

June 2001

Friends of Warrandyte State Park



Newsletter

Friends of Warrandyte State Park (FOWSP) Inc. P O Box 220 Warrandyte 3113

Postcards and T-Shirts

By Pat Coupar

In the past few weeks we have taken delivery of some new promotional material - something in cotton and something in card.

Firstly cotton, in the form of T-shirts. The design is simple with a small FOWSP logo on the front at the top left, and a larger logo spelling out Friends of Warrandyte State Park on the centre back. The T-shirts come in three colours - navy blue with turquoise logo; forest green with cream logo and cream with navy logo.

There is a choice of three sizes - small, medium and large, although it is possible that at a later date if there is enough interest, we may order some childrens sizes. The T-shirts are Australian made of good quality 100% cotton.

If members are interested in buying one, they will be available from the FOWSP market trailer at the monthly Warrandyte market. The price is \$20.

The second Fowspian venture is our own postcards. Three very different photographs were chosen: misty morning; river rocks and tree frog.



The FOWSP logo is evident in the top right hand corner where the stamp goes and a small



amount of text in the bottom left saying, "Become a Friend of Warrandyte State Park to support conservation and receive

our monthly newsletter".

Like the T-shirts, the postcards are available at the market trailer for a price of \$1 each. The local Warrandyte post office has already purchased over a hundred of the postcards. We are also hoping to contact several other local outlets.

If any members would like to help distribute the postcards or T-shirts to environmental shops etc please contact Lee Speedy on 9437 0894.

A big thank you to Lee and Geoff Speedy who have been instrumental in organising production of the postcards and T-shirts, finally bringing to fruition an idea that has been talked about for many years.

The Burgan Problem

By Pat Coupar

The battle with Black Flat's Burgan continued a few weeks ago. This is the third year of the Burgan control trials carried out by FOWSP in conjunction with Warrandyte State Park staff.

The site chosen for the trials is on the south-east edge of the reserve where the Burgan is dense and dominant and the eucalypts dead or dying. For those not familiar with the Burgan problem, it might seem strange to be putting time and effort into removing one of Warrandyte's native plants when there are so many introduced weeds that need attention. The fact is that, for whatever reason, this indigenous multi-trunked shrubby tree is out of balance in Warrandyte's bushland. In some areas it dominates the understorey to the exclusion of everything else. Diversity disappears and so too, eventually, the eucalypts.

The method being used to control the Burgan is simple: trunks are chain-sawed and the cut stumps painted with undiluted RoundUp (glyphosate), seedlings and young plants are pulled by hand and any regrowth from previous years treatment is broken off – this seems to be enough to weaken the plant and kill it without the need for further chemicals.

Thursday morning propagators took time off from the nursery to tackle the Burgan at Black Flat. For a couple of hours the team of hand pullers, dabbers and draggers, led by field officer Colin Bromley with the chain saw, worked industriously and soon a massive pile of cut



branches had formed in an open area. At the end of the morning Colin set fire to the pyre and, despite the freshly cut green foliage, it went up well and did not take long for the huge pile to reduce to ashes.

It was pleasing to see that in areas where the Burgan had been removed in previous years, wattles, eucalypts and peas were starting to grow. The team guarded many of these as rabbits are still prevalent in the area.

It was a most productive morning and the enthusiasm of Fowspians to continue this trial has encouraged us to think about making it a biannual event.

For those who are interested in the trials, but were not able to attend the event can see the results for themselves by visiting Black Flat. The exact location can be reached by entering the reserve from the end of Nelson Road following the management track through two gates to the edge of the nature trail.

Great News from W.A

By Joan MacMahon

This material is taken from the June 2001 *Wilderness News*, the magazine of the Wilderness Society. It's an excellent magazine, reflecting an excellent organisation. I am proud to say I've been a member for nearly twenty years.

The main article is by Virginia Young, our National Forest Campaign Coordinator. She writes about the campaign which has led to a magnificent, and long fought for, conclusion: the end of old growth logging in Western Australia.

"It is hard to describe the overwhelming joy experienced by our Vote Forests volunteers on election night (last Feb.), as it became clear that old growth logging in W.A would end and that the forest issue had played a major role in electing the gallop labor government.

The success of the Vote Forests campaign is still reverberating around the country, giving hope to communities all over Australia that their forests can be saved.

It was wonderful to be part of such a diverse, skilled and dedicated team, who were prepared to put everything else in their lives on hold for the sake of the forests. Being surrounded by people with courage, passion and determination brought out the best in us all. I will always remember the look on Richard Court's face as he realised on polling day that the Vote Forests campaign was a force to be reckoned with. Liberals for Forests, the WA Greens and TWS Vote Forests volunteers greatly outnumbered Liberals and Labour on polling day in the premier's own electorate.

Give thanks to Grace who understood that most of the volunteers working in TWS did not have time to think about food, and prepared delicious home made lunches for 20 to 40 people every day.

Ponder on the determination of the Liberals for Forests team who invested a huge amount of time and money to give conservative voters a way of demonstrating their concern for the forests.

It took quite a deal of gumption for Janet Woolard and Liz Davenport to stand, respectively, against a Liberal Minister and a Premier. Janet won the Lower House seat of Alfred Cove and Liz came very close to unseating Richard Court in Nedlands after only a four-week campaign!

Celebrate the wonderful victory of the W.A. Greens. More than any other party, the Greens worked hard to place the forests at the centre of their political agenda; they were richly rewarded by winning five Upper House seats and the balance of power. As a result, the community can have confidence that Labour will deliver its election commitments.

There are too many people to thank individually. For every person named in this issue of Wilderness News, there are 100 more who deserve to be. Many professional and business people, who don't wish to be named, gave generously of their time, skills and money. Thank you all."

Following Virginia's article are a variety of personal perspectives. For example; Liz Davenport, fashion designer, retailer and Liberals for Forests candidate.

"I was arrested in February 1999, for taking a walk in a public forest and thereby preventing a lawful activity – clearfelling a magnificent old growth karri (Eucalyptus diversicolour) forest. I have had my shops blockaded and many attempts have been made to bully me out of the campaign to save our forest heritage. Nothing could have made me more determined.

For me, the final step in my personal quest to help save our forests, was my decision to challenge the State Premier. This was an enormous step for me personally, as I had once helped fundraise for the Liberal Party and considered Richard Court's mother one of my dearest friends. Yet I felt that, unless I put everything else on hold and challenged the Court Govt. head on, I would not have done everything I could to save our remaining old growth forests and all the animals and birds that depend on them. If we failed in this election, our unprotected old growth would be doomed. As soon as the Labor Party announced that it would end old growth logging and protect 200,000 ha of forests in National Parks I knew the Court Govt. had to go. ----- Working with TWS has given me the confidence to speak up for the forests in any forum. -----What a wonderful result working together has achieved for the people and forests of Western Australia" (Indeed for all Australians!)

Equally interesting are the thoughts of Dame Rachel Cleland, a matriarch of the Liberal Party, aged 95.

"All the big conservation organisations and the hundreds of people battling over the years to
Continued on next page.

Great News from WA contd:

save the forests can now, with the election over, give a huge sigh of relief. The loggers have moved out of the old growth forests and we are all celebrating.

I can't help wishing that we had been able to influence the Liberal Party to change its policy. Knowing the way so many West Australians felt about the forests, I felt that the Liberals would be unlikely to win the election when I saw the new Labor policy. And it was amazing that the first thing Geoff Gallop did was to stop the logging immediately.

I've loved the forests and been involved with trees nearly all my life, both here and in Papua New Guinea. This was the biggest battle of them all. But I do think we must still keep watch over them. There could be another tussle ahead."

Finally Linda Siddall, barrister, journalist and director of the Hong Kong branch of Friends of the Earth (1983 – 1991). "Looking back on those

frantic, exhausting weeks leading up to the election, many things are a blur. But one thing comes through clearly, and that is the sense of privilege at having been part of such a wonderful campaign. In 20 years of environmental activism, I have never experienced anything like it.

Some snapshots:

**Vanishing corridors. As our volunteer numbers swelled and demand for banners, posters and more banners increased, work spilled out of the TWS office to occupy most of the corridor and floor space in Lotteries House. One measure of community support for the campaign was surely the fact that not a single complaint was received from other tenants.*

**Dame Rachel Cleland. Standing in the hot sun to tell a protest meeting of Grandparents for Old Growth Forests why she opposed her party's logging policy."*

Browsing the Billabongs

(Part One)

By Elizabeth Sevier

Just across the Yarra from Gallatlys Lane, Pound Bend is Glynns - the first of the parks in the Middle Yarra Park scheme. Glynns Park is called after the last private owner of the property. The property has been used to farm dairy cattle and grow tomatoes, but is now within the management area of Parks Victoria.

Friends of Warrandyte State Park have some friendly neighbours consisting of the Friends of Yarra Valley. The writer of this article belongs to both groups so, to twist into the personal of the first kind, I have pleasure in surveying a large sweep of the Yarra from Lilydale to Burke Road, Kew and feeling it my territory.

Once the Yarra nurtured hundreds of billabongs. Now there are few natural billabongs remaining. However, some have been recreated in the form of ponds and wetlands and five small excavated areas have made at Glynns Reserve and planted with wetlands habitat species by the Friends of Yarra Valley. I remember working one Sunday morning in Glynns wetlands looking across the river to Pound Bend Reserve where Friends of Warrandyte were weeding and planting too. A happy pleasurable sight.

Where Mullum Mullum Creek joins the Yarra we have Sweeney's Flats. Sweeney arrived in



Melbourne as a convict, but after his years of servitude took up the land there with his wife and children. He was a good friend to the Wurundjeri people in the district, unlike Major Newman at nearby Portville or Tikalara, and exchanged flour and tobacco (no so good we would say today!) for hunting and swimming lessons for his children.

Sweeney's land, along the lane that bears his name, has now been subdivided, but to prevent house drainage into the Yarra, three ponds have been created so that any harmful substances can be dissipated as the flow leads from one to the others in succession.

(Part two next month)

Black Panther Sighted in Warrandyte?

Well, maybe it was just a black cat, but now we have your attention, a few requests:

From the Nursery Manager

- We desperately need forestry tubes and polystyrene boxes. Could all those members who have bought plants from the nursery please return their empty pots and boxes. Just leave them somewhere conspicuous in the nursery if no one is around.

From the Editor

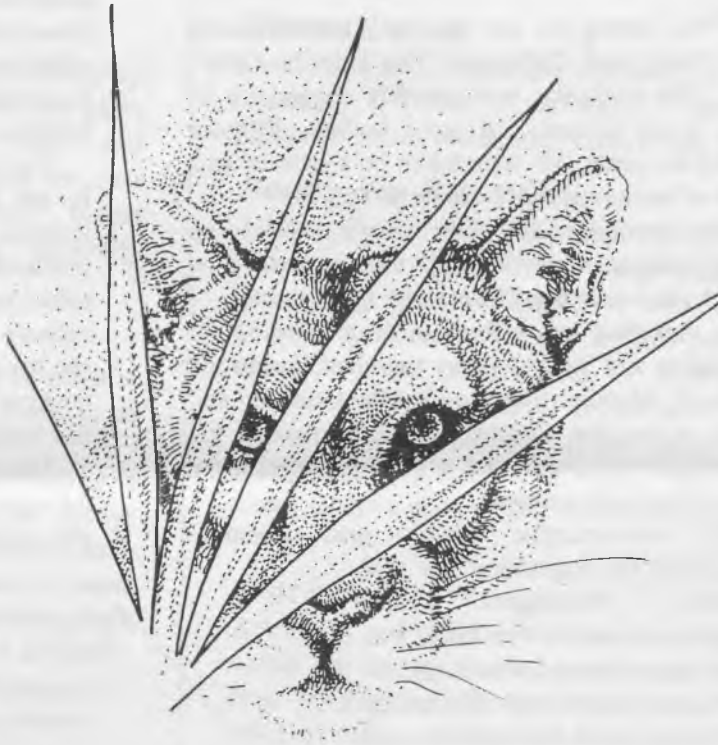
- Need more articles for the newsletter. Writers, poets, artists. Some suggestions: my favourite place/river/road/beach etc; book reviews; environmental news; local issues; reports on talk/seminars etc. Anything from a few lines to a page is welcome. Just send your contributions to PO Box 220, Warrandyte 3113.

From Joan MacMahon

- Does anyone have any old carpet or carpet underlay to use to cover areas of Angled Onion? If so please ring Joan on 9844 3213.

From the Thursday group

- It is that time of year again when we start having soup for lunch on Thursdays. The soup roster will be pinned up on the Folly noticeboard. Please put your name down if you feel you would like to make soup for the group one Thursday.



The Rat is Dead

Two actually. For several weeks now something has been wreaking havoc in the poly houses at the Warrandyte State Park nursery. Seedlings in punnets and trays have been uprooted, including some precious rare plants that we have only just been able to germinate.

The general consensus was that it was a rat. And so it was. Caught in an Elliot trap. Not one but two (in different traps). But some are still on the loose as seedlings are still being disturbed despite wire cages being placed on top of them.

The trials and tribulations of a nursery manager are many. Rats on the rampage is just one of them!



A Journey to Antarctica

Report by Pat Coupar

The setting for our trip to Antarctica with Peter and Cath was 'The Friends Folly'. The audience was suitably rugged up in coats, polar fleeces and wool jackets. Without leaving out seats, we were taken on a journey to a world of penguins, seals, albatross and ice.

Peter introduced the slide show by holding up a large map to show the route they had taken on their three week trip. Departing from the tip of South America, on a Russian ship carrying 50 passengers and 20 crew, they travelled first to the Falkland Islands, then to South Georgia and finally across the Southern Ocean down to the Antarctic Peninsula on the north-west edge of the coldest continent on earth.

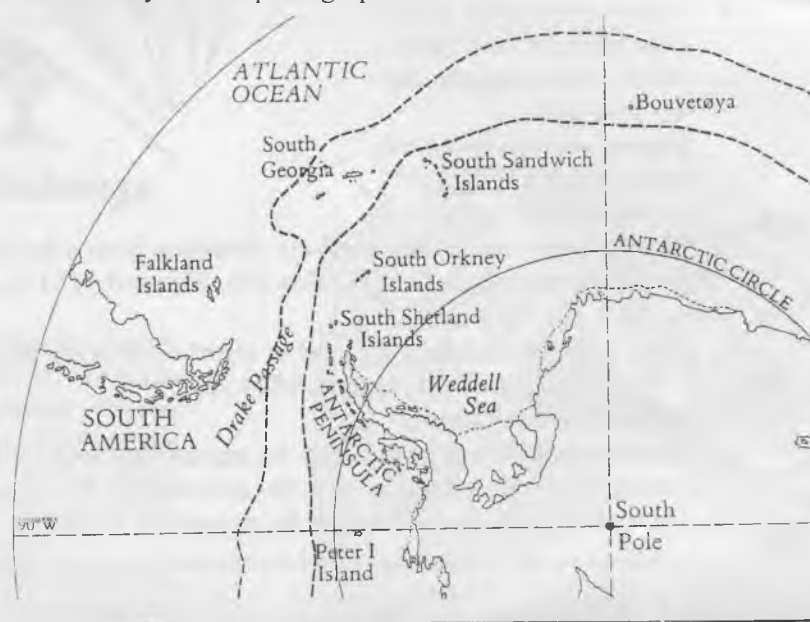
The sub-Antarctic islands are extremely remote and the vegetation low and tussocky. Passengers were permitted to leave the boat, but under strict instructions. As Cath related, they were not allowed to take food or drink with them and if they needed to go to the toilet they had to be escorted back to the boat! The passengers were told not to go any closer than eight metres to the wildlife, but as the slides showed, nobody had informed the wildlife of that rule.

The wildlife was one the stars of the show. Antarctic seabirds

come in two varieties – those that fly and those that don't. Of the first, there were the gentle-faced albatross and of the second there were the penguins – Kings, Adelies and the smaller, squat Macaronis with their comical orange-yellow tufted crests. The southern latitudes are also home to a variety of seals including Fur, Weddell and Elephant.

The most spectacular and memorable photos for me, though, were not of the animals, but of the icebergs. Massive, sculptured blocks of indescribably beautiful ice, some of which had rolled over to reveal strange ribs and ridges. The colours were luminescent blues and greens. To see the icebergs first hand must be an experience never to be forgotten and a highlight of any trip to this most remote wilderness.

Thanks to Peter and Cath for a most informative talk, illustrated by some great photographs.



Zoological Meanings

Strepera graculina

(Pied Currawong)

“jackdaw-like noise-maker”



Heaps of Helpers

Lots of welcome helpers have been turning up every Thursday. I (I-Spy) have noticed that when I stay away the numbers of helpers swells, and when I turn up they immediately change the next weeks program to 'throw me off the track'. Is that because generally speaking I'm generally speaking?

Naming Names

Ian Nixon, from Heathmont, turned up to assist in early May. Ian is a new member who joined up at the Maroondah Festival in February.

Another visitor who has continued helping is Rebecca Hobbs of Mitcham. Rebecca has always performed volunteer work for organisations such as Environment Victoria. She has spent two years in China, teaching English and travelling much including Xian, "most northern and unusual", also "Lijiang where the Naxi people live". Rebecca hopes to return to China soon.

Ecos on Eucalypts

"Seeds from isolated treesof eucalypt species should not be used for propagation and revegetation programs if at all avoidable – seeds would most likely be of poor genetic quality".
Source: Ecos Jan/March 2001.

Bye Bye Barbeque

Twenty five people attended a special barbeque lunch to say au revoir to ranger David Farrar who is going to Wilson's Promontory for six months, and secretary Margaret Humphreys who is off on a long drive to Alice Springs, the Tanami Track, Halls Creek and wherever.

Powerful Owl/Platypus

Shirley Deane, a walks leader, reported that a powerful owl was sighted in a tree near Johnson Mine, Fourth Hill, with its prey. Much discussion ensued as it was first thought the prey was a platypus, but apparently it was a large possum.

After Antarctica

Following the slide night by Cath and Peter, yours truly came down with a deep chest cold – almost

pneumonia. I swear the chill factor in the Folly dropped to -5C. (Chill factor = equivalent temperature on exposed flesh). Next slide night on warmer climate please.

Distant Drums

Geoff Speedy, committee member, is learning Djembe (West African drumming). Communication technology takes a leap forward?

Batting for Butterflies

A Butterfly Action Plan, prepared by Dr Don Sands and Dr Geoff Clarke (both from CSIRO Entomology) and Dr Tim New from La Trobe University, looks at trends in the persistence, abundance and distribution of 218 butterfly species and sub-species of conservation concern in Australia. The Eltham Copper Butterfly gets a mention and picture. Nillumbik and Banyule Councils get a good conservation mention. *Source: Ecos Jan/March 2001.*

Track to Trek

According to a well respected source, major track works are taking place from Jumping Creek to Blue-Tongue-Bend. Colin Bromley says the work involves steps, levelling and a "big face lift".

Manual Matters

Tony Brown from Box Hill NRE was seen in deep discussion with Colin about identifying risks in manual handling of a variety of equipment.

Primary Patter

Heard that Ranger-in-Charge, Andy Nixon, gave a talk at Mooroolbark East Primary School (his daughter's school). Topic?

Biolink Bash

There are 26,000 plants ready for the Greencorps to plant in the Biolink Project at the Park.

Hormone Helpers

There were so many helpers at the depot one day that Alwyn was heard to comment that someone must have spilt the Rootex-L (a hormone normally used for plant propagation).

Jameson Jumps

Ranger Glen Jameson is going to Uluru for two months.



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Bell Miner (Bellbird)

These olive green birds with orange legs and bill are very common in Warrandyte. They form large colonies and are territorial and aggressive to other birds. Their call is a distinctive 'tink tink'.

Bell Miners feed mainly on lerps, the sugary shelter made by leaf-sucking insects called psyllids.



FOWSP Membership Form

Name

Address

.....

Tel. no.

Family \$20

Single \$15

Concession \$10