

THE FRIENDS OF BELAIR PARK.

NEWSLETTER December 1992.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT.

As 1992 draws quickly to a close, I look back with pride at the groups achievements. This year has seen two successful planting days, both of which were open to public participation. In all, about 1500 plants have been placed. While this may not seem remarkable, especially when you compare it with the efforts of our southern "Friends", at Onkaparinga, it is fair to say that much of our success was due to Marianne's efforts. She propagated the majority of the seedlings for these days, and organised minders to care for them. The real success of our ventures however, was due to the particularly good care that our "minders" gave to our plants. I would have liked to mention you all by name, but unfortunately, space does not permit. Rather, I will just say to you all Thank you.

Special thanks must go to the public, other "friends" and the Blackwood Scout Group, for their help on both days.

I have been heartened that recently we have managed to attract several new members: in fact, too many for me to name at this point.

Never-the-less, you all know who you are, so WELCOME.

As a matter of great importance:

Ray outlined a suggestion in the last newsletter called "Adopt-a-plant", which called upon members to monitor the growth, flowering period and seed production of a selected plant in BELAIR, which would ultimately lead to the collection from these species, of the seeds. Our future plant raising initiatives will depend very heavily on the success of this venture, so it is imperative that we are able to maintain plant diversity in all our efforts. So before you embark on this scheme, please contact Lareen, or myself to register your species.

As I mentioned at the October meeting, it is my belief that the Presidency of any organisation should change at least bi-annually, to ensure growth and to allow an influx of new ideas. Too often groups are handicapped because the management remains the same beyond their effective date. For these reasons, I will not be seeking re-election in 1993. It is hoped that the person who undertakes the position, will be one of our newer members, and perhaps one who has not held office before.

19th December is our 101st. Birthday Party.

This will commence at 5-30 pm at the Adventure Playground area and is a bring your own food and drink event. If you can bring a salad and desert to share, it would perhaps mean the night becomes more of a friendly picnic. Bar B-Q facilities are available should you wish to avail yourself. Tea, coffee, cake and icecream will be available to all. Please let Lareen know numbers for catering.

A. G. M.

If there is no real objection, I propose that the date for the A.G.M. be February 20th 1993, to enable the years work to commence in March. This will enable the new committee to establish a programme prior to the first General Meeting in March.

ON THE SICK LIST.

Joyce Underdown has been on the sick list for some time, but I am pleased to say she is recovering. Sickness however, has not prevented her from attending our meetings. Get well soon Joyce.

Also on the sick list is Sam Porter. Unfortunately Sam took ill about the time of our last planting and had to leave early. He has since written to me, apologising for his absences from our Tuesday walking group. He will be undergoing treatment shortly and is likely to miss a number of our meetings and events.

We all extend our best wishes Sam, hoping you are soon on the way to recovery.

My best wishes to all for Christmas and the Newyear,

Barry Burley,
President.

REPORTS ON RECENT EVENTS.

MONTHLY MEETING By Lareen Newman.

September Meeting.

Eighteen people attended this meeting. Items included report from Friends Forum by Joyce Underdown, request for members to adopt-a-plant species in Belair, Bridal Creeper now prime pest plant in the park and occurrences to be notified to Info Centre. Working Bee was at the end of the Playford Lake: olive removed - using the chainsaw at last! And removing Boneseed.

October Meeting.

Twenty seven people attended this meeting. Dene Launer talked about Bridal Creeper. A motion was carried to purchase two new trenching spades for digging up any Bridal Creeper found. Friends to pick berries from creeper and destroy even if the plant can be dug up. Also discussed: Walks, success of September planting, Cleland Walk well attended, vandalism and graffiti in the park recently, exotic ducks to be culled. Due to poor weather no working bee was held, but members who visited the South-East on the long weekend gave a report. In circulation: endangered Species Legislation Proposal, Endangered Species Network Newsletter "Web".

November Meeting.

This meeting was held outside, in Long Gully, a lovely day. Discussed: sending a delegate to World Wilderness Congress on behalf of Friends, still need adopt-a-plant and collect seeds. List of plants that any member still has ("minding"), please tell Marianne.

A.G.M. to be held on 20th February 1993 at 1.00 p.m. - special for A.G.M. only, so that the new committee can plan the programme for distribution in March 1993.

Application to be made for a grant to help purchase a mulcher.

The meeting ended with a walk up the gully to the old Long Gully railway station and back, a number of green hood orchids were still to be seen as well as several lillies.

The following new members were welcomed to our group: Pat Carter and family, Judith O'hara, John Phillips, Lynne Irwin, Julian Randy, Martin Reeve, Margret Stevens, Doug and Ruth Riley, Jen and Tim Tolley. Membership of the group now stands at almost 60.

New members were reminded that anyone joining after June 1992 would be financial until January 1994. Other members are reminded that they should renew in February 1993.

TUESDAY WALKS REPORT. By Lynda Knight.

Our walks in the Park on the second and fourth Tuesdays, each month, have been very pleasant and full of interest. We have been fortunate with the weather, during this late Spring and have noticed various types of orchids come and go, in those months.

Two of the most memorable walks were at Hardy's Scrub, in September, when some Friends of Onkaparinga joined us in our search for the rare flowering Fire Orchid, or Red Beek Orchid, *Lyperanthus nigricans*. Then at the end of October we marvelled at the wonderful array of native plants in bloom at Melville Hill. *Isopogon ceratophyllus*, *Xanthorrhoea* and *Thelymitra aristata* were three of the flowering plants which we were pleased to see, along with the "usuals".

Our numbers averaged nine to ten and we always welcome newcomers. During January, February and March we go into recess. Thank you to all who came along during the year.

PATRON'S WALK COMMENTS.

There has been no report made for the Patron's Walks.

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When walking in the park, take a rubbish bag and collect any rubbish found.

When walking in the park, pull out those small Boneseed plants as you go.

COMING EVENTS .

DECEMBER

5th General Meeting and Working Bee (seed collecting ?).

8th and 22nd Tuesday Walk 2 pm., meet at the Information Centre 2hr car park.

19th Belair's Birthday Party 5-30 pm., at the Playground area, where we have had our party in past years. This year it is bring your own Bar-B-Q., etc and salads, sweets etc to pool share. After the eats there will be a walk and then back to the pavilion for the Birthday cake, ice cream and video showing.

January 1993 no activities.

February 1993, A.G.M. on Saturday 20th, 1-00 p.m. Information Centre.

March 6th General Meeting, 1-00 p.m. I.C.

WANTED FOR 1993. A request from the Secretary.

Would members PLEASE make suggestions NOW for next years programme. What would you like us to do:- more of something, less of something, something new?

Tell the Secretary or the President as soon as possible so ideas can be passed to the new committee elected at the A.G.M. on 20th February 1993. The programme should be drawn up by them ready for the March meeting and in time to be included in the next Newsletter.

A few ideas;-

- new walk destinations, - visits and outings, - speakers, - working bees, - etc.

REPORTS AND OTHER THINGS .

PLANT REPORT. By Marianne Burley.

A successful planting day in September saw approximately 800 plants put in prepared sites at Belair station and Long Gully. At least two thirds are still surviving. The 400 which were left over have been planted behind the Western Lodge near the main entrance and the rest near the Laffers Road - Upper Sturt Road area of the Park by a contract worker employed by the NPWS. He will weed and tend the plants with watering in January. Dodonaea viscosa will be planted on the islands in Playford Lake this month following a burning of heaps of pest plants cut down earlier in the year by the Blackwood Scouts.

Will you adopt a plant?

Below is a list of species and times to collect the seeds. Would you be prepared to take a paper bag on your walks and collect the seeds of your chosen plant? Napthalene flakes from the office should be shaken into the bag before storage to kill borers etc. Sieves are available for husking and seperated seeds may be handed to the NPWS staff with the date and whereabouts of collection or sown this summer in time for winter planting in May -June. Choose a plant now before the rush!

Acacia	rotundifolia	Round-leaved Wattle	Dec. Jan.
"	paradoxa	Kangaroo Thorn	Nov. Dec.
Allocasuarina	verticillata	She-oak	Jan. Feb.
"	muelleriana	Bull-oak	Jan. Feb.
Burchardia	umbellata	Milk Maids	Jan.
Daviesia	brevifolia	Eggs and Bacon	Jan. Feb.
Hardenbergia	violacea	Native Lilac	Nov. Dec.
Kennedia	prostrata	Running Postman	Oct. - Dec.
Pultenea	largiflorens	Native Broom	Oct. - Dec.

If you are unsure about recognising your adopted plant, Ray or the office can help you with identification and sites for collection. Please notify the staff before collecting any seeds and the area in which you will be working.

Don't forget to put your working hours in our record book.

Finally, if members caring for boxes of plants are going away over the Christmas period and need a carer, please phone me on 278-2782 and I will take them from you for the period you are away.

Happy Christmas to everyone and thank you for your support this year.

Marianne Burley.

SOUTH EAST VISIT OCTOBER LONG WEEKEND. By Amber Kell.

Eight F.o.B.P. members enjoyed another long weekend visit to the south east, visiting a number of parks. The group met early on the morning of Saturday the 3rd and formed a convoy of four cars to motor down to Meningie where a short stop was made just south of this town. A second stop was made some distance south of Salt Creek where Ron Pitman discovered a full flowering plant of the rare Metallic Sun Orchid, Thelymitra epipactoides. next to an inch ants nest, the occupants of which came out to see what all the fuss was about. In this area were many other orchid species some not seen by most members before. Along this Coorong stretch of road were many flowering plants that the majority of the passing travellers ignored as boring.

On reaching Mt Scott a hasty lunch was taken, then off in two cars belonging to two very dedicated members of the F.o.B.P. Butchers Gap which took us all out along the fence line of the park to assist in laying a grid for a Mallee Hen nest survey. Two groups were formed and each ran a separate line. In places the bush was quite thick and difficult to penetrate. All this hard work was rewarded with the sighting of the white Spider Orchid, Caladenia patersonii, as well as other orchids etc. with many birds amongst the trees and bush.

Return to the camp site was made at dusk where a campfire snack and a much needed cuppa was taken before our group left for Daphnie's Robe house where the next two nights were spent.

Sunday morning of the 4th our group travelled in two cars out to an as yet undedicated park in the Woakwine Range. Here a deep cutting had been made through the range to carry drain water seawards. The bush here had a number of orchid species, acacia, banksia, black boys and other native plants. Quite a few birds were to be seen here as well including parrots, lorikeets, honey eaters, hawks, eagles and water fowl. Foxes, rabbits, kangaroos and a snake that made Daphnie do a record high jump were seen. High in the sky a flight of pelicans could be seen silently soaring.

After a tasty lunch back at the house, all changed to the other two cars and travelled to the Little Dip C.P. Here a walk was made around a freshly made walking trail that followed the shore line of a small fresh water lake. We tentatively called the trail the "Natlaw Trail" after the two very hardworking people who cut most of this track eg Vicki Natt and Elaine Lawson.

On leaving this lake a track across the sand hills to the beach was followed. Here on top of the low cliffs was seen the remains of an old aboriginal midden. The afternoon was working up to be wet and windy which caused the ocean to colour a strange green, while the surf was spectacular as it crashed against the rocks.

Arriving back at the house a very sumptuous meal was eventually prepared and enjoyed by all.

An early rise on Monday the 5th, cars loaded and off in the direction of Keith. A short stop was made at Kingston to admire the carved stone work and sundial sculptured by Eden Hills sculptor Silvio Apponyi. A slightly longer stop was made at Desert Camp C.P. where many birds were seen and a number of flowering plants.

At Keith we were greeted by the Friends of Onkaparinga who had just returned from a two day trip through Nagkart C.P. complex. Here three of our cars were left, the occupants transferring to two four wheel drive vehicles. The fourth car was later left on a private road with the occupant transferring to a third four wheel drive vehicle. Much of the area visited was in the Mt Rescue C.P. and strictly for four wheel drive vehicles as it can be very sandy in places with rocky ridges. The whole area seemed so vast and spectacular especially from the lookout points such as Mt Rescue etc. Lunch was had at Buck's Camp, some distance from the old ruined homestead, beneath a gum tree and a large bush. The verging vegetation consisted of Mallee, large Banksia trees and brush scrub. Here, under the trees were hundreds of flowering pink spider orchids, Caladenia carnea. Further along the track, on a stony ridge other orchids were seen in flower and even further a white flowered Olearia daisy bush was seen all along the road side.

On arriving back at Keith a drive around the town was made to observe the die back amongst the Eucalyptus trees. All the group members except for one, who stayed overnight at Bordertown, arrived back at Blackwood about 9 p.m. after a memorable weekend.

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PATRON TALK. By Ray. Nash, alias the Editor.

First I will speak as the editor, here I wish to thank all the contributors to the above.

Now as the Patron. As Barry has said, two years is sufficient as President and I endorse his comments on keeping our executive rotating amongst members. I personally would like to see one of our Lady members take on the job of President and see some new faces in our committee. If you think it is worth being a member of our group then why not become a member of the executive, the experience will be of benefit to you?

The present Secretary has offered us all the chance of asking for things that we can or should do. I think we need to have more than just a short working bee after our monthly meetings, why not one of a Sunday morning or afternoon during each second month or perhaps a full Saturday afternoon each second month. Maybe we should have both as some people do find it hard to attend on Saturday afternoons, while others have trouble with Sundays.

Last time I made mention "When are we going to use the chainsaw?", it worked for we did! There are still a great many olives, Pittosporum undulatum and other plants that need cutting and swabbing. Besides these there are Bridal Creeper to be hunted for. We have plenty of work that needs to be done - too much for our small group. How can we attract more members, members who will bend the back and rid the park of its pests? In late October I spent about 45 minutes removing the South African orchid from a small area along the southern boundary, in that time I removed 228 larger plants and many small ones. Next year there will be just as many at that site for I did not get too many of the small ones that were there. PLEASE be on the watch for this plant and tell either myself, the Info. Centre or contact Enid Robertson.

As this is the final Newsletter for this year I hope to see you all at the Birthday party on the 19th and may you all have a happy time over the Christmas - Newyear break and all the very best for 1993.

MEMBER PROJECT.

Under the above heading various projects undertaken by members will from time to time be printed. The following article was prepared and read to the group in 1990 by Daphnie Johncock, amongst other similar projects by other members. A question for members, what do you think of the following article being prepared, with some illustrations, as a pamphlet to be sold to the public for a small fee?

GOLD ESCORT GROUND, Belair National Park. By Daphnie Johncock.

I feel most people know the history of this area in the Park - Nicholas Foott, Government Farm and Gold Escort horse agistment. I will give these aspects a brief coverage and then go on to Tolmer and the Gold Escort and why it is an important part of our heritage.

The first person to occupy land in what is now Belair park was Nichollas Foott, in 1839. The government permitted him to squat on the land (rent free) on the understanding that he would move as soon as the land was required. Foott erected a small "Manning" house near Minno Creek on what is now known as the Gold Escort Grounds. The wooden "Manning" homes were sent from England in kit form. The Quaker Meeting House at North Adelaide is a well preserved building of this type.

Foott spent 420 pounds on the house and an additional 100 pounds on fencing, stock yards and three or four rooms adjoining the original dwelling.

In 1840 Governor Gawler decided to establish a farm in the valley of th Upper Sturt where government horses and bullocks could be agisted and hay grown. Foott was paid 300 pounds for his improvements. More land was aquired making an area over 2000 acres for the goverment farm. John McLaren was appointed 'Keeper of the Farm' and took over Foott's house. Improvements were made - a well was sunk, a stock paddock built and additional outhouses erected. Mr R.H. Moulton was appointed 'Keeper' in 1844 and lived in the cottage for some time.

Unsuccessful attempts were made in 1849 and 1852 to lease the farm, so Governor Young instructed the Commissioner of Police to take charge and use the area for resting the Gold Escort horses and other Police and Survey stock. Nichollas Foott's cottage was used by the men of the Gold Escort and was known as Escort House.

Others who may have lived in Foott's house were the Cooks (1874-1884), W.H. Sanders, the first Curator/secretary of the National Park and park employees Hall and Kirkwood.

The building was fianally demolished but the foundations were still visible untill a few years back when they were 'cleaned up'. There is a photo taken in 1909 in 'The Park at Belair'.

In the early 1850's drought and financial problems were having a disastrous effect on the South Australian economy. The discovery of gold in Victoria almost bankrupted the state as thousands of miners and other able bodied workers flocked across the border taking their savings with them. This left South Australia with both a currency and man power shortage.

Because it was difficult to send gold dust and nuggets the long distance to Adelaide the diggers sold their finds to buyers from Melbourne. This made the position in South Australia even worse. Families were starving, rents unpaid and public servants went without pay for months.

Alexander Tolmer, born in England of French parents, served in a British Cavalry Regiment. He was rather hasty tempered and after failing to gain an expected promotion he sailed for South Australia in 1839. His experience impressed the authorities and he was appointed sub-inspector of Mounted Police. By 1852 he was Commissioner of Police. With the economic position worsening he proposed a bold plan for bringing gold to South Australia from the Victoria gold fields. The government were unwilling to approve the plan but public pressure forced them to change their mind.

The first Gold Escort left Adelaide on the 10th February, 1852 and made the trip to Castlemaine in eight days. On route Tolmer had to find and map the best route and reliable waterholes for later parties.

Over three hundred miners entrusted their gold to Tolmer and the escort returned home safely. Despite the fear of bushrangers, flooded rivers, foul weather and getting bogged in sand and mud. Eighteen escorts were accomplished over the next two years, three were led by Tolmer. Over all around 328,509 ounces of gold worth \$165 million today was carried to South Australia. The economy was given the boost it needed but Tolmer did not fare so well. His temper was his undoing. He was demoted and later dismissed from the Police Force in 1856, although he worked for other government departments. He died in Adelaide in 1890.

From September 19th to October 8th 1986 the South Australian Mounted Police re-enacted the gold escort run for the Jubilee 150. Police historian Robert Clyne researched the route and followed it as near as possible. They carried mail and a genuine Castlemaine nugget to the Old Treasury Building in King William St., where this party was given an enthusiastic welcome as did Tolmer's 1852 Escort. Pony club members and others joined the escort along the way, property owners and towns people were most hospitable.

The Gold Escort Ground is a secluded picnic area today but it has had a varied and interesting history. In the past one hundred and fifty years the area has gone from virgin bush to farm land to stock yards to stock agistment and back again to a natural area although not to the original vegetation. The European trees planted in the area by the first settlers are also part of the Park heritage which groups such as ours must help to preserve.

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NOTICE TO ALL CONTRIBUTORS, HAVE YOUR REPORTS OR ARTICLES
IN BY THE 15TH OF FEBRUARY 1993 and help make your
Newsletter interesting.

Views expressed in articles above are not necessary those of the group or the Editor.