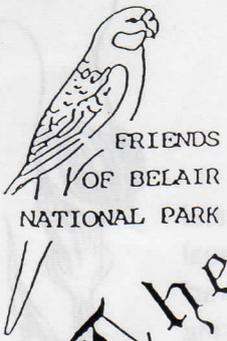


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The Friends of Belair Park

Volunteers working for Conservation
Established 1985
BEST NEWSLETTER 1996.

SEPTEMBER 1998

PRESIDENTS REPORT

Your committee has finalised some recommendations for changes to the Constitution and these changes will be listed in the December newsletter along with the reasons for the changes. Eric Cole is to be thanked for his work on these recommendations. Voting on these changes will be at the A.G.M. in February.

Sometimes the committee makes decisions which makes everyone feel good. Following a request made at a General meeting the committee unanimously agreed to present "Certificates of Appreciation" to Kath Norman and John Hemer. Both Kath and John have participated fully in the Friends activities for many years, but lately have been unable to attend because of poor health. These certificates serve two purposes. A thank you for all that has been done and a reminder we are still thinking of them.

Submissions have been made for two awards. These are a Landcare award through Friends of Parks Inc., and a Kesab award through the Mitcham Council. Although winning these would be "nice" and the monies useful, working with Melville and Jill to prepare these submissions helped to consolidate and clarify my ideas on the Friends. Yes we are a hard working bunch of people and we are getting results.

A few members have joined us since the last newsletter. On behalf of all the members I would like to extend a warm welcome to Mary Valentine, Mark Ward, Jim Burfield and Lee and Sue Merchant. I sincerely hope they get as much pleasure and satisfaction from the Friends activities as the rest of us do.

In the near future our members will be receiving new passes. These are issued by the Parks and Wildlife Service through Friends of Parks Inc. They basically remain the property of the Parks and Wildlife Service as you are only entitled to them while your membership is current. When your membership lapses they must be handed back to the Friends. When you receive your pass we will make sure you know its good points and its bad.

Brian DuBois.



TUESDAY WALKS

The walks in the Park continue to attract approximately twenty people each second and fourth Tuesday, with the exception of a "very wet-weather" day. We have noted the usual early orchids, - Pterostylis Robusta (Striped Greenhood), Pterostylis Nana (Dwarf Greenhood), and Corybas Diemenicus, the little Helmet orchids. Now as spring approaches, the Hibertia's are flowering, as well as Tetratheca pilosa, sundews and peach heath.



If in doubt weatherwise on walk days, please ring Lynda at 1pm.
Lynda Knight.



REMEMBER PROFESSOR JOHN CLELAND WALK SAT 17th OCTOBER.

PROFILE - DOUG RILEY.

Born in Adelaide in 1920, starting work with Laubman and Pank as an errand boy at the age of 15, apprenticed as an optical mechanic at 15 shillings per week working 48 hours a week. We worked Saturday mornings with no paid annual holidays.

Having served my apprenticeship, I later took over the running of the workshop. It was about this time after the war we were developing the complicated C R 39 lens or plastic lens. It was from this humble beginning that Sola, now World leader in plastic manufacture was started.

The CR39 plastic was developed during the war being used for canopies on the fighter planes. This material was much harder than perspex and had good optical qualities as well as being half the weight of glass. Very little was known how to cast this material to produce the desired curve on the finished lens, as shrinkage and numerous other problems had to be overcome. The French started using it but wouldn't tell anybody about the process, so we had to do all our own R&D.

Another big problem we had was machining and polishing the material, quite a different process to that of glass grinding and polishing which we were used to. After perfecting the technique we then had to teach our customers, if they couldn't process our product we would not be able to sell our lens blanks. This gave me an opportunity to see the world. Sola also developed optical machinery in conjunction with an engineering firm selling and installing them overseas as well.

I married Ruth 55 years ago, we have 5 children, 11 grandchildren and one great grand child. We built our own house in Belair, Ruth turning the concrete mixer by hand to make the cement blocks each night after work, laying them at the weekend. During this time we were producing babies as well as the cement blocks (quite different recipes of course). Moving into our new house 12 months after we started building, admittedly there was only the basic structure, walls and roof, no windows or floors (it was summer time), there was more time to finish the building by living there, the kids slept through the noise.

When the house was almost finished I found time to join the E F S now the C F S. In charge of Belair Fire Station for 8 years and the Mitcham E F S for 10 years retiring in 1974. In 1978 I retired from Sola, with Ruth's help we bought and managed a fruit block in Loxton for 2 years coming back to live in Coromandel Valley in 1980. Since retiring I have taken on wood carving and turning in between travelling to Canada to see our daughter and travelling by caravan twice around Australia and numerous 4WD adventures across Australia and the wild parts of Tasmania.

Time now is taken up with Probus, a wood group and beautiful Belair Park. If a successful life is measured by wealth then I'm a dismal failure, if measured by achievements maybe I could qualify. I hope there is still some time left, perhaps enough to see competitions organised, with rewards, for finding the missed introduced weed in the Belair Park.

BELAIR AND SIR JOHN CLELAND. The story behind the Cleland Walk.

The National Park at Belair was established by an Act of Parliament on December 19th 1891 and was the tenth national park in the world. Under this Act, the park was the responsibility of a corporate body called "The Commissioners of the National Park". Among its appointed members was to be the President of the Royal Society of South Australia, in recognition both of their support for the establishment of the National Park and the desirability of having eminent scientific persons as members of the Commission. The first Chairman of the Commissioners of the National Park was Sir Edwin Smith, who held that office from January 28th 1892 until his death in 1920.

John Burton Cleland was born on June 22nd 1878 the son of Dr W.L. Cleland, and went to school at Prince Alfred College. From 1920-1948 he was Emeritus Professor of Pathology at the University of Adelaide, but his interests were wide and varied. In the realm of nature they spanned the full spectrum from the microscopic, through to fungi and ferns to native trees and shrubs, birds and mammals. The fact that he was a member of the South Australian Field Naturalists Society for seventy-nine years speaks for itself. It was this body, a section of the Royal Society of South Australia that was largely responsible for the establishment of the National Park in the first place.

On his election to the position of President of the Royal Society in 1926 Cleland became a member of the Commissioners of the National Park. Of course as a member of the F N S he was well aware of its significance and purpose, and he had also argued strongly in 1924 for the establishment of a National Reserve in the area near Mt Lofty.

Moreover his father had held the same position of the President of the Royal Society from 1897-1900, and had accordingly been a Commissioner too.

On the expiration of his term as President of the Royal Society a year later, Cleland was no longer a Commissioner. However, following the death of Walter Gill in 1929 (who incidentally had been a Commissioner since the establishment of the National Park) Cleland was invited to fill his position.



It was the practice of the C N P at that time to meet monthly (with the exception of December) and to visit the park "officially" twice a year to inspect the "improvements" and to satisfy themselves that all was well.



Cleland's interest and concern for the park and the natural environment was well recognised, and in 1931 he was appointed Deputy Chairman, a position he held for 5 years. These were extremely difficult times, because with the onset of the Great Depression, the Government no longer made an annual grant towards the running expenses of the National Park. The significance of this income cannot be underrated, because the only other source of finance was the park itself, in the form of revenue from hiring recreation facilities, fees from the agistment of horses and sheep, and the sale of wattle bark for tanning. All of those activities put pressure on the precious natural environment. Needless to say Cleland strenuously resisted Government moves to reduce park income, but without success. He was so committed to the need for the people to have access to their National Park that when the question of entry fees was raised as a means to increase the income of the C N P he resisted that too.

Out of this impasse came the proposal for a golf course at Belair which Cleland, one suspects, accepted with reluctance. 1936 Cleland succeeded C R J Glover as Chairman of the C N P and it was in that position that he had to deal with the call to build a second and larger golf course in the park to cope with the success of the first one. As Chairman of the C N P Cleland did not want to be seen publicly opposing the scheme, but with the support of his friend Sir Douglas Mawson, it was possible to arouse sufficient public opposition to the proposal for Cleland to stop the other Commissioners from acting. While saving the park from another golf course of more than 60 hectares around the Pines Oval area, Cleland had to concede the necessity of expanding the present course to cope to some extent with its popularity.

As Chairman, from 1936-1956, Cleland exceeded the record chairmanship of Sir Edwin Smith. It was during this period of office that Cleland undertook the self-imposed task of inspecting Belair National Park on foot, during the period between Christmas and New Year's Day. It was his purpose to assess the management of the park, in relation to weeds, fire breaks, fencing and anything else that came to his attention, so that he could advise park staff more specifically as to how they could best discharge their duties. While regular park inspections with the other Commissioners generally occurred within Belair, Cleland at this time set out to walk around its boundaries. It is this action of his that the Friends of Belair Park seek to commemorate with the Professor Cleland Walk. By doing so it is hoped to draw attention to the history of Belair National Park, and the role of one highly significant person in the managing and developing an appreciation of that Park.



Cleland was knighted in 1964, and died on 10th August 1971. While his name is remembered with the park around Mt Lofty, Cleland's work for South Australian parks and the Belair National Park especially will never be forgotten.

D. John Hunwick.





**COME WITH THE FRIENDS OF BELAIR PARK ON THE PROFESSOR
CLELAND WALK. SATURDAY 17th 10am**

WORKING BEES.



Friday Working Bees.

It was decided to leave Project 13 (the Weed Busters area) and get back to Project 8 which was started in October last year and worked till early December.

Because "Weed Buster Week" is coming up soon, (October 11th to 18th) we want to leave this heavily infested area till then. So on the 17th July we reverted back to Project 8. This area is high on the priority list and is very rugged and steep, with large Boneseed and amongst Wild Rose and Blackberry, this is really testing our fitness.

Project 13 is very well advanced, although Olives have slowed progress. However we are still attacking Olives in addition to our two hours on Friday working on Project 8.

Tuesday Working Bees.

Eric and his team are presently working on Unit 24 on the Management plan. This is close to the Railway line near the Pony Club on Sheoak Road. Good progress has been made in spite of the winter rains.

Wednesday Working Bees.

This is an extra working bee organised to continue maintenance in the Maze area. Recently we very grateful to receive help from the Park Staff. Three days were spent with chain saws cutting up the fallen dead pine tree boughs piling them up and burning them. This is a great help as it was impossible to get to the weeds inside the massive dead boughs, it will also enable us to spray the Blackberries later in the year. Daphne Johncock is helping with the maintenance of this area, its good to have her back. She is a good worker.

Sunday Working Bees.

The highlight was our planting day on the 21st June. Eighteen people turned up and in just over an hour approximately 300 plants were planted around the Farm Oval. Considering the day was very wet, it was a miracle the rain held off until the last one was planted, then it poured while Lynda Knight turned on a welcome "cuppa" under the shelter.

Our thanks must go to Jill Salvi for the wonderful turnout which enabled us to get the planting done before the rain came. Jill made an announcement over the A.B.C. radio. How could anyone not answer her pleading.

The individuals working on their own projects, Eric Cole, Barbara Warburton and Ron Tambllyn are all progressing with their areas. I am sure there are other Friends also doing good work which we don't hear about.

Recently we have had two new recruits, Ian Wilson and Rolfe Kaselow. Ian has been coming on Tuesdays and Rolfe started last Friday, we do hope they will continue as they are both good workers.

Working Bee times.

Fridays 9am to 11am (8am to 10am when daylight saving starts).

Tuesdays 9.30am to 11.30am.

Wednesdays 9am to 11am (8am to 10am when daylight saving starts).

Sundays 3rd Sunday in every month 10am to 12. Meet at the Visitors Centre.

I hope we can get some more starters.

I would like to thank Janine for her help in preparing the Herbicide for our attack on the Olives, it is a great help to have available when we want it.

Doug Riley.

PROPAGATION AND PLANTING.

Two areas have been planted this year. An area near Old Government House and one in Melville Gully. The first area was planted on the 21st June. Despite a weather forecast predicting wind, rain and possible hail over eighteen people turned up with a pleasing amount of non members, thanks to Jill Salvi's media notices. Over three hundred shrubs were planted in this area.

The Melville Gully area was organised by Janine, our liaison ranger, in conjunction with Melville and Dan, members of the Friends and the Green Corp. This planting consisted of more than 1000 trees.

There will be more planting's next year. Janine is currently finalising a list so the seed collection can begin. If there are any members who have propagating skills we would love to hear from you. Our current willing propagationist have basic skills, myself included, but a lot of Australian plants do need specialist knowledge. Maybe when we have the list a training session could be organised.

Brian DuBois.

AFTERNOON TEA.

The Committee extend their thanks to the ladies who so generously provide afternoon tea on our meeting days, it is a welcome gesture.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER. WEDNESDAY 28TH OCTOBER.