

Narrpungup NEWS

May 2014

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from the Friends of the Fitzgerald River National Park

www.fitzgeraldfriends.org.au

THIS EDITION REPORTS THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND ACTIVITIES WEEKEND HELD OVER 5 & 6 APRIL AT HOPETOON as well as where we are up to with TWERTUP

PRESIDENT'S REPORT....

The 2013/14 year has again seen our efforts at Twertup dominate the agenda, and I will begin by thanking Ric and Gil for the overall management of this formidable project. Without their dedication, and the continued work of our volunteers, the roof would not be in place, and the whole thing beginning to look like a useful building. Meanwhile, we have continued to do the things associated with 'Friends' and keep the Park foremost in the minds of local residents.

Fund Raising.

In August, we received a generous gift from Ron and Sue Wooller. Many of us will remember the fascinating talk they gave at the AGM in 2010. They have now published their book 'Sugar and Sand' which fills any gap in Honey Possum information. Several boxes of the book were given to help with fund raising. Ron and Sue have moved to Tasmania, but 'Friends' will remember them with great affection, and hope they return occasionally.

Market Days.

Three have been held; Easter at the Sports Club in Bremer Bay which was not an outstanding success as there were no volunteers and at F. E. Daw and Son's in Ravensthorpe in September as well as Hopetoun in January this year which was successful. Last Easter, 'Friends' arranged an Environmental Corner, next to Friends of the Wellstead Estuary in Bremer Bay.

Walks.

Andy Chapman led a walk in the Ravensthorpe Range during the Wildflower Show enjoyed by people from Albany and as far away as South Australia.

Park Advisory Committee.

A letter was sent by 'Friends' following the last AGM. The Park Advisory Committee eventually re-convened in October to discuss its future. Expressions of interest were sought and members selected. The first meeting was held in Jerramungup. Nathan McQuoid and I are community representatives from the Jerramungup (Western) area. Membership will be expanded to represent tourist and indigenous interests.



Next issue:
August 2014

Representation then will be much wider than in the previous committee which was dominated by farmers who fish! Meetings will be held four times each year at Ravensthorpe, Jerramungup, Hopetoun and Bremer Bay. 'Friends' are entitled to a representative who will be selected by the incoming 'Friends' Committee at the next meeting. Andy Chapman is our current representative, and he has expressed interest in continuing.

Liaison with other groups.

Organisations such as Gondwanalink, Friends of the Western Ground Parrot, Birdlife and Bush Heritage are an important part of our network. We were delighted to learn that Gondwanalink had won the Banksia Award, and that Ron Wooller had won the Serventy Award, both well deserved. I am currently a member of the South Coast Management Group as a community representative. This gives me an opportunity to express our interest in relevant issues, such as vehicles on beaches and beach-nesting birds.

Leonie has been Attending Biosphere Implementation Group meetings as our representative, and Nathan, (Chair of this group) will speak to the incoming 'Friends' committee.

Future Activities.

We have seen the excitement of younger members when shown how to use a microscope looking at aquatic invertebrates. Thanks Geraldine and Steve! So, we were very pleased to receive a grant from South Coast NRM which will enable us to hold four small workshops in Spring and Autumn. During the General Meeting, I'll be asking you for ideas. The aim will be to capture the interest of younger members and their families. The latest baby is Vicky and Paul's Benedict, but they grow fast, and we need to plan. I've said before, that 'The Fitz' is not just an obstacle to getting to the fishing spots on the coast although locally, this seems to be a commonly held belief. It is one of our challenges to demonstrate that it is not only the coast which has a lot to offer. This is why Twertup is so important, and why we are all going to be busy.

I would like to thank the current committee for their support and hard work. Some will change hats, but I would encourage any members to join the committee and get involved with this terrific organisation.

This will be my last year as President. Thanks to you all. Anne Gadsby, 5 April 2014.

YOUR NEW COMMITTEE...

President	Anne Gadsby
Vice President	Rosemary Jasper
Secretary	Donna Higgins
Treasurer	Angela Sanders
Newsletter editor	Andy Chapman
Twertup coordinator	Steve Janicke
Committee persons	Leonie McMahon Geraldine Janicke Gillian Craig

The Twertup Restoration sub-committee persons are: Ric Pepper, Peter Masters and Bill Thompson.

Note that in spite of her intention to stand down as President, in the absence of any nomination, Anne Gadsby generously agreed to continue in that role for six months at which time the Vice President would assume the role. Editor

NEW HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS....

Ken and Priscilla Broadbent of Bremer Bay who have both been stalwarts of the 'Friends' for many years were recognised for their contribution at the AGM. Ken was secretary from 1995 to 1998 and Priscilla either Vice President or President from 1994 to 1998 as well as Newsletter editor from 2003 to 2009. During these times issues dealt with were an earlier proposal to put a road through the park as well as a name change and constitutional amendments for the 'Friends'.



Priscilla and Ken Broadbent receive an award as Honorary life members of 'Friends'. Photo John Tucker

GUEST SPEAKER—DR LIZ FOX

Liz Fox from Birdlife Australia who is coordinator of Birdlife's involvement with bird surveys in the Great Western Woodlands gave a very interesting, illustrated talk on this subject. Liz commenced by putting the woodlands in their national and international context i.e. with an area of 16 million ha they are by far the largest, most arid and intact Mediterranean woodland on the planet.

Since the project commenced two years ago 171 bird species have been recorded; this has involved 900 person days and 1,838 data sheets filled in. Including all records from 1901, 221 species have been recorded. One very noticeable characteristic of the more common species is enormous variation in numbers depending on seasonal conditions. This applies to weebill, red wattlebird, striated pardalote and white-fronted honeyeater. Yellow-plumed honeyeater on the other hand is more numerically stable. Unusual species recorded from the woodlands are: scarlet-chested parrot, masked lapwing, oriental plover and even a record of little shearwater from Southern Cross. Two significant wetlands, Lake Cronin and Rowles Lagoon contribute substantially to bird species richness here.

From a bird conservation point of view, one of the great values of the woodlands is that they provide habitat for species which have either disappeared or become very scarce in the adjacent wheatbelt. These include Gilbert's whistler, western yellow robin, malleefowl, purple-crowned lorikeet and southern scrub robin.

'Friends' are grateful to Liz for making the effort to come to Hopetoun and present this talk. Just by way of comparison 185 bird species have been recorded from FRNP, noting that this includes quite a few seabirds. Editor

AGM WEEKEND ACTIVITIES....

The Culham Inlet bird hide with John Tucker

Twenty four people attended the bird hide on Sunday morning where John introduced us to the inlet and its birds. One hundred and twenty two species have been recorded from the inlet and surrounds; of these approximately 35 are waterfowl including 13 species which migrate annually from the northern hemisphere where they breed to Australia or New Zealand.

John has been bird surveying on the inlet and surrounds for some four years now and has made some really interesting observations including semi-palmated plover which has only been recorded in Australia five times, Pacific golden plover and a greenshank which was leg banded in China (see Narpulungup News, February 2010). In spite of their scarcity and the interest in them, hooded plovers are infrequently recorded on the inlet. *See also article page 5.*



Like observers at a military observation point some were very focussed on birds.....



...while others decided on 'a festival of hats' against an East Mt Barren background. Photo Jesse Brampton

East Mt Barren walk with Nathan McQuoid

Seventeen people met at the East Mt Barren car park to join Nathan on a guided walk up the mountain. At an appropriate vantage point Nathan explained the great antiquity of the Barrens Ranges in that they are but a small remnant of a great mountain range which was pushed up by

folding and faulting some 1,100 million years ago.

From the same vantage point, but at a very different time scale, Nathan indicated a remote valley where V. Claphake collected an unusual eucalypt hybrid, *Eucalyptus burdettiana x tetraptera*, in 1969. This tells us two things; in the bush you can never tell who has been where before you and that nature is complex and mysterious and can be relied on reveal surprises.



Walking group prior to departure. Photo Geraldine Janicke

Before proceeding to the summit the group had a discussion about iconic places, such as East Mt Barren, and how we relate and connect to them particularly with respect to development in their vicinity. This led to the role of roads and how we insert them into sensitive landscapes.

We had lunch at the summit where some attendees took the opportunity to talk about how their involvement with the park had been influential in their lives.



Walkers on East Mt Barren take in the view and contemplate what it all means.

'Friends' are grateful to John Tucker and Nathan McQuoid for their contributions to the weekend.

WELCOME TO NEW 'FRIENDS'

'Friends' welcome these new members and hope their involvement will be enduring and satisfying to them: Jesse Brampton, Ian Weir, Donna and Allan Higgins and Malcolm French who is particularly thanked for his generous donation.

AND NOW THE NEWS YOU'VE REALLY BEEN WAITING FOR—TWERTUP UPDATE...

Some exciting events have taken place at Twertup over the past months. Tenders were put out for a contractor to erect the verandah frame and install the roof, gutters and anticon. There were three respondents and the contract was awarded to Albany Allway Roofing. Five workers plus Ric Pepper spent 4 days in early April getting the job done, with fantastic results and a very professional finish. The concrete slab and roofing was paid for by the Minister for Environment's *Environmental Community Grant 2012*, which has now been acquitted.

Many thanks to all those who voted on the 'Sunsuper Dreams for a better world competition' for "A ROOF OVER TWERTUP FIELD STUDIES CENTRE". Unfortunately we were severely trumped (like 10 times) by two other 'dreams'. However, it did raise awareness and attracted some direct donations for our project, for which we are grateful.

In late May, Bill Thompson organised a very successful busy bee at "Yarrabee". Angela, Simon, Russell, Bill, Jane, Steve and Geraldine managed to recover 10 and a bit palette loads of spongolite blocks from an old house. The blocks were probably from the old Mt Barker quarry and, compared to the Twertup stone, tend to be plainer and creamy white, although a good number have some orange banding. "Yarrabee" is a property that is co-owned by Bush Heritage and Greening Australia (WA) and is being sold – the house was going to be demolished, and the organisations donated the blocks for Twertup.

Over the 'Western Australia Day' weekend, the fourteenth working bee was held at Twertup. Twenty willing workers turned up to install PVC downpipes from the gutters into the concrete wa-

-ter tank and a newly installed 4500L poly tank. The concrete tank was cleaned and a new, bee-proof lid made, all ably supervised by Ric Pepper. Furthermore, most of the dead wood was removed from around the building. It was a real hive of activity and by Sunday afternoon the site looked impressive.

On Saturday night, the BBQ was christened and a few drinks celebrated the roofed structure and clean water supply. Pete Dawson (mandolin) and Steve Janicke (guitar) entertained us with sea shanties and chivvied some songs out of the group.

Apologies to those members who did not hear of the event, which was organised after the AGM in April with invites sent to those with whom we had email contact. If you would like to be notified of working bees and other events at Twertup, our main method of contact is via email (as dates often change at short notice due to wet weather). Please contact Donna, our Secretary at flo-ralush@icloud.com to make sure we have your correct email address.

The next stage of the project will be the building of the walls, along with the installation of recycled windows and doors. Tenders have been requested from qualified stonemasons to carry out this task. *Contributed by Gillian Craig*

NEWS FROM OTHER NEWSLETTERS

Writing in the June 2014 edition of 'Western Australian Bird Notes', Richard Fuller of University of Queensland records a 'truly shocking' decline in numbers of migratory shorebirds visiting Australia and New Zealand. Some species have declined by up to 80% in twenty years. Curlew sandpiper is particularly impacted across its non-breeding range; bar-tailed godwit has declined at 1% per year in eastern Australia and New Zealand and a massive 6% per year in WA. There is a possible clue to the cause here. Godwits arriving in WA pass over the Yellow Sea, between China and the Korean peninsula, on both their southward and northward migrations. Godwits arriving in eastern Australia fly more directly on a Pacific route avoiding the Yellow Sea.

Analysis of satellite data over approximately 4,000 km of Yellow Sea coastline indicates a loss of 28% of tidal flats between 1980s and late

2000s. Historical maps reveal a loss of 65% since the 1950s. The loss is due to urban, industrial, agricultural developments and land reclamations. Furthermore, anticipated sea level rise will inundate a further 23-40% of intertidal habitat along these birds' migration routes. For further information visit <http://www.fullerlab.org>

These are alarming data on one of the most impressive cycles of nature. We need to remind ourselves that coincidence and correlation are not the same as causation in science and that we all collectively contribute to industrial development in China and Korea. Editor

PHOTO GALLERY Images from the AGM weekend and the Twertup rebuild.



On top of the world. Donna and Allan Higgins on the summit of East Mt Barren.



Hug a brick. The spongolite block recovery team at Yarrabee. Photos Geraldine Janicke



Early morning light on the recently roofed building.



Tanks are attached to the new roof.



Photos Gillian Craig

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