



The 'Cleland Walk' is an annual event, hosted by the Friends of Belair National Park

Who was Professor Sir John Cleland, and why do we commemorate him?

(Information taken from a 2015 Cleland Walk leaflet by Alan Raine)

Professor Sir John Burton Cleland, CBE



Image: Wikipedia

- Born in Norwood in 1878
- Studied medicine and microbiology and was a formative force in the investigation of the role of mosquitos spreading Dengue Fever. This work saved countless lives in Australia and around the globe
- He became a professor in Professor of Pathology and Bacteriology at The University of Adelaide in 1920
- He was interested in Fungi – and published TWO handbooks about SA's native fungi – those difficult to identify ancient organisms that are essential in the function of healthy ecosystems
- Also interested in Anthropology, he studied diseases of Aborigines, and Aboriginal uses of plants for food and drugs
- Surveyed and collected plants, donating approximately 30,000 specimens to the SA Herbarium, as well as 450 bird skins to the SA Museum
- A member of the SA Field Naturalists Society for 79 years
- He was knighted in 1964.

Sir John Cleland's role in Belair National Park

- 1929 - made a Commissioner of National Park
- 1931 – 1936 Deputy Chairman of Commissioners
- 1936 – 1965 Chairman of Commissioners
- The Commissioners visited National Park twice a year to inspect its condition and the progress of "improvements"
- Cleland walked around the boundary of the park between Christmas and New Year as a self-imposed task, to check on weeds, fences, fire-breaks etc. to provide advice to the park staff
- Strongly believed in the policy...*"to conserve as far as possible in their natural state the trees and shrubs and undergrowth and to control as far as is practicable such objectionable introduced aliens as the blackberry, St John's Wort and Cape Tulip"*



Image: Adelaidia.com.au



History of Belair National Park



Gooch, Dixon, and Robin – The founders of Belair

In 1881 the government proposed to sell off parts of “Government Farm”. Walter Gooch led a campaign against the sale, aided by the Australian Natives Association and Field Naturalist Section of the Royal Society of SA.

Others supporting Gooch were Samuel Dixon, a prominent conservationist, and Arthur Robin. Gooch envisaged a “National Recreation Ground”, whereas Robin and Dixon sought to protect the flora and fauna. Robin and Dixon later campaigned and were successful in having Flinders Chase on Kangaroo Island declared for conservation alone.

Image: Walter Gooch in 1885, courtesy Friends of Belair Website

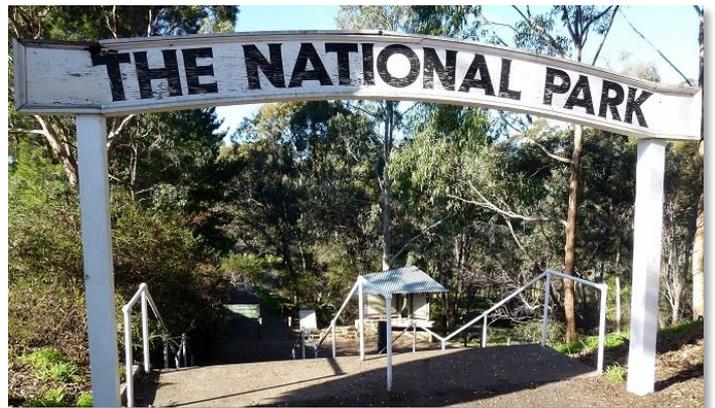
The Park Declared

Eventually the “National Park” was declared by Act of SA Parliament, on 19 December 1891.

The Board of Commissioners elected Sir Edwin Smith as Chairman, he served for 25 years until his death in 1917; Gooch was on the Board for 27 years (to 1919), and Dixon 13 years to 1905.

The Board of Commissioners was responsible for Belair National Park until 1972, when the National Parks and Wildlife Service assumed responsibility.

Image courtesy Friends of Belair Website



The Friends of Belair National Park

The group was established in 1985, to assist Park Rangers in preserving and maintaining the natural environment.

Our main work includes:

- bushcare sessions on weekdays and weekends to help preserve the pristine areas of native bushland,
- a monthly free guided walk through an area of the park,
- planting sessions to re-generate bushland,
- having corporate group weeding sessions,
- assisting local community groups (schools, scouts etc) with their environmental programs,
- holding monthly meetings with interesting speakers,
- having our annual Sir John Cleland Memorial Walk,
- commemorating the Park’s birthday on 19th December each year.



Guided walks from April to November on the second Tuesday of the month, repeated the following Sunday. Meet at the Green Shed near Main Oval 1:45pm for a 2pm start.



Website: <https://www.friendsofbelairpark.org.au/>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/fobnp>
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Unlike Professor Cleland, we have decided against walking the entire boundary of beautiful Belair National Park for our annual walk in his honour. Instead, we have chosen to walk around some lovely Grey Box Grassy Woodland and Pink Gum woodland.

Below is a selection of some interesting plants that we may come across...



Grey Box (*Eucalyptus microcarpa*) Grassy Woodland is a nationally recognised and protected ecosystem that once dominated the lower foothills of the Mount Lofty Ranges. It is estimated that there is only about 1,800Ha remaining from the original 21,000Ha. (Image: [SA Seedbank.com](http://SASeedbank.com))



Twining Fringe-lily (*Thysanotus pattersonii*) is one of 11 SA species within this Genus - it is named for the fringe of fine hairs on the perianth segments. A great little plant that seems to be having a great season this year. Best seen through a hand lens to appreciate the delicate beauty of the plant.



Flat-leaf Grass-tree (*Xanthorrhoea semiplana*). Its botanical name means a combination of 'yellow' and 'to flow' - reflective of the yellow sap. The sap and wood were used by Aboriginal People for glue and fire drills. European people used the resin to make explosives, incense, and varnish. Harvesting this was literally 'hard yakka' and led to the destruction of the plants. (source: koorihistory.com)



Large Green-comb **Spider-orchid** (*Caladenia / Arachnorchis tentaculata*). "All orchids have six petals, often five are most visible, modified into different shapes. A sixth (usually central) petal is called the tongue petal, highly modified in shape and colour with bumps (glands), hair, or fringes." (Ann Prescott. 'It's Blue With 5 Petals'. Page. XII).

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Button Everlasting (*Coronidium scorpiodes*) is a sensational standout with its tall yellow flowers. It has recently had a name change to *Coronidium* to reflect the 'korone' – the Greek word for 'crown'. All daisy flowers have 'composite heads' – the 'flower' you can see is actually hundreds (thousands?) of individual flowers. Look closely...



Native Carrot (*Daucus glochidiatus*). This grows pretty much throughout SA, except for the north-western desert region. It is related to the carrot we eat, but not big enough to be of any practical food use. Check out the tiny, hooked seeds, a perfect adaptation for hitching a ride on a passing animal for dispersal. (seed picture: [SA Seedbank.com](http://SASeedbank.com).)



Heath Tea-tree (*Leptospermum myrsinoides*). Grows throughout south-eastern Australia, it is a lovely habitat plant for little wrens and other woodland birds. It has stunning white flowers laden with pollen for much of the springtime. *Leptospermums* are in the same botanical family as the eucalypts – Myrtaceae.



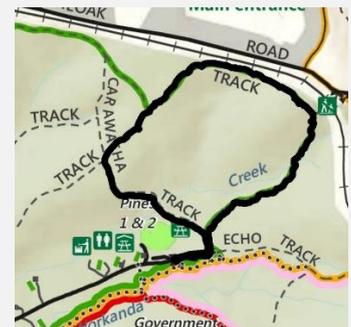
Common Chocolate-lily (*Arthropodium strictum*) was an important staple 'root-food' for Indigenous peoples. The tuberous roots were eaten raw or roasted. Would you believe there are still remnant Chocolate-lilies in the middle of Pakapakanthi / Victoria Park after 184 years of mowing, grazing and horse racing?!

Walk distance: ~1.3km. Minor Gradients along Lodge and Carawatha Track

Allow at least: 1 hour. Allow longer than this because there is plenty of wildflowers to look at!

Directions: Park at Pines Oval. Walk up Echo Track to the intersection of Lodge / Carawatha and Echo Tracks. Take Lodge Track and follow it up towards the Pony Club on Sheoak Road. Stay on Lodge 'across the top' to the water tank at the top of Moorow Track.

Turn left down Moorow and then onto Carawatha. Follow this back to Pines Oval.



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