



WILD TIMES

Edition 35 August 2009



Nature Writing Prize Award Winner



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Another Successful Summer for Overland Track Hut Wardens and Walker Surveys

The efforts of volunteers in the Overland Track hut wardens and walker survey programs were celebrated recently with events at Cradle Mountain and Hobart.

The hut wardens program celebrated another successful season with a program debrief and barbecue at Cradle Mountain.

The program, a partnership between the Parks and Wildlife Service and WILDCARE Inc, has been very popular with a number of the volunteers becoming very experienced, having participated in the program since its inception 11 years ago.

Program coordination this season has been shared this year with veteran WILDCARE volunteer Bill Forsyth showing the ropes to Northwest Region volunteer facilitator Steve Mansfield. The volunteers have a close and positive working relationship with visitor centre, ranger and track ranger staff, with ranger Eddie Firth in charge of the overall program.

The program is based at Waterfall Valley, the first overnight destination on the Overland Track. The volunteers assist walkers with general enquiries, equipment advice and adjustments, first aid, weather information, flora and fauna advice, and undertake general hut and toilet cleaning, as well as a host of related tasks.

Volunteer hut wardens usually stay at Waterfall Valley for shifts of 10 days. They carry in their supplies, with some of the heavier foodstuffs being flown in during other operations along the track.

Volunteer facilitator Steve Mansfield said their efforts demonstrate an extraordinary commitment over a long period of time, a high level of skill and experience and their passion for Tasmania's reserves.

In Hobart, the efforts of WILDCARE volunteers in the Overland Track walker survey program were celebrated at an afternoon tea.

About 20 volunteers carried out surveys of Overland Track walkers as they finished their walk at Narcissus on the northern end of Lake St Clair. The volunteers worked in pairs



Overland Track Walker Survey volunteers Annie Lamble, Philippa Richardson and Bill Forsyth. Bill also has a major role with the hut warden program.

on three-day shifts, conducting surveys for up to 60 walkers, from November through to mid-April.

This year's surveys totalled 434, the greatest number since the surveys began. It was a transitional year for the survey, as an online survey was introduced as a trial for the 2008/09 walking season.

Visitor research officer Ben Clark said that as more than 90 per cent of walkers booked their walk online, it makes sense to have the survey conducted online and the trial proved to be successful, with 519 walkers completing the online survey.

Ben assured the volunteers that there would likely be other opportunities to conduct surveys with walkers at locations such as the Walls of Jerusalem and the Southwest Track.

Ben told staff and volunteers at the event that the survey data has been an incredibly useful tool, providing input into developing the sustainable management report for the Overland Track and in particular the social indicators for the report.

Liz Wren, PWS

A Special Thanks

Readers may have noticed that several articles in this (and previous) issues of Wildtimes are attributed to Liz Wren from the Parks and Wildlife Service. Have we a new editor you may ask? Well, not quite.

Liz is Manager Media and Communications with PWS and one of her many duties is to prepare articles for the internal on-line newsletter available daily to PWS staff. This has been a wonderful source of articles and photos for our own magazine, so I thought I'd introduce Liz to you.

Liz is originally from Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA and has worked in a variety of positions in the print media from advertising manager to journalist, editor and photographer.

Before coming to Tasmania in 2003 Liz worked for 10 years with NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service at Kosciuszko National Park as manager of media and information and senior ranger neighbour relations.

If your WILDCARE work involves the media and PWS you'll no doubt meet Liz in her official capacity, but at the weekends you'll just as likely see her out in the bush, in one of our many magnificent reserves.

So Liz, special thanks from us at WILDCARE.

Craig Saunders



ON THE FRONT COVER: Friends of Maatsuyker Island volunteer Marina Campbell in spectacular surroundings as part of the island's environmental weed survey. Photographer (and volunteer) Vicki Campbell wins free WILDCARE membership for 2010 for providing this photo. See page 18 for more.

WILDCARE Friends of Tinderbox Marine Reserve

Environment Tasmania and recently formed WILDCARE branch Friends of Tinderbox Marine Reserve hosted an activity day for the whole family at Hobart's closest, fully-protected marine reserve, the Tinderbox Marine Reserve, on Sunday 3 May.

About 40 people attended the event, including many families interested in enjoying and caring for this beautiful and accessible playground. The sun was shining and the channel was calm, making for a perfect dive and snorkel for those courageous enough to brave the chilly waters. A marquee was set up to house a display including a map of the proposed boundary extension of the fully-protected Reserve, as well as information about some of the marine life that can be found there.

The rockpool ramble led by Jane Elek and Renata Schadack of Tasmanian Marine Naturalists attracted a good crowd, enabled everyone, from toddlers to grandparents, to see, touch and learn about the incredible diversity that is living and interacting in the intertidal zone on the rock platform. A host of native sea anemones, crabs, sea snails (molluscs), red, green and brown algae inhabited the rocks and tidal pools. Several species of invading seastars, half-crab, molluscs (Pacific oysters, NZ screw shells) and a red alga were pointed out.

Following a delicious barbecue feast, there were a number of informal talks. The Marine Police discussed the challenges we face from poachers and uninformed fishers in maintaining the health of the marine reserve and its wildlife, and strongly encouraged everyone to report illegal use of the reserve to Fishwatch (0427 655 557). Rebecca Hubbard of Environment Tasmania explained the benefits of fully protected marine national parks, such as re-building populations of heavily fished



Rockpool Ramble at Tinderbox Marine Reserve

species, protecting the full range plants and animals, and building the health and resilience of ecosystems to withstand impacts such as pollution, climate change and invasive species. Sue Wragge of Underwater Adventures Tasmania described the wonderful wildlife that can be found in the area such as spectacular soft corals, sponges and kelp forests and the fascinating fish such as seahorses.

WILDCARE Friends of Tinderbox Marine Reserve was officially launched with a dozen people signing up to get involved at a local level helping to improve management of the area, information signage, managing introduced pests, monitoring and raising awareness.

Anyone interested in the work of this new group can find more information at www.wildcaretas.org.au/pages/groups.php (click on WILDCARE Friends of Tinderbox Marine Reserve)

Jane Elek

Redefining the three R's

Wildlife Rescue, Rehabilitation and Release

Caring for injured & orphaned native animals



Judy Synnott doing what she does best

The WILDCARE Nature Care group Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation was started by Judy Synnott over twenty years ago with the aim of providing care services for native wildlife

along Tasmania's North West Coast. Today the group boasts a dedicated team of carers, many of whom have been with Judy and the group for over 10 years.

The group's work is based on the 'three Rs', but probably not those you worked on at primary school!

Theirs are Rescue, Rehabilitation and Release. Members of the group are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and have been responsible for the successful release of thousands of native animals.

Through WILDCARE's own Internal Grant Scheme the group is this year planning to provide all carers with Wildlife Rescue Packs to assist them carry out their duties safely and efficiently.

These packs will include carry box, gloves, hand sanitiser, reflective vest, bottle, teat, milk formula, scissors, bandage, instant heat pack, masks, pouches, torch, pen and paper.

A supply of packs will also be held in store to be used in the event of natural disaster such as fire or flood.

Margaret Taylor

Boxthorn removal on some Furneaux Islands

In May 2009, eight WILDCARE volunteers (Friends of Bass Strait Islands) headed north to slightly warmer latitudes, to work on boxthorn removal from small islands near Flinders Island. Funding was provided from Caring for Our Country Coastcare to the Tasmanian Conservation Trust. This 12 day trip was the first of several proposed working bees on this project, to continue work begun under earlier Envirofund projects. The aim is to remove boxthorn from 12 islands to restore and maintain natural habitat, in particular for breeding seabirds and native vegetation. Boxthorn takes over the native vegetation, and burrow-nesting seabirds such as shearwaters, penguins and diving petrels have to negotiate the spiky thickets and are often trapped by the thorns.

Over 12 days the group worked on 9 islands (Chalky, Mile, Little Chalky, South Middle and North Pascoe, Wybalenna, Rabbit, and Sentinel) and also around Emita on Flinders when the weather was too windy for boating. Transport to the islands was with Mike Nichols on his charter boat Bass Pyramid, and we watched albatrosses, other seabirds and dolphins while on the way to work! Boxthorn treatment method was simple cut and hand-spray, at times quite challenging given their unfriendly nature and the care needed to ensure all stems were treated. Monsters required a chainsaw to access the stems.

For some it was their first boxthorn working bee, others had been before. It was really fantastic to see the progress achieved by regular boxthorn removal, with some islands having very few plants. Some islands to be visited on future working bees have substantial areas to be treated.

Ongoing follow-up removal work will be needed to keep boxthorn under control on all the islands, as unfortunately there



Russ Bauer at Chalky Island

will be continued sprouting from existing fruit and re-invasion via birds.

The local NRM officer Mick Sherriff helped us for a couple of days, and was curious to know why we gave our time to volunteer for this work.

Our rewards included improving life for the seabirds and also for human visitors, looking after islands that we visit for recreation, enjoying sea cruises with amazing wildlife, exploring beautiful islands, swims in glassy clear water, and enjoying good company and food after the day's work.

Many thanks to the weeders Scott Bell, Vicki Campbell, Mark Alexander, Kat Hopkins, Dave James, Russ Bauer, Jean Jackson and Karen Ziegler, especially to Karen for heroic organizing efforts, and to all the locals who helped us out during our stay. To participate in future boxthorning trips, keep an eye on the WILDCARE calendar.

Jean Jackson



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Friends of Deal Island Newsletter

No 5 July 2009

Hello Friends,

Friends of Deal Island (FoDI) held a very successful AGM and General Meeting on the 23rd May at Ross and welcomed the attendance of 24 members (plus 14 apologies). Minutes have been circulated to all members.

Deal Island now runs on 24-hour power thanks to Parks and Wildlife, Powercom and the sun. With the installation of the remote power station the lights come on at the flick of a switch. Every night, rain, hail or hurricane the caretakers would plough up the compound to turn off the generator. Sheer utopian conditions; no more pneumonia, no more crawling on hands and knees, just CLICK and into that warm bed. Thank you Parks and Wildlife.



Array. Array, Array!

FoDI has recently been successful with two grants. A grant from the Tasmanian Community Fund sees \$9700 allocated to purchase a stove, beds and utensils etc for the visitor's house on Deal. This will enable volunteer working bee groups to enjoy a higher level of comfort during their stays. A grant from NRM North for \$5000 will enable FoDI to continue its weed management and rehabilitation program.

Thank you, granting bodies.

We still await the outcomes of our applications for the Caring for our Country grant for \$43,870 and the Restoration and Preservation of the Deal Island Lighthouse Jobs Fund Project for \$376,000. We remain very optimistic.



New Deal Island mower being tested behind the new vehicle



Friends of Deal Island

(Stop Press: We have just been advised that our Caring for our Country application has been successful!!)

The FoDI executive will attend a meeting with the staff of Parks and Wildlife Northern Division in July to discuss and implement a partnership agreement between PWS and FoDI. This is an important step in developing a collaboration of ideas, energies and outcomes to enhance Deal Island's cultural and heritage values. We shall keep you informed of the progress of this partnership.

ABC's Stateline ran a very good story on the power installation and the caretaker program very recently. Ethel and Wes talked about their caretaking and Parks and Reserves Manager Wayne Dick gave a very good synopsis of the whole program

Dallas Baker OAM

President. Friends of Deal Island

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Discovering Maria Island's Spectacular Marine Environment

Environment Tasmania and Friends of Maria Island Marine Protected Area hosted a marine discovery weekend on Maria Island on 21-22 of February 2009 to get people under water and experiencing the wonders of Tasmania's marine national parks.

The mob of almost 40 people aged from 8 months to 55 years, arriving by charter boats and the local ferry, descended on the island to clear blue skies and crystal waters. It seems Mother Nature was supportive of our attempts to appreciate the natural wonders of this spectacular coastal and marine environment.

The Marine Protected Area provides the perfect place for snorkelling and diving, with protection of all species ensuring large rock lobsters, abalone, various fish, sharks and rays are seen frequently.

There are huge populations of beautifully colourful jewel anemones encrusting the wharf and of rays, sharks and fish swimming unperturbed all around the jetty structure. So many people were surprised to see these magnificent colours in Tasmania – the pinks, greens, yellows and purples are more like what you'd expect to see in the Great Barrier Reef.

A number of snorkelers saw two huge rock lobsters hiding under ledges in the marine national park close to the painted cliffs that would never survive outside a protected area. These are the very lobsters that are eating the invading pest *Centrostephanus urchin*, and demonstrate the importance of keeping marine ecosystems healthy with a natural range of prey and predator species.

Tasmania's leading marine photographer, Jon Bryan, gave a presentation of his magnificent photos of Tasmania's marine environment and the range of threats it is facing, such as overfishing, graphically illustrating the importance of protecting areas of our marine environment.

With Parks and Wildlife Rangers and Jane Elek of the Tasmanian Marine Naturalists on hand, there was a wealth of knowledge available on the wide range of plants and animals that inhabit this spectacular coastline. The rockpool rambles



Volunteer Divers surround PWS Ranger Richard Koch at Maria Island

led by Jane demonstrated the important role that many seemingly insignificant species play in an incredibly vast and inter-connected web of life.

Dive-master Sue Wragge brought her boat all the way from Hobart to give many people their first experience of seeing life underwater. It was a mind-blowing experience. Other experienced divers were thrilled to dive at the base of the fossil cliffs, swimming under huge limestone boulders thickly encrusted with a huge variety of organisms of all shapes and colours, surrounded by many schools of curious fish, cuttlefish and a very large ray.

The Maria Island Marine Discovery Weekend was the first for this summer, and has been hailed a huge success by participants and presenters alike. Many thanks to the Parks & Wildlife Service for their active support, Sue Wragge of Underwater Adventures Tasmania for getting so many people underwater, Summer Kitchen for providing delicious bread, and the All Organic Farm for providing nutritious fruit and veg.

Rebecca Hubbard, Marine Coordinator, Environment Tasmania

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Don't Forget Your Gumboots

(Two Weeks on the Orange Bellied Parrot Project in Birches Inlet)

We felt a little ostentatious as we stomped around the wharf at Strahan in our gumboots, waiting for boat transport down to Birches Inlet. But the Volunteer Information we had received had gumboots on the essential list, and this was the best way to pack them in. It wasn't until an obvious tourist came over and asked for directions to a spot that only locals would know that we began to feel a little more comfortable.

The OBP re-introduction program has two foci – Melaleuca and Birches Inlet. Birches Inlet is at the head of Macquarie Harbour, to the east of the Gordon River. The inlet is 10km long and the Birches River flows into the southern end. 2 1/4 kms down the Birches River the track takes off for Low Rocky Point and it here on the button grass plains the OBP program is based.

A small charter boat ferried us down Macquarie harbour and Birches Inlet, with the backdrop of mountains and beaches, and the wonderful reflections that are a feature of this part of the world. Once in the Birches River – just wide enough in some places for the boat to pass through – we were very conscious of the surrounding vegetation. Western peppermints line the river, with an undergrowth of tea trees of various species, and coral fern.

In some areas, beautiful flowering *Spyridium gunnii* lined the banks with greater water ribbons in the water below. Eventually we arrived at BBL (Big Boat Landing). Above this point the river narrows too much for the bigger boat and all our chattels were transhipped to the dinghy for last 500m of winding channel, lined with tassel cordrush of prodigious size. Finally, we reached LBL (yes Little Boat Landing) where we offloaded the gear into a wheelbarrow for the final 200 metres to Frog Lodge. If you look closely at the photo, you will see the open-air shower on the western side of the building – sited nicely to catch the prevailing breezes (or gales) and guaranteed to ensure quick showers. Behind Frog Lodge is a tributary of the Birches River with a wonderful stand of rainforest containing Huon Pine, leatherwood, *Nothofagus* and many ferns.

From Frog Lodge a boardwalk wanders 500m through the buttongrass to the bird hide where we spent up to 5 hours a day with both morning and evening sessions. The walk was, of course lined with the typical plants found in association with button grass – lemon boronia, *Xyris*, swamp honeymyrtle, scented paperbark and even a few tiny Pink Autumn orchids. Around the hut wiry bauera was common. In the background is the beautiful D'Aguiler range and in the middle distance what the locals know as the Wombat Hills, where we spent many pleasant hours walking and bird watching.

We were very fortunate to have the use of a small and very stable dinghy with a 4 hp motor, and we used this to investigate all the local waterways. We also explored several beaches many of which were lined by western peppermints and huge old banksias that put the yellow, drought-stressed bushes we are used to, to shame. At one of our favourite beaches, just at the mouth of the Birches River, we watched a pair of azure kingfishers busy diving for food.

The 5 wonderful people we took over from told us of a rainy period when 3" fell and left the tracks sodden and the creeks and rivers running over the bridges and the boardwalk to LBL,



Frog Lodge, aka Birches Inlet Hilton

which was totally submerged. We were suitably impressed, but couldn't really imagine it. In our first week our only complaint would be that the weather was too hot. We had our one thrill when we were contacted and told to be ready to evacuate on short notice with all the valuables – telescopes, records, sat. phones etc – as a bushfire was near the Gordon River and headed our way. However, after a few hours we were stood down when the forecast changed and rain was predicted later.

And rain it did. Soon the frogs were singing and we could hear the water rushing into the tanks. It only rained about 1 1/2" but even then the tracks were sodden, the creeks and rivers were running over the bridges and the boardwalk to LBL, which was again totally submerged.

How glad we now were to have gumboots! So quick and easy to slip on and off for a trip to the loo or to check on the dinghy moored at LLB. They were also very useful for stomping around the Sorell swamp – although I did fill one up when I went knee deep into a mud hole, very tricky to pull it out too. Oh yes, and I got two boots full crossing the creek to the Wombat Hills after the rain. But they do dry quicker than leather boots do.

And the OBPs? They were a delight. We had been worried we would be confused by the very similar blue winged parrots, but having seen both species, we had no problem. The telescopes were superb and we were able to identify the birds by their leg bands – although cold mornings and condensation proved a bit of a challenge. Every day we saw at least one different OBP at the hide, and of course there were some that appeared every morning and evening – greedy red/black M for one. Some birds also habituated the bush and grass around Frog Lodge. We saw several along the Birches River and two on the Sorell River, but didn't see them anywhere else. However we were thrilled to see both male and female southern emu wrens.

We had a wonderful two weeks. If you are happy with your own company, enjoy nature and are able to exist without TV I can fully recommend it, but I would suggest that you don't forget your gumboots.

John Hamilton and Jean Taylor

(From the editor: John and Jean are more often seen volunteering closer to Hobart, especially as coordinators of one of our most active and successful branches, Friends of Coningham Nature Recreation Area. They will receive a special treat from our merchandise store for submitting this article)

Old Wall, New Story

(Tunnack Road Wall, Oatlands)

(From one of WILDCARE's newer Heritage Care branches, the Dry Stone Walling group)

The 100m dry stone wall along the Tunnack Road just out of Oatlands has been saved from removal and now has a few stories to tell. The first 30m were in a very bad way with some patches down to ground level.

The stones were spread out and scattered on the ground, although a few sections were still full height. Enter a team of Green Corps members. The stones were roughly sorted out into large, medium and small with the larger ones being placed near the old wall, leaving enough space for safe walking up and down the line of the wall.

After a half day indoor workshop and power point display with Andrew Garner, the Green Corps team set about rebuilding the wall from the remaining base up.

The end nearest the town was not built in its original place but turned to run towards a gateway set back from the busy Tunnack Road. The rebuilt 30 m have a few 'through' stones, something which the old wall lacked entirely.

The through stones give the wall better stability and it is hoped that in future there will be less bowing and bending and bulging of the wall along its length.

Presently the top of this section of wall has a series of stones placed together which when viewed from the road look like cope stones but are just left-over stones put on top to tidy up the surrounding ground. These stones are not adding to the wall's stability although they are adding to its height.

The next 5m were rebuilt by two people being examined for DSWA accreditation. To satisfy the first stage of English accreditation each person had to demolish and rebuild 2.5 m



Dry Stone Wallers Hard at Work at Oatlands

of wall in 7 hours. This section now has regular through stones every 1–1.5m at knee height and carefully selected cope stones, which act like through stones, at the top. The overall height is less than other parts of the wall.

The next 11.5m are the result of a WILDCARE working bee cum workshop attended by 24 people. With only 3 experienced wallers to guide them it is obvious that the number of participants was too many, although everyone had a busy and productive day.

The outer walls of any dry stone construction are easier to build if they taper towards the top, however, one of the guide posts has been straightened up and therefore the width of the wall is the same at the top as at the bottom and there is no taper in one part. So now the wall has a new kind of bulge – a manufactured one.

The next section of about 8m was part-demolished and rebuilt by 12 keen WILDCARE volunteers (who may not necessarily be WILDCARE members) and the worst patches of old wall have a new life. Some further work needs to be done getting cope stones on top, patching one last gap and clearing the ground near the old wall of briars and weeds and accumulated soil.

The wall is still there, still a statement in the landscape, but not really looking like it once would have been. Perhaps in another 150 years another team of people will rebuild it once again and a new story will unravel?

Another result? In many places in Tasmania new walls are being built as the participants, armed with good will, enthusiasm and notes written by Maria Weeding, get going in their own gardens. One preservation project becomes many projects, and the dry stone wall revival goes on.

Eleanor Bjorksten



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Friends of Tasman Island

This year the Friends of Tasman Island (FoTI) have gone from strength to strength.

Since its inception in 2005 this dedicated band of volunteers has worked towards the protection and restoration of the island's historic infrastructure and natural habitat. In partnership with the Parks & Wildlife Service, the group's first working bee was held in April 2006 to coincide with the centenary of the Tasman Island lighthouse. Two working bees were held the following year and in 2008 working bees were held in February, March and November.

Funding for the works programme is raised by the group themselves. Their stunning limited-edition Tasmanian Lighthouses series of calendars have been a sell-out success and next year will feature Swan and Goose Islands. All the money from this project goes directly towards work on the island, thanks to the continued sponsorship of the Cascade Brewery. Additional grants from government, semi government and private industry also help towards the considerable expense of accessing and working in this remote area.

2009 got off to a good start with a nine-day working bee in January with an international flavour when German backpacker, Falk Baumgarten, joined the team. Storm damage was the main focus. The rear wall of Quarters 2 had literally blown away and there were broken windows in Quarters 3. Maintenance continued on all three houses plus the Oil Store, together with extensive mowing and brushcutting around the settlement and tracks.

After three trips and many hours of volunteer time and sheer hard work, Tasman Island's weeds are diminishing! Thanks to a grant from Envirofund, the final in a series of three working bees was timed for early March when some weed species were in flower. Targets this time included Blackberries, Hebe, wild turnip and radish, Arum lilies, Scrambling groundsel, Montbretia, Californian thistle and various succulents. Luckily the enthusiasm of the weeders had not diminished as follow-up weeding will continue over the next few years. A plan is now in preparation which will contain information for future working bees on the identification of each weed species, its location and previous weed treatment, together with recommended management procedures for the future.

A second working bee in March was programmed to culminate with the Rotary Club of Tasman Peninsula's Open Day on April 4th. Working from dawn till dusk, the team was so enthusiastic that it was hard to drag them away on recreational walks around the island. However, it is pleasing to note that, while the main accommodation is still in Quarters 3, rooms within Quarters 2 and Quarters 1 are now habitable.

Co-operation between Tasman Island's various stake-holders is proving invaluable. Repairs to Bureau of Meteorology's equipment is often on the list of jobs to do on FoTI's working bees. The group also appreciates AMSA's support with projects. Lyndon O'Grady made an impressive landing near the old Zig Zag track and spent three days on the island on the island before the scheduled Rotary Open Day. His arrival added another dimension to our time on Tasman Island – we were able to celebrate the 103rd birthday of the *raison d'être* for the lightstation – the lighthouse itself – on 2nd April, by climbing to the top of the tower. Lyndon also presented



Kevin Heaton and Alan Sanderson Repairing Window in Q3 Tasman Island

the group with several folders of photos and other historical information from the AMSA files.

Further working bees will be scheduled in Spring & Summer to further the work of restoring Tasman Island and its lightstation to their former glory.

Erika Johnson
for Friends of Tasman Island



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St. James Anglican Church, Jericho

INCORPORATING THE JERICO CULTURAL AND HERITAGE CENTRE

(From another of our recently formed Heritage Care groups, the Jericho Heritage Centre)

Four years before the settlement of Oatlands began, the first recorded religious service was held at Jericho, on the 23 February 1823. It was conducted by the Reverend Samuel Marsden from N.S.W. in the home of Mr. Thomas Gregson, "Northumbria", Jericho.

The movement for the erection of a church at Jericho began in 1827. Up until this time, the district was being supplied by William Pike, a catechist, who lived at "Park Farm", Jericho. However it wasn't until 1838 that a church was built and it was consecrated by Bishop William Grant Broughton on Tuesday 10 May 1838.

Fifty years later, cracks appeared in the building, and it was decided to erect another building on the same site. On the 29th April 1888 the new church, St James' Church, Jericho was consecrated by Bishop Sandford.

As a dominant township element, St. James' is of great significance to Jericho. Architectural fittings and furnishings bear dedications to prominent early members of the district, including Thomas Gregson who was Premier of Tasmania in 1857, and who's property "Northumbria" borders the church. St. James' is listed on the Tasmanian Heritage Register for its community values and its ability to represent a modest sandstone Victorian Gothic Church. The building was designed by the well know architect, Henry Hunter, who was responsible for many fine building around Tasmania. Walter Fish was responsible for the stonework and the woodwork was carried out by Charles Ellen, both of Oatlands.

The stained-glass windows were added over time and are some of the best examples of Australia's glass artists, including John Lamb Lyons (Sydney), George Dancy, William Kerr-Morgan, Brooks Robinson (renowned for the strength of his workmanship) and perhaps the most important window which was the last window that William Montgomery crafted. The beautiful window at the rear of the church, "Crucifixion" was executed by Augustus Fischer of Melbourne. His windows are rare and his work was renowned for his treatment of flowers.

It is also thought that St. James Church was the first church in the southern hemisphere to have conducted an Ecumenical Service.

The churchyard includes an Avenue of Honour, a row of pine trees dedicated to local men (and one woman) who served in WW1.

St. James' is a family church of the Bisdees, a prominent pastoral family of the district. They took an active part in the welfare of the church and it's people. John Hutton Bisdee was the first Australian-born Victoria Cross recipient, and is buried in the cemetery. Bisdee was awarded the V.C. in 1900 for bravery in the Transvaal War, following which he returned to Tasmania to the family farm, and later served in W.W.1. He passed away on his property in 1930. The two Bisdee family plots are a dominant feature of the cemetery when approaching the doors of St. James'.

A local volunteer committee has established an excellent museum of local history and a memorial to those local men who served for their Empire.




St James Church Jericho

For the botanist, the cemetery is one of only two sites in Tasmania where the rare plant *Leptorhynchus Elongatus* or Lanky Buttons can be found. This bright yellow daisy was recorded by the botanist J. D. Hooker in the 19th century as "not uncommon".


(If you are interested in the group's work see more at www.wildcaretas.org.au/pages/groups.php (click on Jericho Heritage Centre)

Stephanie Burbury



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Nature Writing Prize Award

Winning Essay



Wildtimes presents the first instalment of this year's Nature Writers Prize award winning essay by Maureen Scott Harris. Maureen was born in British Columbia, Canada in 1943. She has lived in Toronto since the mid-1960s, where she has worked as a librarian, freelance editor and writer. A multi award winning poet, Maureen has published a number of volumes. She was talked into entering an essay in this prize by a Tasmanian friend, and agreed when she saw how strongly aligned it was with her own philosophy of writing. At heart she wants to know "How can I, as a human being, live on and serve the earth which holds and sustains me?" She will spend around 4 months in Tasmania later this year.

Broken Mouth – Offerings for the Don River, Toronto

...Let us explore any stream, creek, lake, pond and rivulet in our home towns. Water in these places nurtures reveries and sustains our very existence.

Basia Irland. "A Eulogy for Water"

Through its broken mou

Ted Hughes. "The River

1

On a Monday afternoon in early November my friend Barbara and I walk through Muir Gardens, a small formal park in mid-town Toronto. We're grateful for the mild sun-streaked afternoon with a loveliness we can't take for granted in Canada at this time of year. Beyond the gardens we follow a path into the ravine. It winds over roots and stones to dip close to a little watercourse. I step down to the water's edge, and stand, watching it rush over and along the rocky-bottomed streambed. Listening.

Down here beside the water, the bushes near it green-leafed still, it might be summer, the cool sound a haven in August's sticky heat. But the light's too pale, and it falls through bare-branched trees. Barbara joins me and we stand silent for a while looking upstream. We see water catching light, scattering then pulling it back again. It's rhythmic, like a dance. "You might say the water sparkles but really it's more like a continuous and single vibration," Barbara says – and she's right. I look at the stream, seeing it.

We stand there watching the shiver and quiver. We're seized by the place and don't want to move. Isn't this lovely! one of us says more than once, and, How beautiful it is! the other replies – an inadequate call and response. In another culture, or even at another time in this culture, we might have known or found the right words to express our response to the stream. Perhaps we would have addressed it, giving thanks for its gifts. Poet Ted Hughes wrote "the river is a god," but direct address to parts of the world doesn't come easy any longer. Or perhaps at all.

The forest floor above the bank is thick with mostly yellow leaves, the maples and beeches drawing strong vertical lines with trunks no longer veiled in understory. Images of fairy forests hover in my mind, but only for a moment. This place is material, feeding several senses as well as our hearts and minds with its tangible being. The longer we stand there the more we seem to be looking at a river at the very beginning of

the world, surrounded with clear light and air, pristine. From this river all rivers descend.

"Where are we?" I ask, breaking a silence. "Is this the Don?" "Well yes," Barbara says, "it must be, or at least one of its tributaries. I used to play on the Don as a child. It runs by the house in Hog's Hollow where I grew up, not far from here." How little this stream resembles the Don River further south where, shadowed by railway tracks and rivers of cars, it winds through a near waste of worn, and worn out, land. The difference between here and there shows how we human beings have addressed the world through the last couple of centuries.

2

The northern boundary of the Greater Toronto Bioregion – the most urbanized area in Canada – is the Oak Ridges Moraine, an irregular ridge of sand and gravel hills stretching 160 km from the Niagara Escarpment to Rice Lake. Created by the advance and retreat of glaciers some 12 000 years ago, the Moraine contains the headwaters of 65 river systems, including 35 in the Greater Toronto Area. It is the source of potable water for many communities, as well as home to significant plants and animals. It is also contested land, eyed longingly by both the aggregate industry and developers.

The two branches of the Don River rise from the Moraine and flow more or less south, gathering their tributary creeks and streams, to merge at the Forks of the Don, some 8 km from where the Keating Channel delivers it to Lake Ontario. From headwaters to lake the river travels 38 km, much of it through fragmented landscapes, some of it through concrete.

The history of the Don is probably not very different from the history of many rivers that run their course through now urban surroundings. Native peoples used the river for transportation, and so did the first Europeans. As the newcomers settled they worked the river hard, clearing land alongside it for farming, while grist, lumber, and textile mills moved steadily upstream. Quarries and factories followed, as bricks, paper, beer, leather, meat, and tallow began to be produced or processed locally. Gasworks and chemical factories were added in the late 19th century. All the industries used the river's water for their work, and dumped their wastes into it.

In the 1880s, to prevent flooding and allow shipping to move further upriver, the Don Improvement Project channelised and straightened the river. Removing its meanders freed more land for industrial development – and further degradation. The project also turned the river mouth at a right angle west to empty into the inner harbour. Before the Improvement the Don flowed into Lake Ontario through one of the largest wetlands in North America. Ashbridges Marsh was both a major habitat and a migratory stopover for birds. It harboured other life of course, including mosquitoes, and malaria and cholera were reported. Early in the 20th century health concerns led to what remains today the largest lake-filling project in North America: the marsh was drained and filled in, providing yet more land for industrial expansion.

Railway lines had run up the valley since the 19th century. Following the Second World War, suburbs spread north along the river, and transportation was again the focus of



development. In the 1960s the Don Valley Parkway and the Bayview Extension were constructed, one on either side of the river, and access to it became restricted. Few wanted to go there anyway. Industries had begun to move out but they left polluted wasteland behind. In 1969 the environmental organization Pollution Probe held a funeral for the Don.

Since that funeral much work has been done to clean and restore the river and its valley. The Task Force to Bring Back the Don, a citizens' group working with the City of Toronto, emerged in 1989. Under its auspices a network of walking and bike trails has been laid out, native trees, shrubs, and wildflowers planted, and several small wetlands established. The area is heavily used by Torontonians, for walking, picnicking, and biking. But the river itself is still polluted. As recently as 2007 a national water quality test identified the Don as the most polluted river in Ontario.

3

In the course of its journey from the San Juan Mountains in Colorado to the Gulf of Mexico, the Rio Grande traverses 3 034 km, forming the border between Texas and Mexico, and passing through the Chihuahuan desert. In any given year, with variations in rainfall, snowmelt, and human usage, stretches of the river go dry.

In 1995 New Mexican artist and water activist Basia Irland initiated an on-going project, A Gathering of Waters: Rio Grande, Source to Sea. At the time the Rio Grande was the third most endangered river in the United States. "[P]eople described the river as if it were a cut-up pie with the Middle Rio Grande disconnected from anything upstream or downstream; it had no beginning and no end" said Irland in an interview in 2001. People living along the river were frequently disconnected from those in towns upstream or downstream; from community to community, the uses to which the water was put were often contested.

Basia Irland's project was based on a Hopi tradition, in which people planted or buried a jar of water where they lived, to ensure that usable water would continue to flow to their village. Her proposal called for people living along the river to collect water samples, starting at the headwaters and passing them downstream, to be emptied into the ocean at the river's mouth – performing the river's flow.

Irland constructed a special canteen, the River Vessel, and began the water collection herself in Colorado. The canteen moved from one community to another, each community adding to it. On its long trek from headwaters to mouth the water was carried by boat, raft, canoe, hot-air balloon, car, van, horseback, truck, bicycle, mail, and, through the pueblo villages of New Mexico, foot, as teams of runners relayed it 240 km in two days. The River Vessel was accompanied by a Log Book, in which participants wrote observations and comments.

The project captured people's imaginations and revealed the deep feelings they had for the river. When the canteen reached Boca Chica on the Gulf of Mexico late in 1998, a giant celebration took place. People from all along the river came at their own expense. "They wanted to be there for that final moment of releasing the waters... It felt like an act of compassion, a gift," said Irland.

Through their participation in the project people addressed the river. But the river also addressed them. The carried water created relationships – between communities, who were more aware of each other and their water uses and needs, and

between individual people and the river.

In 2008, the list of the 10 most endangered rivers in the United States did not include the Rio Grande.

4

The brochure was titled: The Don River Workshop: Bringing Psyche to the River in the City. It announced an event in late October intended "to explore our relationship with the river running through the city." Basia Irland was listed as a presenter.

The workshop took place along the Lower Don River, a few weeks before Barbara and I stood beside that little stream in the ravine, on our November walk. My brief field notes make the difference between the two sites clear:

opaque water – mud, clay, and gravel scuffing concrete edges
– weeds

dirty mud-encrusted littered banks, broken and
wasted trees, heaps

of torn out roots

(still full of
birds)

junk everywhere

a refuse site –

refused significance

refused recognition

a river scorned and degraded, channelled and diverted,
walled with concrete, running between doubled rivers of cars,
alongside railway tracks

but it keeps moving

Before the workshop I had never walked beside the Lower Don. For many years if I thought of the Don at all I thought only of a river of cars. Often we joined their flow, driving the Parkway north to escape the city, past the ugly mountain of salt stored on the flats for winter streets. From a car's-eye view the river, when visible at all, was small and unimpressive, the land around it worn and empty.

5

I think of Toronto as haunted by water it hardly knows about. As the city expanded north, west, and east many creeks and streams were buried, often enclosed in storm sewers where they continue to flow, out of sight and mostly out of mind. West of the Don River was Taddle Creek. It ran through the University of Toronto campus until 1886. By then it was so polluted the city covered it over. The Taddle still surfaces after very heavy rains, puddling alongside Philosophers' Walk, seeping into the basements of nearby buildings. In spring red-winged blackbirds call from the shrubs around the law library as if they remembered the creek. Every now and then plans to resurrect it, recreating the sylvan glade of old campus photographs, also surface.

When York (now Toronto) was founded in 1793, Garrison Creek supplied salmon as well as water to soldiers stationed at its mouth to guard the harbour. Because of pollution it was fully enclosed by the mid-1920s. Garrison Creek travels beneath the streets of my neighbourhood and after storms



it too surfaces, in the parking lot of a supermarket a block or two north of my house. Though unseen, I hear it when it's rain-swollen, and am briefly disoriented by the sound of rushing water echoing from grates and manholes, musical and unanticipated in the constant mutter and grunt of traffic.

A map of central Toronto's main streets, with the buried streams traced on it, looks like a diagram of nerves or blood vessels cutting at an angle across the grid formed by the streets. When I first saw that map the city grew unsteady in my mind. Though for the most part oblivious of its watery footing, Toronto floats over a mesh of waters so thick and knotted I'm still astonished it doesn't sink into them.

6

The brochure had stated: "The workshop is designed to renew our kinship with the river and its urban environment so that we may become more conscious of neglectful attitudes." Following a talk about the history of the river and the restoration projects underway, we walked upstream gathering garbage. We stuffed torn plastic, old bottles and tins, snack packaging, paper and newspaper, broken toys, single gloves and mitts, bits of metal, and unnamable junk into the plastic bags we were carrying. We left a ragged, mud-covered blanket lying because no one wanted to touch it.

The day was cloudy and cold, wind knifing up the valley, rain in the forecast. On either side of the path grasses, seed-encrusted woody plants, and shrubs grew. They were mostly dun-coloured or beige now, but the stems of red osier dogwood and a few purple wood asters stood out like punctuation marks. Brightly-dressed cyclists, runners, and walkers streamed past in both directions. Crows called, house sparrows twittered, a red-tailed hawk rose in a lazy circle up the east rise of the valley.

We stopped walking when we reached the shovels and seedling trees laid out for us. A short demonstration of how to set the seedlings and we started work. After more than an hour's digging and setting, we were tired and exhilarated and no longer cold. Light-heartedly we stepped back to see what we'd done – some 50 new trees and shrubs planted. As we stared at their fragile promise for a moment or two no one wanted to leave them.

Physical work done, the workshop leaders led a small ritual to help us shift into a less gregarious mood. Crossing to the other bank, away from the congested trails, we picked up pebbles or twigs, a seed head, dried leaves – anything that connected us to the place – and a large leaf each. We stopped on a flat stretch of sand, near where a large dead fish lay, half on the bank, half in the water. A salmon, someone said, but no one ventured an opinion about why it was dead. We put our tokens on the large leaf and each of us in turn set the leaf afloat, along with our preoccupations and a wish for the river. We filled tiny bottles with water, then found places to sit out of sight of each other.

7

Ritual fosters new ways of knowing by creating a space in which to experience them. Our daily preoccupations and compulsions keep us safely engaged with the familiar, but blur what is beyond. When we let them go we can open to different ways of knowing both the world and ourselves.

I think of ritual as a bridge out of the small self into something larger – the experience of interconnectedness. Victor Turner understood it as a powerful means of creating temporary

communities, linking people around concerns or to perform a particular task. It forms a relationship among participants, and also states the possibility of a relationship between participants and whatever the ritual is for. Because participation in a ritual binds you into the intention it expresses, it gathers focus and energy for that intention. Felt connection and obligation are both part of the experience of ritual.

One important function of ritual is reparation. It attends to breaks and tears in things, noticing, mourning, apologizing, attempting to reweave what is torn. It wants to make amends. But ritual also celebrates, offers thanks, marks significance. It can express the seemingly opposed together – celebration and mourning, for instance. Both those feelings are called for when we look at the river and how we have related to it.

Ritual offers a means to step out of ordinary time and pay deep attention to something. It is a reverent gesture toward that thing, allowing or inviting it to step forward.

It may be that paying close attention to the river is already a ritual act.

8

I propped myself on a forked branch hanging over the water. Many of the large willows around me had broken limbs. Bits of torn plastic and paper festooned the shrubs overhanging the river, marking its high water moments. The ground was littered with cigarette packages, bits of tin foil, and bottle caps. Everything looked used up. I was tired and chilly and couldn't get comfortable. Nothing spoke to me. Finally I lay back against the branch and stared, not at the river's hypnotic, almost-silent motion, but through a tangle of still-leafy twigs to patches of sky.

Small birds materialized: chickadees with black caps and white breasts, olive-green kinglets, a white-breasted nuthatch. They hopped and darted and crept, feeding among branches and twigs, undisturbed by my presence. The river murmur, a rustle of wind in dried leaves, the muted small sounds of the birds blended, making a music I realized was the larger voice of the river.

When the birds moved on I sat up and watched the water running below me. The branch creaked. What would happen if it broke and I fell? I took out my field notebook and started a poem.

This riverbank is neither book nor text
but I can read it.

Mud, I read, and flood,
cold-- broken-- and

new grass.

garbage it says, over and over again

garbage

garbage

garbage

Birds chant, naming themselves

chickadee, kinglet, red cardinal,

the nasal nuthatch head-downing

along a willow trunk.

The river speaks.
 Fall! it whispers wryly, fall!
 and if I do fall from this tree limb
 where I sit, I will be slowed
 but not stopped
 by thin willow branches,
 slowed but not stopped
 like the river itself purling over gravel,
 rubbing itself along root-threaded banks,
 rising into the air, seeping
 between roots, into cracks in
 the concrete-straightened banks

picking up speed and darkness, racing
 along the channel which creases
 into a right-angle at its neck and
 pours out into the harbour –

A bell called us back to the group. Basia Irland was to speak. We returned to the spot by the river where the dead fish lay. She described her work on the Rio Grande, and suggested we could make a similar gesture for this comparatively small urban river. She held a Mohawk pot in which she had placed some cedar. We emptied our bottles of water into it.

Then Basia told of learning that the Don no longer had a mouth, but instead was emptied into the harbour through the tube-like Keating Channel. She said how shocking she had found the discovery, and I felt my own throat narrow in response. It was her intention to bury the pot that evening, somewhere close to where the mouth might have been. She would bury it with our collective wish for a restored river, one that had both mouth and voice returned to it.

9

If each of us thought of water as a living being, perhaps, just perhaps, a shift of attitudes and values might occur and manifest through small and large actions of protection and preservation.

--Basia Irland. "The Ecology of Reverence"

That things of the world exist for our use is a notion enshrined in western religious as well as scientific thinking. Many of us who have grown up within the western intellectual tradition experience the earth, if at all, as the backdrop for human life; it seems essentially inert, not a living organism, and certainly nothing to be addressed. We don't think of water as living, though our lives are utterly dependent on it. We deny thought and emotion to other creatures; at times we have argued they don't feel pain, much as newborns were believed not to feel pain – and operated on without anaesthesia – until late in the twentieth century.

The cost of living on the earth in the light of such ideas is desolation. We need other ideas and some are beginning to emerge – or re-emerge. As we struggle free of attitudes that place humans at the centre, we find an awareness we've been taught to ignore: the feeling that we live in an animate world, surrounded by animate beings. This awareness exists in most

of us, much as those buried streams still run beneath Toronto. When it surfaces it often brings a flood of emotion, a feeling of awe and reverence for the intricate world we are part of. Such moments demand a response of some kind.

We respond in many ways – with our hands clearing garbage and planting trees, with our minds and voices arguing the river's importance to a livable city, and with our whole selves creating communities of care for the river or other areas. When we respond to the river's presence with reverence and reverie, dreaming new possibilities for both it and ourselves, we are working to correct the balance of the world.

The word "response" is derived from the Latin *respondere*, meaning to promise or to pledge; and the Latin in turn descends from an Indo-European root, meaning to make an offering or to perform a ritual. To respond, it seems, is already a ritual act. Perhaps the deep human impulse to address the world, acknowledging its call and response, is the most innate ritual of all. In joining that call and response we are pledging the awareness and attention that are the beginning of change.

10

But water will go on
 Issuing from heaven.

In dumbness uttering spirit brightness
 Through its broken mouth.

Ted Hughes. "The River"

The workshop on the Don River took place in 1999. So did other events and activities around the river. In 2001, the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation was established, and naturalization of the Don's mouth was identified as a top priority, with funding promised by federal, provincial, and municipal levels of government.

The wheels of government grind slowly, and it wasn't until 2006 that the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority was granted approval for its Environmental Assessment Terms of Reference by the Province of Ontario. The Assessment addressed the restoration of the river's mouth to green and accessible land, and the construction of a berm to provide flood control to an area west of the Don. It was completed in 2008, and its components are now under construction.

Work remains to be done. How to reduce pollution in the river is a major question. But general interest in and concern for the Don River and its mouth remain high. Whether work on the area will be slowed or deflected by the current economic downturn is anybody's guess. In the meantime, Torontonians and others continue to walk, cycle, and run by the Don. The Don itself continues to sustain the vision of what it might be, flowing as its own reverie and uttering ragged tones through its broken mouth.

Second and third prize winning submissions will be published later this year.



Schouten Island Caretaker Program a success

WILDCARE volunteers and Parks and Wildlife Service staff wrapped up another successful year of the Schouten Island caretaker program with the last caretakers Adrian and Leonie Geard coming off the island on the in early May.

Schouten Island, in Freycinet National Park, is a popular stopover for boating and fishing enthusiasts, especially during the summer holiday season and the Sydney-Hobart Yacht Race.

The Schouten Island caretaker program began in 2007 but many of the volunteers have previously assisted PWS as part of a gorse eradication project.

Working in teams of two for a fortnight at a time, 24 volunteers undertook a range of activities including providing information to visitors, first aid, weed removal, collecting visitor statistics and recording wildlife observations.

Several caretakers also endured destructive summer storms, which added unplanned excitement to their stay on the island.

Northern Region manager Chris Colley praised the work of the volunteers.



Schouten Island accommodation at Moreys Bay

"Volunteer programs are an essential component of our core business and we are committed to the on-going support of these programs," Mr Colley said.

Applications for the 2009/2010 summer program will open in August 2009. Keep an eye on the WILDCARE website activity calendar at www.wildcareas.org.au/pages/calendar.php

Liz Wren, PWS

SPRATS achievements recognised in environment awards

The WILDCARE Inc group Sea Spurge Remote Area Teams (SPRATS), are celebrating after recently winning the community award at the Tasmanian Awards for Environmental Excellence.

The group's work has been the subject of articles in previous editions and has focussed on the Sea Spurge and Marram Grass control along the remote Southwest coastline between Cape Sorell (near Strahan) and Cockle Creek.

In the past three summers the group has surveyed this coastline with 350 of its 600 km being mapped as susceptible to invasion. To date they have treated 315 km (91 per cent) of susceptible areas.

SPRAT's remote area weeding techniques are highly practical and effective, with the potential to remove greater than 99 per cent of weeds following two or three treatments.

By the end of the 2012/13 field season the group is aiming to have controlled all infestations of these weeds, and be concentrating on surveillance and follow-up of minor infestations.

SPRATS has formed close linkages with the Parks and Wildlife Service as well as other groups doing similar work. PWS West Coast Parks and Reserves manager Chris Arthur was extremely grateful for the volunteer assistance provided by the group

"The success of SPRATS demonstrates that groups working in partnership with the PWS can achieve something that the PWS on its own, could never do."



PWS Parks and Reserves Manager Chris Arthur (left) with SPRATS members Jon Marsden-Smedley, Graeme Marshall and Julie Marshall.

Anyone interested in SPRATS work, and maybe joining them in the field next summer, can find more details on their website at: www.wildcareas.org.au/pages/groups.php (click on SPRATS).

The \$1500 prize money for this award will go towards the group's work next season.

Craig Saunders and Liz Wren

Park staff I've Worked With...

Continuing Bill Forsyth's chat about staff he has worked with in his long association with PWS. In the last edition we left Bill about to introduce us to Cathie Plowman. Read on

Cathie Plowman and Hank Schenkle were the instigators of the (Overland Track Hut Warden) Program. Cathie also helped initiate the track ranger program earlier. She was concerned about the Overland Track: messy campsites, messy huts, walkers inadequately prepared and having a miserable time with track sickness. She proposed a volunteer ranger program. PWS at the time questioned the use of volunteers and instead designed a program of employed track rangers. This was in the summer of 1986-87. Cathie became one of the first track rangers. This, she told me, was to become one of the best periods of her life. She regarded the job as a great privilege and did the job for seven seasons.

Cathie started life in Sydney. Her parents were bushwalkers, regularly walking in Tasmania. Her mother told her about the Overland Track, sheltering in Kitchen Hut, camping in Du Cane hut. She wanted to do these things too, and later on did so. She moved to Tasmania in 1981 to work as a volunteer for the Tasmanian Wilderness Society on the campaign to save the Franklin River. That part of her life she also regarded as a great privilege, but she said that was another story

Her first volunteer job with Parks was a pilot whale stranding at Strahan in the early 80s, then fulltime work followed right up to 2005. Then she worked part time until she went back to nursing. Cathie now works at the Beaconsfield Hospital in the Tamar Valley.

Her work with Parks was varied: interpretation section in Hobart, cook for track workers on the South Coast Track, track ranger, ranger, fire spotter, caves manager and back in interpretation section in Launceston. Along the way she carried out a statewide survey of Orange Bellied parrots in the breeding season of 1995.

She set up the volunteer program at the Tamar Island Wetland Centre. Like the track ranger and hut warden programs this one has been a wonderful success.

She told me, "The truth is, the community wants to be involved with their national parks and reserves. These places belong to the whole community and not the privileged few who are fortunate enough to have a paid job with PWS."

Cathie, to raise money for a very good cause, once walked from the Northwest tip of Tassie to the Northeast tip. She is now (like us!) back to being a Parks volunteer, working with Karstcare at Gunns Plains and doing some freelance volunteer interpretation work. Her latest project is the Walk of Gold at Beaconsfield.

I asked Cathie, "What was your favourite Parks activity?", and her answer was,

"Without a doubt it was communicating with Parks visitors and linking them with the Parks experience that best suited them. I love the Tasmanian bush and I love to help people enjoy it."

So, at various times, being with Cathie has been a pleasure for me, being associated with a very experienced person with lots of knowledge about every part of Tassie. One of a group of very fine people working with Parks.

Next, I shall tell you a little of Krissy Ward. The volunteers working at Birches Inlet and Narcissus Hut will already know



Bill Forsyth April 2009

her. After working on the Overland Track Hut Warden Program my next volunteering experience was with the Orange Bellied Parrot Recovery Program. And especially the bird monitoring at Birches Inlet.

Because of the remoteness volunteers at Birches had to do the work in pairs. I joined an American couple for my first trip. They had retired to Tasmania and lived in the Bay of Fires area. And what great company they were. Pete was a mathematician with the Star Wars program (nothing to do with the movies). Beth worked with the CIA. She was a tourist guide, showing visitors around the CIA headquarters in Virginia. I travelled with them to Strahan. We stayed overnight in the Parks office situated in the old Customs House. There were two flats at the rear with wonderful wide wooden staircases to the rooms above. It was for me a pleasure to stay there. The next season I stayed there as well. Today, as far as I know, the flats are occupied by PWS staff.

We were picked up by Krissy and taken to the boat ramp where Mario (the chartered boat operator) put his craft into the water. His method of launching was to back the trailer into the water and reverse the craft into deep water. Novel, I thought!

We picked up the gear to go to Birches from the Strahan wharves, and also Krissy's mother, father and partner. Mum and Dad were from Queensland visiting. And so we travelled across Macquarie Harbour and down into Birches Inlet.

The charter boat went as far as a landing at the last of the deep water and we unloaded the gear and ourselves onto the landing. Then we loaded the gear into a 'pussycat' dinghy (with 4 hp motor) and did several trips up the inlet to Frog Lodge (see Jean Taylor's article and photo in this edition). Did you ever see the film 'African Queen'? Well, it was like that. Travelling through a tunnel of vegetation until we came to the second landing. Unloaded the gear into a wheelbarrow for the last one kilometre walk to the Lodge.

More about Birches Inlet and Krissy next edition

Bill Forsyth



Woodvine Nature Care Group Gets Started

Everybody needs their friends, and Woodvine Nature Reserve is no exception.

Woodvine is 377 hectares of native vegetation and old farmland with significant natural and cultural values. Daniel and Elizabeth Long began farming Woodvine in 1861 and Ernie Shaw, the last of the family to live there, gifted the land and timber buildings to the Parks and Wildlife Service in 2001 and continued to live there until shortly before his death in 2005. The recently formed WILDCARE Friends of Woodvine group, which includes members of the Long and Shaw families, held working bees on the 3rd and 31st May this year and an enormous amount of work was done.

Parks have developed a catch-up maintenance plan for the Woodvine buildings and the Friends are helping put it into action.

Vegetation has been cleared from around the buildings to allow access and create small firebreaks. Weeds were removed from inside some of the buildings as well.

The 1920's soldier settler cottage has had some temporary weatherproofing applied where window glass had been removed by vandals. The Friends have also replaced missing and rotten weatherboards on this cottage (which has a wonderful display of daffodils in front of it in spring) and we installed flashing to direct water away from the foundations.

Woodvine's other buildings include a 1920's stable, the plans for which were found amongst the contents of Ernie Shaw's cottage. The Friends have begun removing a thick covering of old hay from inside the stable as it is now a significant fire hazard. Parks staff have begun stabilisation work on the stable, the 1861 house, the 1940's fuel store and the two-seater toilet. A group of Green Corps dismantled the collapsed blacksmith's shop and re-erected two walls and displayed some of the hand-forged objects found inside.

Daniel and Elizabeth Long had 14 children at Woodvine and 13 of them lived long lives. Their twelfth child, Oswald Charles Bertram, was born in June 1885 and died four months later.



Woodvine Working Bee 3 May 2009

He is buried behind the 1861 house and members of the family removed weeds and pruned the shrubs on his grave, revealing for the first time that it was marked with a ring of stones. We plan to add a plaque for Oswald later.

We've also been working on pruning some of the pear trees in the orchard in an effort to get them to fruit again and we've made a start on containing the Spanish heath (*Erica lusitanica*) infestation. We suspect that's going to be a long job!

At both working bees, the Friends were delighted to see wedge tailed eagles soaring above Woodvine, keeping an eye on what we were doing and reminding us of the things that make Woodvine a place worth befriending.

You can join the Friends of Woodvine Group on the WILDCARE Inc website, or call Jackie Bice, Volunteer Facilitator, PWS, on 6214 8107.

Linda Forbes



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Diary of a Serial Weeder

(Vicki Campbell has recently retired from full time paid work and seems to have found a new calling with WILDCARE vegetation management projects, in particular weed control. Over the summer 2008-2009 she found time to take part in extended projects on Maria Island, Tasman Island, Maatsuyker Island and the Furneaux Group. When I asked her to describe her experiences it wasn't surprising to find she didn't have much spare time to prepare a report. Instead, she has offered this excerpt from her diary describing a recent visit to Maatsuyker Island...)

Wednesday 18th March 2009

After dodging the clouds along the south coast, our helicopter makes its way across to Maatsuyker Island and sets down on possibly the largest piece of flat land on the island. We are greeted at the helipad by John & Lorraine. Once working as paid lighthouse keepers at Australia's northernmost lighthouse on Booby Island, they are now volunteer caretakers here at the most southerly one.

We're the first visitors they've seen since arriving six weeks ago, and there's home-cooked morning tea waiting for us at Q2 – one of the former keeper's houses and our home for the next nine nights. None of us realise at the time, but already the pattern has been set - this was to be a trip where no-one would go hungry.

Friday 20th March

Having been warned to expect cold, wet and windy conditions, it's almost unnerving to wake to a still, mild day. Today we continue our work on the blackberries, returning to an area which was only discovered and treated in February 2008. Although we spend quite a bit of time treating re-growth here, the piles of dead canes give us some idea of the extent of the original patch, and we're impressed with the good job done by the last working bee.

We spend the rest of today and tomorrow visiting all the known blackberry sites on the island. Some of these were first treated as long ago as November 2004. We're still finding isolated canes, but in some cases this is all that's left of dense thickets which were once up to five metres high. It's encouraging to see how successful the treatment has been, but at the same time we can see how vital it is that this follow up work continues. Blackberry is a "Weed of National Significance" and the National Blackberry Programme lists Maatsuyker Island (along with the rest of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area) as a National Priority Area for eradication.

That evening we enjoy pre-dinner drinks and 'nibbles' on the balcony of the lighthouse, before returning to Q2 where John & Lorraine join us for dinner.

Sunday 22nd March

One of the duties of the caretakers is to do the weather observations three times a day. We visit John and Lorraine as they take the readings for the 9am report. They're coming to grips with the cloud descriptions – the main problem they have now is that the clouds often change by the time they've sent the full report.

Taking advantage of the fine weather, we spend the next two days doing weed survey work, extending the area already checked for weeds on previous trips. Starting at the road, we work our way either east or west towards the coast, stopping only when the slope becomes too steep to continue. It's slow going, and even in our "high-vis" vests we often lose sight of each other in the thick scrub. But we're rewarded by spectacular views of the coastline, and unexpected sights such as vast masses of Dianella laden with ripe blue berries.

Tuesday 24th March

Sitting quietly in the dark, we can barely make out the little figures of Short-tailed Shearwaters (mutton birds) as they emerge from the bush onto the track. I'm not often out of bed at 5am, but this is the second time I've done it in the last few



Maatsuyker Weeders from left Karen Ziegler (Project leader), Marina Campbell, Vicki Campbell, Phil Hearps and Mark Alexander

days – this is too good to miss. Although there are only a few birds on the track, they seem to queue and politely wait their turn, as if waiting for clearance from air traffic control. One by one they move up to the helipad, stretch their wings a couple of times, and take off. It's steady and orderly at first, then as daylight approaches more and more birds stream in from the scrub, and there's a real sense of increasing urgency. We must have seen hundreds of birds leave during this brief morning rush. I haven't experienced anything quite like this before, and it just adds to my appreciation of why we're here.

Maatsuyker Island is home to a huge breeding colony of Short-tailed Shearwaters - some estimates put the number at a million pairs. There are several other species of burrowing sea birds as well, including the endangered Soft-plumaged Petrel. Although the island is free of feral predators (there are no cats or rats), invasive weeds do pose a serious threat to the habitat of these birds. Ironically perhaps, the long-term presence of the birds has contributed to the highly fertile soils which provide ideal conditions for the woody weed *Hebe elliptica*. Many of these shrubs had grown so large that they needed to be cut by chainsaw when first treated.

After breakfast we turn our efforts to checking the sites where primary control of *Hebe* was done a year ago, pulling seedlings and treating the larger plants with herbicide.

Thursday 26th March

John and Lorraine are keeping us up-to-date with the latest forecasts.

The weather has been exceptionally kind to us until now, but as our departure date approaches the winds are strengthening. We start to wonder if we'll be able to leave tomorrow, but no-one seems concerned at the thought of staying longer.

Karen heads off to finish spraying *Montbretia*, while the rest of us continue on from yesterday's survey work. Not long after we enter the scrub, there's a heavy downpour. If the rain didn't do the job, the dripping vegetation ensures that we are soaked through. Karen calls a halt to work for the day. All up we have surveyed about 14 hectares on this trip.

Friday 27th March

John comes up to the house to let us know that the morning's weather is OK for the helicopter. A final quick pack and clean-up, and we're on our way up to the helipad.



Thanks are always due to all the people who make these special trips possible. In this case, to Karen for her work in co-ordinating the trip, to Pip & Craig for all their behind-the-scenes work, particularly in organising transport of gear to the island, and to caretakers John & Lorraine for their hospitality and support during our stay.

Vicki Campbell



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Maatsuyker Island Lighthouse



John and Lorraine Walker enjoy the view from Maatsuyker Island Lighthouse

The lighthouse stands on steep, rocky cliffs
 On the islands south facing shore.
 Buffeted by the south west wind
 That blows both cold and raw.

Seaman sailing this wild, rugged coast
 Demanded a guiding light.
 Where would they build in this untamed land?
 Maatsuyker was the chosen site.

It took special men to build the station,
 On this wild and solitary isle.
 The type of men, who built our nation,
 Strength and courage was their style.

You have to admire the steely resolve of the
 Keepers who called maat home
 With all the hardships experienced here
 No power, no radio, no phone

The stories you read of this early time
 Of lighthouse and island life
 Rarely tell of the daily trials
 Of the lightkeepers stoic wife

Now this gracious, old lighthouse
 No longer guides sailors at night
 It is old fashioned, outdated, redundant
 Replaced by a small, solar light

Technology extinguished it's flashing light
 And snuffed out its reason to be
 For 100 years it served all who sailed
 Across the great southern sea.

Sadly i look at the rusting rails,
 Peeling paint and leaky panes
 I note too the set direction of the
 Rusted up, old weather vane.

The brass is no longer polished and
 The prisms are dull with dust
 For the future of this grand old lighthouse
 In government we must trust.

Now volunteers man the station
 They keep up a presence here
 But will our history be abandoned?
 This is my one great fear!!!

Lorraine Walker 2009

(Lorraine and John Walker were volunteer caretakers on Maatsuyker Island over the period February – June 2009. More details on this program from PWS Volunteer Facilitator Pip Gowen on 03 6264 8463)

WILDCARE Merchandise Arrives

WILDCARE has recently decided to dive deeper into the world of commercial merchandising by providing a range of WILDCARE badged clothing items for volunteers, WILDCARE members (and the general public?).

The order form in this issue provides details of our offerings which have been supplied by Richard Blundell from Pumpkin Prints in Hobart, a long term supplier of WILDCARE's printing and clothing requirements.

For our initial trial run (which comprises \$5,000 worth of stock) sales and distribution will be handled by hard working WILDCARE treasurer and Wildtimes editor Craig Saunders from a shipping container at Huonville (lucky Craig!).

Depending on the success of the venture we may upgrade to a department store in the city, or more likely draw on the professional mail order services of Australia Post or the soon to be announced Parks and Wildlife Store (sshh.. I think that's secret).

The clothing will be available to anyone through the ordering process described on the order form but will also be available to WILDCARE project managers, group presidents and staff of our partner agencies (PWS, DPIW etc) to provide clothing to volunteers as rewards or program uniforms for much reduced rates.

Prices for this scheme are available from Craig at his normal contacts.

Extra badging for special programs can also be arranged.

Note that this new scheme will replace the old WILDCARE scheme of volunteer rewards whereby WILDCARE and Parks and Wildlife Service shared the costs of polar fleece vests for volunteers who had reached milestone numbers of volunteer hours.

We look forward to your order!

Craig Saunders



Wildtimes Publication Schedule

EDITION #	COPY DEADLINE	PUBLICATION
36	1 November 2009	1 December 2009
37	1 March 2010	1 April 2010
38	1 July 2010	1 August 2010

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

WILDCARE Gift Fund Donations

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

Large Donations

\$100,000 from Dick Smith, as the second annual donation to the Frenchmans Cap track project. \$25,000 from Bruny Island Charters and Tasman Island Cruises.

Donations of between \$100 and \$1,000

Phil Wyatt, Chris Arthur, Ingrid McGaughey (Rehabilitation Tasmania), Shaun Field, Andrew Johnson.

Donations up to \$100

Dallas Baker, Denise Schultz, Revel Munro, Kathryn Jury, Rachel Daniels, Vivienne Muller, Sally Brown, Alejandro Capul, Glen Hayhurst, Tim Turner, Robert Connell, Mandy Richardson, Pip Gowen, Andrew Smith.

Special Thanks

A special donation was received from the family and friends of the late Dr Anne Matz, made in lieu of flowers at her recent funeral. Anne moved to Tasmania from Central Europe in the mid 1940s and was an avid bushwalker and naturalist well into her 90s. She dearly loved every aspect of and was a strong advocate for our natural environment.



WILDCARE Clothing Order Form

Note: prices include GST. No additional charge for postage.



POLAR FLEECE JACKET (Green, full zip)	
Circle size	S M L XL
Item cost	\$60.00
How many?	
Total cost this item	



POLAR FLEECE VEST (Green, blue)	
Circle size	S M L XL
Item cost	\$45.00
How many?	
Total cost this item	



RUGBY TOP (Green/White)	
Circle size	S M L XL
Item cost	\$45.00
How many?	
Total cost this item	



BEANIE (Charcoal)	
Circle size	S M L XL
Item cost	\$12.00
How many?	
Total cost this item	



POLO SHIRT (Green)	
Circle size	S M L XL
Item cost	\$30.00
How many?	
Total cost this item	



CAP (Green)	
Circle size	S M L XL
Item cost	\$12.00
How many?	
Total cost this item	



T SHIRT (Green)	
Circle size	S M L XL
Item cost	\$25.00
How many?	
Total cost this item	



BROAD-RIMMED HAT (Green)	
Circle size	S M L XL
Item cost	\$16.00
How many?	
Total cost this item	

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WILDCARE Gift Fund Contributes to Cat Eradication of Tasman Island

The WILDCARE Tasmanian Coast Conservation Fund (a sub-fund of the WILDCARE Gift Fund), co-founded by Bruny Island Charters, Tasman Island Cruises and WILDCARE Inc in 2008 is helping to complete the groundwork for a major eradication program for cats on Tasman Island.

Project manager and PWS Ranger Luke Gadd said that work is proceeding on developing a cat eradication program for the island in response to the impacts cats are having on native wildlife and in particular bird species such as the fairy prion.

Department of Primary Industries and Water wildlife biologist Sue Robinson said that while the number of cats on the island isn't known, it's obvious they are having a large impact on birds and in particular, fairy prions that nest in burrows in the island's rocky terrain.

"Prions are easily caught because they alight in cave entrances before running into crevices and burrows," Sue said.

"Each cat probably kills two to four prions per night. If there are 50 cats on the island, that equates to 36,500 to 73,000 birds per year."

An eradication plan was completed by consultants Landcare Research from New Zealand in March, following a visit to the island in December 2008. The plan recommends certain research and monitoring be undertaken before eradication with two aims; to develop baseline data to evaluate the success of the project and to fill in knowledge gaps about cat behaviour on the island.

Luke said this information will help to determine the best time of year for an eradication effort, particularly in regard to prey abundance levels.

The eradication plan also recommends a series of sub-plans for proper coordination of the project. These include a procurement and staffing strategy, and separate plans for research and monitoring, operations, occupational health and safety, communications and biosecurity.

Luke said the intention is to complete the sub-plans by October to progress the project to a point where, when money becomes available, the project is ready to go.

A \$41,000 grant from the WILDCARE Tasmania Coast Conservation Fund, of which tourism operator Rob Pennicott is the major donor, is providing for the research and monitoring phase of the project to proceed.



DPIW Biologist Sue Robinson with Shearwater killed by Feral Cat

The majority of the funds are being spent on purchasing remote area cameras, GPS collars for the cats, and transport costs. This research includes identifying cat movement patterns through GPS telemetry work, establishing baseline data on seabird abundance and diversity for pre and post-eradication monitoring and researching the relative abundance of fairy prions through the autumn/winter/spring period to determine if there is a period of least abundance on the island and thus an optimal baiting period.

"We will also be able to undertake field trials of the preferred bait for the eradication, to monitor uptake levels by non-target species as well as confirm the palatability for cats - we don't want to use bait the cats won't eat," Luke said.

Luke and members of the project team were joined on their monthly Tasman Island monitoring trip in April by two Mexican eradication practitioners from 'Conservacion de Islas'.

Jose Berredo and Luciana Luna, who work on Guadalupe Island, were visiting Australia and New Zealand to gather information about options and experiences with local eradication practitioners. Department Sue Robinson and Luke were able to show them the research and methodology established for the project and discuss potential issues with the Tasman Island project and their project on Guadalupe. Volunteer members of the WILDCARE Friends of Tasman Island will assist with the eradication program and follow-up monitoring.

Liz Wren, PWS



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We are seeking up to 10 keen volunteers who will form a partnership with one of five schools in the northwest. Initially each school will be assigned one or two Volunteer Environmental Educators. Their role will be to support the environmental education program within the school and to promote and support an ongoing and active partnership between the local national park, local reserves and the school.

All selected Volunteer Environmental Educators will initially undertake a free three day training course at "The Lodge", Lake Barrington 30 Sep 09 – 2 Oct 09 and will commence in one of the following five schools on 5 Oct 09: Ulverstone High School, Ulverstone Primary School, Hillcrest Primary School, Riana Primary School and Wesley Vale Primary School.

To apply please contact Stephen Mansfield, Regional Volunteer Facilitator, on (03) 6429 8727.

Some of the other great photos that didn't quite make it to the cover! Thanks!



Fencing on Deal Island,
see more on page 5 ◀

Rock Lobster in Maria
Island Marine Reserve,
see more on page 6 ▶



Kevin Heaton on Tasman Island,
see more on page 9 ▶

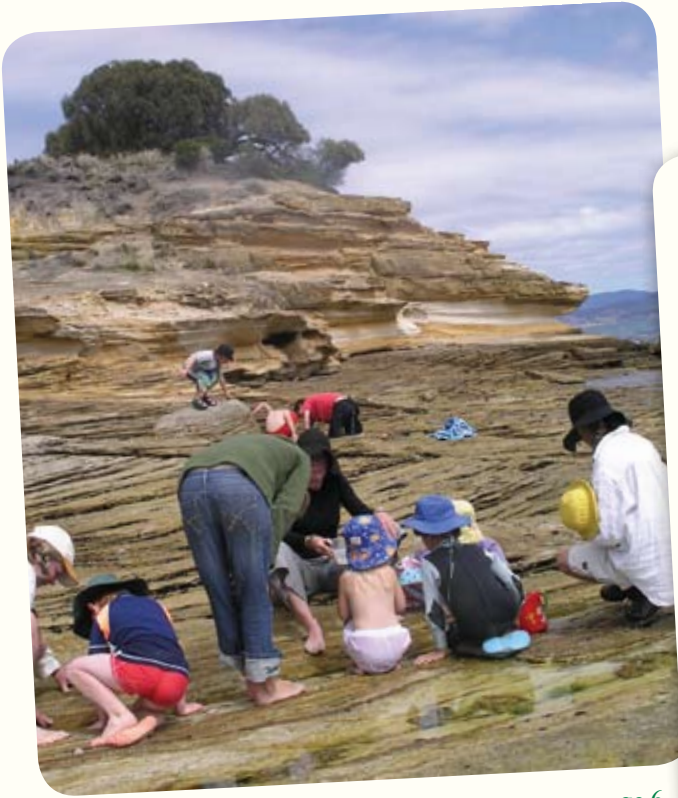


David Edgar and Chris
Creese on Tasman Island,
see more on page 9 ◀



Mark Alexander in
the scrub, see more on
page 18 ▶





Rockpool Discoveries on Maria Island, see more on page 6



Dry Stone Walling at Oatlands, see more on page 8



Stainglass Window, St James Jericho, see more on page 10



Volunteer Sue Heaton on Tasman Island, see more on page 9



WILDCARE Inc

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