



# The Friends of Belair Park

Volunteers working for Conservation  
Established 1985

## NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 1995

1995: FRIENDS OF BELAIR 10TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

President Ron Pitman. Vice President Mike Cerchez. Secretary Lareen Newman. Treasurer Joyce Underdown. Committee members: Beth Pitman, Peter Sutton, Doug Riley, Daphne Johncock. Newsletter Editor Lareen Newman.

### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Sunday 3rd September, 10am - 3pm

"BIRD SPOTTING WALK IN BELAIR NATIONAL PARK".



Since 1987 FOBNP have held an annual walk in Belair NP to commemorate the annual inspection walks of Professor John Cleland whilst he was Chairman of the Commissioners of SA National Parks from 1936 to 1956. Birds are the theme for this year. Remember **THERE IS NO MEETING IN SEPTEMBER**. Instead bring your family and friends on this walk which will be led by Pat Bowie of the Ornithological Association. The pace should be suitable for all ages. Wear walking shoes and bring your lunch, drink, sunhat and suncream. To do only the morning or afternoon part you can join or leave at lunch. However, to enable us to walk in areas where birds are most likely to be seen, which depends on weather and vegetation changes, the lunch location will not be known until Saturday 2nd. Phone Ron (276 9260) or Lareen (278 8649) for details then, or see the notice in the Info Centre/Ticket Office on the day. The schedule is:

- 10am Start from Information Centre
- 12pm Lunch stop
- 1pm Walk continues
- 3pm (approx) Walk finishes with refreshments at Information Centre

### OCTOBER MEETING

Darren Willis, the new District Ranger at Belair, will address the meeting.

### NOVEMBER MEETING - GUEST SPEAKER 1pm

"TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF AFRICA. BEING AN ACCOUNT OF A JOURNEY TO TIMBUKTU IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF MUNGO PARK (A SCOTTISH EXPLORER)".



Do come along to Graham Bucherfield's talk, which sounds most intriguing. It will be followed by shared afternoon tea and then the November general meeting.



## PUT DECEMBER 19TH IN YOUR DIARY

We will celebrate on December 19th as usual with a tea around 5.30pm. This year is Friends of Belair's Tenth Birthday and the Park's 104th birthday. Following the success of last year's tea, it was decided at a recent general meeting that this year's tea should once again be a quiet affair with group members and specially invited guests only.

## BELAIR NATIONAL PARK IN STATE'S TOP 10 ATTRACTIONS

From *The Advertiser* of 5.8.95.

	No. of visitors
Myer Centre	14,600,000
Adelaide Casino	2,847,000
Botanic Gardens	1,003,559
SA Museum	576,000
Art Gallery of SA	448,800
Festival Centre	373,000
Ice Arena	350,000
Adelaide Zoo	325,900
Granite Island	320,000
Belair Nat. Park	307,200

A survey reported in the *Advertiser* with figures from SA Tourism Commission, based on the number of visitors to various attractions in the 12 months to July 31 states that 307,200 people visited Belair NP, making it number ten in the list. Innes National Park, where this year's Friends Forum is being held, was one of the top country attractions with 162,000 visitors.

## NEXT YEAR'S FRIENDS' FORUM (1996)

will be hosted by the Friends of Onkaparinga at the Southern Districts Sporting Complex, Noarlunga on 20-22 September.

## FREQUENCY OF FORUMS - OUR INPUT IS REQUIRED

All Friends of Parks groups and Consultative Committees have been asked to reply to a paper outlining options for changing the frequency of Forums. Currently both groups hold their own forum each year, which doubles up on a lot of organisation, costs, topics, etc. Dene Cordes, Manager of the Community Liaison Unit has therefore made the following suggestions for consideration.

1. Friends Forums be held every 2 years (1996, 1998, 2000, etc).
2. Consultative Committee forums be held every 2 years (1997, 1999, etc).
3. Or, since many people and staff attend both, and topics tend to be similar, have one forum a year called "Volunteers in Parks Forum", hosted alternately each year by a Friends Group and then a Consultative Committee. All involved could raise their concerns, with each group benefiting from hearing the others' views.

We have been asked to fill in a form, ticking one response out of:

- a) Hold one combined forum for all groups every year.
- b) Hold a separate forum (as at present) but in alternate years, ie Friends Forum one year, Consultative Committee the next.

We are also asked to tick yes/no to "if we continue with two forums per year, should the Community Liaison Unit set the dates, not the hosts, so that the Forums are six months apart?"

*Please consider these options, especially if you have attended Forums in the past. The form will be filled in with a consensus opinion at the October meeting. Let a committee member know your views if you won't be at the meeting.*

## SUNDAY GROUP WORKING BEES REPORT

The July group bee was cancelled due to excessively wet weather, however some members went off and "did their own thing". An extra bee was held during August, planting replacements in the Pines Oval area where the Guides had planted with us last year. The weather was much improved for the August group bee, when more planting was done at Pines Oval.

**LETTER FROM DAPHNE JOHNCOCK**  
Dated 30th July, Windjina Gorge NP.



"How are you all bearing up in wet and windy Adelaide? Every time I phone my daughter I complain about the 30 degree heat and she tells me about the cold and damp. Over half my holiday has gone! I have quite a fat diary, 3 hours of video and about 100 photos to remind me of it all after I get home.

The highlights of the trip have been the Cape York Safari and the flight over the Bungle Bungles. My mouth just hung open the whole hour and a half of the flight. I went from Kununurra so flew over the Ord River market gardens, Lake Argyle, the diamond mines and the Bungle Bungles. They are so big that to drive around them on the ground would be like an ant's view of a house! The size and shape and colours have to be seen to be believed. I had spent a day in Keep River NP in the NT, which is called a mini Bungle Bungles, but it was nothing compared to the real thing.

The wildflowers are just starting in the Kimberley area so I expect to have flowers all the way from now on. I have bought a book on WA wildflowers, so I will know what I'm seeing. Not many walking tracks in the northern parks (too hot to walk I suppose) so I have done a lot of sitting on creek banks birdwatching. Hope you are all well! I guess I'll be back before I know it.

Regards, Daphne



#### **PLANT SPECIES KNOWLEDGE NEEDED - CAN YOU HELP?**

Volunteers with some plant species knowledge are being asked to contribute to the State Plant Life Cycle and Regenerative Mechanisms Register. Contact John Choate on 204 8763 if you can help.

#### **"BUSHCARE" - A NEW INITIATIVE OF TREES FOR LIFE**

by Ron Pitman, with notes based on Trees for Life material

On July 7th the Minister for Environment & Natural Resources, Mr David Wotton, officially launched the "Bushcare" programme in The Main Oval Pavilion at Belair National Park. The launch was well attended by a wide variety of people all with a common interest in "Bushcare". Joyce Underdown and I represented FOBNP. "Bushcare" is Trees for Life's new programme to save SA's rapidly disappearing remnant vegetation. TFL's Technical Officer, Andrew Allanson, conceived the idea. As a result, a pilot programme is currently underway involving 29 sites in 6 council areas (Mitcham, Noarlunga, Happy Valley, Light, Wakefield Plains and Mallala). Funding has come from the six councils involved, Save the Bush, and the Native Vegetation Council. It is planned to extend the programme, providing funding can be arranged.

The "Bushcarers" are volunteers. John Bradsen, chair of the Native Vegetation Council, says "The essential element in a project of this scale and urgency is a substantial and continuing contribution of energy by a large number of volunteers. Trees for Life has a proven record of being able to attract volunteers and manage their efforts. We have every confidence that they will make a success of BUSHCARE". The scheme has the support of the Farmers Federation, Local Government Associations and the Native Vegetation Council of SA. On the day of the launch a bus load of people went up Sheoak Road and observed what Mitcham Council and a volunteer Bushcarer had achieved. A light lunch was provided by the Red Ochre Grill restaurant. Trees for Life are to be congratulated for their dedication and hard work.

**PLANT PROFILES - The Bunya Pine**  
by Vern Whittenbury



A list of plants found in Belair NP was published in the Management Plan of 1989. It contains 379 species native to the Park and 399 introduced. However, not all of the introduced species should be regarded as weeds. For example, several magnificent Bunya Pines grace the landscape and preserve this species which has been heavily logged in its natural habitat. Further, it is seldom grown commercially, being somewhat difficult to propagate and very slow growing.

The Bunya Pine is native only to Queensland and its main remaining occurrence is in a rainforest south of Kingaroy. The area was proclaimed the Bunya Mountains National park in 1908. The Bunya's scientific name is *Araucaria bidwilli* and it is closely related to Australia's Hoop Pine, the Norfolk Island Pine and the Monkey Puzzle Tree from Chile. It is easily distinguished, however, by its large rounded dome, a feature unique to Australian trees. A dramatic silhouette is made by those Bunya pines near the Karka Pavilion.

The Bunya was an important food source for Aborigines and was the only hereditary property which they possessed. Each tribe had its own set of trees and of these each family had a certain number allocated. They were given names and handed down from generation to generation. Anyone who harmed them faced dire consequences. The Bunya's cones grow high in the canopy and fall to the ground when ripe, but to deny food for the bandicoots and other animals they were collected by climbing, with the aid of cut toe-holds. The cones resemble large pineapples, weigh up to 7kg and contain about 120 nuts which are twice the size of an almond. The delicious nuts were eaten raw, roasted or ground into flour. They were also stored by being buried in mud near waterholes.

A heavy crop of large cones containing the edible nuts is produced at 3-yearly intervals. When this occurred there was enough food in the area for Aboriginal groups to invite guests, and invitations were sent out via message sticks to tribes for a radius of 300km or more. A truce between warring tribes was called and great feasts and fun activities were held - a sort of Olympic Games with mock fighting, hunting and spear-throwing contests. Logging and the timber industry brought these "Bunnia Feasts" to an end in the 1870s. The Bunya Pine produced a valuable timber, a useful resin, and is highly prized as an indoor plant in Europe and the USA. But beware, the large heavy cones can be a health hazard, especially in high winds!

**BIOLOGICAL CONTROL OF BONESEED - DO YOU WANT TO HELP?**

A project has been launched to involve Friends of Parks in biological control of boneseed. It involves the technical leadership of John Choate (DENR Wildlife Management) and an application has been lodged to fund a professional project leader in SA for one year. The results were to be known in August. However, to prepare for the project groups are being asked:

- a) Whether they have a boneseed infestation in their park
- b) Whether they are willing to help breed control insects, release them, monitor results, etc
- c) To give names of interested people and the name of one person per group to act as a link between the group and DENR's Wildlife Management Section.

Please let Ron or Lareen know if you are interested and what aspect you would like to be involved in so that your name can be added to the list.





### TUESDAY WALKS REPORT by Lynda Knight

During the last few months there have only been two "Tuesdays" when the weather was unsuitable for walking, but the rain has helped rejuvenate the Park after last year's drought. On average ten or twelve people come along and enjoy walking in different areas of the Park, but we sometimes drive somewhere as a finale, particularly if some orchids such as the "helmets" might not be still flowering by the next walk. Leopard orchids (*Diuris maculata*) are now beginning to flower as well as the greenhoods, which have been prolific this winter.

### NEW BOOK - 20 NATURE WALKS IN THE MOUNT LOFTY RANGES

We have been sent details of this new pocket-size book which is illustrated in full colour with over 100 photos, detailed maps, information on plants and animals and instructions for exploring out-of-the-way corners in 20 national parks on Adelaide's doorstep. It is available from the Nature Conservation Society at the Conservation Centre, 120 Wakefield Street, for \$20.00 inc post.



### REPORT ON BICYCLE SA ECOTOUR WITH FRIENDS OF BELAIR

This event which was organised for World Environment Day (Sunday 4th June) turned out to be very successful and the weather was superb. Ron and Beth Pitman met the group of about 12-14 riders at Old Government House and gave them an introduction to the Friends network and the Friends of Belair. Mike Cerchez then accompanied the group (on his new bike) as far as Amphitheatre Rock. Here they met up with Lareen Newman who gave a short talk about the Park's history of recreational use, the recreation zone of the park and the introduced exotic trees the group had just ridden past. The bikes were then left while most people walked up to have a look at the Rock, discussing introduced species, foxes, birds and other topics on the way. The tour then backtracked to go up Saddle Hill Road, where a lone koala was spotted. At Waverley Lodge Joyce Underdown informed the riders about the native vegetation of the park and led a short walk, which was much appreciated by the group.

### NATIONAL MALLEE FOWL WORKSHOP 16-17 SEPT, ORPHANAGE GOODWOOD ROAD

The Biological Survey and Research Section is organising this Seminar and Forum for anyone interested in Mallee Fowl, whether you have previous knowledge or not. Cost will be around \$5 and includes lunch, morning and afternoon tea on the Saturday. There will be a field trip on the Sunday, which may cost a bit more. For details contact Jason Ferris on 362 5536.



### SIXTH WORLD WILDERNESS CONGRESS - BANGALORE, INDIA 1997

Out of the nominations received, Vicki Natt was chosen to represent the Friends of Parks network of South Australia. Some members of Friends of Belair know or have met Vicki during group visits to the South East, particularly whilst working on the infamous Mallee Fowl Grid at Mount Scott. She is an enthusiastic and practical member of several groups, including being Secretary of Friends of Butchers Gap and President of Friends of Little Dip.

### FRIENDS NEED THEIR OWN AMBULANCE COVER

Although all members of the Friends groups are covered by government insurance whilst working in the capacity of a volunteer, as long as they take due and reasonable care, they are not covered for ambulance costs. The Community Liaison Unit therefore urges all volunteers to ensure their own ambulance cover, via direct ambulance subscription or private health funds. It is not possible, at present, for Friends Groups to cover volunteers at working bees, etc for ambulance costs should the need for ambulance attendance arise. Without some form of insurance cover it would cost you \$392 for an emergency call-out plus \$2.30 per patient kilometre.

## CONSTITUTION OF FRIENDS OF BELAIR - MORE SUGGESTED CHANGES

Following the changes made to the Constitution at the AGM in February (in order to simplify and clarify it), Dene Cordes was invited to comment on the new wording adopted, considering his wealth of experience with such matters. He said that we already had a strong Constitution, but made some useful suggestions of new points. These could not be adopted at the time since they needed to be put to an AGM (and the next one is 1996). Consequently, they have been held over and are aired here for you to consider ready for the next AGM in February. Outlining these points now gives you time to think of whether we should adopt the suggestions, or how you'd like to reword them. Please make comments in writing to the Committee by the end of October in time for them to be put in the December newsletter as notification of changes intended to be discussed at the 1996 AGM. Copies of the current Constitution are available from Lareen. The bones of Dene's suggestions are:

### Clause 3 (4)

Clarify that honorary members are 'honorary associate members', elected annually on the recommendation of the committee. A step above this is Life Membership, granted for long and outstanding service. Dene says "In my humble view, Life Membership ought not be discussed at an AGM". He says it is so important that it ought to be decided in private by executive office bearers. Otherwise it is embarrassing if the person is present at the AGM, trying to discuss their worth or shortcomings, or if someone nominates someone totally unsuitable it is difficult to say No in front of everyone.

### Clause 3 (5) (1)

To be consistent with Friends of Parks Inc constitution, subscriptions fall due every 1st January.

### Clause 3 (5) (9)

Are two delegates needed?

### Clause 5 - Meetings

The wording may be a little restrictive. The group may decide later that meetings should be every two months or not at all some months (this is the case with September - the Cleland walk is being held instead). Dene suggests "Meetings shall be held when appropriate, excepting the month of January"...

### Clause 5 (3)

Do corporate members need two votes?

### Clause 7 (2)

Consider adding "Such statement is forwarded to Friends of Parks Inc for noting" (which we have to do anyway).

### Clause 9

Add under the last part some lines for the President and Secretary to sign and date that version of the Constitution.

**USEFUL NUMBERS:** President *Ron Pitman* 276 9260; Secretary *Lareen Newman* 278 8649; Treasurer *Joyce Underdown* 278 1987; *Park Office* 278 5477; Tuesday Walks Enquiries: *Lynda Knight* 278 2623; Working Bees: *Doug Riley* 278 3685.

