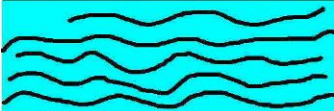


News from Darebin Creek March 2011



Friends of Darebin Creek

The Friends of Darebin Creek was formed in 1995 to protect, restore and conserve the Darebin Creek and it's adjacent parklands as a natural environment for the enjoyment of the community.

Creek Dates for your Diary:

- April Event – TBA
- Next meeting (all Welcome) – Thursday 19th May 2011, DCMC – Darebin Park
- Weeding Electric Spur Heidelberg, Sunday 29th May
- Planting Electric Spur Heidelberg, Sunday 26th May

Friends of Darebin Creek AGM 7pm 10 March 2011 at Darebin Parklands Environment Centre.

By Peter Grenfell – DCMC

Around 18 people were on hand to hear Sean Dooley speak about Birds in the Urban Environment. His talk and slideshow were very well received.

Sheryl Sibbison presented Sean Walsh with a Life Membership – a framed Friends of Darebin Creek certificate, in honour of many years service in a variety of roles.

We discussed who would like to take on roles for the Friends Committee for 2011, and people nominated themselves.

2011 Committee roles –

- Sheryl – Convenor and membership
- Helen – Public Officer
- Maureen – Treasurer and mailbox
- Adrian - Events Officer
- Phillip – Newsletter coordinator
- Peter– liaison at DCMC, to continue helping in any way possible including updating website.

Discussed places to advertise our group and its activities – radio, newspaper, community noticeboard, Council Enviro newsletters, Darebin volunteer network, website.

Treasurer's report – Memberships are now due, a form will be sent out with this newsletter.

Adrian proposes having a patch or patches for FODC to work on eg. Broom at Electric Spur.

Association with DCMC should cover legal liability – Peter to check with Adrian Infanti, then FODC could run our own planting days.

Sheryl suggested that FODC meet quarterly.



Sean Dooley speaks about Urban
Birdlife – 10th March

Next meeting on Thursday 26 May 7pm at Parklands Enviro Centre – we could view a short environmental film to start with on the new big screen (Any ideas let Peter know pgrenfell@dcmc.org.au)

Meeting concluded at 9.30pm.

End of Year Celebration – Friday 10th December Furlan Club

A small group met at The Furlan Club in Thornbury for our Xmas celebration. The evening was spent socialising and reflecting on the activities which occurred during the year. We wish to congratulate those members who were able to attend activities and help to make a difference along the creek. The evening is a chance for members to get together in a relaxed atmosphere and is open to all members each year.

Sheryl and Trevor.

Weeding Bee Foothills Park, Epping – Sunday Nov 28th 2010

By Phillip Orth

On a very rainy and stormy weekend – myself and the Whittlesea bushcrew managed to weed four very large bags of Paterson's Curse from the Henderson Creek surrounds. The weather being so rainy obviously dissuaded other participants but Narelle, Aleks and I still managed a good job of the insidious Patterson's curse. Hopefully with a better day next year and a few more friends to help we will really clean out this lovely area.



Wildflower Walk – Cherry Creek Reserve – 30th October

By Phillip Orth

After a fairly tumultuous and stormy weekend – 6 hardy friends (Phillip, Adrian, Robert, Michael, Margaret and Maureen) turned up for an enlightening walk through the Cherry Creek reserve with Michelle, Tess and the Darebin Bushland crew.

Our aim was to travel through some of the few remaining remnant vegetation areas that showed huge biodiversity and lots of native wildflowers. Being a fairly rainy day and not very sunny – the sun orchids were not out – but we did manage to find many species out and blooming including lots of trigger plants, flax lilies, milk maids etc.



- 1 *Stylidium graminifolium*
Trigger plant
2. Michelle Darebin bushcrew
3. Right *Burchardia umbellata*
Milkmaids



Meeting with South Morang Railroad project

By Phillip Orth

On Thursday 28th October, the committee of Friends of Darebin Creek plus Adrian Infanti from DCMC met with representatives of the South Morang Railroad extension to discuss the ramifications of the railroad extension from Epping to South Morang.

It was found out that quite a lot of relocation of the Flax Lily had been completed but that 200 river red gums had to be cut down to make way for the train line. They were trees that had grown up since the train line was decommissioned in 1952 but still a loss to the area. Unfortunately due to the need to install the electric power lines it was not possible to keep them.

Project details are below – the website details for further information have been included.

Protection of Flora

Any protected flora species will be removed prior to commencement of construction vegetation clearing and earthworks activities.

Matted Flax-lily

Matted Flax-lilies (*Dianella amoena*), have been located in the construction corridor. The Matted Flax-lily is a tufted, mat-forming, perennial lily that is listed as endangered under the *Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. Matted Flax-lilies identified along the construction corridor will be translocated to a secure conservation site in Plenty Gorge. Other suitable locations for the lilies are also being identified. These rare plants will be moved in accordance with an approved Translocation Plan.

An area of land south of the proposed South Morang Station carpark has been permanently fenced to protect another group of Matted Flax-lilies. This is a 'No Go Zone' for all project activities.

There will be ongoing management of this site, to ensure the Matted Flax-lilies continue to thrive.

River Red-Gums

There are River Red-Gums along the rail corridor between Epping Station and the new South Morang Station. The Project team will endeavour to protect as many River Red-Gums as possible. However, due to the need to ensure the safety of the rail network unfortunately the majority of these trees will be removed.

Environmental offsets

The South Morang Rail Extension Project team is committed to offsetting vegetation losses caused by construction activities on the project. Guided by the *Victorian Government's Native Vegetation Management: A Framework for Action*, the Project team will prepare an Offset Management Plan that will document how the project will offset any vegetation losses as result of construction activity.

[http://www.transport.vic.gov.au/DOI/DOIElect.nsf/\\$UNIDS+for+Web+Display/5A4C847233C20EEACA2577960004B779/\\$FILE/SMREPIInfoSheet_ProtectFloraFauna_Aug2010.pdf](http://www.transport.vic.gov.au/DOI/DOIElect.nsf/$UNIDS+for+Web+Display/5A4C847233C20EEACA2577960004B779/$FILE/SMREPIInfoSheet_ProtectFloraFauna_Aug2010.pdf)

LIVING WITH DAREBIN CREEK

(Illustrated Talk given by Anthea Fleming to Warringal Conservation Society, December 2010)

Brian and I have lived in Ivanhoe ever since our marriage in 1965. He already owned a house there on a long block, 50 ft wide and 370 feet long. Brian always says that 70 ft is vertical; meaning the overall fall from front gate to back boundary – so we have a long narrow west-sloping back garden. And our back boundary is the midline of Darebin Creek.

My friends and relations were concerned. “What are you going to do about that?” and “Can't you get the Council to fill it in?” “You'll have snakes!” Certainly, at the time our creek-flat – and almost all the others - was a wilderness of long grass, fennel and blackberries. Kangaroo-grass *grew* on the slope. Neighbours' boys used to ride a decrepit motor-scooter about on the flat, making little tracks through the tall weeds. They came in by a nearby lane leading down to a foot-bridge, installed so people could walk to Alphington Station.

In our early days we made little use of our creek-flat, and only one neighbour had made a garden of his. Some people viewed the creek-slope as a useful place to dump rubbish. But one good thing - it was and is a bird corridor. We soon found that we were seeing many native birds, such as Red-rumped Parrots and Blackfaced Cuckoo-shrikes, and we started a bird-list. At first it was on the back of an envelope on the fridge door, then an exercise-book, and later a dynasty of pocket-notebooks. In between having babies and battling with a small inconvenient house, and then through its reconstruction, I joined the Bird Observers Club, and in 1977, Warringal Conservation Society.

Though most people saw the Creek as a liability, we valued it. When we re-built, we made sure that we had a view to the Creek, and since then most houses and backyards along Clark Rd. have been re-developed so as to take advantage of the view and space towards the Creek.

In 1971, there was a big flood. We looked out the back window and saw this sheet of water – Lake Alphington! The Yarra had risen and backed up the Creek, and it completely covered the school oval. (It also interrupted construction of the Eastern Freeway). We saw quite a few floods over the years.

In 1973, Sue Course introduced us to Rockbeare Park. Its original Ivanhoe Wetland was a fine source of tadpoles of the Growling Grass Frog and there was a wonderful cypress log to climb on... Then came the MMBW gang's attack on the 'scrub' – the cypress log was burnt with most of the bulldozed undergrowth - and this led to the formation of the Darebin Parklands Association. Our children soon learned what Boneseed was, and to pull up its plants wherever seen. We helped with many early Darebin Park working bees. In 1974 a major spate in the Creek washed out many new plantings, but they soon recovered.

At the time there had been suggestions that a Freeway would be built along the Darebin Creek Valley, as an off-shoot from the Eastern Freeway (built circa 1971). Fortunately Mr Hamer cancelled that, at the time of the extension with the Alphington Quarry land to extend Rockbeare Park to Darebin Parklands as we know it today. But we couldn't walk upstream along the Creek to Darebin Park, beyond Heidelberg Road. All local properties date from the original land sales of the 1830s, so there was no creekside reserve. None of our immediate

neighbours have ever objected to people walking quietly along the Creek (nor do we), and we could range along both banks (thanks to the footbridge) between Sparkes Reserve and Latrobe Golf course.

Of course at first the Creek was a potential danger to young children. We had to fence them in, but as they got older they made many local friends, and could wander and paddle on the Creek banks, crossing by fallen logs and stepping stones. They could walk downstream to visit friends or upstream to Sparkes Reserve. Meg and her friend Christine discovered a pony in the paddock behind the Napier Waller House - in due course the pony's owner lent me a bridle and said I could teach them to ride! The paddock is now the *Napier Waller Reserve* and has been re-planted with indigenous flora from its original paddock state. Willow removal is I suppose a good thing – but we lost a pair of Sacred Kingfishers which used to nest there in a hole in a willow.

The Creek was a great adventure playground. Steve and his friends made great use of the Creek – he used to harvest golfballs from the water hazards on the golf-course, wearing a wetsuit. He sold some back to the pro, and others to golfers on other courses. And he wore the wetsuit while rafting on a big piece of insulating foam which came floating down the Creek.

Local wildlife has changed over the years – at first we had Shrike-Tits and Rosellas, which used a neighbour's huge Red Gum as a base. Owls came at night and so did bats. Unfortunately the owner considered the big tree unsafe and had it felled; another on the school's land suffered the same fate. We sometimes used to watch the Gould's Wattled Bats leaving it in the evenings. We now have a comparatively restricted bird list, though we still hear and sometimes see a Frogmouth...

Birds in Australia don't need feeding, but some of our neighbours have bird feeders... Result – vast numbers of Noisy Miners, Common Mynahs and Spotted Doves. Pied Currawongs moved in too and are probably the reason we now see few of the smaller birds. Rainbow Lorikeets have largely displaced the Red-rumps. And these days we have Flying-foxes, so no wonder we get little fruit.

Steve had introduced a cat to the household (which died this year aged 19). Then Steve went to sea, but the cat stayed. He was quite a hunter when young and I rescued a few birds, but the real problem was his interest in reptiles. He suffered two snake-bites – treatment was very expensive – after that the Vet told us he was probably now immune. He still brought in young snakes (usually deported to the Latrobe Wildlife Rsv), and we still see snakes now and then. And we have a healthy Bluetongue Lizard population, and many interesting insects - probably because we are far too lazy to spray our plants.

In recent years, there has been much more official attention to our Creek from Yarra Water. It's now mentioned in approving tones on real estate signs. And a real Creek community of residents has developed. Our street has an annual party and barbecue on Christmas Eve – the advantage over a street party is that no permit is required. There are now no neglected weed farms – though mown grass is not much of a bird habitat. And when threats of unsuitable development occur, we band together to fight them, through the planning system of the Councils and the Appeals Tribunal – with fair success. Two houses were originally going to be built low-down on the slope, in everybody's view, but unanimous local objections to Banyule Council induced the owners to move back closer to the street.

Another threat to the local ambience was a huge basket-ball hall planned by the Alphington Grammar School *to* overhang the Creek flat – again concerted objection by locals and other bodies (Yarra Water, Darebin Creek Committee of Management, and various local and Friends bodies, including WCS) took them to VCAT and we succeeded. It was very good to see that our creek is valued by so many people, including many who don't live right next to it...

And now, at last, the Darebin Creek Foot and Cycle Path show signs of construction! At present it ends above the Heidelberg Rd Bridge. Yarra Water has been planning the extension for a long time and has done much planting and some anti-erosion stonework on the bed and banks. Many years ago the local sewer was built where its pipe formed a weir. Fish couldn't get up except in very high water. A fish-ladder cascade was installed by the Golf Club's Practice Fairway. Steps go down to it at the end of Riverside Rd. There was also a lot of indigenous planting and channel reconstruction with rockwork. Unfortunately, Melbourne Water didn't listen at local planning meetings when we told them how fierce floods could be, and their new plantings were bashed flat and weed mats washed away in 2004. So, alas, was the re-constructed foot-bridge – a real grief to us, and it won't be rebuilt; the school views passing pedestrians as trespassers. We really look forward to being able to walk home from Darebin Park under the railway bridge, *and* past where the path currently comes to an end. The path will pass under the road bridge to Sparkes Reserve where there will be a new footbridge, and then will follow on the school's bank (behind a fence) most of the way, then through the Waller Rsv. and through Latrobe Golf Club. In due course we will be able to walk or cycle all the way to Willsmere Rsv on the Kew bank, and join the Main Yarra Trail. So we can say that Darebin Creek is now recognized as an asset to the community, and we are no longer eccentric to love it as we do.

ANTHEA FLEMING



Kids on a cypress log 1973,
Darebin Creek floods - 1974

Get Involved in Darebin Creek Events in 2011 ☺

- Next meeting (all Welcome) – Thursday 19th May 2011, DCMC – Darebin Parkland Centre – Alphington.
- Weeding Electric Spur Heidelberg, Sunday 29th May
- Planting Electric Spur Heidelberg, Sunday 26th May
- August 1st Gronn st National Tree Day
- August 28th Planting Electric Spur Heidelberg
- September 25th cut and paint woody weeds, Bundoora Park Grasslands.
- October 30th – Hand weed Electric Spur, Heidelberg.

Got anything to say? Contributions to the FODC newsletter always welcome. Please forward to fodc.articles@dcmc.org.au or philorth@iprimus.com.au

Contact Numbers

Convenor/ Membership Officer	Sheryl Sibbison	9467 1370 (h)	Water Pollution? (quote drain sign's number) Melb Wildlife Sanctuary & Indigenous Nursery	9695 2777 9479 1206
Adrian Hotchin	Events	0409 133 049	Shopping Trolley Hotline	1800 245 022
Phillip Orth	Newsletter	0419376244	Litter Report Hotline	1800 352 555
Darebin Creek Management Committee		9499 4454	Wildlife Rescue Hotline Vic Police Motorcycle Squad	0500 540 000 9380 7283

NOTE: The Friends of Darebin Creek **Membership Brochure** comes complete with map and information in seven languages. Call Sheryl (tel no above) for copies to distribute to neighbours, schools and clubs, and other centres.

Visit our website at www.friendsofdarebincreek.org.au