

# *Bandicoot Tails*

## **Newsletter of the Friends of Scott Creek Conservation Park**

No. 140, September - October, 2011

President's Words: The recent Friends Forum held in Kimba was most enjoyable. An excellent series of talks were given by people of mostly local origin on this region. They were, without exception, very interesting and informative. A geologist who grew up in the area explained the formation of this ancient area, an entomologist spoke of his very long term studies on the invertebrates on Lake Gilles and a PhD aspirant discussed her studies on the effect of fire on the local dune ecosystems. Dr John Read (who well remembered his namesake Don from their time at Roxby Downs eighteen years previously) and his wife also added to the mix. John is a very enthusiastic character, a herpetologist, naturalist and ecologist, living and working in the area. He and his wife also have found time to help save one of the last remaining forested islands of the Solomons, where totally unsustainable logging by foreign owned companies has all but decimated the other islands. The indigenous people were made aware of the great tourist potential by leaving the island's natural beauty intact and helping restore the populations of the turtles that nest there. A good news story from a hard won battle.

Jenny Dawes has kindly written an article for this edition on her Forum Highlights and a DVD of the Forum will be available soon which we will be able to share with the Group. Meanwhile back at the ranch, the lovely bird brochure has been selling very well and we have broken even so far as publishing costs go. The Stirling Market has been a very good venue for selling and spruiking the group (although our ranks have swollen not a jot). Many people are not even aware of the park and are very interested in finding out about it and all it has to offer. Several people have told us of their close association with the park when it was still farm land. One gentleman told us about the origins of the camellia bush at the top of Bandicoot Track. Apparently some forty five years ago, the family living there planted it over the body of the family dog which had died at the age of nineteen. As the bush is such a hardy one and is not able to perpetuate itself, my sentiment is that it could be the last pest plant in the park we think about removing. In other words, it will not be my decision.

On the weedy front, the Nature Foundation grant for the removal of sugar gums has been spent. A large number of the gums had started to spread from the seed bank left by their parents (ringbarked over ten years ago). They have all been dealt with and follow-up will now be an easy task. The season, whilst being a boon for boneseed and broom has been much less so for the endangered orchids of the park. The *Caladenia gladiolata* population currently boasts one flower and one bud and *C. rigida* very few indeed. We can only hope it is cyclic and next year will see a resurgence.

Sunday's Spring Walk was held on a perfect day, the orchids were blooming and birds were nesting and all walkers enjoyed the slightly altered route a great deal. Thanks to everyone for making it such a relaxed and sociable day.

Our Guest Speaker for the AGM, Alison Derry, is an ornithologist/ecologist who spent eighteen months working on Macquarie Island. Her experiences and beautiful photographs, which I have seen, will make for a very entertaining and informative evening.



**Some of the Spring Walkers. Spot the Pres?**



### **Bird Banding:**

Banding activities were somewhat curtailed by the weather in July and August, but we managed to get out on three days, before or after rain fronts. Our results were as follows

16 <sup>th</sup> . July	Gate 7	22 nettings	9 recaptures	10 species captured
31 <sup>st</sup> . July	Gate 3 Crossroads	10	2	7
20 <sup>th</sup> . August	Gate 11	33	5	10

The results were average for Gate 7, low for Gate 3 and the best we have had from Gate 11.

The longest-lived recaptured bird was a Striated Thornbill at Gate 7, coming in at 8+ years. Other long-lived birds were a 5+ Striated Thornbill, also in the same flock as Methuselah above; a 5+ Grey Shrikethrush at Gate 7; a 4+ Whitebrowed Scrubwren at the Crossroads; and a 4+ Superb Fairy Wren at Gate 11.

### **Around and about at the Kimba Forum**

Thoughtful organisation provided Forum participants with some interesting experiences. It was 'book-ended' by two special visual presentations. The first, a clever idea, was to have the first night's BBQ meal adjacent to the town's large wheat silos on which they showed a wonderful panorama of local scenes. The pleasure of some 200 participants was shared, out behind the open marquee, by quite number of residents!

At the other 'end', we finished on Sunday evening with a remarkable treasured old 1960's film made about life in and around Kimba. Age had affected parts of the soundtrack in particular, but the audience appreciated scenes of old Holdens and similar cars lining the street, women in hats, gloves and 'bouffant' dresses, men in rolled up shirt sleeves and children getting off the old school buses, some carrying Gladstone bags. Farming scenes, including depictions of an even earlier era, showed horse teams ploughing, managing the harvest process and crank-starting a car. Apparently not much farming could be accomplished without a pipe or cigarette often poised precariously over some risky situations.

With additional insights from our speakers, ideal weather enhanced the tours conducted around the area, such as when searching for life on salt lakes in Lake Gilles CP and in appreciating the geological basis of the sand dunes and large granite outcrops. However, the vast flourishing green acres of wheat apparently hide wise mice which now survive winter in deeper holes and are expected to reduce the harvest by thirty per cent.

This relatively small town has a lot of pride and considerable community spirit, manifest in the way they pulled together to support just a handful of Friends' organisers. Apart from providing quite lot of home stay accommodation, several community groups spent their weekend catering for our meals, including Sunday's BBQ breakfast held at their museum.

Meanwhile Friends' achievements were recognised through awards presented at the dinner, including a goat eradication project in western Kangaroo Island, a Banded Stilt project on Lake Torrens that required kayaks to band chicks - and a Lincoln NP bird brochure, which should give someone a good idea about us next year in Naracoorte! The 2012 organisers' presentation suggests it will be an equally enjoyable experience.

Jenny Dawes



Forum participants were shown how captured water run-off from Peela Rocks is fed into a large tank in a shed below and used for stock.



2011 Kimba Forum tour participants on Peela Rocks (courtesy of the landowner).

**Social Events:** At our last business meeting, we discussed the desirability of visiting other areas of interest as a social activity for our membership. Jenny Dawes has investigated likely areas and has suggested visits to the Salisbury Wetlands ( a bird haven and ecological re-establishment area) and the Waite Reserve (a Hills Face Zone park). These have been put into our programme and details will be sent out soon.

It will be interesting to see how other groups are tackling their local problems.

**Programme September – November 2011 (all working bees meet at 9.00am at G18)**

September	24	Saturday Working Bee	Gate 9- Erica and assorted enemies
	25	Stirling Market Stall	8.30 am – 4pm.
October	2	Salisbury Wetlands A.M. visit and lunch	Details TBA
	4	Tuesday Working Bee	Boneseed- W slope opp Mackereth Cottage
	9	Sunday Working Bee	Boneseed etc upstream of Fern Gully-Park at old pump shed, Bandicoot Track
	13	Business Meeting	Thompson's residence, Frith Road, Cherry Gardens, 7.30 pm.
	15, 16	Bird banding	Gate 7, 6.00 am
	22	Saturday Working Bee	Boneseed etc W& S of G12
	29,30	Bird banding	Derwentia Creek, 6.00 am
November	1	Tuesday Working Bee	Erica & Boneseed Derwentia Gully
	6	Waite Reserve walk	Details TBA
	<b>10</b>	<b>AGM</b>	<b>Scott Ck Hall-Guest Speaker Alison Derry, ecologist - on her 18 month stay on Macquarie Island (&amp; great photos too) 7.30 pm.</b>
	13	Sunday Working Bee	Broom etc SE Viminaria Paddock area
	19,20	Bird banding	Gate 4, 6.00 am
	26	Saturday Working Bee	Broom etc up from Breakfast Ford, Bushrat Ck

**John Butler asks that anyone attending working bees and going directly to site rather than to the meeting area at Gate 18, give the organiser a call the day or so before, in case of a change in plans.**

As a safety measure when working in the park, consider carrying a switched on mobile phone if you have one, with John's 0427 164 290 or Tom's 0417 869 349 numbers stored. Let John and Tom know your mobile No.

We have several two-way radios for members use. These are also available at working bees.

**Officebearers:**

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

President Tom Hands 8388 2150 RMB 691, Cherry Gardens, 5157  
Email: [almanda11@bigpond.com](mailto:almanda11@bigpond.com)

Secretary Don Reid 8388 2123 224 Mt. Bold Road,  
Bradbury, 5153  
Email: [dre00249@bigpond.net.au](mailto:dre00249@bigpond.net.au)

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

Saturday Working Bee Coordinator:

Peter Charles 8377 1749 74 Lascelles Avenue, Warradale,  
5046

Email: [charpet@ozemail.com](mailto:charpet@ozemail.com)

Tuesday/Sunday Working Bees Coordinator:

John Butler 8278 2773 5 Trevelyan Court, Coromandel  
Valley, 5051

Email: [jhbutler@chariot.net.au](mailto:jhbutler@chariot.net.au):

**Friends Website:** <http://friendsofscottcreek.org>

**Please note that your Secretary's home address has changed, due to the new numbering system being put in place throughout rural area. RMBs are disappearing!**

**Don's email address has also changed to [dre00249@bigpond.net.au](mailto:dre00249@bigpond.net.au)**