

THE FRIENDS OF BRAESIDE PARK

NEWSLETTER



Contents

- President's Annual Report 2
- The Friends of Braeside Park AGM 3
- Suspension of Friends Activities due to Covid-19 4
- Mordialloc Freeway - History 4
- Bridal Creeper Rust 5
- Ranger Ernie's Farewell -Finally! 6
- Digger turns 40! 7
- A-Team Wednesdays 8
- Creating Indigenous Wildlife Meadows 8
- Sounds of Nature 9
- Duckies 9
- The Park 11
- Park Info 12
- Membership Form 13



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The opinions expressed in this newsletter are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of Parks Victoria or its staff.

From the President

President's Annual Report

August 2021

2020 to 2021 was another Covid disturbed year. The Committee meeting on 10 December 2020 was the first face-to-face meeting after the March meeting. It was also the Friends' Committee Christmas Celebrations so we went from Easter Eggs to Christmas Cake, and Margaret's ability to schedule Zoom Meetings consolidated.

Whilst the Committee met and deliberated on necessary organisational items, the Nursery fell into disrepair. Parks Victoria banned volunteers from the Nursery. The Rangers already over worked and under staffed were permitted to run the nursery! "Working for Victoria" groups planted, but seed collecting, and propagation stopped and the nursery stalled. It is in the process of rejuvenation!

Frank and Helen completed Clean Up Australia between lockdowns. Considering the large visitors increase, the Park remained relatively litter free but certain areas cumulated windblown litter and ubiquitous litter dumpers.

Margaret, our Mordialloc Freeway Reference Group representative, attended Major Road Projects Victoria' Zoom meetings. Committee Members turned up in full kit for the Opening of the Underpass. Whilst the Friends suggested "partnership opportunities" to the MRPV, none actuated but the Friends subconsciously prompted the MRPV to organise community plantings and a mural. The Freeway's completion date is October-November 2021.

2021 saw most of our calendar's activities irregularly happen. Wednesday A-Team, Night Walks, Mystery Walk, Bird Surveys, WaterWatch and some face-to-face committee meetings.

The Friends completed many submissions – Review of the Victorian Wildlife Act, Environmental Infrastructure and Population Explosion Inquiry, Planning for Melbourne's Green Wedges and Agricultural Land- and applied for grants to South East Water, Port Phillip Western Port Management Catchment Authority and Kingston Council.

Parks Victoria's precinct plan for Braeside Park, when released, the redevelopment of Kingston Golf Course and the Suburban Rail Loop will impact on the Park but with the present committee members, Frank, Helen, Rosemaree, David M and David B, Margaret and our wonderful Rangers, even with the retirement of Ranger Ernie, anything is possible.

Judith Sise

The Friends of Braeside Park

Friends of Braeside Park Annual General Meeting

8 August 2021

The Friends of Braeside Park held their Annual General Meeting on 8 August online with the committee members agreeing to carry over their roles, for another year.

We are grateful to the committee for continuing to guide us for another year.

In the words of our President: *"no matter what's been thrown at us in the last couple of years we've managed to keep going and managed to achieve things, which lots of other groups have probably found more difficult than we have."* (Judith Sise)

Currently we are interested in increasing visitation to the Park with values on volunteer involvement in all our areas. Our activities and projects including our recognition of Phar Lap, with a project active on the Racecourse Trail, work on recognizing the history of the Friends' group, recruitment for friends activities in 2021-22 in all areas. New activities are always welcomed and promoted to further the aims and goals of the Friends Group.

The committee of the Friends' always welcomes new members and interested groups to contribute to the work of the friends in many areas including night walk/tour guiding, recording our activities, other new activities that we could do in future, and assistance with re-vegetation of the Park/nursery group.

The bonus for joining is that you learn information about the Park from the existing committee members and ranger team. And you get to contribute and guide the Friends in their future activities.

Please contact us on braesideparkfriends@gmail.com for more information or call 0417 323 460. The Committee meets on the first Thursday of the month at 7.00 pm, and we welcome your interest.

Nominations were confirmed via email and the re-elected committee 2021-2022 is:

President:	Judith Sise
Secretary:	Margaret Hunter
Treasurer:	Helen Russo
Assistant Secretary:	Rosemaree MacLean
Newsletter Editor:	David MacLean
Website and Promotions:	Frank Russo
Committee members:	David Boldiston

The Friends of Braeside Park (cont.)

Suspension of Friends Activities due to Covid-19

The Friends of Braeside Park would like to thank our network of members, financial and Park Connect, and event volunteers for their support in 2021. We have tried despite lockdowns to run what activities we are able to do, but after issues with continuing lockdowns, have made the decision to suspend our activities program until we are able to plan these with some certainty of holding them.

I would like to personally thank the members of the Friends' committee for their support of the program, and the members of the community who have attended the following events:-

Clean Up Australia Day, Night Walk Program, Mystery Walk, Wednesday A Team, Bat Night, Water Watch.



Clean Australia Day

I would like to especially thank the hard working committee members including Judith Sise, Margaret Hunter, David Boldiston, David MacLean, Rosemaree MacLean, Helen Russo and Frank Russo. We look forward to a resumption of activities when we are able to do so.

Our activities will continue online for the Seniors Program in October, with details to be finalized, and with summer rather than winter walks planned by the friends when restrictions allow us to do so.

Margaret Hunter

Mordialloc Freeway - History

Park visitors are now very familiar with the construction of the Mordialloc Freeway, formerly the Mordialloc By-Pass along the western boundary of Braeside Park. The freeway reservation was set aside in 1958, and the freeway construction started in 2019.

The original route of the planned road, on many maps, was through the infrastructure buildings, including the current Park Office, and nearby works. The route was moved away from this area, and a shared pathway added, in addition to the underpass to the Woodlands Industrial Estate (established in the late 1990's). Re-vegetation work is planned to reestablish plantings in the area of the freeway and other areas.

The EES Enquiry, approved the construction of the road, which is now nearing completion; there is no doubt that this will impact on the amenity of the Park, and the Friends Group have been working hard to mitigate the 'risk' to the park as much as we can.

The Friends of Braeside Park (cont.)

Mordialloc Freeway - History (cont.)

We encourage you to contact the Major Roads Project Victoria with any concerns with issues impacting from the freeway until completion; after this the road is managed by the Department of Transport, which the Friends will work with to continue to mitigate these ongoing impacts on the Park and surrounding areas. Further information can also be sent to the Friends of Braeside Park ongoing on this project, to work with other community stakeholders to maintain the positive outcome of this project.

Margaret Hunter



The former sewerage works at Braeside Park in 1956
With thanks to Peter Somerville for this photograph.

Bridal Creeper Rust – Braeside August 2021

This year with the help of the friend's group, park staff were able to begin tackling our bridal creeper problem in the Heathlands. FOB contributed \$300 enabling us to order a small amount of rust and leafhoppers, two forms of biological control for bridal creeper. These biological controls were originally cultivated and released by the CSIRO some years ago with effective results in several areas across Australia.



Park staff trialed two different forms of release. The first, within the conservation area, was the release of hopper and rust infected material onto our healthy plant material at different marked locations. The second release undertaken soon after in the self-guided trail area required collecting a large amount of rust infected bridal creeper, mixing it in 200 litres of fresh water so the spores washed off into the water and, spraying it out over as much of the healthy material as we could cover.

A month or two on and the results have been quite impressive, lots of our bright green healthy bridal creeper is turning an orange yellow colour which is the rust taking hold. Although not the entire answer to our problem and lots of follow up will be required to further slow the spread, the

bonus of using biological controls ensures that native vegetation is not affected, as can often be the case in the use of other control methods such as chemicals.

Kelly Virgona

Ranger, Braeside Park

Park Activity

Ranger Ernie' Farewell Finally!

Ernie's many-times rescheduled Farewell morning tea finally happened on Wednesday 14 July – just before another lockdown!

Many blokes and a scattering of ladies rolled up to the Visitors' Centre to say nice things about long-time Parks Victoria Ranger, Ernie.

Des Lucas, Braeside Park Ranger/Team Leader, started the proceedings, presenting Ernie with a car fridge, an Australian road map book and an A3 card of photographs of the youthful and mature Ernie working in many different capacities in the Park over the past 30 years.



The Friends of Braeside Park and Karkarook Park presented life memberships and congratulated Ernie on his long and supportive collaboration with both groups. The Friends' Group at Braeside gave Ernie a photo of his favourite plant, a Diurus Orchid, found in the Braeside Redgum Grassy Woodlands. The Dingley Men's Shed also toasted, with a coffee, Ernie's longevity, and productivity.



While some urged Ernie to keep in contact and attend activities, I thought Ernie has, after 40 years of "ranging", earned the right to pursue other interests! Goodbye and enjoy travelling if you ever manage to escape Premier Dan Andrew's lockdowns.



Judith Sise & Margaret Hunter

Park Activity

Digger turns 40!

A further celebration was the presentation to Digger, long term Braeside ranger of a memento of 40 years' service to Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water, MMBW, and other land agencies. Digger is a national treasure, and keeper of knowledge on Braeside Park since its foundation, and still working at Braeside as a ranger.

One of my best memories of Digger's knowledge and contribution, is of a recent school visit from the Mornington Peninsula Year 11 Students, which spotting Digger, digging a hole, (of course near the Men's Shed) were then privileged to benefit from Digger's knowledge for a considerable time. I went and had a cuppa. Needless to say, the group was well educated in the history and other aspects of the park by the time they left. Thank you, Digger.

27 July 2021

Margaret Hunter



Echidna Train

A rare spot from a Park Visitor of an Echidna train.

The males follow the female who eventually decides which one is most desirable. She probably judges by the twinkle in his eyes.

Photo was sent to Des Lucas, Park Ranger.

On behalf of Friends, I would like to thank the visitor who shared this rare sight with the rest of us.

Editor

Park Activity

A -Team WEDNESDAYS

The A Team is a group of volunteers that spends Wednesday mornings with a ranger from 9:00am until 12 noon undertaking a variety of park maintenance activities that can include, weed control, reclaiming and recycling tree guards and guard frames, planting, fence maintenance, nursery activities, woody weed control in the Heathland, management of the Diuris block.

During the last 18 months the activities of the A Team have been significantly reduced by COVID-19 lockdowns, 6 in total at the time of writing this article and from the lack of Ranger staff availability due to fire, leave, training and other park priorities.

Park Rangers and those who are part of the A Team are hoping that the lock downs cease and that an ongoing program can be set and delivered into the future.

If you are interested in becoming involved with this group of dedicated volunteers, then register through Parkconnect and come along on a Wednesday morning. Please see the activity schedule at the rear of this newsletter for further details.

Weeding in July

Between the lock downs in July, the A Team was able to get out and weed around indigenous plants that were planted in 2020. The indigenous plants were planted by the Working for Victoria crews last year in August when volunteering was restricted. The A Team did a great job protecting these plants, but more work is needed.

Andrew Morrison

Park Ranger



Creating Indigenous Wildlife Meadows

At the AGM (Zoom), we had our imaginations stimulated by guest speaker *Alex Moodie*.

Alex's love for nature began as a child living on the Mornington Peninsula. She studied Natural Resource management in Ballarat and after working on various revegetation and endangered plant projects, she was employed by the City of Greater Dandenong Council as a Conservation Programs Coordinator. Her job for the past decade has entailed overseeing all restoration and enhancement of remnant bushland sites.

Alex's presentation was simple and clear in structure and content. She explained the "What, Why, and How" elements of creating a indigenous wildlife garden. Then concluded with the very important Maintenance strategies and some Hot Tips. Having attended many such presentations as Greater Dandenong Council's introduction to a new program, "Gardening for Wildlife", I found Alex's presentation style and content refreshingly easy to absorb.

Judith Sise

Park Activity

The sounds of Nature

A walk around the main Braeside track early this morning taking in the Bird Hide and Wetlands Observation Platform produced 37 species of bird dominated by those dependent on the Wetlands.

The elongate pond extending south from the original Bird Hide was, as always, busy. Eight species of duck were noted, some in pairs, including Australasian Shoveler, Pink-eared and Hardhead. The large exposed dead tree in the pond, visible from several vantage points, is providing a nest site for two pairs of Great Cormorant, while elsewhere in the vegetation around the pond, Australian Darter, Little Black Cormorant and Little Pied Cormorant are inspecting potential nest sites.

Further south at the Wetlands Observation Platform, a Great Egret was conspicuous in the morning sun which highlighted its clean white plumage as Eurasian Coot, Dusky Moorhen and Chestnut Teal paddled about in the water, but no grebe today. Black Swan were busy building prominent nests of reeds.

Continuing around the track, bird sound pierced the still morning air with the loud call of the Grey Butcherbird, Pied Currawong, Sulphur-crested Cockatoo and Little Raven contrasting with the softer ringing tones of the Grey Shrike-thrush and pleasant squeaks and trills of the Grey Fantail and Superb Fairy-wren. Above, noisy groups of Rainbow Lorikeet speed between trees and Noisy Miner fight amongst themselves and harass other birds.

Leaving the park along a sandy track by the fence line near Lower Dandenong Road, a pair of Common Bronzewing foraged quietly in the leaf litter. They fly off a short distance and look back at me with a still gaze.

Now home to lockdown, not something that bothers our native birds, who today pleasingly brightened up an otherwise tedious day.

John Sise

Duckies

Years ago, when I went walking in Braeside Park, I enjoyed looking at the birds and the ducks.

There used to be typically 3 or 4 species that I remember.

In the last few weeks, walking around the ponds I have been fortunate to observe 8 different species. And if I count the very rare observations earlier this year, I can add another two species.

This is thrilling. We have gone from 3 or 4 species to 10 species this year. This is despite the best efforts of the construction crews to scare anything and everything away.



Last week I enjoyed watching the Blue billed males do their lovely mating dance. Over the last few months I have been able to keep up with a growing Pink-eared duck family - all the ducklings survived.

Recently my wife pointed out the high number of Hardhead ducks.

Park Activity

Duckies (cont.)

It is refreshing to see an increase in the variety of ducks in the park.

The writer has been able to either photograph or eyeball the following this year:

- Shelduck
- Grey Teal
- Chestnut Teal
- Hardhead
- Australasian Shoveler
- Pacific Black duck
- Australian Wood duck
- Pink-eared duck
- Musk duck
- Blue Billed duck



It is interesting how many wood ducks I have seen standing in trees this year. If this continues, the Rainbows are going to have some serious competition.

Adding to the ducks, I have also been able to regularly spot Grebes - both the Hoary-headed and the Australasian species. It however has been a couple of years since my last sighting of a great crested Grebe. I can but only hope.

David MacLean



The Park



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Frank Russo, Judith Sise, Helen Russo, Rosemaree MacLean,
David MacLean, Margaret Hunter, David Boldiston

Join us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/327955807288240/#>

Newsletter Contributions

Thank you to Judith Sise, Margaret Hunter, Heather Markland, Des Lucas, Kelly Virgona, Andrew Morrison, John Sise and David MacLean for contributions to this edition.

We thank the many contributors to our Facebook page for their excellent photos and stories.

All photos on pages 9, 10 and 11 are by David MacLean.

If you have an item to share in future editions or have any feedback in relation to this newsletter, please contact the editor at

de_edfobp@iinet.net.au
or braesideparkfriends@gmail.com

Editor's Note

This newsletter is being distributed to financial members and affiliated groups.

Despite Covid-19 lockdowns, the editor and the committee have continued to maintain the same publication schedule. We hope that you enjoy reading this publication and that it fires your imagination to the days in the future when we will be able to meet and enjoy this wonderful park together.

If you have something to say or some beautiful picture or story to share, please send it to me for evaluation and possible inclusion in the next newsletter. We welcome input from all our friends.

David MacLean
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Friends of Braeside Park - ABN 72 959 503 118 INC NO A00242027B
Membership Renewal/Application Form:



Many of our members did not renew their membership for the 2020-2021 year.

Renew now and this will cover you for the 2021-2022 year.

Membership Types

Corporate	\$20
Family	\$15
Ordinary Member	\$10
Student Member	\$5
Organisation Member	\$15
Concession/Pensioner	\$5

DONATION: \$.....

Personal Details:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email address: _____

Interests: _____

Membership Type: _____ Paid: _____

Payments can be made into our bank account – **PREFERED METHOD**

CBA BSB: **063-144**
Account no: **1008 3808** Include family name in description
Account name: Friends of Braeside Park
Email to: braesideparkfriends@gmail.com