



FriendsNET

Number 56 August 2006

From your Network Committee Convener ...



Maelor Himbury
(Friends of Maribyrnong
Valley) Network
Committee Convener
9374 1902 (h)

Funding for Parks

On July 26 the *Herald Sun* reported that Parks Victoria was to receive an extra \$24 million 'cash injection'. However, it went on to indicate that all this money was to be spent on just five parks.

No doubt there are plenty more parks that could do with a 'cash injection' – especially seeing that most had their funding reduced to pay for the rehabilitation of Alpine National Park after the bushfires. As an election is approaching it may be a good time to have a quiet chat with your local candidates.

Our Network has a name change

On a less political note, the new Victorian Environment Friends Network website is now uploaded. (*Yes, that's not a mistake—we've changed the name to avoid confusion with other*

non-environment groups such as Friends of the ABC). The website is still at the same address (home.vicnet.net.au/~friends) but we hope you will find it much more attractive and easy to navigate. Check it out and let us know of any corrections. If your group is not listed it is probably because it has not formally affiliated with the Network and thereby authorised us to publish your details.

Next year's Network Conference

The Network Committee is now planning the 12th Friends weekend conference to be held next year. Dates, a theme, topics and a venue have not yet been determined. Somewhere in the east or north of the state is preferred. It is your Conference and the Committee requests your suggestions within the next few weeks.

Groups in action

The Friends of Warrandyte State Park was formed in 1982. Here they tell us something of their activities.

It's all about diversity

The Friends of Warrandyte State Park have a broad agenda. As well as supporting the park in various ways, education of the general community is a high priority. In July we launched two colour brochures entitled *Warrandyte's Fungi* and *Warrandyte's Mosses and Liverworts*. These complement a series of three previous brochures on Warrandyte's eucalypts, wattles and wildflowers. All brochures are available from the FOWSP trailer at the Warrandyte Market held on the first Saturday of the month.



In 1993 our group published the book *Discover Warrandyte*, unfortunately now out of print. We maintain a library for the use of members and Park Rangers, located in the new rangers' office at the Pound Bend depot where we have our own purpose-built meeting place.

Every Thursday, propagation and other activities are held in our nursery where indigenous plants are available for public sale from 9.30 am to 12.30 pm (Thursdays only) and on the first Sunday afternoon of the month from 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm.

On the first Thursday morning of every month, under the guidance of a ranger, we run TAG (Thursday Activity Group) activities such as planting and learning techniques for pest plant and animal control. To familiarise people with the park we host two walks programs on the first Sunday and the fourth Thursday. The Sunday walks have a theme with a knowledgeable leader, and are followed by a BYO lunch.

We also hold an annual Koala Count and produce a ten-page monthly newsletter in which we report on nature sightings and park issues.

For further information contact the Membership Secretary, Lee Speedy, 9437 0894.

Congratulations to our 'Best Friends' for 2006

At our August Seminar, three Best Friend awards were announced and presented by Professor Nancy Millis on behalf of the Award Panel whose other members are Hon. Rod Mackenzie and Mr Don Saunders.



Doris Bevan

Doris Bevan (Friends of Sassafras Creek)

A truly remarkable lady, one of our senior citizens whose great love of the environment has made her a Volunteer extraordinaire.

Doris has been a tireless worker as a Friend of Sassafras Creek since 1990.

Age and a heart by-pass aside, nothing stops Doris who is a great inspiration to all. Her open-mindedness and level-headed thinking has provided direction and stability over many years.

Doris has participated in every aspect of Friend's work – many forms of weeding, seed collecting, seed propagation, setting up educational displays, helping with Weedbuster activities at Olinda Primary School, caring for and improving walking tracks, building bridges and steps and, as a very active committee member, encouraging and supporting everyone in the Friends activities.

Other groups to enjoy Doris's time and enthusiasm are Friends of Sherbrooke Forest, Friends of the Helmeted Honeyeater and, as a volunteer with her husband, on Puffing Billy.

Bill Goodall (Friends of the Point)

Friends of The Point recommended Bill Goodall for this award in glowing terms of praise.

Bill's association with the Point Nepean began during his working days with the Commonwealth Department of Defence. This left him with much knowledge and a love of the area. He was able to draw on this early experience and become a driving force when Point Nepean was transferred to the State of Victoria and became a National Park.

Large quantities of wind blown sand had buried the historic fortifications. He established the

Friends Group in 1989 and since then, assisted by his wife Shirley and others, he has manually removed many tonnes of sand from the fortifications and has led the Friend's Group in the restoration of historically significant artifacts and the building of safe, easy walkable tracks.

His early knowledge of the area and much research assisted in the establishment of interpretation signs, notes for walkers and other audio-visual elements.

Bill and Shirley have travelled from their home in Black Rock to the park twice a month until recent times and the amount of work performed by him and under his direction has been prodigious.

Eric Mitchell (Friends of Braeside Park)

From a sewage treatment works to the great park and wetland of today, Eric Mitchell has played a leading role in the establishment of both the Park and the Friends Group. He has had two terms as president – one as the inaugural president. He has provided ongoing leadership, motivation, organisation, advice and guidance for 16 years, directing many activities, notably:

- the establishment of a Community Nursery which produces around 15,000 indigenous seedlings per year for revegetation in the Park;
- works around the Braeside wetlands and planting of 20,000 seedlings in 1991;
- installation of a viewing platform over the wetlands.

He was editor of the group newsletter from January 1990 to July 2005.

Ranger Des Lucas estimates his community involvement to be worth at least \$200,000.

Eric's many volunteer appointments include Councillor and Mayor. He was the inaugural secretary of Friends of Dandenong Valley Park and a very active member of the Victorian Friends Network.



Bill Goodall



Eric Mitchell

AUGUST SEMINAR A 'SELL-OUT'

Our seminar, *Unmuddying the Waters*, on Saturday 19 August, was a sell-out success with more Friends wishing to participate than could be accommodated. Melbourne Water was a wonderful host, providing the full resources of their Werribee Discovery Centre, three of the eleven speakers, lunch, refreshments, and a platypus key ring for everyone, all free of charge to the Network. Similarly, all the other speakers generously made themselves available, demonstrating huge support for the Network.

A summary of the seminar will be included in the November *FriendsNET*.



Foreign fungus invades Melbourne

Weeds and feral exotic animals are very familiar, but exotic fungi are much less so, apart from the common Fly Agaric, the well-known red fungus with white warts so often illustrated in children's books.

A new fungus invader appeared in Melbourne in 2005. Naturally occurring in Kenya, Madagascar, Thailand and China. *Favolaschia calocera* was found in New Zealand's north island in the 1960s and has since spread widely. It recently arrived in Norfolk Island and is now recorded from several sites in Melbourne. First reported from Beaconsfield, a south-eastern suburb, it was soon found in Ivanhoe, in a small park by the Yarra. It has recently been found in the Flying Fox relocation enclosure about 500 m further west,

and in a riverside conference centre in Lower Plenty. At all sites it has adapted to growing on Tree Violet (now *Melicytus dentatus*).

It sprouts bright orange stalked fruiting bodies after rain, in dense clusters and is very distinctive. It spreads rapidly, colonising new areas very fast. Degraded weedy bushland with a lot of Tree Violet is common along the Yarra, so it may have spread much more widely than the known sites already. The prospect of a serious control program being set up is not good.

What to do if you find the fungus? Mapping the spread is important. Please contact fungimap@rbg.vic.gov.au to report new sightings and to receive details of control measures.

Robert Bender, of the Friends of Wilson Reserve (a Yarra-side reserve in Ivanhoe) reports on yet another foreign invader.



These photos show the uppersurface and undersurface of the fruiting body caps. They are bright orange, small (compare with the clover in the photo) and have been found growing on Tree Violet by rivers.

Experience Exchange (your space)

Future Friends

In our last issue, one of our Friends asked the question 'Where does the future of Friends groups lie?' and offered some thoughts.

Bill Bygott has responded. He retired as CEO of Terumo Australia in 1987 aged 57 years. Here is his story:

Following retirement, my wife and I moved from Melbourne's eastern suburbs and built a small house on the Mornington Peninsula. My wife quickly met up with a group of like-minded souls and continued her long involvement in craftwork and ceramics. I left behind a well established, labour-intensive garden and sought some worthwhile, healthy community activities, joining local U3A, a bushwalking group and the Peninsula Bird Observers Club.

On one of our birding outings a member of the club told me about his connection with Seawinds Nursery Volunteers; what a great group of people they were; what a great job they did for the environment, and that they were always looking for volunteers. At the same time, a friend of my wife's who was a member thought I would enjoy the work and

friendly atmosphere so I joined the following week and have never looked back. I have taken on the role of Works Manager. We propagate 10,000-15,000 indigenous plants a year. We have 30+ active members, many of whom meet weekly throughout the year (some twice a week). We also maintain and continuously develop a large Indigenous Plant Garden to demonstrate to the public what can be done with indigenous plants in a garden setting. With the continuing exodus of retiring 'baby-boomers' from city life to the coast and country, environmental Friends Groups provide a wonderful outlet to those with plenty of energy, willing to contribute something really worthwhile for the environment, and at the same time derive a great deal of pleasure, satisfaction and fellowship from their participation.

And on the 'health & safety' issue

With the current emphasis on health and safety of volunteers, there is one thing that all Friends can do to protect themselves—particularly those weeding or planting. We should have a tetanus booster every 10 years. Tetanus (lockjaw) is caused by a germ usually found in soil that enters the body through a cut or wound.

Share your questions, experiences or ideas – contact a Committee member (see page 4)

Geoff's Group Grapevine

Friends of Terrick Terrick weekend base-camp is on 7 & 8 October. A great program with grasslands monitoring, Plains Wanderer and lots of locals. To register, or for further information, contact Parks Victoria Kerang 5450 3951, email kmcknight@parks.vic.gov.au. Bookings are essential.

Friends of Wigan looks like a goer. There will probably be a camp at Wigan once or twice a year. To express interest, contact Leigh & Angela Stafford 5154 2211 or ocfg@bigpond.net.au.

Sixty Friends of Wyperfeld had a great 30 years celebration on the Queens Birthday weekend. Two thousand Slender Cypress-pines were planted. The last copy of *Wyperfeld - Australia's first Mallee National Park* was auctioned for \$150. The founder of the group, Geoff Edwards, down from Brisbane, and Elizabeth Doery were recognised with honorary Life Memberships. Activities included a day walk into the Big Desert, an inspection of the various plantings over the years, and a visit to Chug Fuller's museum.

The most popular activity at the Kananook Creek Celebration Day in March was canoeing. This led to the Kananook Creek Association calling a Public Meeting through the local paper to discuss the formation of a canoe club and 60 people turned up, resulting in the Kananook Creek Canoe Club. Contact Rob Thurley 9770 1568.

The Friends of Tarra Bulga National Park conduct an annual Lyrebird Count, the most recent on 12 August. In June they hosted a visit by Jan & Bill Incoll from the Lyrebird Survey Group who passed on their practical knowledge about such surveys, resulting in an 'improved approach' next year. A good example of beneficial networking between groups.

Over 70 people celebrated the Frankston Environmental Friends Network's 10th birthday at a lunchtime BBQ on 9 August. Formalities were kept to a minimum with a light-hearted quiz covering its achievements in bringing together the Council, reserve management teams and members of 15 volunteer groups.

The Friends of Brisbane Ranges Wildflower Show is at the Anakie Staughton Vale Hall on Sunday 8 October.

**Deadline for
November issue:
15 October 2006**

If undelivered, return to:
Friends Network Committee
c/- VNPA, 60 Leicester Street
CARLTON 3053

And we welcome...

Healesville Environment Watch
This group, with more than 50 members, formed in 1989 with a focus on the Ward of Ryrrie within the Shire of Yarra Ranges. It engages in practical community-based activities. Maureen Bond 5962 1224

Friends of Heatherton Park
Heatherton Park is a passive recreation park in the City of Kingston that was a sand pit and then a tip site - Melway map 79 E11. The group is helping reinstate the indigenous flora. Norm Bury 9546 2448

Friends of Montmorency Bushlands
This group works in close collaboration with the City of Banyule Bush Crew in enhancing the Montmorency bushlands. Pam Rowley 9439 1853

Friends of Morning Mist Reserve
Morning Mist Reserve is in Cranbourne South, City of Casey, Melway map 136 J5. The group is being reformed and is organising working bees. Don Jewell 5998 7734.

Friends of North Warrandyte
This group is actively restoring Stony Creek, a tributary of the Yarra at North Warrandyte, Melway Map 23. They are propagating their own indigenous plants. Leon Grinszpan 9844 5995.



*Geoff Durham
is one of the Network's
Group Liaison Officers*

THE VICTORIAN ENVIRONMENT FRIENDS NETWORK

The Friends Network provides a means of communication between the hundreds of Victorian community groups which support conservation reserves, natural areas, historic places and indigenous flora and fauna species. Affiliation involves no financial or other obligation.

Through a biennially-elected committee, the Network –

- promotes Friends Groups and assists in the formation of new groups
- facilitates networking between groups and provides supportive information
- liaises with management authorities and other relevant organisations
- distributes *FriendsNET* quarterly (February, May, August, November)
- holds a weekend conference or a one-day seminar for Friends every year
- produces a Friends Kit in conjunction with Parks Victoria
- provides Model Rules for incorporation of a Friends Group
- administers the Best Friend Awards
- maintains a Web page – home.vicnet.net.au/~friends. This lists all affiliated groups and has an Application for Affiliation form as well as other information useful to groups.

Committee Convener: Maelor Himbury – 9374 1902 – maelor@melbpc.org.au

Newsletter: Geoff Durham – 9523 5559 – gadurham@bigpond.com

Group Liaison: Geoff Durham & Jenny Harrington – 9481 7381 – jharrington@netlink.com.au

Group contact database: Bernie Fox – 9741 9859 – hayburn@bigpond.com.au

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