



WILD TIMES

Edition 48 January 2014



INAUGURAL DEVIL POO PICK UP



**WILDCARE FRIENDS OF PITTWATER AND
ORIELTON LAGOON**



**PLUMBERS, ROLLS ROYCES AND NO MORE
PLASTIC BAGS!**



Editorial

Well Happy New Year to all our readers!! Our readers include our 60031 Wildcare members, our online supporters and all the staff at the P.W.S. It has been a great end to the 2013-year and I do hope that you enjoy this edition of Wildtimes. Don't miss the cross word on page 17 and the renew your membership REMINDER.

In this edition I am pleased to introduce you to one of our newest Wildcare groups - Friends of Pittwater and Orierton Lagoon on page 3 and to some amazingly dedicated Wildcare volunteers featuring this summer at Melaleuca and Cockle Creek.

I am also excited to feature the two page Wildcare Strategic Plan pages 10, 11 and 12. It's the end to plastic bags in Tasmania, there has been chemical certificate training, Friends of Maria have been active and the Inaugural Tasmanian Devil Poo Pick up has occurred- all featuring in this summer edition.

The Wildcare Board is happy to announce the Craig Saunders Memorial Photographic Competition. This will be an annual event to remember that amazing Wildcare volunteer – so get your cameras snapping to win \$1000 towards a Wildcare Group Project of your choice, (more information next edition).

We are also hoping to see you at the Annual General Meeting to be held in Hobart on the 24th March. The exact location for the moment we are keeping a secret!!

Happy reading

Jodie Epper
Editor



Even the stars like going to this beautiful part of the world - Melaleuca.



Volunteering at Melaleuca - what a joy!

WILDCARE Gift Fund Donations

The following generous donations to the WILDCARE Gift Fund have been received since our last edition:

Paul Doyle, Trista Abbott, Cameron Renilson, Samantha Loveder, Tarn Crowe, Kaylene Allister, Nail Polato, Arimbi Winoto, Louise Jeffery, Brenton Head, Noah Poole, Lynette Holmes, Brenton Head, Donn Jumber, Stephen Small, Gregory Bell, Brenton Head, Lee Fuller, Julie Brooks, Louis Larcen, Lynette Holmes, Sarah Elliott, Phillip Wyatt, Tracey Simpson, Andrew Smith, Dr FJ Wivell

Wildtimes Publication Schedule

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49	1 April 2014	1 May 2014
50	1 August 2014	1 September 2014
51	1 December 2014	1 January 2015

Submissions to Wildtimes Editor at wildtimes@wildcaretas.org.au

ON THE FRONT COVER:

The Friends of the Tasmanian Devil working in partnership with the Save the Tasmanian Devil Program at the Free Range Devil Enclosure.

New group formed – Wildcare Friends of Pitt Water-Orielton Lagoon

The new Wildcare Friends of Pitt Water-Orielton Lagoon (PWOL) group was formed on the 2 November, 2013 at our inaugural meeting at the Parks & Wildlife (PWS) Seven Mile Beach Field centre. We had a great response and a great BBQ!

Assistance to form the group and set up our meeting came from Carol Markby, Ranger PWS and Andrew Smith at Wildcare with thanks also to BirdLife Tasmania, SCAT and Landcare Tasmania who all assisted with the meeting call out. After filling out the paperwork and meeting with Wildcare's Jodie Epper, our next step is to develop our annual working bee calendar in partnership with PWS.

Initial activities planned include plant propagation, weeding, revegetation, rubbish collection and bird surveys. With our diverse member interests to date, we expect these activities to expand.

The aim of Friends of PWOL is assisting to protect, enhance and raise awareness of the Pitt Water-Orielton Lagoon Ramsar site with objectives -

- To progress implementation of the Pitt Water Nature Reserve Management Plan 2013 (incorporating the requirements associated with its status as a Ramsar site) in the protection of natural and cultural values;
- To weed, revegetate and remove rubbish from the Ramsar site;
- To encourage community awareness of Pitt Water-Orielton Lagoon site values;
- To support and facilitate research and incorporate into on-going planning.

Pitt Water-Orielton Lagoon is one of 10 Ramsar sites in Tasmania & the only one in an urban area. There are many and varied pressures in different areas along the lagoon foreshore and surrounding areas including weeds, rubbish, creeping backyards, vegetation clearance, water quality, stock grazing and cropping.



Friends of Pittwater Orielton Lagoon meet for the first time and are off to a good start with a strong partnership between the volunteers and the land managers PWS

The lagoon is internationally significant as the primary and most southern Tasmanian feeding ground for migratory shorebirds (many EPBC listed) and a recognised shark breeding nursery area. It is also important habitat for many state & nationally listed threatened plants and animals such as saltmarsh and seagrass species and the endemic live-bearing seastar *Parvulastra vivipar*.

There are many guiding documents available to the group for the PWOL Ramsar site including an Ecological Character Description 2010, the Pitt Water Nature Reserve Management Plan 2013, the Resident Shorebirds & Seabirds 2013 survey report, the Foreshore Action Plan 2011 and the Sorell Stormwater Management Plan 2013.

So if you are looking for somewhere special to volunteer your time near Hobart, consider joining Friends of PWOL. We welcome new members - email sandy.leighton@inet.net.au and we can take it from there.

Notice of Wildcare Incorporated Annual General Meeting Notice

When: 24th March 2015

Where: Hobart - more information will be posted on the website closer to the date.

All Wildcare members are invited to attend – this is a great chance to input into your Wildcare.

A story about a plumber...

A tradesman's life is hard, hard on your body. We spend years crawling under houses and in muddy trenches and by the time we retire there are not many of us who can still do the work, or want to. I was lucky and spent a big chunk of my time teaching and certifying the plumbers and that's why I'm still in the game. I am 72.

Working on plumbing jobs in remote areas is challenging work. The houses that I get asked to fix are often from the 1800s, quite run down and not regularly maintained. In addition, they are by nature remote, often needing fixing without the use of power tools, all under strict OHS rules and sometimes not all the materials make it onto the helicopters.

One of the jobs I remember was on Tasman Island. We had to re-spout and re-gutter Quarters 2 and 3 (we call them Q2 and Q3). All of the guttering had to come in via helicopter and the wrong pieces arrived. Well I certainly wasn't going to sit around doing nothing for a week – I don't like weeding – so I made all the pieces up! It took me two days to make the right angles and then another day to do the job. On these working-bee trips you just get on with it.

On a job on Cape Bruny I remember having to unblock the septic tank. This type of work is not everybody's cup of tea, that's for sure. The first problem was I needed to find it! On Bruny Island the council records have all vanished and there are no plans for any of the structures. Luckily I knew roughly where to start looking.

Another time, on Maatsuyker Island, the hot water had run out of gas. The cowl had blown off in the wind – Maatsuyker gets pretty windy at times – and this created a down draft that kept blowing out the flame. The regulators were ancient, about 20 years old, and they corroded in my hands. There was no pressure and no gas. That was a good job!!

I volunteer because I love photography. These opportunities let me follow my passion for taking photographs of remote areas. The opportunities I get from being a Wildcare member



Wildcare volunteer Ron Fehlberer hard at work on replacing the pump on Cape Bruny Island lighthouse station.

are amazing. The offers of going to these places are fantastic; I could never do it by myself. It costs me nothing but my food. It's a bonus

This story originated from a chat in the corridor of the PWS head office with Wildcare volunteer Ron Fehlberer. Ron is a Wildcare volunteer both in the field and in the Wildcare office where he helps out with Wildcare membership administration.



Leaving Maatsuyker Island



Flying past Cape Pillar from Tasman Island.



From the CEO's desk

Here are the highlights of activities since the last edition of Wildtimes.

Strategic Plan 2013-2016

The strategic plan has been formally adopted by the Board and the implementation process is now well under way.

A two-page summary of the plan has been posted on the website and is included in this edition of Wildtimes. Should you require the more comprehensive version, please contact my office.

Co-Chair, Will Forsyth, and I have presented the plan to senior officers of the Parks and Wildlife Service in Hobart, Launceston and Ulverstone with highly favourable feedback. It has also been presented to Minister, Hon Brian Wightman.

We look forward to forming a new and effective partnership with the Parks and Wildlife Service in the months ahead.

Governance

Governance is the framework (system of checks and balances) that an organisation like Wildcare puts in place to ensure that it meets its legal obligations and oversees the business of the organisation effectively.

It is about how Wildcare is run – the structures, policies, systems and understandings that enable it to make the right decisions, determine future direction and set the right course.

I have delivered the first in a series of practical workshops on governance to Wildcare's Board of Management. It focused on the principles of governance and the roles and responsibilities of Board directors, including their legal responsibilities. The overall aim has been to assist directors to increase their confidence, competence and professionalism as a volunteer director of the Wildcare Board of Management.

Further workshops are planned in 2014.

Financial management and reporting

In keeping with the increased focus on best practice in governance, Finance Officer, Lindie Lupo, has been working diligently to ensure that the standard of financial reporting throughout Wildcare is enhanced.

Her two major tasks have been to improve the standard and presentation of financial reports submitted to regular Board meetings. Work has also been undertaken to improve financial reporting to members and stakeholders through the Annual Report presented at the Annual General Meeting.

Significant improvements have now been made and fine tuning will continue to occur. This is a work-in-progress.

Annual Report 2013

Contributions from you by way of text and photos are most welcome for inclusion in Wildcare's Annual Report 2013. We are keen to showcase projects from around the State, highlighting what Wildcare is all about. This has not been done in the Annual Report previously.

We look forward to receiving your contribution by 20 January or earlier.



Audit and acquittal of grants

Wildcare has engaged Accru Hobart as its auditors. Acquittal of any grant will now need to be undertaken through Accru in future. The contact person is:

Eva Ewe
Accountant, Accru Hobart
Level 1, 18 Ross Avenue
ROSNY PARK, TAS 7018
Email EEwe@accruhob.com.au
Telephone (03) 6244 5044
Facsimile (03) 6244 7319

To obtain an acquittal to satisfy a funding agency, you will need to collate relevant documentation in the form of grant deed, evidence of payments made under the grant and actual expenditure against budget for the project. You should then contact Carol Pacey, Branch Liaison and Accounts Officer (telephone 6247 1978 or email carolpacey@bigpond.com), and ask for a "job report" to be printed for you. All this documentation should then be made available to the auditors.

It is very important that timely reporting under grants is observed. We recently noted a case where a Wildcare branch had an outstanding report due to a funding agency. The branch was unaware that the funding agency would not process funding applications submitted in good faith by other Wildcare branches until this outstanding matter had been satisfied.

Remember, each one of us is part of the Wildcare team and upholding Wildcare's reputation is part of the deal!

Future workplan

Work will continue on compiling the 2013 Annual Report, as well as making arrangements for the AGM, to be held at the end of March 2014.

A practical fundraising plan for Wildcare is nearing completion and implementation of this plan will be a major focus in 2014.

Implementation of the strategic plan, in all its facets, will be the prime driver of future activities.

Contact me

Please contact me at any time to discuss an issue, seek guidance or pass on information.

Your contribution is very much valued.

Malcolm MacDonald
CEO, Wildcare Inc
CEO@wildcaretas.org.au
(03) 6334 3990

Cape Bruny Lighthouse

by RON FEHLBERG June 2013.

The Cape Bruny Lighthouse was decommissioned in 1996 and replaced with an automatic solar powered light on the next hill to the east of the existing tower. The Lighthouse had a continuous service for over 148 years. It was the longest continually staffed extant lighthouse in Australia.

The last caretakers were Beth and Andy Gregory whose daughter Rhianna turned off the light for the last time on the 6th August 1996. They then contracted to be caretakers for the next 15 years giving them 17 years of service as caretakers of the station.

In August 2011 the Parks and Wildlife service under the Southern Regional Facilitator Pip Gowen and the Ranger in charge of Bruny Island Bernard Edwards set up a volunteer roster program. This gives the opportunity for Tasmanians, mainlanders and even overseas candidates to participate in the program for up to 2 months at a time as caretakers.

The present requirement is a 3 day course to be taken with the Bureau of Meteorology as weather information and readings are required to be sent back to the Bureau. This necessitates a 5.30am start every morning. Readings are taken at 0600, 0900 and 1500 hours every day.

There are a number of duties which volunteers are required to undertake during their time at the station, depending on their skills. Some of the main duties are --- Opening and shutting the main precinct gate. Opening and closing the museum, cleaning the museum and public toilet, keeping toilet supplies stocked. A weekly checking and servicing the generator, check solar inverter and write down power performance and usage. Wash and clean solar panels. There are a lot of birds on Bruny Island and a large number delight on sitting on the solar panels. There are a number of walking tracks to maintain and trim back bushes. There is wood to be cut for the fire. A vegetable garden to maintain and plant



Cape Bruny from Lighthouse Beach

There is always painting, mowing, picking up rubbish, cleaning out table drains and organising car parking. As there is now a commercial tourist operator who takes guided tours of the lighthouse it is necessary to keep it clean and free from water, as it leaks when the weather is bad.

The main function of the volunteers is to talk and answer questions from the visitors, so it is a good idea to study up on the history and workings of the station. During our last stay April, May this year we had up to 1000 visitors a week in our busiest time. During our stay last year and this year Glenda my wife made and repaired curtains in both houses plus cooked, cleaned and entertained guests. I being a plumber replaced lots of the plumbing in both houses, installed new pumps and even cleaned out a septic tank.

We enjoyed the experience and especially talking to the tourists who came from all over the world and had an interest in lighthouses. The scenery at Cape Bruny is outstanding and most stand there in awe of it. Every persons camera gets a real workout no matter what the conditions are like.

On the 31st of March 2013 the Cape Bruny Lighthouse celebrated its 175th birthday. A core of enthusiasts were invited to attend the festivities of the day. Being a Sunday we expected a good roll up. Unfortunately the day turned out to be a wild, wet and very windy day. The winds were gale force and it was very difficult to even stand up. We could not get the flags up, they would have been torn to shreds. The few of us who turned up enjoyed the food, drinks and especially the birthday cake and reminisced on what the day could have been.



Cape Bruny from East Cloudy Head



Maria Island - The battle of the Broom

'This is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.'

This quote from Winston Churchill, whilst referring to past conflicts of epic proportions, nevertheless seems an apt comment on the state of play in our little battle with the Canary Broom on Maria Island. We have reached a turning point.

Our November working bee saw a small group of seasoned Broom warriors demolish the last known stand of broom, restrained only by a line of yellow tape isolating one of two small areas reserved for the pending release of a biological control; a psyllid specific to Canary Broom. Cause for celebration but in the event champagne corks did not pop. Instead the group seamlessly moved on to begin the next phase of the operation; the systematic follow-up weeding of the inevitable regrowth in previously cleared sites. This will be the pattern on subsequent working bees, informed by regular monitoring. Definitely a change of pace but essential if the achievements gained through many years of hard work are to be sustained.

At this moment, tucked away in the forest, Broom seedlings and small plants are mustering their resources for a clandestine counter- attack! We will need all the weapons in our armoury to hold the line.

This perhaps begs the question - why a biological control at this stage in the battle? If the psyllid 'takes' we will have a corps of minute 'SAS' infiltrators working independently behind the lines, sapping the strength of the enemy. (The psyllid was released on mainland Tasmania several years ago and has been effective with no risk to native species).

It will be a long campaign as the seed bank in the soil can remain viable for many years with many variables affecting regrowth. Wetter weather in recent years has seen prolific growth of native vegetation, a desired outcome but conversely this effectively hides Broom regrowth. Fortunately the psyllid is well equipped for 'seek and destroy' missions in such areas.

Another aspect is that the continuity of ongoing monitoring of the many sites spread over 200 hectares of thick bush, together with the associated data-bank maintenance, cannot be guaranteed indefinitely.

Now go to the scene of one the former battle-grounds - the track up Skipping Ridge. Walk this track in 2005 and infestations of Broom would dominate for much of the way, dense thickets bordering the track and extending far down the southern slopes towards Bernacchis Creek. A scourge of the forest has been largely removed and today a search with a practiced eye will occasionally locate scattered small Broom seedlings, competing with burgeoning native vegetation; the bush is restored. In current jargon - 'visual amenity has been greatly enhanced'.

And all due to the work of volunteers, with the direction and assistance of Parks and Wildlife, grants from NRM Envirofund, Caring for our Country, Landcare Tas. and Wildcare which, amongst other things, enabled contractors to tackle many of the large, easily accessible infestations. Walking this track today gives a rewarding feeling of achievement in a magnificent setting.

Nevertheless there is still much work to be done. Battles have been won but the war continues. In the congenial company of our comrades-in-arms we look forward to ongoing 'mopping up' operations.

Some Statistics on the Broom project

Since 2005:

- Detailed mapping of 200 hectares of Broom infested bush.
- Approximately. 200 separate sites identified and cleared.
- 5,700 hours of volunteer work.
- More than 26 working bees.

Peter Booth, Friends of Maria Island



What a nice log for a photo – Friends of Maria Island looking for canary broom.

Volunteering at Cackle Creek

Adam Gittins and Anna Broome are spending June 2013 to April 2014 volunteering for PWS after nearly seven months on Maatsuyker Island in 2012/2013. Here Adam describes their time at Cackle Creek.

Cackle Creek is a magical place. On the west side of the creek, the Southwest Wilderness National Park meets the coast and on the other the Nature Recreation Area provides further opportunity for camping, boating, fishing, bushwalking and just kicking back and enjoying the spectacular views over Recherche Bay. As well as a quick toddle to the whale sculpture, visitors can walk an hour or so out to Fisher Point or access the six to eight days of the South Coast Track to Melaleuca.

The small Parks office is usually open and manned by volunteers from early December to late March. Having volunteered for Parks on Maatsuyker Island and Deal Island as well as walking to Cackle Creek from Lake Pedder, we jumped at the chance to spend five weeks helping out with pre-season tasks.

Field Officer Peter Price introduced us to our home for the period. The quarters attached to the office are warm and well equipped. We also discussed what tasks we could carry out during our stay.

Our first job was renovating six of the campsite toilets. We cleaned, sanded and painted the inside walls, filled holes (including replacing a missing wall), fitted new door closers, repaired locks and replaced the toilet roll holders. For good measure, we fitted door closers on two additional toilets.

Ongoing tasks included litter picking, (including a mattress and complete exhaust pipe) and weeding for Canary Broom. We helped top up some of the pot holes with gravel. We walked the tracks regularly picking up rubbish and clearing fallen branches. We also repaired and cleaned the interpretive sign at Fishers Point.

Our stay coincided with work on the South Coast Track. We assisted with building one of the bridges and fitting wire to the repaired bridges and sections of parallel planking. We had a great time with Michael Johnson from Mt Field and his team. We cooked five communal meals for the hard working guys whilst Michael provided some killer desserts. Michael did a fantastic job in upgrading this section of track.

We updated some of the office and quarters information, removing anything that was out of date and rewriting parts of the volunteer information. We contacted a number of the key tourism companies for updated information. We also gave the office a good spring clean.



Adam with the renovated toilet.



Anna, Adam and Peter Rice.



The Rolls Royce at the end of the road.

Whilst not officially open, we assisted a large number of visitors with information. At this time of the year, many of the South Coast Track walkers arrived rather wet and muddy, so we provided tea and coffee, toast, home-made banana bread and sometimes even a warm fire to celebrate their achievement. We also ensured that arrangements with coach companies worked smoothly and gave weather observations to Par Avion (the local aircraft charter company) pilots to help them plan their schedule.

It wasn't all hard work. In our spare time Adam fished, providing a few meals of flathead and salmon and played his guitar. Anna perfected her sock knitting. We also rode on the Ida Bay railway and dined out in Dover for Anna's birthday. A visit to Tasmania's best Japanese restaurant in Geeveston was a highlight. We also walked and just enjoyed being in this special place.

Whilst we had our fair share of 4WD vehicles, intrepid conventional drivers, campervans and caravans, the vehicle of the stay has to be the 1919 Rolls Royce Silver Ghost driven by an eccentric Englishman. As he pointed out, in 1919 all the roads were unsurfaced, so the Rolls is built for it. He made it to the "end of the road" in any case.

In a week we will leave Cackle Creek, but the Parks adventure doesn't end. We are volunteering for two weeks on Maria Island, two months at Melaleuca, two months at Cape Bruny and, hopefully, a further two weeks on Schouten Island. However exciting these adventures prove to be, we will always have a soft spot for Cackle Creek and be grateful for the assistance provided by Peter Price, Michael Johnson, Pip Gowen and the PWS Huonville team.

Interested in PWS Volunteering contact:

Pip Gowen, PWS Regional Volunteer Facilitator on email pip.gowen@parks.tas.gov.au or mobile 0427 648463.

Get Outside with Community - a partnership with PWS and Wildcare!

The Get Outside season has begun with the first of the seven trips successfully completed. Sam Cuff from PWS and Jodie Epper from Wildcare and two volunteers took a group of men from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq on a trip to Mt Field and Cradle Mountain - Lake St Clair National Park.

"This is process of connection" said Jodie Epper, "connection between people, connection to place and connection between agencies and organisations".

Two of the individuals who participated on this three day excursion had recently completed a two day leadership course. They used their newly found skills by leading guided walks in both of the national parks visited. 'The guys did a great job safely guiding the group on thirsty minute walks and delivering Leave No Trace messages, sensory interpretation and



Sam Cuff PWS and Jodie Epper - Get Outside Coordinator - building good partnerships.

managing expectations and personalities' said Sam.

Here are some of the comments from the participants.

"My name is Ifti. I have come from Afghanistan... I am very excited about my 3 days away with Get Outside Program. We went to a



A trip to Lake St Clair.

waterfall called Russell Falls. I have never seen a waterfall before – it was amazing – we do not have them in my country"

"Today I went to Lake St Clair, it is part of the World Heritage Area – this means that it is a very special place. We walked to the lake, looked for platypus. I enjoyed the rain falling on my face " – Ishfaq formally from Pakistan.

A second trip to Mt wellington was held on Friday 15th November. The sun was shining, people were singing and we drank Kunzea Tea. Eight volunteers and eleven participants from countries including Sudan, Ethiopia, Kuwait, Iraq, Nepal, and China attended.

A third trip was organised just before Christmas. Thirty-Four people went to Mt Field for the day. Waterfalls droplets on our faces, dancing, singing eating and slow time spent wrapping our arms around those gorgeous trees.

So far 35 Wildcare volunteers have signed up to the project. As a volunteer you simply get to come along on some of the walks and enjoy meeting new people and spending some time in the bush.

For more information contact jodie@wildcaretas.org.au



39 people experiencing Mount Field for the first time.



New Tasmanians learning about the World Heritage Area.

An underwater photograph of a whale swimming in clear blue water, viewed from below. The whale's body is dark and sleek, with a lighter patch on its belly. Sunlight filters through the water from above, creating a shimmering effect.

Strategic Plan 2013 - 2016

WILDCARE INCORPORATED

Our mission...

To attract and manage volunteers to participate in projects that preserve, protect and enhance the natural and cultural environment of Tasmania for current and future generations

A photograph of a white lighthouse with a yellow top, situated on a rocky cliff. The lighthouse is cylindrical with a small window. The cliff is composed of large, grey rocks with some green vegetation. The sky is a clear, pale blue.

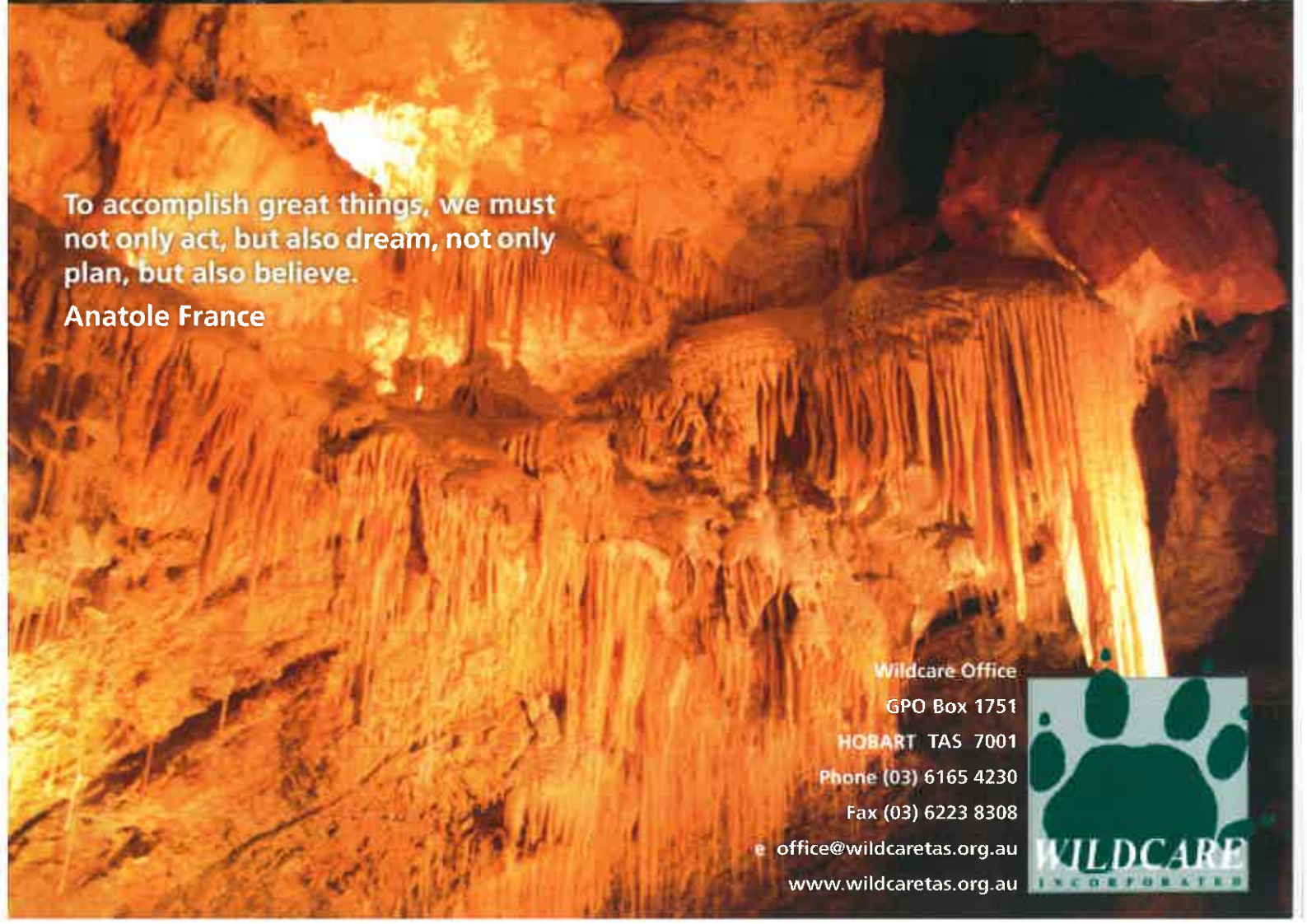
Our values...

Accountability, collaboration,
communication, consistency, fairness and
transparency, inclusiveness, integrity,
leadership, teamwork and trust



Our vision...

To be recognised as the leading volunteer organisation for conservation in Tasmania, promoting wide community participation in the delivery of practical programs and services that get results



To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream, not only plan, but also believe.

Anatole France

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Our strategic priorities and key outcomes...

Marketing and communication

- A practical marketing and communication plan that gives focus and direction to future communications and marketing activities is established
- Communication with members and delivery of services to members are enhanced
- Communication with branches, groups and volunteers is relevant and timely
- Wildcare's entire online presence is made more contemporary, effective and user-friendly
- Effective use is made of new and emerging technologies
- The elements which make up the Wildcare brand and its positioning in the marketplace are reviewed and evaluated
- A strategic focus for the brand is determined, promoting key messages that emphasise opportunities for engagement
- Innovative ways to build the brand are identified

Stakeholder and community engagement

- A stakeholder and community engagement policy is established
- A new and effective partnership arrangement is entered into with the Parks and Wildlife Service, providing for broader engagement within the agency and covering the next three years
- The level of volunteerism for the natural and cultural environment of Tasmania is increased
- Members are well-informed, valued and active in Wildcare activities
- Volunteers are recruited, retained and managed in a manner that reflects best practice

Governance

- Suitable people with relevant skill sets are identified to assist with implementation of this strategic plan
- The Constitution and structure of the Board of Management are reviewed to ensure that future needs can be met
- Policies are developed to enable Wildcare to be effective, accountable and operating to the highest standards
- Ongoing capacity to sustain future growth is reviewed regularly
- Information flows to the Board of Management are reviewed to reflect the Board's increased strategic focus
- Key performance indicators are established to review the Board of Management's performance
- A self-assessment of the performance of the Board of Management is conducted annually
- Progress towards attainment of all outcomes in the strategic plan is assessed at regular intervals
- Board Directors and branch Presidents are equipped to observe best practice in governance through participation in relevant professional development programs

Emerging opportunities

- Wildcare is integrated into the fabric of Tasmanian society as a means to improve health and wellbeing and address disadvantage
- An active social media presence is maintained
- The opportunity to develop an online shop facility is investigated
- In conjunction with Parks, a strategic assessment is conducted to identify and prioritise for business case development under-utilised assets of the Parks and Wildlife Service

Sustainability of operations

- A practical fundraising plan is developed and implemented
- A professional fundraising capability is maintained
- Directors' skills in dealing with financial matters are enhanced
- Succession planning at Branch level is encouraged
- A risk management plan is prepared and implemented
- A continuous quality improvement policy is adopted
- The current and likely external environment in which Wildcare operates is monitored

OMG - It's a Devil!!!

Friends of the Tasmanian Devil participated in the inaugural Devil Poo Pick Up in early December. Five volunteers and the project leader, Jodie Epper, spent two lovely days at the Free Range Devil Enclosure at Coles Bay. Our job was to assist the Save the Tasmanian Devil Program with maintenance jobs – namely picking up devil poo that had accumulated on the ground over time using pooper scoopers.

Before the event at Coles Bay, I spent time with the staff of Save the Tasmanian Devil Program working out exactly what the volunteers would be doing and sorting tools, transport and accommodation. Information that would be relevant to the volunteer before the day was important too – for example, information on diseases that you can catch from wildlife, medical forms had to be signed and returned on time, JRA's (Job Risk Analysis Forms) read and signed, and then it was on to the site.



Wildcare volunteers yielding pooper scoopers.

I was invited to view the enclosure by Jocelyn Hockey, DPIWWE Head Keeper. I was looking at the enclosure trying to imagine if volunteers could assist here, I was checking for hazards, I was checking that tasks would be suitable for volunteers – as the Project Manager I really wanted this project to work. And then a Devil went running past. It was my first experience with a Tasmanian Devil and the feeling took me by surprise. I felt excited, sad and hopeful all at the same time. After this I knew that this job would be a perfect volunteering experience. Here are a few snippets of the trip.

Day 1- Drive to Coles Bay where we reported for duty at the Free Range Devil Enclosure. There are about 20 devils in the enclosure running semi-wild. The site is about 23 ha of coastal scrub with quite a few drainage lines crisscrossing the property. There are areas of grass and some dense bush in the centre of the property. The whole site is double fenced and padlocked.

The team was briefed and then got straight down to work. Here are some of the things they had to say -

"I could never imagine how different it feels to see Devils in their natural environment and the realization of actually viewing them for the first time – it was amazing." Carly

"Being inside the double fenced, 22 hectare devil enclosure, it was hard not to recognise the significance of this project. With such treasured residents, it had the feel of a very special and secretive fortress. The wild and natural coastal land is a top-notch enclosure and is well cared for by the dedicated practitioners, Karen and Phil. It was a real pleasure to be part



Wildcare volunteers looking down a devil den hole with Karen from STDP.

of their team for a few days. I felt privileged to be amongst the first volunteers to participate in such an event and witness first-hand one of only a few free ranging enclosures of healthy Tassie devils.

Spotting devil poo became a little addictive and quickly became very enjoyable with the company of the Wildcare crew. I had never seen devil poops before and some of them tell quite a story... with fur, teeth and bones galore. It really made me ponder what an integral role these voracious little devils play on the Island. Poo pick up accompanied by a swim at one of the best beaches in the world..all in a days work!!" Lisa

"Who would have though that picking up Devil poo could be so relaxing." Dianne

At the end of the day we drove into Coles Bay township, settled into our accommodation at the caravan park and went off for a swim while the sun shone on the Hazards. The next morning we did it all over again. We managed to cover the entire site – sighting Devils in the process. It was rewarding and satisfying work.

Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment

Help get the

FOX OUT
of Tasmania



Please report fox sightings or any possible evidence of fox activity to the 24 hour hotline

1300 FOX OUT
1300 369 688

All calls are strictly confidential and your information may be important

Fox Eradication Program
www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/fox



Wildcare Deslacs

The beautiful Cape Deslacs Nature Reserve and Pipeclay Lagoon are on South Arm. These reserves are of particular importance to migratory and local sea birds. Wildcare Deslacs is a branch of Wildcare Incorporated Tasmania, a registered Association. The group formed in November 2008 at Clifton Beach (population 555). With a financial membership of eight people, it has attracted additional volunteers to:

- undertake on-ground environmental activities, field days and workshops in the Cape Deslacs Nature Reserve, Clifton Beach and Pipeclay Lagoon Coastal Reserve areas (36 events, 200 participants);
- raise community awareness through annual public information sessions, meetings and social events, quarterly newsletters plus articles and websites; and
- lead successful projects and partnerships with local businesses, environmental and community groups.

Wildcare Deslacs were awarded the 2013 Tasmanian Landcare Award for Coastcare on Sunday. Peter and Elizabeth were on hand to accept the award on behalf of all the hard-working volunteers and the great support we get from Wildcare Inc, Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service and Clarence City Council. Congratulations!!!

Wildcare Deslacs also won the award for Best Community Service and/or Development Project at the 2013 Australian Institute of Project Management (Tasmania branch) Project Management Achievement Awards, for the Cape Deslacs Spanish Heath Management Plan.

At the 2013 national Project Management Achievement Awards, Wildcare Deslacs was recognised with a High



Commendation Award for the Community Service and/or Development Category. High Commendation Awards were only awarded in three categories.

The judges decided made these awards when there was less than 5 points difference from the winning score out of a maximum score of 300 points.

Wildcare Deslacs has received a Volunteer Week Certificate of Appreciation and was also awarded a Certificate of Appreciation at the 2013 Clarence City Council (CCC) Australia Day Awards.

In line with Wildcare Inc objectives: to foster the care and protection of Tasmania's National Parks and other conservation reserves, natural and cultural heritage (on public and private land), Wildcare Deslacs is committed to collaboratively work to develop and implement a long-term and inclusive plan to:

1. Contain the spread of Spanish heath;
2. Reduce current infestations; and to
3. Reduce the impact of Spanish Heath on sensitive areas.



Peter and Elizabeth from DESLACS happy to accept the Coastcare Award at the Biannual Landcare award ceremony.

No more plastics bags in shops - some are still in the ocean!

A plastic bag ban has started in Tasmania which will eliminate a major waste stream. The problem of plastic rubbish is massive in this relatively remote and clean coastal state – especially in our rough and wild South West coast.

Matt Dell, a self-employed geoscientist and cartographer, has been leading an enthusiastic group of Wildcare Coastal Custodians to remote beaches in Tasmania's South West Wilderness World Heritage Area.

With the help of some local fishermen, every year up to 20 volunteers collect and repatriate rubbish that's washed up.

"A lot of it's hard to identify cause it's so small," Matt said.

"We pick stuff up from a fridge door, plastic buckets, bins, but we pick up bits of plastic maybe two or three millimetres across. So we pick up everything, if we can." The South West Marine Debris Cleanup is one of the longest running baseline marine debris studies in the southern hemisphere and to date over 150,000 items have been collected, counted and documented from South West Tasmania.

This year's tally was over 35,000 items, and Matt Dell says his return trips every autumn to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area show the problem of marine debris and rubbish is getting worse and worse every year.

Wildcare Coastal Custodians is also working with the Tasmanian fishing industry to stop polluting plastics at source. "There's a tangled web of plastic ingrained into the beach and hopefully we can do something to get rid of it," Matt said.

"We're actually working with the local fishing industry at the moment. We're trying to get rid of bait straps out of the bait



Picking up rubbish from remote beaches is good fun.

cycle. They're typically blue or white plastic straps that wrap up the fish that are used for bait. And we've got pretty broad support from the Tasmanian Fishing Industry Council and the Rock Lobster Fishers. We're looking to eliminate it at the production source. We've picked up 10,000 of them so far and I don't want to pick up any more."

As a keen surfer, photographer, beachcomber and coastal scientist, Matt Dell also wants to document the coastal change. "While I'm there the other interesting part of my job is watching the coast slowly change. And that's where I'd like to expand it to, but I'm too busy picking up rubbish. So my next aim is to start integrating a bit more science into it.

Matt is also interested in making people come and pay money to do it – would you?

Public Open Day Huge Success with Volunteer Caretakers

Sunday 8 December at Bruny Island Quarantine Station

New Volunteers Lyn Donald and Kel Callaghan (from QLD) helped PWS and Friends of Bruny Island Quarantine Station (FOBIQS) by getting busy on their first day, Friday 6 December preparing the property to present to the public on Sunday 8 December.

"We started work at 7.30am and finished at 6pm having mowed lots, cleared tracks, dug holes and put directional signs in place", Kel said.

The site was visited by 41 people on Sunday comprising of visitors from South Australia, Victoria, France/Belgium, Tasmania and Bruny Island locals. 90% of visitors stayed for one, to one and a half hours; 5% for two hours and 5% half an hour. All the visitors enjoyed a walk around the site and commented on how interesting it was.

Volunteers Lyn and Kel, were there to meet all the visitors, show them what information was available on site, talk about the self guided walk and the heritage signs.

They also gathered more information about the site from visitors who had an immediate family connection to the site and this feedback from the general public is useful for both PWS Managers and for FOBIQS.



"Lyn and Kel are hooked", said Pip Gowen PWS Regional Volunteer Facilitator. Lyn said, "Kel never gushes over places or things we do – but he absolutely loves it here. We are both very much enjoying the combination of jobs and the chance to meet and chat to people from all over the world".

The partnership between PWS Southern Region, Friends of Bruny Island Quarantine Station and the PWS Volunteer Program has developed into a win/win for everyone. Congratulations to all involved.

PWS Volunteer Caretakers selected for this first summer season 2013/ 14, will have a 4-5 week placement between December and April 2014. Calls for volunteers for the 2014/15 season will be put up on PWS, Wildcare Inc and FOBIQS Websites mid-2014.

ChemCert course - view of a beginner chemical-mixer

Jenny Scott, FOMI and FOSI member

In May this year a few of us from Friends of Maatsuyker Island (FOMI) and Friends of Snake Island (FOSI) joined a group of like-minded people from other local community groups on a two day ChemCert course run by the Skills Institute, Hobart Campus.

The aim was to learn how to use weeding chemicals safely and become certified so we could legally mix and use chemicals for our community group weeding working bees.

The course was specially presented for people dealing with environmental (bush) weeds, and appropriate methods of herbicide application (dabbers, backpack sprayers), rather than agricultural situations (tanks and boom sprays).

Some people were updating their qualification, while I was a rank beginner (I had used the chemicals in dabbers, but not mixed them). Our course had several Hobart City Council Bushcare people attending, which was great for us amateurs, as they generously contributed information and ideas from their joint experiences in weeding Council land, often with our weeds involved.

Several FOMI and FOSI members had received funding from the Wildcare Small Grants scheme for our course fees – many thanks Wildcare.

We were each provided with a huge, fat manual to keep, as well as lots of extra handouts. The course ran through a lot of material, so it was good to know it was all written down already so we could refer to it as we needed.

I found it a revelation to learn how much vital and legally important information was contained in the LABEL of a container of chemicals.

Never will the word 'label' be the same again. We were tested thoroughly on this complex LABEL information at the end of the course.

We also learnt such arcane skills (arts?) as calculating exactly how much chemical to use in a backpack sprayer according to the nozzle type, recommended dilution and application rates for different areas to be sprayed.

We tested the behaviour of the sprayers outside on the bitumen car park by measuring out distances and pacing along them while spraying water around. It was intriguing to see how marked the differences were in the application rates and amounts used when applied by different individuals and with different nozzles.

We were tested on some rather nail-biting calculations for application rates versus nozzle types, volumes of chemicals, areas to be covered, etc.

We all managed to get it in the end. It was an enjoyable and interesting two days.



Gloves, eye protection, skin protection – all good to go.



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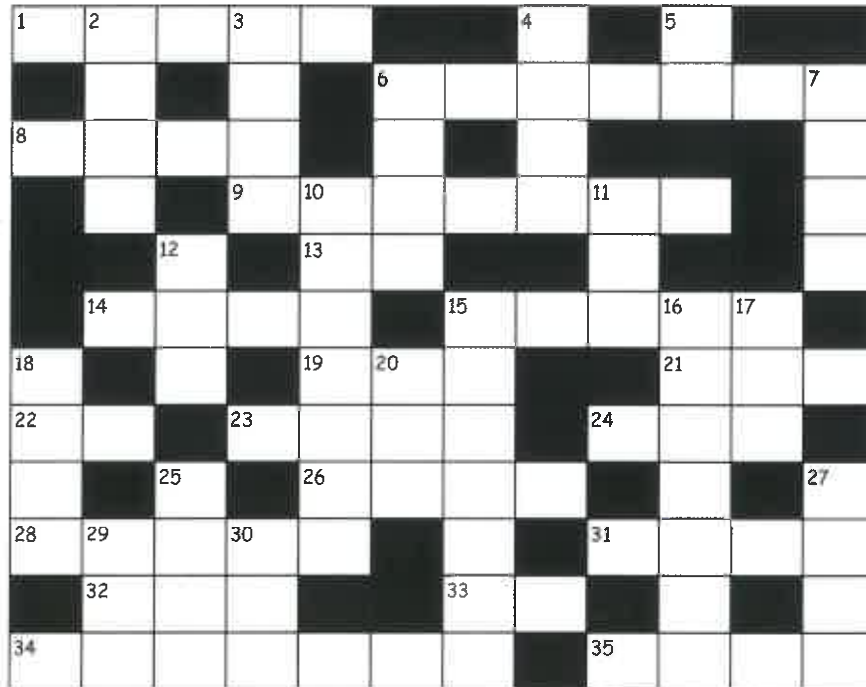
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NATURE CROSSWORD ★ ★



ACROSS

- 1. Most leaves are this colour
- 6. When it's sunny in the forest, these appear on the ground
- 8. A hopping amphibian
- 9. A small migratory bird that flies fast, eats insects and builds a mud nest
- 13. A baby possum rides __ its mothers back
- 14. The main way platypuses move around
- 15. Nocturnal animals do this during the day
- 19. A flying mammal
- 21. Watch out for animals on the road if you're driving this at night
- 22. A wallaby joey lives __ its mothers pouch
- 23. Humans have _____, animals have fur
- 24. ___ do we have National Parks? To protect the environment and for our enjoyment
- 26. A large plant with a trunk and branches
- 28. Wallabies, wombats and native hens like to eat this
- 31. Recycling is a great _____
- 32. A possum got into my tent last night and ___ all my food
- 33. I need to be able to look after __ self in the bush.
- 34. Very small black animals with six legs
- 35. Black currawongs are also known as black __ y_

DOWN

- 2. The Tasmanian Tiger or thylacine is either very __ __ or extinct.
- 3. Animals that lay _____ are called monotremes.
- 4. A pygmy possum can hang on to a twig with its prehensile _____.
- 6. A large black water bird with red beak and white wing patches.
- 7. A lot falls in winter in the highlands.
- 10. Large burrowing marsupials.
- 11. How many young does a wallaby usually give birth to each year?
- 12. A nocturnal bird of prey.
- 15. Creeks.
- 16. A spiny ant eating egg- laying mammal
- 17. You ___ money for your parks pass
- 18. Many birds do this to mark their territory
- 20. We breathe this
- 25. There are five species of native mice and _____ in Tasmania
- 27. Feral _____ prey on wildlife
- 29. The Tasmanian devil _____ away when I walked closer
- 30. Large eyes help a possum to do this in the dark
- 5. Is this clue in the right place?



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Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment



Melaleuca... it's all about people

In December last year I received a call from Pip Gowan, the Regional Volunteer Facilitator for the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service to tell us that we would be spending most of January 2013 as the volunteer hosts at the Ranger Base in Melaleuca which is deep in the Tasmanian wilderness. So my wife Chris and I had some work to do.

Obviously we needed to do some planning... first up was food. We were told that Parks would pay for the flights in and out, but that the total weight of our baggage should not if possible weigh more than 40 kilos.

This presented a bit of a challenge, but by treating it like a long bush walking trip we managed to come in just over that. Mainly dried food, but also a few luxuries such as wine, salamis etc.

We felt quite proud about this as we also included a walking tent and gear. The food was just enough, but by the end of the month it had got quite monotonous.

Melaleuca had been described as remote and isolated, but we had been told that it could get quite busy at times, and to take a tent so that if the accommodation became noisy and we wanted a quiet night we could camp in the bush.

This was a good move as whilst we were there we had quite a number of people associated with the Orange Bellied Parrot project who also had to use the accommodation block.

Although this made the station quite crowded at times, we looked upon this as a bonus as at night the social activity was terrific, and at times hilarious... anyone going to Melaleuca should definitely take a sense of humour with them!

It was also a real pleasure to camp out at times under the trees, with the wind roaring through the tops and rain falling gently on the tent.

Apart from the stunning scenery the next best part of the job here was the meet and greet.

Whilst we were there we know that we talked to about 240 bushwalkers who had flown in and were walking out on the South Coast Track... then there were all the people who had



Picking up rubbish is one of the jobs we do.

flown in for tours with Par Avion... kayakers... yachties and people walking in.

It was great to meet and chat to such a diverse group and many of them really appreciated a friendly face to greet them upon arrival at Melaleuca

So, for anyone who is lucky enough to have the opportunity of doing the same thing what do you need to make the experience as enjoyable as possible?

Here's my thoughts... apart from food which is obviously a personal choice... a good camera. The scenery is magnificent and the constantly changing light makes for some stunning photographic opportunities.

A camping tent, for the reasons stated above... a good sense of humour and a sense of the ridiculous are handy. Also a willingness to pitch in with other things that are going on.

We were able to help out with some maintenance work at Barbara Wilson's place, assist the OPB people in building a new bird hide, and at times to help the Par Avion pilots with their tours.

An ability to be able to talk to a lot of people from very different backgrounds and nationalities is also a great advantage.

As well as all the 'glamour' things there of course is the more mundane side of things ...and Chris would spend at least two hours every day making sure that all the facilities were spic and span and up to her exacting standard... toilets a speciality!

So... Melaleuca... remote but certainly not isolated. Would we do it again?...

You Betcha!

Tony Barber



Giving the insides of the huts a once over.



How to begin?

January 1st 2013

"The year's doors open/ like those of language/ toward the unknown... we shall have to think up signs, sketch a landscape, fabricate a plan/ on the double page/ of day and paper." Octavio Paz, 'January First', trans Elizabeth Bishop.

How to begin? With a New Year's resolution to improve fitness, grow greener, begin a journal?

A journal is more welcoming than a diary, looser, more accommodating to scraps of data and ideas and more public. It becomes an exercise in interesting oneself.

We've moved from a city's heart into Gumbaynggirr country. White timber cutters arrived here late, in the 1870s, with their bullock trains and families and houses and tracks followed by roads and streets, shops and schools. My grandfather's 'daybook' is a ledger of fields, trees and costs. He was a wheelwright in a village nestled in the heart of England, vertically planted from generations of blacksmiths.

Our house backs onto Jagun Nature Reserve (pronounced Jah-oon in Gumbaynggirr, meaning 'home'). The reserve is a bundle of trees and tree stumps, orchids, vines, birds, insects, reptiles and mammals. It is regrowth forest oversupplied with stumps standing on poor sandy soils with clay substrates. It regrows slowly; it takes 50 to 60 years for hollows used by parrots, possums and gliders to form. We won't be here that long.

2nd

"Always continue walking a lot and loving nature." van Gogh, letter to Theo van Gogh, Jan 2 1874.

Each walk is an opportunity and adventure. Last week it was finding *Cryptostylis erecta* - Bonnet Orchids. Perhaps a journal will discipline me to observe more, understand more and make personal connections, not just a record of looking outward into the world.

Aldo Leopold showed that you need an active and participatory relationship to the land to gain a proper ethic towards the land. I'm using a mattock on saplings to stop trees from overwhelming this home. The forest is working at invasion. The first modern tree *Archaeopteris* conquered the world; its pelt covered much of Pangaea and changed the surface of the planet. Since then trees have evolved 100,000 species, though 10% are now endangered.

3rd

"O, Lord, How beautiful thy world is! How inimitable the structure and symmetry of any single leaf of the tree that make the greenery of this infinitesimally small spot of the earth's surface!" Sir Henry Parkes, diary, Jan 3 1892.

It's very early or very late, long before kookaburras and cicadas

stretch their wings and sing. It's a solid, stubborn, bricked-in black; the rain has eased but left no starlight. I think I am awake from last night's long call, my mother bewildered and upset. Though the open window, a Toowhoo a who, Toowhoo a woo calling from the forest edge. The only owl that calls like those from my English childhood is the Powerful Owl. We have wanted one for our forest, a robust owl to dominate night's canopy, a restoration of the family. The top predator indicates forest health, that its ecosystems are supporting abundance. I saw one once with a Sulphur-crested Cockatoo in its talons and the owl still looked huge.

I thought I'd finished this entry, turned off the lamp then found light seeping down from a thick mattress of cloud over the Pacific and two shadowy shapes emerge as roos, noses in the green trough. Cicadas are already juggling noise that never falls to earth. Sunrise is converting a new day in twenty minutes time, then we can test Constable's powers of observation that "no two leaves on a tree are alike."

4th

"The birds must suffer greatly as there are no haws. Meat frozen so hard it cannot be spitted. Several of the thrush kind are frozen to death." Gilbert White, journal, Jan 4 1768.

That most influential nature writer Gilbert White published so that, "stationary men would pay some attention to the districts on which they reside." He sensed culture intertwined nature, and that "the life and conversation of animals" was important.

Not a great year for butterflies; black specks of native bees dive into the *Echium plantagineum*'s second coming in the white garden, one exotic corner of our native garden. I am weeding paspalum in an avenue of Blueberry Ash and Lilypillies we planted for privacy; two years later they are only my height. She bends over a garden bed, her skirt lifts, I notice the ligaments running from the back of her knees up her thighs, pretty legs for any age, the tick bites almost gone. That tension turns me on, not a sexual thing, nor asexual, more the taut elegance of a sail the wind has just filled and which rushes you into the horizon.

This house is a cool observatory, binoculars hang off the tallowwood posts, yachts slide along blue wrinkles on the horizon racing from Pittwater to Coffs, Dollarbirds chatter in a Bloodwood. I would name this third deck 'Selborne' if I had the patience and the eye.

5th

Cardinal Schönborn endorses intelligent design by denouncing materialist interpretations of evolution. BeliefNet, Jan 5 2006.

I read on the deck as the hot air fills with dragonflies. Hundreds of dragons unable to bank and swerve and loop like the Needle-tailed Swifts hunting high, but they zip forward and sideways and hover with robotic precision and the speed and strength of deep time. Dragonflies the size of seagulls ruled the Carboniferous with Horsetails long before the dinosaurs.

6th

The expansion of bioenergy crop production is increasing ground level ozone, a deadly pollutant. Ashworth, Wild & Hewitt, letter, Nature, Jan 6 2013.

Guests gone, barbie cleaned, we rest on deck. The sea is thundering, trying to inch closer, a Pink Bloodwood buds creamy-yellow, its sweet scent arrives in gusts. The Blackbutts' upper limbs are shining silver, the sky is fluorescent blue and through this immensity a tiny, mouse-sized insignificant significance darts by, a Scarlet Honeyeater pulsing colour with volition and destination. Moments later, a flash of aqua as a Sacred Kingfisher perches on the tip of the bower. We have pursued these beings with binoculars and cameras but never sought possession.

Four Scaly-breasted Lorikeets fly by, spangled breasted a more accurate term, their colours cross a threshold, demonstrate how beauty mesmerises by its fleeting fictions.

These colours are exotic to me, brought up in a damp green amalgam of fields and woods, owned and formed by the Enclosure Acts, but still a picture of England from before the wars. An innocent place; the blood of empire rinsed by the waters surrounding the island. There never was a sustainable history and the sustainable future we need so desperately is hard to imagine. I thank animals before eating them, but that's not enough, is it?

7th

"Even after the elimination of bourgeois production, however, there remains the snag that the soil would become relatively more infertile, that, with the same amount of labour, successively less would be achieved, although the best land would no longer, as under bourgeois rule, yield as dear a product as the poorest... Having bored you with this muck ... Marx to Engels, Jan 7 1851.

A Kookaburra lifts me up. I climb the stairs, a bright rose-gold star hangs low directly East, Mars? The Southern Cross sticks overhead, Saturn glares over a waning crescent moon, Christmas light are flashing silver, crickets have surrounded the house - the sea's slow heartbeat.

I was tricked into getting up. Half an hour later, the Kookaburras

start the dawn chorus, the first one was like those knowing concert goers who begin clapping before the last note has faded when you want to linger with the remains of the music. A pair of plovers join in the business. Yet time reverses, the sky grows darker, purple clouds feed in from the South, curtains are closing, the Milky way has closed down, the sky is drenched in cloud the moon put out and the sea is getting louder. It's hard to believe in the resurrection, that a violent luminosity will soon lubricate the leaves, but it's firing havoc on georgic landscapes in Tasmania, scorched mutilation, rumours of one who didn't run away pitchforked by flame.

'Soil is the mother of all things' - Chinese proverb. How to begin to be green and sustainable with such appetites? We try to improve the soil, as soils are being eroded globally - sixty-five million tons per day. A handful of healthy soil contains two thousand million living organisms, each with individual life cycle and functions.

8th

Attn Rhys Edwards

re Dev app. 2012/160 Tuesday, January 6, 2013

Dear Sir

I support the referenced development application, but would like to remind the developer and council of the importance of existing trees remaining on the site due to it being a designated koala corridor. This corridor has unfortunately already lost trees in a previous development.

Between 1990 and 2010 the number of koalas in New South Wales declined by a third (Threatened Species Scientific Committee). The koala population is not secure on the Mid North Coast. This corridor is important. We heard koalas in Jagun Nature Reserve (which the corridor connects to) a few months ago, and they were photographed, the first time in a decade.

Yours, ...

This decade is the cusp of a tipping point: it is the end of the hunter-gatherer lifestyle that humans have pursued for 99% of their history and for the first time over 50% of the world's population are now urbanised.

Native fauna and flora are under pressure everywhere; loss of rainforest, source of the richest biodiversity, is relentless. This world is a dynamic often catastrophic place (over 99% of species that ever lived are extinct) and the concept "balance of nature" has 'evolved' to an emphasis on change and disturbance. The problem is that humans are increasing the extinction rate as they become distanced from natural environments. If we can learn to appreciate nature conservation will follow; natural aesthetics is a key long term conservation strategy.

Ecology has begun a paradigm shift implicating us as totally



dependent on natural processes, as indigenous cultures knew. Yet we abuse them - one response is to sing of the beauty of the natural world, so that those alienated from such experiences will demand the in the future.

Our culture celebrates distraction not attention. I think we need to take responsibility for our attentiveness as well as actions. Paying attention strips levels of awareness from wider fields to realise that experiences are richer and more complex than imagined. Attention fosters a sense of responsibility for the environment, the flora and fauna and the landscapes, habitats.

9th

"Read Johnson's 'Vanity of Human Wishes,' - all the examples and mode of giving them sublime, ... 'tis a grand poem - and so true!" Byron, Journal, Jan 9 1821.

The earth is hard, the mattock thuds as I cut into paspalum roots, purple thumbs with silver hairs wedged into the baked clay. After half an hour my eyes sting with sweat and my heart is pounding. Bush fires up north and south, the heat encourages the cicadas and the ocean is a mirror of light. I open up the house, have work to do, think of going for a swim finding my way to sea level, where it all began. Our postures, our rationalisations and desires are all connected to how we live with nature not inevitably doomed to Johnson's "inevitable self-deception".

The trunks are dead still, the canopy fluid, light swims from branch to branch amongst the flowering Pink Bloodwoods and Xanthorea shooting among eroded castles, fungi and moss reveal a past when the axe was wielded so quickly the muscular empire made a good living. Yet the forest stands as if human presence is imaginary.

The Brothers Grimm collected old German folk tales about forests, outside the norm, places of enchantment and danger (Wild from old German wald for forest). Jakob Grimm later wrote: "A temple is simultaneously a wood. What we think of as a walled building, merges, the farther back we go, into a sacred place untouched by human hands, in a grove and enclosed by dense trees." ('Introduction to Germanic Mythology', 1835).

Trees are among the oldest and most efficient of all multicellular life forms and live simultaneously in earth and sky. Powered by the sun, these biochemical engines draw water and minerals from the soil and convert carbon dioxide into life-giving oxygen. Each mature tree is an ecological city, home to a myriad of interacting lives, plants, fungi, animal. This house is built around tallowwood poles with flooded gum floors; we need timber, but 25 million annually for disposable chopsticks was ridiculous. We are slow at learning trees - they are too anonymous. The artist Herman de Vries wanted to remove

this anonymity and founded The Tree Museum, planting 400 species of trees in the Hague. Nearly every street has its own tree with information about that individual tree.

10th

I have met with but one or two persons in the course of my life who understood the art of taking walks daily... who had a genius, so to speak, for sauntering. Thoreau, Journal, Jan 10 1851.

This entry by Thoreau led to 'Walking' considered the seminal work of the environmental movement, an evolving work through public lectures and revision, the essay marks a shift, half-way through drafting Walden, from a poetic to a more empirical (or as he put it, 'distinct and scientific') way of depicting nature.

While eating breakfast I watch three roos weed the garden, fur fluffed from the rain, looking like stuffed toys, colour of cardboard, muzzles damp and dark, hoping it's just the grasses this time. A fresh batch of jumping spiders are leaping all over the windows. Vagrant hunters by daylight, they stalk their prey intelligently, learn by trial and error; beauty fits their complex eyes and how they dance from side to side in courtship.

Each walk stands unique, we walk differently, some as if looking through a window, some study the ground, but we are porous to the scents and sounds, and the texture of ground. I never have a plan. For the first time here I see a Forest Kingfisher shoot past up Oyster Creek as I stand on the little wooden bridge. We pick a few tasty purple Dianella berries; the Gumbaynggirr used the thin leaves to weave string.

Later, taking out the recycling, I disturbed the Sacred Kingfisher perched on the summit of our simple bower made from fallen branches tied together for the Bower Creeper to climb; the third time in three days and never before, the garden is starting to work.

11th

"Besides a general interest about the Southern lands, I have been now ever since my return engaged in a very presumptuous work & which I know no one individual who wd not say a very foolish one... At last gleams of light have come, & I am almost convinced (quite contrary to opinion I started with) that species are not (it is like confessing a murder) immutable." Darwin to Hooker, Jan 11 1844.

Today is the hottest day, fire danger is everywhere; the cicadas are humming that metallic noise and an Oriental Cuckoo appears, south of its normal range. A friend spotted a pair of Cicada Birds yesterday, again an unusual sighting.

It's a hot sky even with the sun dropped into temporary exile, its surface wipes pale blues and smears of ochres - a Jules Orliiski canvas (his ideal painting is "nothing but some colours

sprayed into the air and staying there.”)

I'm on the top deck in a position of privilege somehow derived from reproduction, variation and the struggle for existence. Two bats hunting overhead know what we look like, giants with breadth and depth. They are silhouettes, fast fluttering wood block prints skittering back into shadow - it seems important to witness such events pre vampire parties in old castles. Eastern Long-eared bats? Large-footed Mouse-eared Bats? Eastern Bent-wing bats? In tropical ecosystems bats often comprise over half of mammal species, but populations are declining due to disease and habitat loss. They have long life-spans but low birth rates, usually one pup annually, and are vulnerable roosting in colonies.

The ceiling grows brighter and darker over the gothic forest stirring with its nocturnal business and machinery of insect noise oiled and running smoothly, a paradigm of leave well alone.

12th

“One gets horribly sick of the monotony and can easily imagine oneself getting played out... It is going to be a close thing...”
Captain Scott, diary Jan 12 1912.

A wonderfully worked straw-coloured ovoid pot, long as a little finger, lies on the door mat. It's smooth as a pinch pot thrown on a wheel; the craft of writing is never so smooth.

From the neat hole a bright black and orange Mud-dauber Wasp will have emerged to begin again to build, to paralyse jumping spiders carrying them back, to lay a single egg. The larva feasts on its stunned larder then pupates in a miracle of metamorphosis, beginning with small mouthfuls of mud.

We walk down to the creek, the waterlogged timbers lining its bottom are exposed blackened, a couple of mullet nose around, its body is flexible, sometimes pouring over the path insistent on returning to the sea, but it empties into a large lagoon, infrequently open as the sea throws itself against the coastline in incessant bellyflops.

The hottest day of summer finds the sea breeze empty.

13th

“The idea came to me to write poems of a pagan nature. So I scribbled something down in irregular verse (different to the style of Álvaro de Campos, more irregular), and abandoned the idea.” Fernando Pessoa, letter, Jan 13 1935.

The Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos gather noisily, flapping in creaking circles, these large huge slow birds flock here in stormy weather.

The storm duly arrives lighting the whole forest starkly, a stage illumination as if getting closer to flashes of truth. How can we have dominion over floods and bushfires?

Judeo-Christian theology claimed dominion over nature; exploitation was natural, pagan nature worship unnatural.

Respect for life is “a feeling that we must not destroy certain things... Christianity, anxious to destroy primitive paganism, had made great efforts to exclude plants and animals...”
(Mary Midgley, *Beast And Man*, 1995).

Raymond Williams suggest three essential meanings of the term 'nature': the essential quality and character of something; an inherent force that directs world or human (Christianity ropes this to God); and the material world itself (with or without humans).

They can't be untangled. I've just had a thought, this lapsed Catholic is a pagan (Latin Paganus, 'villager') like Socrates, Epicurus, Cicero and everyone else once was – with a belief, like Buddhism, that being alive means being interconnected and tangled - everything connects: plants, politics, wonder, food, health, soil, economy, history . . . My favourite nature writing is multidimensional, open to the complexities of how we understand, represent and act upon the natural world.

14th

Today is a Diary Day in Korea. Couples exchange their new diaries and wish for a good year. I was there last summer but couldn't tell their happiness index. We share Google Calender and are lucky.

Having a beer with neighbours, they laugh at our wild garden. We don't own a mower or strimmer wanting our patch to be an extension of the reserve (with a Japanese 'room', small orchard, vegetable garden and a few roses). Nature is not an exotic thing that's been boxed off and preserved in a park or a photograph somewhere else.

We decide to leave the paper wasps' nests over the door; they give a nasty sting but are not aggressive and are good for the garden.

If humans suddenly vanished, there would be no weeds. After months plants would thrive and blossom on the pavements, roots would impregnate walls. After years the roads would become grassed highways for large animals, parks and sports fields would sprout saplings and grow great forests that would clean up the sky.

15th

“The war is going to go on despite our quarrels and our longing for freedom and fresh air, so we should try to make the best of our stay here.” Anne Frank, diary, Jan 15 1944.

This country is still at war but nobody seems to know. The Gumbaynggirr footprint, always light, is fading; bora rings lost, canoe trees rotted, grinding stones lost. Country covers up. In the forest stumps decay, by the bridge chains are nailed to a tree, beyond are remains of a barbed wire fence.

Zen master Dogen says, “Mind means trees, fence posts, tiles and grasses.” Mindfulness is calm awareness of one's body,



feelings, and thoughts, but once in the forest my senses are on alert outwards.

A furry glimpse, a Swamp Wallaby bounds off thudding the ground. John Berger says animals began to disappear during the industrial revolution, just as domestic pets and animal representations became popular. Animals and humans both became alienated from natural and traditional ways of living. Australia has one of the highest rates of pet ownership in the world and this village is full of dogs.

There are 400 million dogs in the world all descended from wolves which number about 100,000 with some species endangered. Pets are bad for the environment, but the Australian Companion Animal Council reports that pet care products, pet purchases, pet food, veterinary services and pet care services were worth \$6 billion dollars some years ago and rising - 50% of the world lives on less than \$2.50 a day, probably the same as our electricity costs.

16th

"Half an hour later he detected a black speck ahead. Soon we knew that this could not be a natural snow feature. We marched on, found that it was a black flag tied to a sledge

bearer; near by the remains of a camp." Captain Scott, diary, Jan 16 1912.

No sign of the Brolgas, the black speck is a Whistling Kite over Belmore Marshes, once the Kakadu of the south, now a plain of grass; water is the new gold. At Hat Head we stop off for a skinny dip as two White-bellied Sea Eagles wheel overhead with a birds-eye view. The creek is tannin-dark, the dunes bone-white, the beach golden and the sea the colour of Truman Show oceans. This can't be real – there's no work, no food, no walls, no ceiling.

At Delicate Nobby Beach I waded through surf, camera above my head, to shoot the sea churning through a chasm, then relax, try and catch some waves, carried with no ambition. I should try and finish my history of Antarctica.

Thinking of bravery, Rachael Carson comes to mind.

17th

"Who can help us, then? Not judges, not doctors, no king or emperor, because [reason] is the Devil's greatest whore." Luther, Jan 17 1546.

Dawn. Words fail.

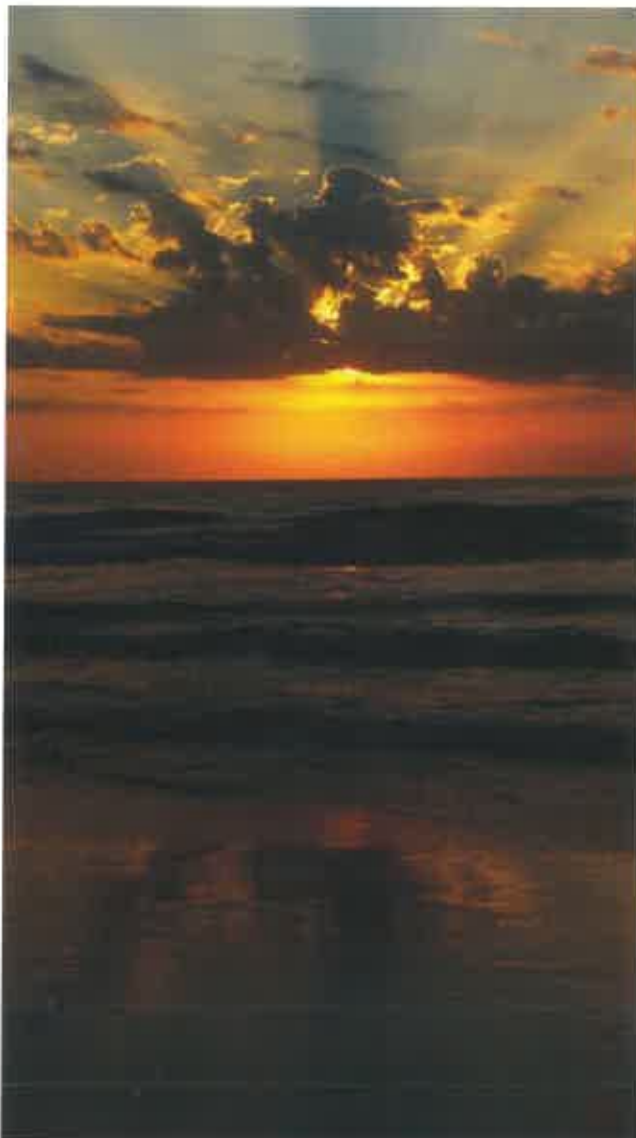
Photographs fail too, subsumed to the Romantic notion of the sublime and a surfeit of brochures. Yet I cannot resist the light show of a beautiful new day, the burnished beach, Brahminy Kite, Nankeen Night-Heron and Little Terns diving close in. It's wretched surf, so just the two of us. It takes attention to appreciate our cosmic inheritance, even Gaia as metaphor rather than palaeontology.

Late night I was reading the critic who coined the term Arte Povera: the artist "discovers also himself... abandons linguistic intervention... abolishes his role as being an artist, intellectual, painter or writer and learns again to perceive, to feel, to breathe, to walk, to understand..." Germano Celant, Arte Povera catalogue, 1969.

We can't afford to dream of tomorrow.

16.01.52 17 Jan

Latitude -30.59259° Longitude 153.0113°





Adam & Anna fixing wire to South Coast track bridges



Kelp Gull - image by Peter Grant



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