

The Friends of Belair Park

Volunteers working for Conservation
Established 1985

NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 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



TENTH BIRTHDAY TEA - TUESDAY 19TH DECEMBER 5.30PM PINES OVAL
Come along and celebrate the group's tenth anniversary and the Park's 104th birthday in the usual style. We will be meeting at 5.30pm at Pines Oval Picnic area, so BYO chairs and drinks, and bring along a savoury and/or dessert plate to share. Joyce Underdown has kindly offered to make a Birthday Cake, so thank you Joyce. Twelve current members will be celebrating ten years' association with the group and will be presented with commemorative certificates at the tea. People who either attended the inaugural meeting held to gauge interest in establishing a group on 27th October 1985, or who joined within the first year are:

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|-----------------|-------------------|
| Dene Cordes | Pat Oakeshott |
| Dianne Cordes | Beth Pitman |
| Daphne Johncock | Ron Pitman |
| Lynda Knight | Christine Stanley |
| Ray Nash | Joyce Underdown |
| Kath Norman | Vern Whittenbury |



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - SATURDAY 3RD FEBRUARY 1996, 1PM
Don't forget to come and help elect a new executive and committee. Better still, come along prepared to stand for office! Your current Secretary and Newsletter Editor, Lareen Newman, will not be standing for reelection, since she and husband Peter are expecting a baby in late April. They reckon this will keep them busy enough next year! Our liaison ranger Janine is also expecting a baby, in February, and so unfortunately for us will be on maternity leave most of next year. We wish her well.



CURRENT MEMBERSHIP

Members are often wondering and asking how many members the group has. Well, at the latest count there are 46 members, 2 families and 1 corporate group who have paid their membership for 1995. This year although we have lost some people, we have also welcomed ten new members (very apt for our tenth year), as well as 1 family and the corporate group. Kathy and Brian Webb of Panorama joined as a

result of coming on the Cleland Walk, while Miles and Julie Doddridge of Bellevue Heights have recently joined with their family, and K Harries is another new member who mainly does physical work in the park. Welcome to everyone!



REPORT ON THE CLELAND WALK

About 50 people set off in lovely weather on this year's walk to commemorate Professor John Cleland. The theme this time was "Birdwatching in Belair" and the walk was led by Pat Bowie, Delwyn Clark and Janice from the SA Ornithological Association. We first visited Playford Lake and saw Black Duck, Wood Duck, Hardheads, Cormorant, Coot, Moorhen and plenty of Rainbow Lorikeets. Then we headed up the Moorowie track where we found smaller birds such as Striated Pardalote as well as lots of orchids and two koalas. The tracks then took us towards Old Government House where we made a lunch stop.

Some walkers left at lunch, while about 8 new people joined in as we went down the hill to the Adventure Playground, busy with visitors for Father's Day. On the track past Railway Dam we saw a Coot making a nest on the dam, Adelaide Rosellas and a lone Sulphur Crested Cockatoo. After a brief ice cream stop at the Kiosk we climbed the steps to the old National Park railway station and watched White-faced Honeyeaters and New Holland Honeyeaters in the tree tops. We were also pleased to see a large spread of the rare orchid *Pterostylis cuculata*. Meanwhile, back at the Information Centre, Lynda Knight, Judith O'Hara and Beth Pitman were preparing afternoon tea. The walk ended around 3.20pm.

OCTOBER MEETING - DISCUSSION WITH DARREN WILLIS, DISTRICT RANGER

Darren Willis, the new District Ranger at Belair, ~~will~~ addressed the meeting and introduced himself. He is married with 3 children and lives at Kangarilla. This is his first position with the NPWS, having previously worked for Woods & Forests as a Forest Ranger at Kuitpo for 7 years. Before this Darren worked as a Resource Protection Officer and a Technical Officer with the Fisheries Dept.

Darren explained that the old NPWS Sturt District has now been split so that he is District Ranger, Belair District, which takes in Belair NP, Shepherds Hill RP, Brownhill Creek RP and Totness RP. Working with him on this are Janine Kraehenbuhl, Neville Houlahan and Malcolm Lane. Terry Gregory is District Ranger for the other part, called Sturt District, which covers all parks from the Freeway to the southern metro boundary. Darren's brief is to concentrate on Belair because it is a high profile park with a long history and, as we all know, has many issues needing attention. He came across as enthusiastic and keen to get things done.

Darren believes Belair needs a strategic direction and focus with a long term view. He wants Belair's best aspects to be emphasised in an appropriate way with the available funds, in order to meet what visitors to the park want to do nowadays. This could include, for example, encouraging Aboriginal heritage or ecotourism walks, developing Heritage accommodation within the park, etc.

Several hours were spent with the Friends discussing and asking questions on Darren's management views, the types of operations and development which he believes are suitable and possible and what he considers inappropriate for Belair. He said that more money will be allocated to vermin and pest plant control, and that fox baiting had already begun. Darren handed out copies of the recently developed DRAFT VISION STATEMENT AND "STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND PRIORITIES DOCUMENT FOR BELAIR NATIONAL PARK AND DISTRICT 1995-96" which is currently being used. Five copies are in circulation amongst the Friends of Belair.

FUTURE OF LONG GULLY KIOSK AND RESIDENCE - OUR VIEWS SOUGHT

We have just received a set of options which Darren would like us to discuss about the Long Gully kiosk and house. As you may know, the person running the kiosk was given notice to leave and mobile catering is currently being trialled in the park, since it is believed that this will better meet the needs of visitors, by making food and drink available in the more popular areas (eg Adventure Playground). The options we are asked to consider are:

- A1. KIOSK REDEVELOPMENT INTO VOLUNTEER CENTRE to provide working base for Friends of Belair, Friends of Old Govt House, LEAP and NEWSTART employment scheme groups operating in the park.
- A2. KIOSK BUILDING RETAINED AS BUSINESS FACILITY (catering or souvenir), although park management does not believe that the kiosk is in the best position to effectively service the bulk of visitors.
- A3. KIOSK BUILDING DISMANTLED if no relevant use identified. It is not heritage listed.
- B1. RESIDENCE RETAINED AS RESIDENTIAL LEASE. Currently managed as a lease and bringing in \$5200 pa, which could help maintain the rest of the facility. Permanent occupants are a security presence.
- B2. RESIDENCE DEVELOPED AS VOLUNTEER ACCOMMODATION for visiting volunteers. Would house 6-12, but contribute no income towards maintenance. Lower security presence unless used very regularly. Alternative accommodation is Commissioner's Shack (2-4 people).
- B3. RESIDENCE MANAGED AS TOURIST ACCOMMODATION would give higher potential weekly revenue than Option B1, but would be periodic. No significant security presence, and location not necessarily suitable for tourist accommodation (presumably because distant from entrance?).

FREQUENCY OF FORUMS - OUR RESPONSE

All Friends of Parks groups and Consultative Committees were asked to give their input regarding the frequency of future Forums. It was decided at recent meeting that the Friends of Belair preference was to have a single Forum held every year combining the Friends Forum and the Consultative Committed Forum. It was felt that this would allow both groups to benefit from hearing the ideas and issues of the other, whilst also minimising duplication of arrangements and expenses.

WORKING BEES REPORT

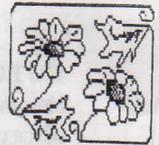


The September group bee was almost rained off but Joyce Underdown led the keen members who did turn up towards the Workshop area where they pulled boneseed and were delighted to see wildflowers and orchids amongst the long grass. The October group bee saw 5 members brave the drizzle and hunt out about 100 plants of the rogue orchid *Monadenia bracteata* over near the Golf Course.

Meanwhile, I gather that individual members and smaller groups continue to work in various areas. Doug Riley, Brian Dubois, John Hemer and a friend have been working and weeding along Upper Sturt Road and near the Railway Station. Doug took advantage of his recent poisons training and has been trial-spraying with a poison targeted specifically at blackberries. Joyce Underdown and Ray Nash are working around Government Farm Oval and Joyce is back up on the Moorowie Track working areas where she weeded previously, particularly removing *Acacia longifolia* this time.

PLANT PROFILES - The Bunya Pine in Belair National Park

by Vern Whittenbury



Following Vern's item on Bunya Pine in the last newsletter he has now found an article about Bunya Pine (*Araucaria bidwillii*) in Belair NP, which is particularly interesting in throwing light on the attitudes of earlier "Friends" of the park and the reason for certain parts of the park looking as they do today. The following are edited extracts from Jake and Jacquie Gillen's *Trees of Significance in South Australia*, written for the National Trust of SA.

Within Long Gully are clusters of Bunya Pines, readily identified by their characteristic, symmetric crowns. Originally from south-eastern Queensland, the Bunya Pine has adapted and flourished in Adelaide and its environs. Normally an emergent over rainforest, the distinctive bell-shaped silhouette is today often found in Adelaide's older gardens. Mr Samuel Dixon was a foundation member of the Board of Commissioners of National Park, Belair. As Chairman of the Planting Committee he played an active part in selecting trees, obtaining seed and supervising the laying-out and planting of the Park. *The Register* newspaper of 4 November 1904 quotes him as saying:

"As South Australia possesses a particularly poor flora, as far as shade trees are concerned, it is essential, in the interests of the public, that plenty of shade trees should be planted".

Mr Dixon was keen to introduce new plants into the National Park and after a trip to Queensland obtained a large parcel of seed from the curator of the Brisbane Gardens. These seeds may well have produced the many Bunya, Hoop and Norfolk Island Pines scattered along the length of Long Gully. Next time you are up near Karka Pavilion look out for the Bunyas!

BUSHLAND WEED MAPS - PREPARE ONE FOR YOUR WORK AREA

Janine, our liaison ranger, has handed out copies of an example of how to do a bushland weed map, along with instructions on developing a strategy. She is keen to have a map done for all areas being worked on in the Park, during group and individual bees. These maps will then show where certain weeds are in the park, what was removed when, and what areas need to be reweeded in the future. The steps involved are given below. Please ask the rangers or other Friends if you need help doing a sketch map.

1. FIND OUT WHICH WEEDS ARE PRESENT IN THE AREA.
2. PREPARE A BUSHLAND WEED MAP. Map all major weeds, where they are starting to invade and where well established. Zone the map according to the degree of weed invasion.
3. PREPARE A WEEDING CALENDAR. If you give this to the rangers they will know when you will need poison, etc.
4. TRAIN YOURSELF AND OTHERS IN WEEDING METHODS.
5. PREPARE A PLAN OF WORK. Select the area you will target first, working from the LEAST weedy bushland. Plan a work program using your Map and Calendar.
6. START WEEDING. Weed from the best bushland to the more degraded areas. Remove all target weeds, so that one weed species is not just replaced by another. A small area thoroughly weeded has a greater chance of native plants regenerating than a large area done carelessly. Don't forget FOLLOW-UP WEEDING, using your map you can see which areas will need checking next time/year.

NOVEMBER MEETING REPORT - GUEST SPEAKER ON AFRICA

Eighteen members and two guests from Friends of Old Government House were most enthralled by Graham Bucherfield's talk about his years living in Ghana (formerly the Gold Coast) in the late 1950s. Having moved from Adelaide to teach Design and Engineering at a University in southern Ghana, Graham took the opportunity to explore inland, driving eastwards up towards the River Niger and then north-west along the river to Timbuktu. He showed some magnificent colour slides of the countryside, the people and the buildings - strangely shaped mud brick mosques, brightly dressed local people, stark dry fields and desert. As well as seeing an area of the world which most of us rarely come across, we heard about its history, how it was first explored by Europeans and plenty of tales about Graham's own travels. The afternoon was nicely rounded off with a delicious shared tea.



TUESDAY WALKS REPORT by Lynda Knight

During the last few months our Tuesday group has experienced a variety of walks and we've also seen a great diversity of native flora. On one Tuesday in August noted botanist Enid Robertson led us on an interesting walk through Watiparinga Reserve giving us historical as well as botanical explanations of the area, which once belonged to her forbears and is now under the National Trust. The regeneration which has taken place since sheep grazing finished decades ago, is very gratifying. The native orchids this year have been even better than usual, possibly because of good winter rains. We were delighted to find some "Gnat" orchids as well as quite an abundance of the "Mayfly" orchids. In Long Gully the Large Greenhood (*Pterostylis curta*) were once again prolific. Each walk has always produced some different species of native flora. The Golden Moth orchids (*Diuris lanceolata*) and Donkey orchids were flowering near Government Farm Oval. Leopard orchids (*Diuris maculata*) were prolific also, particularly near Upper Sturt Lodge.

Following this year's successful Cleland Walk some new members joined us, and having seen *Pterostylis cuculata* in profusion we were happy to have Ray Nash lead us on our next walk, to show our group this rare and beautiful species. We of course saw other beautiful flowers as well, but this was a special treat. One of the recent highlights this Spring was a visit to Loftia Park, where twenty people were delighted to see the rare Fire orchids (*Lyperanthus nigricans*). We also found a large patch of Rabbit's Ears (*Caladenia menziesii*), many trigger plants, tall leek orchids, lots of donkey orchids, milkmaids, bachelor buttons and a large specimen of the large Mt Lofty Daisy in full flower. On another occasion we were asked by Enid Robertson to find and dig out some of the rogue orchid *Monadenia bracteata* and with Ray Nash's guidance seventeen people wandered around Gums Oval and removed several hundred of this species.

In summary, our Tuesday walkers have enjoyed some very pleasant walks and good weather during which we have seen many beautiful native flowers. We hope to find some Hyacinth orchids before the year ends and then we go into recess for the hotter months, resuming again in April 1996. Finally, I must pay tribute to Vern Whittenbury for sharing his botanical knowledge with us and for making our walks more interesting.

"WATER - THE FUTURE'S IN OUR HANDS" by Ron Pitman

This was the heading of an article on the Education page of the Advertiser on 16.11.93. It was a report on the Onkaparinga Estuary Wetlands Project, which is being managed by Terry Gregory of DENR. Reading it took me back to my earlier years, the days just before World War II when a group of us would ride our bikes from the southern suburbs down to Old Noarlunga Town to hike up into the Onkaparinga Gorge. (The name derives from the Kurna word Ngangkiparinga). Up



in the gorge we camped and did fishing, shooting and swimming. We loved the place so much that one year we did this six weekends straight before Christmas. We loved the old Murray too. On one occasion a couple of us Rover Scouts put a 15' canoe, "Miss Alladin" on the train to Morgan on the Murray and spent ten days paddling and camping our way down to Tailem Bend. They were great days.

Water, of course, is not just for recreation. It is the life blood of the nation. Bill Reschke, author and former journalist with the Sunday Mail wrote with great passion about the Murray "I was born", he wrote, "when men began to kill the Murray, to check its natural rhythm with locks and dams. The last fifteen years of the free-running river were my childhood". Further he wrote, "But education is the only real hope for the preservation of the Murray for all its users". This has been the concern of successive governments, Federal and State. Men like the former Federal MPs Sen. Don Jessop and Ralph Jacobi MP of South Australia put a lot of time and thought into the preservation of the Murray. The latter was dubbed "Minister for the Murray".

On Friday 3rd November The Australian carried a double page spread A SPECIAL ADVERTISING REPORT paid for by the SA Government. It read: "This is a call to Australia to help save the Murray-Darling River system". In big bold print, straddling both pages, it challenged: "There could be no greater gift to future generations of Australians and no more symbolic gesture than the restoration of the River Murray" and was signed by the Premier of SA. I said to a friend at the time that the government would go down in history if it could achieve that. South Australia could not survive without water from the Murray.

Today the estimated average daily consumption of water per head of population is 500 litres. This includes water used in homes, agriculture and industry. Toilets account for 23% of water used and showers another 20%. 10% is used in the kitchen and 16% in the laundry. It takes 50,000 litres of water to fill the average in-ground swimming pool (*The Advertiser*, 16.11.93). Recommended reading, if you are interested, is "Who Owns the Murray? A South Australian Perspective" by Peter S Davis and Phillip J Moore (1985).

WATER - THE FUTURE'S IN OUR HANDS

SKELETON CALENDAR FOR 1996 "THE YEAR FOR RECRUITMENT"

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| Saturday 3rd February 1pm | ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Election of 1996 committee and executive. |
| April | Tuesday walks recommence. |
| September 20-22 | Friends of Parks Forum,
Southern Districts Sporting Complex, Noarlunga,
hosted by the Friends of Onkaparinga (in their
10th anniversary year) |
| September/October | Cleland Walk - discussions currently underway with
Dene Cordes to lead a "History Walk". |
| December 19th | 11th Birthday Tea, Park's 105th Birthday. |

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.

