

Narpulungup News

November 2018 Volume 2



A walk in the park: exploring Twertup surrounds

Early this year, the Friends committee decided to organise some activities to make the most of our new Twertup Field Studies Centre. Libby Sandiford and I volunteered to lead a couple of walks over a weekend in late October.

A good response saw people coming from as far away as Bunbury and Perth. People could choose to do just one or both walks.

Libby and I went to Twertup a few weeks before to reconnoitre the route to Roe's Pool, the destination for the Sunday walk. With some other helpers we cleared hundreds of fallen mallees on the way and worked out a route through some very overgrown tracks north of Twertup Creek. We climbed Roe's Rock on the return journey and decided it would definitely not be included in a guided tour [see story page 4 for memories of

another, much earlier, expedition to Roe's Rock by Friends members].

The eight kilometre Saturday walk, while short, was mainly off-track and included quite a few steep ascents and descents. We had no fixed itinerary so made the route up as we went along. It was heartening to see the rare obligate seeder *Eucalyptus arborella* recovering well on Dorrie after the fire [that destroyed Twertup in January 2008].

It appears the same cannot be said for some of the banksias. Joining us on the walk was Malcolm French, the author of *Eucalypts of the Western Australian Wheatbelt* and he was very interested in exploring some of the peaks to the south-east that may have escaped the fire. On one we found some wonderful specimens of *E. arborella* many

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The Twertup walking gang. Photograph courtesy Sylvia Leighton

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hundreds of years old. As well as Horrie and Dorrie, we climbed the four hills shown in the background of the group photo (on page 1). After the usual convivial Twertup evening we made an early start on Sunday for the 20 km return trip to Roe's Pool. It was reasonably easy flat walking, with about four kilometres of very overgrown track to negotiate. One of our team, Peter Dawson, had the track loaded on his GPS so we could impress the punters that we weren't really getting lost.

Before Roe's Rock a couple of people decided that it would be prudent for them to rest and await our return. Unfortunately this meant they didn't get to see the magnificent Roe's Pool. Most of us stripped off to a modicum of respectability and ventured in for a swim. The return journey was slow, making it quite a long day. All the feedback has been positive so make sure you book early for the next adventure.
Bill Thompson



Inaugural plant identification workshop at the restored Twertup Research Station

The inaugural plant identification workshop at the fully restored Twertup Field Studies Centre was held on a beautiful sunny weekend in mid September.

It was a great opportunity to benefit from the incredible expertise of local botanists Gil Craig and Libby Sandiford. We started with a lesson on the basics of plant identification and having ascertained that we could distinguish our stigmas from our styles we honed in on the distinguishing features of the plants frequently found in the park.

We then took to the bush around Twertup and along the Horrie and Dorrie walk to test our new-found knowledge. The hand lenses and microscopes turned attractive flowers into wonders of nature. We had all visited the Ravensthorpe Wildflower Show the day before the workshop and were inspired by the incredible array of species found in the Biosphere. Many thanks to Libby and Gil for organising such a valuable opportunity.

Leonie McMahon



Earthquake Tremor felt at Twertup

On Sunday 16th September at about 1.00 pm the Lake Muir earthquake tremor which measured 5.6 on the Richter Scale was also felt at Twertup. One of the workshop participants, Sylvia Leighton, recalls that she was looking down a microscope at some flowers when she felt this strange shaking feeling. The roof of the centre also rumbled at the same time.



Top: Botanist Libby Sandiford, left, with Bill and Jane Thompson and Sylvia Leighton, front. Middle: workshop participants. Bottom (L to R) Louise Gadsby, Julie Outram and Del Harland with Gil Craig.

Life members Ken and Priscilla Broadbent and how they came to be involved with Friends

Ken and I are not exactly sure when we joined the Fitzgerald River National Park Association, but we know it was in the 1980s. In the early part of that decade our house in Bremer Bay was used by Dr Ken Richardson and Ron Wooler from Murdoch University who were studying honey possums and other small marsupials in the 'Fitz'. They sparked our interest.

We had been coming down to Bremer Bay since the 1960s and had always been interested in the Fitz. About 1981 we made a trip through the park from east to west, on the Collett's Track. (We were lucky we did it then before it was closed!). Later we heard about the Association. At that time we were living in Mount Pleasant and were only able to visit Bremer Bay during the school holidays. Anyway, we decided to join.

I believe that we were known in those days as the mystery or phantom members because we never turned up to anything. However, one day that changed. We think our first real involvement may have been a walk with Helen Taylor and Elsie Penglase,

searching for Hopetoun Beard orchids to the east of West Mount Barren. We didn't find the orchid, and we got very tired and very dirty from stepping over and around burnt vegetation, but it was an exhilarating day.

After we moved to Mt Barker in 1987 we started to become involved in more activities. We visited Twertup several times for meetings, courses and expeditions. A very clear memory was a walk to Roe's Rock when the Twertup Creek was high. We decided to ford it wearing our underpants which we then hung on a bush to dry. We went on in our dry shorts and trousers and collected our underwear on the way back. We called the bush *Banksia under-pantii*.

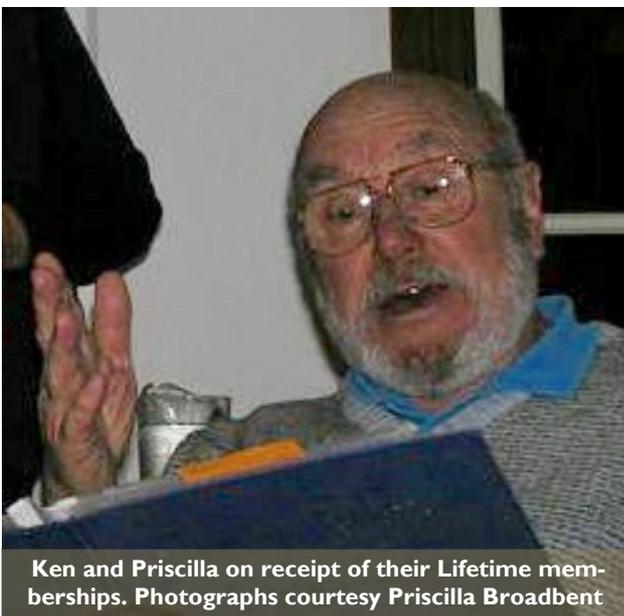
In 1994 after some years on the committee, I became vice president of the Association and Ken became secretary. Then in 1996 I was elected President, a post I held for three years. Ken remained as Secretary. The work during these years included the fight to prevent a road being

built through the park. As I remember this took up a lot of time and energy. The drawing up of the constitution was an ongoing project which came to fruition in 2003. After relinquishing the presidency, I took on the job of editor of the *Narpulungup News* for six years.

It was time for a rest! But we continued to be involved with all sorts of projects. I wept when we heard Twertup had burnt down. So much work, so many projects gone - cleaning, repairing, building, re-building, removing bees from tanks, and much more.

We participated in the planning to rebuild Twertup and were in favour of it from the beginning. Unfortunately, age, and Ken's heart operation in 2010 meant that we had to forego any physical contributions to the rebuilding. We were absolutely delighted to be given Life Membership in 2014. We had something of an embarrassing moment when we had to admit that we'd lost the beautiful framed certificate which the Friends had given us. But we have a lovely photograph of a royal hakea here which sits on my desk. Thank you to the Association, now the Friends, for the wonderful time that we have all had together.

Priscilla Broadbent



Ken and Priscilla on receipt of their Lifetime memberships. Photographs courtesy Priscilla Broadbent



The dibblers that weren't

Between the 20th and 24th October 2018 six 'Friends' conducted the dibbler monitoring at the Moir Track monitoring grid in FRNP.

This was the third time we had conducted the monitoring and the first time no dibblers were recorded.

Previous counts were 12 and five for October 2017 and May 2018 respectively. Bush rats were plentiful still with 50 recorded but this number too was down on the 129 recorded in May. What is the reason for this? It is most likely due to the extremely dry conditions prevailing on the south east coast. According to one analysis for Ravensthorpe for the months May to and including September the rainfall for this period was the lowest since records began in 1901. Close to the monitoring grid the rainfall over this five-month period was 94.25 mm.

However, in science a negative result is still a result as long as it is properly recorded and I'm confident that with a return to better rainfall conditions dibblers will be recorded here. As a volunteer participation exercise the six participants clocked up 46 hours and 604 kms.
Andrew Chapman

Our new logo...



The design and printing of our new logo was supported by funding from the Western Australian Government's State NRM Program, supported by Royalties for Regions. Thank you to South Coast NRM and Synergy Graphics.



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Unique to the Fitz *Eucalyptus nutans*

There are only two known naturally occurring populations of our final species in the *Unique to the Fitz* series but it took some botanical sleuthing to reveal its true identity. A stand of *Eucalyptus nutans* was rediscovered in 1992 near Bremer Bay by local landscape ecologist Nathan McQuoid after being misidentified and lost for more than a century.

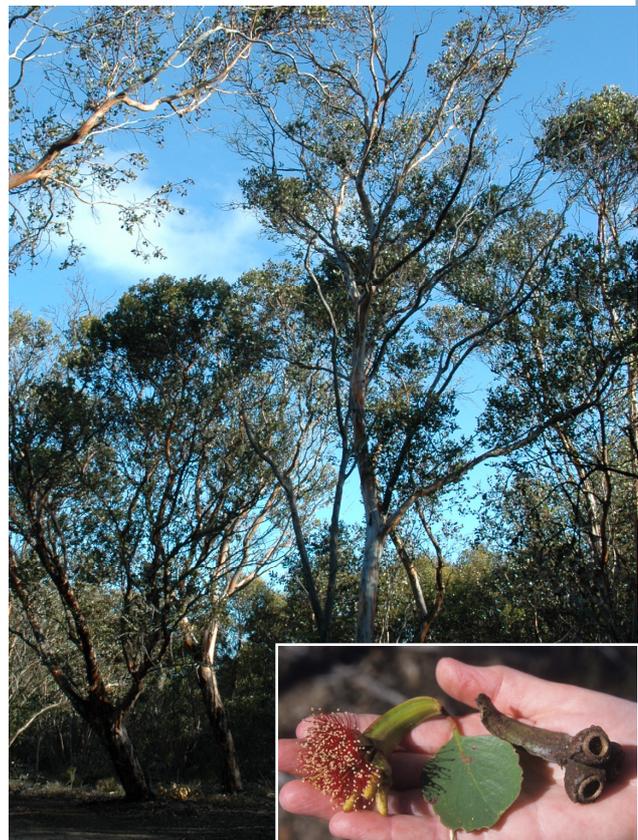
Also known as the Bremer or red flowering moort, *E. nutans* was initially collected by professional plant and insect collector George Maxwell in 1862 and described by botanist Ferdinand von Mueller in 1863. More than a century later it was recollected in 1973 and 1979 and seedlings from that collection were grown in Kings Park in Perth and elsewhere under the mistaken belief that they were *Eucalyptus platypus*.

Between 1999 and 2003 Nathan and Professor Stephen Hopper continued their investigations, eventually demonstrating that the above-mentioned Bremer Bay population was the same as the Kings Park specimens. This stand is growing on gravelly clay over spongolite, close to the Fitzgerald River National Park boundary.

A second population was discovered in early 2014 by Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions ecologists Sarah Barrett, Anne

Cochrane and Sarah Comer on a gravelly rise to the south of the original population. The species is classified as Declared Rare Flora.

With thanks to Nathan McQuoid for information and photos.



Save the date

Friends will be holding their

2019 AGM

on the weekend of

16th-17th March

at the

Twertup Field Studies Centre.

A more detailed program of activities will be sent next year but the format of the day will go something like this...

10.00 am: Morning Tea

10.30 am: AGM

After meeting close: Lunch

1.30 pm Presentation on

Bothriembryon

land snails and the Fitz

A bit about our AGM presenters

Dr. Lisa Kirkendale, Curator of Molluscs, and Technical Officer Corey Whisson, both from the Western Australian Museum, will be co-presenting a talk entitled *First phylogeny of the Australian land snail genus Bothriembryon (Gastropoda, Orthalicoidea) reveals high levels of diversity in the FRNP.*

Dr. Kirkendale (photograph below right) reveals she fell in love with marine invertebrates at the University of Victoria, British Columbia, when she “dipped her toes (forever) into taxonomy when she [co-described] a new species of sea cucumber.”

She is both excited and frightened by the scale of the Western Australian ‘molluscape’. This is her first foray into land snail work and through this work she is firmly smitten not only with *Bothriembryon* but the glorious South West of Western Australia.

Corey Whisson (photograph below left) has worked exclusively with Molluscs for more than 17 years. In his role at the WA Museum he has participated in numerous marine and terrestrial biodiversity surveys of Western Australia - from deep sea trawls to shallow scuba dives, and 4WD trips to mountainous treks.

He was first attracted to land snails whilst sorting leaf litter from the Darling Range and was amazed at the presence of micro native land snails around Perth! This stuck with him and in 2014 he enrolled in a Master of Philosophy degree at Murdoch University, researching the taxonomy and biogeography of the Gondwanan land snail genus *Bothriembryon*.

Narpulungup News

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