

Bandicoot Tails

Newsletter of the Friends of Scott Creek Conservation Park

No. 160

November-December, 2015

The Annual General Meeting:

We had a very good turnout for our AGM on the 12th November at the Cherry gardens CFS. 32 people arrived to hear Tom Hands give his final address and elect our new committee. Nominations were made as follows:

President:	Peter Watton
Vice-president	John Butler
Secretary	Don Reid
Treasurer	Donella Peters

Without any further nominations being made, all the above were declared elected.

Retiring President's Report:

Outgoing President Tom Hands gave a brief summary of the 25 years that the Friends group has been in existence.

From a small beginning, with minimal funding and little knowledge, we were guided by people like Enid Robertson to understanding the park's problems. Early funds raised through our stall at the Blackwood Rotary Fair helped to fund initial contractor work. Our first creek rehabilitation was started in Derwentia Creek and has spread to several creek lines in the park, with considerable success.

We were lucky in attracting exceptional talent to our group. Tom mentioned several names in this regard. He singled out John Butler for his quiet dedication in coordinating our weeding efforts over 20 years and Don Reid for his many years as Secretary and as leader of the bird banding group..

This year saw a new initiative, with the start of the 'Almanda Project' begun by John Wamsley, using crowd funding as its basis. We raised about \$30,000 in the first year.

He finished by giving his thanks to all members for the support they have given him during his time at the head of the group.

Incoming President's Remarks:

Peter Watton gave a short address as he took over the reins:

"I know Tom Hands doesn't like a fuss, but 25 years as the President of the Friends of Scott Creek Conservation Park warrants some fuss.

Scott Creek was proclaimed a Conservation Park in 1985 and then five years later the Friends group was formed. I wasn't involved at that time, but from what I'm told, when working out who would do what, I believe Tom was asked if he wouldn't mind taking on the President's role, which he did. Now, 25 years later, it seems that it is time for our second president, but don't expect me to last 25 years.

Based on the fact that he would regularly say to me “when you take over...”, I suspect Tom started grooming me to take over the President’s role soon after I joined the group about 12-13 years ago. I guess I have been on work experience ever since.

The big question was actually asked by Tom last year when I was spending some long service leave travelling around Far North Queensland, but he assured me he wasn’t planning on going anywhere quite yet. I thought he might have wanted me to take over at last year’s AGM, so I chose to miss the AGM and take another trip interstate.

Obviously he finally got me to commit in a moment of weakness, and while I would have been happy to remain the understudy indefinitely, unfortunately circumstances won’t allow it.

From the moment I joined the Friends group, I have thoroughly enjoyed working and socialising with you all, and Tom was a big part of that. Anyone who has had any dealings with him would recognise his great passion for nature; he has a terrific knowledge on a wide range of environmental issues and excellent ID skills, in both plants and creatures great and small. Importantly, he is very generous in sharing this passion and knowledge. He is a man whose opinion, while not necessarily always welcomed, particularly by politicians and bureaucrats, is definitely respected.

He is very humble and we usually exchange a fair amount of tongue in cheek banter. I am very grateful for the time he has spent imparting a small amount of his vast knowledge to me and most of all I am grateful for his friendship.

I guess things will be different in the future for the Friends of Scott Creek, but working together I am sure we can remain confident in the future of the Park.”



The 25 year members

Jen Pitman, accompanied by DEWNR and NRM representatives, presented long service badges to many of our members. The photo above shows the group of “Golden Oldies”. Donna Reid provided an appropriately labelled cake to mark the occasion.

Badges were presented for 25, 20 and 10 year service. A surprising number of members qualified, which shows that our activities, especially weeding, must be good for the health.

Overseas Contact:

A fortnight ago, I received an email addressed to Tom and myself, from BBC Radio Dorset. Lance da Costa, their producer, runs a session with its focus on things ‘Dorset’ and has discovered us on the internet. He wants to set up a telephone conversation to discuss, in a light-hearted way, the in and outs of ‘Dorset Vale’ and the Scott Creek Conservation Park. Why not, I thought and have answered him in the affirmative. Further developments will be advised.

Don Reid

John Wamsley’s Plant of the Month

Almanda Blue Update

In Bandicoot Tails #157 I introduced a plant that is now causing some ripples. It is a bit like a modern day “Jack and the Beanstalk” Fairy-tale (or should that be Fairy Tail?) Anyway I thought it was time for an update.

Let me go back to the beginning. A few years ago I asked Tom if it would be OK if I did a bit of restoration work in Almanda Creek. He said that was OK and said he would try to show me a special plant that grew in the creek. We battled our way through the blackberries down to the creek. Tom bent down in the creek and fossicked through the water-cress growing in abundance in the creek. He handed me a pinch of mud and said, “See if you can grow that?” I constructed a special wetland for the plant. It had running water and everything the plant had in Almanda Creek except the water-cress. After a while a tiny plant grew. As it matured I realised it was just a water-cress. I carefully removed it and continued to wait for whatever I was waiting for. In time another tiny plant grew. As it matured it was clear that it was not water-cress. But! What was it?

It seemed to me that it was unhappy in the water, so I moved it to the damp ground near the stream. It rewarded me with a flower. This was the first time that I had seen its flower. This may be very important since I have never seen it flower where it supposedly came from in Almanda Creek. Never-the-less on balance of probabilities that is where it came from.



However! This was no ordinary flower. It was more like *Lobelia anceps* than *Pratia pedunculata*. But! The plant had the habit of a *Pratia pedunculata* rather than a *Lobelia anceps*. So! I was faced with a problem as to its true identity.

I showed the flower to Tom. I cannot remember what he said but it was something like, “You didn’t get this out

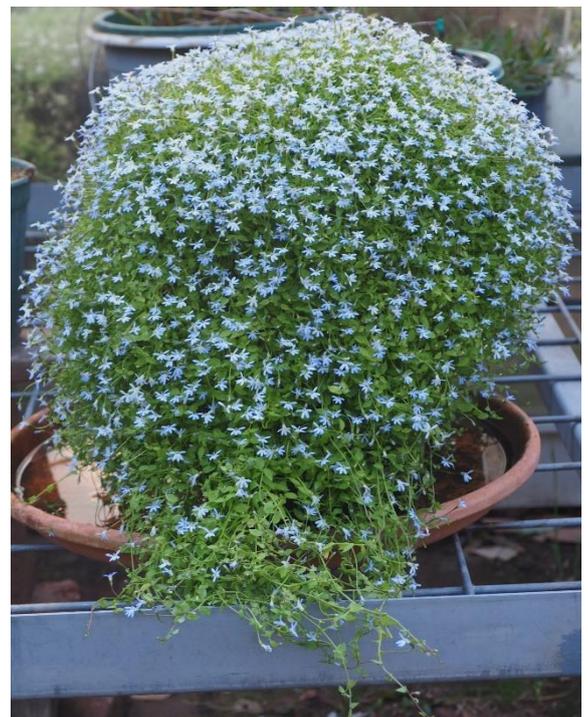
of Almanda Creek” He suggested I send a photo to Bob Bates. In due course Bob Bates replied that it was either a *Lobelia anceps* or a *Pratia pedunculata* but he would need more than just the flower to decide.

Now! I was fairly sure it was neither. I asked Tom to take the pressed plant and a photo down to the Botanic Gardens. He came back with the identity. It was a *Pratia pedunculata*. I asked him if he had shown them the photo. He said he hadn’t. I said I was not happy with the identification. I asked him to show the photo to an expert. He did this and suggested that I had mixed up my photos. That this photo was not from Almanda Creek. I gave up and wrote what I knew and that was duly published in #157 of the “Bandicoot Tails”. The experts said it was *Pratia* (now *Lobelia*) *pedunculata* so that is what it is. But! It is certainly a new variety of *Lobelia pedunculata*. I decided to call it *Lobelia* “Almanda Blue”.

I then accepted the responsibility of raising funds for the Almanda Project and one of our big fundraisers would be the “Wirrapunga Indigenous Garden” Open Garden as part of the South Australian Open Gardens events. By this time I had established Almanda Blue along the banks of Almanda Creek and grown a number of the plants as Pot Plants. I began to realise that this plant had “Commercial Value”. I decided to auction some at the Open Garden.

Since I was now going to publicly show off the plant I also decided it was time I should licence it in some way so no-one could pinch its “Commercial Value”. This plant could raise funds for the Almanda Project. During licensing I was required to obtain reports from a “Qualified Person”. A list of Qualified People were given. There were two from South Australia. I contacted and spoke to both.

The five plants I auctioned at the Open Garden brought between \$30 and \$70 each.



On the left a conventional *Lobelia pedunculata*. On the right *Lobelia* “Almanda Blue”.

(This is an edited version of John’s email to the weeding group.)

Why Did You Join Us?

Our newest member, Steven Davey has written this short note in response to a request for a “Tails” submission.

On Joining the Friends

Some ambitions take half a lifetime to become reality.

I was first aware of the ‘Friends of Parks’ concept via some information on a sign at Para Wirra Recreation Park at least twenty years ago. It was in this park I had my early experiences of regular bushwalking, daring to venture dangerously off-track within the South Para Gorge. Everything was new and mysterious. Decades on I haven’t lost the sense of wonder, nor the irrational desire to see what lies over the next hill or within the fortress-like depths of scrub and forest. Such forays rarely disappoint, because the journeying and the observation are an end in themselves.

Alongside the compulsion to intimately experience the natural world, there was always a deep feeling of regret and loss for what had been obliterated. Much of this alteration in the landscape had occurred in my lifetime. While I lamented the disappearance of visual amenity and habitat, I did nothing about it. Work and other necessities left little time or energy for secret, nagging ambitions.

Retirement from regular work in the urban parks environment, in May of this year, changed a lot of things. Overnight I found myself deposited in a new paradigm, where time and energy could be distributed in a different way. Scott Creek Conservation Park has long been a favourite with me, due to its relative isolation, protected as it is by the barrier of the Onkaparinga River Valley and the buffer of the Mount Bold catchment reserve. I knew the reputation of a couple of the Friends’ members and it was obvious that there was a rare level of professionalism within the group.

The little experiences and adventures I have had in my short time with the Friends has exceeded expectations, and my technical learning, which had all but stalled for years, has recommenced, guided by the expertise of others. What can surpass holding a tiny native bird in your hand or seeing a rare fern in the hidden reaches of a stream?

Not least of the pleasures is associating with like-minded people, and knowing that together we can begin to preserve the precious remnants of natural heritage which have enthralled me throughout all of my life.

Stephen Davey

Bird Banding Notes:

Date	Location	Total Captures	Recaptures
15 th . – 16 th August	Gate 3 Crossroads	23	9
29 th .-30 th . August	Gate 4	23	5
19 th , - 20 th . Sept.	Scott Creek	17	5
3 rd . – 4 th . October	Derwentia Creek	22	3
17 th . – 18 th . October	Gate 19	13	4
31 st . Oct. – 1 st . Nov.	Kangaroo Gully	30	7
14 th . – 15 th . Nov.	Gate 7	16	2

The table summarizes our activities since our last report.

Notable recaptures are as follows:

Brown Thornbill	8+ at Gate 3 Crossroads
Golden Whistler	10+ Gate 4
Scarlet Robin	6+ at Kangaroo Gully
Striated Thornbill	2 birds, 6+ at Gate 19
Superb Fairy Wren	2 birds, 6+ at Gate 7
Whitebrowed Scrubwren	9+ at Gate 3 Crossroads
Whitethroated Treecreeper	5+ at Scott Creek

We have had several new recruits to our endeavours – Steven Davey (see above) and the Murcott family. Welcome aboard.

PROGRAMME NOVEMBER - JANUARY

November	3	Tuesday working bee	TBA- these next WB's are flexible- depends on where weeds are flowering/seeding
	8	Sunday Working Bee	TBA
	12	Annual General Meeting	Cherry Gardens CFS Hall, Main Rd, Cherry Gdns, 7.30pm – Speaker, Ranger Jen Pitman, her recent trips to the Stony Desert-Scenic, Flora & Fauna photographers paradise
	14-15	Bird banding	Gate 7, 6.30 am.
	28	Saturday Working bee	TBA
December	1	Tuesday working bee	TBA
	5-6	Bird banding	Gate 4, 6.00 am.
	13	Sunday Working Bee	TBA
	18	Christmas Function	See you at the Reid's residence, 224 Mt. Bold Road, Bradbury, 6pm.
	26	Saturday Working Bee	TBA
January	5	Tuesday working bee	TBA
2016	9-10	Bird banding	Scott Creek, (Mackereth Cottage), 6.00 am.
	23	Saturday Working Bee	TBA
	30-31	Bird banding	Gate 9, 6.00 am.

MEET AT GATE 15, ALMANDA CAR PARK, 9.00AM

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

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Treasurer: Donella Peters, (H) 83395639, 10 Boomerang Cres, Aldgate, 5154.
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