



THE NEWSLETTER of The FRIENDS of BELAIR PARK DECEMBER 1993

President Ron. Pitman. Secretary Lyn Coombe. Treasurer Joyce Underdown.
Vice-presidents Daphne Johncock & Joy Hargreaves. Assistant treasurer Beth Pitman.
Committee members Lareen Newman, Godfrey Parkinson and Barry Burley.
Patron & Editor of Newsletter Ray. Nash.

Subscriptions for 1994 are almost due, be sure that you do not fall behind, pay early.

✱ BIRTHDAY PARTY ✱

From Lareen Newman.

Don't forget to come to the annual get-together to celebrate the Park's and the Friends of Belair's birthday, Sunday Dec. 19th. As usual, bring food to share, servers, chairs, table, your own plates and cutlery, etc. Starting about 5.00 to 5.30 pm at the Main Pavilion, the evening will include a talk (with slides) by Curtis Smith, exchange Ranger from Oregon USA. He has been highly recommended by those who heard him at the Forum.

PAST EVENTS

MEETING REPORTS. By Ron Pitman, President.

The October meeting was moderately well attended and those present were rewarded by a short slide presentation by F.O.B. member Dan Jaeger. He spoke at length on the Australian King Fern, *Todea barbara*, which he said "Is S.A.'s most distinctive and sadly rarest fern. It has never been abundant and is only then confined to suitable areas of the Mount Lofty Ranges. Locally this ancient (fossil remains have been found in rocks of the late Palaeozoic Era - approx, 250 million years ago) King Fern has almost disappeared with no areas left where the species is actively regenerating"

Members appreciated Dan sharing his knowledge with us.

Our November meeting was poorly attended no doubt because there were so many activities on that weekend. However the gathering was held in the small room of the Main Oval Pavilion.

Once the business part was finished we were addressed by Anne Prescott (author of "It's Blue with Five Petals"). She praised the F.O.B. and all who had been associated with removing Boneseed in particular from large areas of the Park. Her concern however is to make people aware of the introduced aggressive weedy orchid (*Monadenia bracteata*), which she has found in the Belair National Park. At our next working bee (Sunday Nov. 21st.) she is going to join us and will instruct us how to identify it and dispose of it.

WALK REPORTS

Patron's Walk by Beverley McClean

On Tuesday August 31st, six people with Ray Nash went to Scott Creek Conservation Park and entered through gate 21. During our two hour excursion we saw many flowering plants, including, Yakka, Hakea, Greenhoods Orchids, Donkey Orchids, Mayfly Orchids, Sundews, Daviesia and 2 other pea flowering plants. We came across a natural vegetated patch with *Grevillea lavandulacea*, Native Cranberry, Red Heath, Myrtle Wattle, Running Postman and *Isopogon* (Cone bush).

At a disused quarry we looked at the lovely layers of coloured clay. Examined a *Pterostylis longifolia* (Tall Green Hood Orchid) and activated the labellum which is part of its pollination mechanism. We completed the visit with the usual afternoon tea. A good time was had by all.

CLELAND WALK 26 SEPTEMBER

By Lareen Newman

Many thanks to Ray for leading about 16 of us on a very enjoyable day walk, in lovely Spring weather. We walked to Long Gully, with a break amongst the cherry blossom, before a steep climb up and a steep descent to reach the trees planted as a memorial to American soldiers in the 2nd World War. On reaching the Upper Waterfall it was time for lunch, and our return to the Info. Centre for afternoon tea (thanks to Beth) was via Queen's Jubilee Drive and Old Government House. Along the way our guide pointed out many lovely flowers (including some of the rare *Pterostylis cucullata*). We also saw several koalas perched precariously in various trees, a Musk Lorikeet poking its head out of a nesthole, and a little nest of Noisy Miners. Those who didn't come now know that you missed all these things (and many more!). So put it in your diary for next September.

WORKING BEE REPORTS

Reported by a mystery member who threatened to decapitate the Editor if the person was named.

The small group that volunteered in July to help the Park Staff plant and weed near the Belair Railway Station, have continued with weeding during the week when they have a little spare time. The area now looks much better for their work.

Ron and Godfrey with the aid of Neville Houlahan, spent several hours installing the long awaited seats at Waverly Lodge entrance. Lynda and the Tuesday walkers are now pleased and grateful!

A couple of Sunday morning Working Bees have produced two small piles of mulch through the new mulcher and a large pile of Olive branches to be dealt with. It poured with rain at the August working bee, we were soaked, but the mulcher kept chugging! Ray's car with the mulcher on the trailer could not make it up the slippery clay covered hill!

Malcolm Lane came to the rescue and winched and towed him out.

Those not working on the Olive problem have been pulling Boneseed, unfortunately they have reached an area of large bushes which are much harder to pull.

During the October working bee, seven members pulled boneseed from along the Old Governor's Residence pathway.

Many hands lighten labour! Please join our Working Bees, so that the overall load is easier.

More on Working Bees

By Pete and Lareen Newman

In September, Mike, Ron, Daphne, Joyce, Ray and

Pete cut down olives, and fed them to the munching Mulcher, getting about 2 teaspoons of mulch from a forest of olives! Work was interrupted by a heavy fall of rain, and refuge was taken in Ray's car (sorry about the carpet, Ray!). Ray and Daphne, having driven to the working location, had a very slippery time trying to get their vehicles out on the track and Ray and Trailer were finally extricated with the help of the NPWS 4WD.

In October Ron, Sue, Joyce, Ray, Lareen and Pete worked on a patch of thick (and stubborn!) boneseed by the footpath, up near Government Farm Oval. We wondered where Daphne had got to, but she appeared several hours later after working on a patch on her own, wondering where we had all been.

November's working bee was well attended: Mike, Peggy, Joyce, Vaika, Daphne, Amber, Ron, Lyn, Dan, Godfrey, Laura, Ray, Pete and Lareen all spent the morning with Ann Prescott (botanist and author of "It's Blue with 5 Petals") who showed us the weed orchid *Monadenia bracteata*. We then dug up about 50 orchids which would have flowered near the golf course and along Upper Sturt Road. Ann took them away in a thick plastic bag to go in a deep pit at Mitcham dump. This weed orchid is presently in controllable numbers in Belair and with ongoing efforts it could be eradicated completely. Otherwise Ann believes it has the potential to outcompete and replace around half of the 100 or so native orchid species in the Mt. Lofty Ranges.

After the working bees this year, you can now walk almost all the way on our FOB project footpath to Government Farm Oval without seeing a patch of boneseed, so this year's working efforts have been worthwhile, although some follow up work will be needed and there are still some olives to get. Why not come and join us in future and really get in to the bush.

By Ron Pitman.

Working bees can be fun, the same faithful few turn up each time. I encourage you to come and join us. You will be surprised at what has been achieved so far especially in removing Boneseed.

THE FRIENDS FORUM REPORT

By Daphne Johncock.

The 1993 Forum was hosted by the Friends of Telowie Gorge Conservation Park, in the district Hall at Napperby, a small town at the foot of the Southern Flinders Ranges, near Port Pirie.

In common with other forums there was much friendly chatter, plenty of delicious food and lots of work for the host group and their helpers.

Arriving early I located the Hall and then drove around the neat little town and found the Scout Camp where Ray, Ron and I were to stay. By the time I returned to erect our display lots of others had arrived and the marquee was a hive of activity.

The day had been hot and the evening was ideal for the

outdoor B.B.Q. tea where people mingled freely. The presentation of awards followed and this year was short, sharp and shiny. Our group received an Adopt a Plant certificate which was accepted by Lynda Knight and I collected an Appreciation Certificate. Supper concluded the evening and we were then on our way to our various accommodations.

Our camp building was a bit chilly but the Friends of Simpson Desert were prepared - they soon had a roaring fire in the hearth, their swags rolled out on the floor nearby and the "medical port" handy. The rest of us had comfortable bunks.

The camp was on Napperby Creek so most people went for a walk each morning, some walking further than others!

Day two was the day for getting down to business. Bruce Leaver, the Director, opened the proceedings with a summary of S.A. Park statistics on funding, staffing, use and future trends. The Forum topics, similar to other years were fielded neatly by Bruce Leaver who kept things moving and close to the scheduled times.

Lorraine Edmonds gave a interesting and informative talk on "Preservation of the Flinders".

After a succulent B.B.Q. lunch a panel consisting of Bruce Leaver, Brenton Arnold, Barbara Hardey and Nicholas Newland answered questions from the floor. It was interesting to hear the different views taken by each panellist.

During the afternoon visits were made to Telowie Gorge or Nelshaby Park. I was in the group at Nelshaby an area surrounding the old Nelshaby dam. Our guide carried a joey in a pouch slung from his shoulder for the entire weekend and everyone had to have a peep.

Saturday night was a three course sit down dinner in the hall, followed by a social evening. Dene and Diane Cordes opened the old time dancing by leading the Polonaise. It took a while to get it right but it was fun. A lot of us had trouble remembering the other dances too!

Sunday was more relaxed. The film "The story of Yellow-foot" was shown and Wildlife Management Officer, Peter Alexander, spoke about Yellow-foot also.

Curtis Smith and exchange Ranger from Oregon, U.S.A., spoke briefly and offered to speak at Friends Group Meetings. He and his family will be guests at our Birthday Party in December.

Friends of Telowie were thanked for their hospitality and Caralene Mudge, "She who must be obeyed" was given a standing ovation.

Next year's host group, Friends of Simpson desert, closed the forum after showing slides of the magnificent desert in all its moods.

Walks were again available and I went to Telowie Gorge this time. Richard Philips who spent a number of years as a Ranger in the area was the guide for our group.

Telowie Friends helped build the 1Km walking trail to the first rock wallaby area. Some people were lucky to glimpse one bounding over the rim of the gorge. It is possible to continue further into this spectacular gorge on a narrow track with a greater chance of seeing Yellow-foot, particularly morning or evening.

As I did not want to be late home I slipped quietly away, by passing the reptile display and returned to the Hall to dismount the display, have some lunch and say my farewells and thanks for a happy weekend.

COMING EVENTS

MEETINGS

December 4th General Meeting, 1-00 pm, followed by working bee.

February 5th General Meeting, 1-00 pm, Information Centre Theater, followed by the Annual General Meeting.

March 6th General Meeting, 1-00 pm.

WORKING BEES

December non but a good time to collect seed.

January 1994 is also a good time to collect seed.

February Sunday 20th, 10-00 am.

March. Sunday 20th, 10-00 am.

WALKS

Tuesday Walks

Non till mid March, then every second and fourth Tuesday afternoon at 2 p.m.

PARKS AND GROUPS BIRTHDAY.

This event will take place on **December 19th**, a Sunday this year, come along and support the group. For details see page 1.

PATRON'S TALK by Ray. Nash, alias the editor.

Dare I say anything? First the forum, as has been reported by Daphne a most delightful meeting of people with like interests. I found it very interesting with the topics of the forum how questions were carefully avoided or muffed, there eventually was found a way of getting direct answers but this must be kept secret as who knows who would read this and apply a bluff next year.

Nearer home during the past year we have seen some wonderful improvements made in our park, I refer to all the work done by Neville Houlahan and his staff on the various walking trails. Besides this quite a lot of planting has been done by Pia Richter and her Junior Rangers. Pia has left Belair to take up a position at Ceduna. May I express for the group our thanks for her friendship and help while she was with us and that she has a very

interesting time in her new position.

Also you will notice that about some of the areas that are to be planted, there have been fences erected to protect these sites from pedestrians, some even have signs asking people not to pass into such places. I find this very encouraging and hope this type of protection is kept up. Very pleasing to see. Perhaps one day we will see visitors etc. to the park showing more respect for areas planted out and keep out without notices, fences etc. having to be erected

When one looks about the park it becomes very evident to us who know, how much has been done by the volunteers over the past eight years, quite an impressive bit, like Joyce's work for instance. BUT as a visitor to the park, do you know who has done this work? There is very little evidence that there is any voluntary effort done in the park, a little notice board in the information centre and a notice about the habitat planting in the Centenary year near the Government Farm Oval and that is about all. Part of this maybe due to our lack of pressuring. One would think that the N.P.W.S. would be out to advertise the work that volunteers are doing in the hope that others would be encouraged to join in, it is to their benefit.

This brings to mind something that I was told many years ago, "Things given (in our case labour, plants, etc.) are of no value when compared to items paid for". More and more I see the truth of this when dealing with our activities in the park. The only apparent value we have seems to be mostly political, eg it looks good to show visitors and therefore the management must be doing the right thing.

Perhaps this accounts for the large number of people who become members, then fade out. Have they seen this sooner than those, like myself who are gullible and more trusting? For myself I feel that "easy come easy go" is the view that is seen of our efforts.

This then will be the last newsletter that I will edit and print, unless I can be convinced to continue at or after the next Annual General Meeting and its elections.

May I wish all the very best to everyone for the festival season and the new year. Ray. Nash.

OTHER THINGS.

SOME PARK FACTS By John Hunwick.

In recent months Belair National Park has featured on a number of occasions in the local Messenger Press. It started with the widespread recognition that the new Tavern is an ugly monstrosity, that the palms outside were inappropriate for the Park (and are currently

dying?), that a new road was to be made without details being included in the authorised park management plan, that pine tree removal had to be stopped for lack of funds, and now that mountain bikes will be accommodated within the park.

One could not help thinking the role of the park was primarily for people and whatever they wanted in there - provided it was done with due care. Even the letters to the Editor that criticise these happenings seem to support the notion that the park must cope with these changes - somehow, in a better way.

That is certainly not my reading of the History of the Park, nor my interpretation of the authorised Park Management Plan. On pages 45 - 46 it states:

"The management philosophy for Belair Recreation Park has four principal components:

First, the park should be managed to provide a high quality, natural environment which the public can appropriately use and experience.

Second, areas within the park where the natural systems remain structurally intact, or where species or communities are of particular value, should be actively managed for their long term preservation.

Third, the park should be a place where public awareness of the role of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, its aims and objectives, and the reserves system that it manages, can be improved.

Fourth, the park should provide for the pursuit of only those recreational activities which are not in conflict with the intention of the preceding philosophical elements."

Moreover, the National Parks and Wildlife Act by which the Management Plan receives its authority states:

(section 40 in my version) "where the Minister has adopted a plan of management in relation to a reserve-

(a) the provisions of the plan must be carried out in relation to the reserve; and

(b) operations must not be undertaken in relation to that reserve unless those operations are in accord with the plan of management."

All the above happenings could be said to contravene the philosophy of the Plan if not the letter of the law contained in the act in one way or another. But looking at what should be done is far more positive than criticising what should not have happened.

Once again the authorised management plan and its philosophy and objectives is a good place to start. On page 57 of the plan it states:

"To manage the park in a manner which will lead to the preservation and re-establishment of the flora and fauna which was native to the park prior to European settlement."

Well, what has been going on? According to the media NOTHING. While there has been some work done on re-establishment of native grasses, the occasional shooting of trespassing cats, and some program related to the planting of prickly wattle in order to safeguard the southern brown bandicoot I haven't heard of much else being done by the staff in this regard.

One wonders what work has been done to confirm the native flora and fauna of the area. It has been done for the Flinders Ranges - but not for Belair? What has been done to plan out an area in Belair that is free of rabbits, cats and foxes so that some of our most endangered species can be considered for reintroduction? I understand Cleland has had some thoughts on the subject, but Belair?

South Australia has more than 20 million hectares of parks and except for islands none of it is safe for any of our threatened species. In the recent return of the Numbat it was no coincidence that they went to a private sanctuary and not a public park like Belair.

And yet that is what Belair is supposedly all about - even more so now there is so little natural environment left in the southern Mt. Lofty Ranges - less than 6% - of which Belair is one of the biggest remaining sections.

While our park managers spend their time debating the size and structure of buildings to be placed in the parks., their colours, their surrounding plants; while they accommodate forms of recreation that have nothing to do with appreciation of the natural environment, then the real purpose of the parks - preservation of our wild life - does not get the attention it deserves.

It is perhaps a good thing that there is not a lot of money for park spending right now. We need to get the philosophy and management priorities right before we spend the money, and not spend money only to find that people continue to benefit while our wildlife languishes. Belair has the right philosophy but not the right management priorities. No

wonder those who care about wildlife are disillusioned with the present management of parks.

[Editors comments following the above.]

The above recalls statements I have heard several times in the past years, these say that Belair has nothing of value ecologically. People who believe this are, either lazy and have not gone out into the natural areas of the park, stupid or say such things because of political hopes. It is also considered that the higher eastern part of the park is the best ecological area, however no consideration is given to the western lower part where the bush land here is a remnant of that which used to extend from Belair through Blackwood and further south and south west and nowhere else. Perhaps this is why the N.P.W.S. does not put much emphasis on volunteer work in the park, too many to see what is going on and complain if there is further eroding of the natural environment here.

STURT RIVER CATCHMENT.

Report on a meeting held on the 20th October 1993, by Ron. Pitman.

The venue was held at the Mitchell Park Neighbourhood Centre, for groups concerned about the Sturt River Catchment, the B.N.P. being in this area.

The meeting was called jointly by A.C.F. Adelaide Branch, ILKARI, Flinders Conservation Group Inc. and Friends of Laffers Triangle (an area bounded by Sturt, Marion and South Roads).

Some 40 odd people were in attendance including myself representing the F.O.B.P.

Under the heading OUR COMMON CONCERN that we meet together, it was stated, "The Sturt River has been a significant catchment for the Adelaide region since time immemorial. The Kaurna people walked its length and camped along the banks for thousands of years prior to European settlement and knew it as "WARA PERRE" or "Gully Winds River". It provides a crucial link in the legend of the Tjirbruke, one part of the rich traditional law of the Kaurna people.

It was amongst the first places to be settled by Europeans in the early 1840's and

thousands of people have since grown up along the river using it for food production, recreation and simply to enjoy the beauty and wonder of nature."

The last 30 - 50 years has seen a steady decline in the health of the catchment.

Representatives from each group gave a brief outline of their aims and activities. The scene was set by Mark Wilkins A.F.C. Rural Liaison Officer (engineering background). An example of their (A.C.F.) success is the Landcare Initiative, which now boasts over 1600 Landcare groups around Australia.

The E.W.&S. had two representatives present. They had a series of boards demonstrating what had been and is being done elsewhere in the State to clean up the catchment areas of the Mt. Lofty Ranges (60% of Adelaide's water comes from these catchments).

Certainly something needs to be done to clean up the ailing Sturt Creek and the Patawolonga basin into which it flows.

It was decided to meet again on **Wednesday November the 24th** and further address this issue.

ENDANGERED SPECIES

An inaugural meeting was held on the 9th of November 1993, commencing 7-30 pm at the Conservation Council Building, Wakefield, St. Adelaide. Your Editor attended.

Mark Ellis was the chairperson with speakers; Rick Davies (later elected as Convenor), who talked and showed slides of threatened plant populations and their management; H. Possingham who discussed *Spyridium coactifolium* and lobbying with the Victor

Harbour council over a site; and Kiern Brewer who talked mostly about the Park's Friends Groups.

The meeting resolved and formed a group to be known as "**Threatened Plant Species Action Group**" its aims are to gain members; to encourage more awareness of the threat to plant species; to negotiate with Friends of Parks groups in management and maintenance of endangered plant populations in parks. Our group will be contacted sometime with regard to the rare plants in B.N.P.

PLANT WATCH

Now is the time for members to seriously consider the business of **collecting seed**, the types wanted are those low understory plants and grasses. If you are not sure of the plant you intend dealing with ask first.

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1994 WILL SOON BE DUE.

IF YOU ARE STILL IN arrears FOR 1993 OR EARLIER, THEN NOW IS THE TIME TO CATCH UP.

PLEASE PAY THE TREASURER AND HAVE IT DONE WITH.

Under the groups constitution members who miss paying for a year will still owe the group that years subscription. If you do not want to be a member then you must give a written resignation, otherwise you are considered to be a non financial member and will not receive copies of the newsletter after mid year, but will still have to pay for those missed years subscriptions.

1ST AUSSIE EXPO OF REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS.

Wayville Showgrounds 27 Dec. 93 - 10 Jan. 94.

The Committee wish all members and readers a Merry Christmas and a Very Happy New Year.

The deadline for the next Newsletter will be **two weeks before the next General Meeting after the Annual General Meeting.**

Views expressed in articles printed in this Newsletter are not necessary those of the group or editor.

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