welcome to our new Ranger Andrew – we all look forward to working with him.
Goodbye Ernie & Hello Andrew.

More Volunteers are needed. Please come & join us.

Wednesdays 9 am - 12 noon

Meet at the lunch room - Park Office

Morning tea provided.

Bev Bancroft.

***Join in the activities with Parks Victoria Rangers
every Wednesday from 9 am - 12 noon
- meet at the Park Office
- morning tea provided
Help is needed for a variety of jobs - everyone most welcome.
Wednesday afternoons continue
from 1 pm - 2:30 pm in the Nursery & Community Garden.
Everyone Most Welcome***

Newsletter Contributions

Thank you to Judith Sise, Margaret Hunter, Bev Bancroft, Frank Russo, Merv Dannefaerd, David MacLean & Park Staff for contributions to this edition.

If you have an item to share in future editions or have any feedback in relation to the newsletter, please contact the editor at braesideparkfriends@gmail.com



Friends of
Braeside Park

The Friends of Braeside Park invite you to attend a night walk to view nocturnal animals of the park

**On Friday Nights at 7pm
from April thru to September
on the 12th April, 3rd May, 7th June,
5th July, 2nd August & 6th September
Meet at Visitors Centre
Braeside Park, Lower Dandenong Rd, Braeside**

**Cost: Gold Coin Donation per person
Numbers Limited - Bookings Essential
Via email:
braesideparkfriends@gmail.com
or contact Margaret Hunter on
0417323460**

Friends of Braeside Park—Activity Calendar

Weekday Community Project-The A Team:

Every Wednesday with Ranger staff commencing at 9:00 - 12:00 from the Park Office. Activities can include weeding, mowing weeds, mulching, planting, fencing etc.

Nursery - Plant Propagation:

1st Saturday and 3rd Sunday from 10:00 am to 12:00 Noon and

Every Wednesday 1pm to 3pm

Undertaking a variety of propagation activities.

Committee Meeting:

2nd Thursday, monthly 7:00 to 9:00pm at the Park Office.

The Committee meets to make decisions about the running of the group.

Water Quality Monitoring:

3rd Tuesday, monthly 9:00 to 12:00 noon from the Park Office.

Water samples are taken and monitored from the Dingley Waterway and Wetland.

Bird Observations:

A set bird observation is completed monthly around the main wetland.

Call Ranger Janelle Cadd on (03) **8427 2027** to become part of this program.

Birds Australia Monitoring Program:

10 bird monitoring transects are monitored in this program with 5 completed one month and the other 5 the next month.

The sessions occur on the 4th Friday of each month from 8:00 am alternating between the following starting locations.

Park Office January, March, May, July, September, November

Robin Car Park February, April, June, August, October, December

Special Activities:

Night walks are offered from April through to September. Gold Coin Donation.

For details and bookings phone **0417 323 460**

**Community Nursery is Open on the Third Sunday of the Month
10:00 am to 12:00 noon – Seedlings \$2.00 each.**

Friends of Braeside Park Inc.

President: Judith Sise **Secretary:** Margaret Hunter

Assistant Secretary: Rosemaree MacLean **Treasurer:** Bev Bancroft

Newsletter Editor: David MacLean **Webmaster:** Frank Russo

Publicity Officer: Vacant

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Join us on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/327955807288240/#>

Current Facebook Members = 118

THE FRIENDS OF BRAESIDE PARK MEMBERSHIP

Membership Renewal is due on 1 July 2019.

Renewal Membership Forms below.

PLEASE NOTE that Newsletters by emails or hard copy will be sent to Financial Members only.

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The cost of membership of the Friends of Braeside are:

- Family Member \$15
- Ordinary Member \$10
- Student Member \$ 5
- Organisation Member \$15
- Pensioner Member \$ 5

NAME:.....

ADDRESS:.....

EMAIL ADDRESS.....

Wish to renew my Friends of Braeside Park membership for the 2019-2020.
Please circle the membership that suits your circumstances.

RETURN:

**Treasurer
Friends of Braeside Park
PO Box 608, Braeside VIC**

Friends of Braeside Park Activity Calendar 2019

Activity	Time/Day	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Committee Meeting	7pm - 9pm 2nd Thursday at the Park Office	*	14	14	11	9	13	11	8	12	10	7	12
Community Projects Weekday - "The A Team"	9am - 12pm Wednesdays at the Park Office	*	6 13 20 27	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	4 11
Nursery open for plant sales	10am - 12pm 3rd Sunday	20	17	17	14	19	16	14	18	15	20	17	15
Plant Propagation Community Nursery	10am - 12pm 1st Saturday & 3rd Sunday	5 20	2 17	2 17	6 21	4 19	1 16	6 21	3 18	7 22	5 20	2 17	7 22
Saturday Watervatch Program	9:30am - 12pm 2nd Saturday Visitors Centre	*	9	9	13	11	8	13	10	14	12	9	14
Bird Observations	8am - 11am 4th Friday Park Office	25	*	22	*	24	*	26	*	27	*	25	*
Bird Observations	8am - 11am 4th Friday Robin Car Park	*	22	*	26	*	21	*	23	*	25	*	13
Nightwalks	From Visitor's Centre 7pm	Nightwalks offered from April through to September. Gold Coin Donation per head Bookings Essential 0417323460											
Community Projects Weekends	9am - 12pm, follow the signs	*	*	*	*	*	World Environment Day Tree Planting Sunday 2nd	National Tree Planting Day Saturday 27th	*	*	*	*	*
Special Activities are held throughout the year at various times		*	*	Clean Up Australia Day Sunday 3rd Meet at Visitor Centre 10am - 12pm	*	*	Mystery Walk Sunday 2nd 12:30 - 3:30 with afternoon tea	*	AGM Sunday 11th 12pm-1pm	Breakfast with birds Sunday 22nd Red Gum Picnic Area 7am - 9:30am	Spring Walk - Nursery Open Day Sunday 13th 1pm - 3:30pm	*	End of Year BBQ Wednesday 11th

Website www.braesideparkfriends.org.au

Email braesideparkfriends@gmail.com

Community Nursery is Open on the Third Sunday of the Month 10:00am to 12:00 noon – Seedlings \$2.00 each.

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