



FRIENDS OF PARKS INC

VOLUNTEERS WORKING FOR CONSERVATION



BANDICOOT TAILS

Newsletter of the Friends of Scott Creek Conservation Park

No. 79, April, 2003

The President's Word

In the latest issue of "The Web", a publication of the Threatened Species Network, an article on weeds and pest animals stated that they are costing the agricultural sector over \$3.3 billion a year. This statement begs the question "what cost are they visiting on Australia's natural ecosystems". I would be inclined to say that whilst a fairly accurate figure may be put on how much is spent on ecosystem recovery, the long term cost to biodiversity and our society in the future is inestimable. A report to the Federal Government has stated that the current framework to prevent, eradicate and control invasive species that cause major environmental impacts is inadequate. (And so say all of us). The report also warns that far stronger action is required to attack "sleeper weeds" (those that have established but are yet to become a problem). A good example of one such is Scabious which, in a plant survey in 1988, boasted ONE plant on Mt Bold Road, It is now one of the most predominant species along roadside verges throughout the Cherry Gardens area. In the "think globally act locally" mode, an excellent piece of advice given a long time ago by Enid Robertson- no doubt on more than a couple of occasions is - **"when you find a new weed, don't monitor it, remove it"**.

There will no doubt be many groans of dismay when you see the list of new Orchid names and, while increasing the number of different genera of orchids in the park, gives the weekend botanists yet another learning curve to ascend.

I hope you can come on our Easter Walk – although florally not the best time of the year, the walk along Currawong Ridge provides some beautiful views of the more inaccessible bush.

EASTER WALK, 18TH. APRIL

Our Easter walk this year will start at Gate 3, just up from Mackereth Cottage at 10 am. We will proceed up to the Currawong Ridge track, thence to Gate 8, Gate 9, back to Neville Road and then back to our start point.

BOB BATES' BOTANY

Our occasional correspondent, Bob Bates, has returned from his sojourn in England, so no more words from foreign climes. However, he is still producing notes of interest, as the following will attest.

Disappearing Plants of Scott Creek Conservation Park

At least fifty of the plant species which have been present in the park at some time in the last twenty years have 'disappeared' but before we get too worried let's break down the list into categories.

Garden plants:

When I was a kid and living at Mylor we often visited friends living in the area.... of course it wasn't a conservation park then but an area of struggling farms..... cows, sheep, goats, pigs and more interestingly hobbyists growing fruit or flowers for the floristry trade. Of course once the people were gone the gardens were left untended... over the first few summers the more delicate garden plants succumbed. Occasionally even 20 years later some annual will come up after disturbance and I have seen petunias, solanums and hollyhocks since 1985. When I did my first plant survey in 1988 there were walnuts, lemons and oranges, stone pines, rhododendrons and the like but these have been cut down.

Ironically most of the garden plants disappeared without man's further interference while those we spend the most hours trying to eliminate are still there!

Only after disturbance:

Another large group of disappearing species (or perhaps we should call them 're-appearing' are those that appear only after fire, flood or other disturbance.. ie they just seem to have disappeared!

Examples of this group include the two native pelargoniums, *Lobelia rhombifolia*, *Billardiera bignoniacea*, *Viminaria*, *Lavatera plebeia*, *Haloragis brownii*, *Olearia teretifolia*, *Utricularia tenella*, *Schoenus maschalinus*, the orchids *Prasophyllum constrictum*, *P. odoratum* and *Pyrrochis* and the fern *Hypolepis dicksonioides*.. These species only appear after fire or disturbance.

Two water loving species ie *Elatine gratioloides* and *Lepidium* sp have only been seen on flooded ground. Clearly any of these species may not be seen for years at a time and then appear in large numbers when their special requirements are met.

Other species are just '**blow-ins**', plants with wind-borne seed, especially composites such as thistles, gnaphaliums, Cassinia and even Skeleton weed. These have all been seen as single plants which either lasted but one year and were unable to set up permanent populations or died naturally of old age.

Some interesting **native species** were only ever known from small unviable populations. They may have been more common before the massive modification of their environment since settlement but the conditions are no longer suitable. They were the last Mohicans. Some species were known from single old plants... ie the *Austrostipa breviglumis* near Greenhood Track which disappeared after 1998, the *Thomasia petalocalyx* off Mt Bold Road which senesced about 1990, the *Vitadinia gracilis* near Almanda chimney not seen in ten years, *Hydrocotyle verticillata* a single colony of which disappeared from Almanda Creek after 1996, *Calostemma purpurea* from Neville Road and a plant of *Villarsia reniformis* in Scott Creek in 1988. There must have been many more which disappeared early on before botanists even had the chance to record them.

The Island Effect:

The 'island effect' has certainly begun to kick in at Scott Creek particularly with native grassland plants which were once constantly replaced from nearby populations around Cherry Gardens.... but as the grassy woodlands of Cherry Gardens are now gone the tiny outliers at Scott Creek are dying out, as weeds and brush smother them and there is no source from which they can be

NOT all
Natives

replaced. This is especially true of orchids... since 1988 we have lost the velvet greenhood *Pterostylis cucullata* from Greenhood Gully, *P. falcata* from Almanda creek, *Hymenochilus cycnocephalus* (previously *Pterostylis*) from opposite Almanda, *Oligochaetochilus bisetus* (previously *Pterostylis*) from the Quarry Track, *Prasophyllum australe* now known only from one swamp adjacent the park and *Anzybas unguiculatus* (previously *Corybas*) from Twisted Chimney Gully... although this may still be present as it is nigh impossible to find in overgrown bush. An orchid species now totally extinct is *Prasophyllum rotundiflorum* from Cherry Gardens... it is likely to have occurred at Scott Creek too.

What is more worrying is the rapid decline of several other vulnerable orchid species such as *Arachnorchis behrii*, *A. rigida*, *Petalochilus vulgaris*, *Prasophyllum fitzgeraldii* and *Thelymitra carnea*. These are mostly being lost due to smothering by weeds and brush.

The only way to ensure that we don't lose any more species un-necessarily is to manage the Park to ensure there is always a succession of vegetation regrowth without major weeds and with maximum habitat variety... ie we need patchwork burning and slashed areas; with native grassland, swamps, heathland, wetlands, creekside, dense thickets and open woodland all managed differently. Intelligent management with access tracks.. not closing off large areas and forgetting them. Likewise we need to consider the historical aspect by not removing all garden plants from old house sites... just the aggressive ones. Floral diversity assists in keeping a diverse native fauna too.

Bob Bates March 2003

NEW ORCHID NAMES for SCOTT CREEK

In the last 2 years due to subdivision of unrealistic genera such as *Caladenia* and *Pterostylis* the number of orchid genera present in Scott Creek CP has been revised upward from about 18 to about 30. No new species have been added but that too is about to change!

The new genera (with representative species) are:

Nemacianthus caudatus which is monotypic and previously *Acianthus caudatus*. (The Park still has *Acianthus pusillus*.)

Arachnorchis behrii, *A. gladiolata*, *A. leptochila*, *A. reticulata*, *A. rigida* and *A. tentaculata*.... the spider orchids which were previously *Caladenia*. There are no *Caladenia* species in the Park but *Caladenia latifolia* does occur nearby.

Petalochilus carneus, *P. pusillus* or *P. aff minor* or both, *P. prolata* and *P. vulgaris* which were also previously in *Caladenia*.

Pheladenia deformis previously listed either as *Caladenia* or *Cyanicula* and some authors prefer it still as *Cyanicula* (ie all the blue flowered species)

Corysanthes diemenicus and *C. incurvus* the helmet orchids which were previously *Corybas*.

Anzybas unguiculatus which was also previously *Corybas*.

Corunastylis species aff rufa the midge orchids previously *Genoplesium* and before that lumped with the *prasophyllums*..

Diplodium aff alatum, *D. robustum* and their *hybrid*, previously *Pterostylis*.

Hymenochilus cycnocephalus previously *Pterostylis*.

Bunochilus smaragdinus previously *Pterostylis longifolia* complex.

Linguella (two species aff nana) previously *Pterostylis nana*.

Plumatichilus plumosus previously *Pterostylis*.

Oligochaetochilus bisetus and *O. aff rufus* previously *Pterostylis*.

Urochilus vittatus previously *Pterostylis vittata*.

There are still several species of true *Pterostylis* at Scott Creek ie *P. nutans*, *P. foliata*, *P. curta*, *P. falcata* and hybrids.

Most of these changes result from research by David Jones and Mark Clements in Canberra. There is also talk of the weed orchid *Monadenia* being known as *Disa* but I have not seen published evidence.

Coming in the next two years are several new sun orchids (*Thelymitra*) being revised by Jeff Jeanes in Melbourne, and new species names for our *Eriochilus*, *Corunastylis* and *Linguella* and perhaps *Petalochilus*.

No other family of plants at Scott Creek has suffered such massive change of names.

Bob Bates March 2003.

Bird Banding:

The previous two weekends have seen our ornithologists working at the Gate 9 and Gate 7 sites. On the 29th and 30th March, at Gate 9, two perfect mornings saw a total of 51 birds from 11 species handled. Included in this total were 7 retraps, the oldest being a 3+ Striated Thornbill.

On the 5th and 6th April, we worked at Gate 7, with nets in and on the edge of the direct seeding plot between the Gate and Gurr Road. Twenty two birds were caught, with 5 species and 6 retraps included, with a predominance of Striated Thornbills. These yielded the surprise of the year to date. Four Striated Thornbill retraps included one bird aged 8+ years and another aged 14+ years. The latter bird was banded at the Reid's house, about 200 metres from the banding site on the 25th February, 1990. The oldest age recorded for this species is 15 years 7 months, for a bird near Canberra, last recaptured in 1985. However, our record is a very respectable one and emphasizes the potential longevity of many of the Australian passerines.

To date, we have banded twice in and around the direct seeding area. On both occasions, the predominant number of birds were caught on the edge or in the older bush around the new growth. At present it is not particularly attractive to most birds, apart from passage through it to the more diverse bush areas around it. Changes in this over the next several years will be observed with interest.

Regeneration in the Mount Bold Dam Catchment:

We have received this message from Shaun Kennedy, Bush Management Officer of the S.A. Water Corporation.

"I would like to inform the Friends of Scott Creek Conservation Park that Bush For Life has committed a BFL team to work on the remnant vegetation within SA Water gate 81 site (S 1428). The team will be led by Rebekah Crawford under the occasional guidance of Andrew Allanson. The Gate 81 team is planning to attend two days (both Wednesday and Thursday) every fortnight. Numerous photo points are being established this month to track the natural regeneration of native species. More formal monitoring is envisaged to be conducted potentially by Adelaide University students. In case you were wondering, Gate 81 is S.A. Water's name for the Matthews Road gate. The gate will be labeled accordingly in the future.

If you have any questions about the work proposed by the Gate 81 BFL team then do not hesitate to contact me on the number below."

Shaun Kennedy, Bush Management Officer
(Tel) 08 8463 6052 (Fax) 08 8207 1346
email: shaun.kennedy@sawater.com.au

**FRIENDS OF SCOTT CREEK CONSERVATION PARK
PROGRAMME FOR 2003**

Month	Date	Activity	Location
April	1 st .	Tuesday Working bee	N & S of Stringybark Tk (enter G14), boneseed, etc.
	5 th - 6 th .	Bird banding	Gate 7, 7.00 am.
	13 th	Sunday Working bee	S of G17, Neville Rd., Wood Duck Ck., broom, boneseed & gorse
	18 th .	Easter Park Walk	Meet at Gate 3, 10 am.
	26 th .	Saturday Working bee	E. of pump shed, Upper Fern Gully
May	6 th .	Tuesday Working bee	E of G4, Acacia longifolia
	8 th .	Business meeting	TBA
	11 th .	Sunday Working bee	Old school site N of G8, pull/C&S broom
	17 th - 18 th .	Bird banding	Gate 19, 7.00 am.
	24 th .	Saturday Working bee	Top of Stockyard Tk.; broom, Melaleuca, etc. (enter at G20)
	31 st .	Bird banding	Gate 3 crossroads, 7.00 am.
June	1 st .	Bird banding	Gate 3 crossroads, 7.00 am.
	3 rd .	Tuesday Working bee	Enter G14 and follow minor track on left for about 500m.; boneseed, etc.
	5 th - 6 th .	Bird banding	Gate 9, 7.00 am.
	12 th .	General meeting with speaker	Coromandel Valley PS, 7.30 pm.
	15 th .	Sunday Working bee	Enter G3, Bandicoot Tk; boneseed, etc. S of track
	21 st - 22 nd .	Bird banding	Gate 7, 7.00 am.
	28 th .	Saturday Working bee	Enter G11 and follow scrub clearing W edge; broom in scrub NW of G11
July	1 st .	Tuesday Working bee	TBA
	5 th - 6 th .	Bird banding	TBA
	17 th .	Sunday Working bee	TBA
	23 rd .	Saturday Working bee	TBA
August	5 th .	Tuesday Working bee	TBA
	14 th .	Business meeting	TBA
	17 th .	Sunday Working bee	TBA
	23 rd .	Saturday Working bee	TBA
September	2 nd .	Tuesday Working bee	TBA
	11 th .	General meeting with speaker	TBA
	14 th .	Sunday Working bee	TBA
	27 th .	Saturday Working bee	TBA
October	7 th .	Tuesday Working bee	TBA
	9 th .	Business meeting	TBA
		Sunday Working bee	TBA
		Saturday Working bee	TBA
November	4 th .	Tuesday Working bee	TBA
	13 th .	Annual General Meeting	Coromandel Valley PS, 7.30 pm.

	16 th .	Sunday Working bee	TBA
	22 nd .	Saturday Working bee	TBA
December	2 nd .	Tuesday Working bee	TBA
	13 th	Propagation Day	Thompson's, Frith Road, 9.00 am.
	19 th .	Christmas function	TBA

Don't Forget: Meeting point for working bees is the Almanda Mine/Gate 19 at 9.00 am.

Please note that there is NO meeting this month, the Easter Walk instead.

Officebearers:

Any queries on Friends activities, please contact your office bearers.

President Tom Hands 8388 2150 RMB 691, Cherry Gardens, 5157

Email: almanda@bigpond.com

Secretary Don Reid 8388 2123 RMB 104, Bradbury, 5153

Fax 8388 2622

Email: minhist@triplei.net.au

Treasurer John Thompson 8388 2387 P.O. Box 426, Blackwood , 5051

Saturday Working Bee Coordinator:

Peter Charles 8278 7488 24A Wonoka Road, Eden Hills, 5050

Email: charp@senet.com.au

Tuesday/Sunday Working Bees Coordinator:

John Butler 8278 2773 5 Trevelyan Court, Coromandel

Valley, 5051

Email: jhbutler@picknowl.com.au mail:

Friends Website: <http://homepages.picknowl.com.au/peters/default.htm>