



WILD TIMES

Edition 36 December 2009



MT WELLINGTON, A PARK CLOSE TO HOME



ECOLOGICAL BURNING HELPS RARE ORCHIDS



PETE SMITH JOINS THE WILDCARE BOARD



WILDCARE AT THE BAY OF FIRES



Editorial

Well ... Why not? All the best magazines have an editorial so why can't we have one?

Being the first editorial I thought I might spend a few moments describing just what we at WILDCARE expect from this little document.

You've probably noticed that most of the articles describe projects that WILDCARE branches (our Community Action in Reserves or CAREs groups) have undertaken or are planning to undertake.

So, Wildtimes is a celebration of all that WILDCARE achieves. And these days, we don't have to look too far for plenty of things to write about on that front.

With every edition there are new branches to talk about, more fundraising success stories and most importantly more happening on the ground, more volunteer projects and more projects funded by the WILDCARE Gift Fund.

Which doesn't mean that it's always dead easy to source the articles themselves.

I spend a good deal of time badgering project managers for reports.

Still, I accept that as part of the job and hope that you in turn are sympathetic and get on with that contribution you promised!

It's always easy to focus on the project manager for a formal report but often it's even better to read something from the ordinary (Are they ever ordinary?) volunteer members of the crew.

If you've taken part in a WILDCARE project recently then why



not commit your experiences to paper for others to get benefit (or a laugh) from?

In this edition you will read about our 'Take the WILDCARE Option' campaign designed to increase WILDCARE membership among Parks and Wildlife Service All Parks Pass holders.

If (I mean 'when') this campaign works we'll have many new members and so many more copies of Wildtimes to send out.

So, in parallel with this campaign we are also modifying our WILDCARE website to finally give us the ability to send the magazine electronically to those who so choose.

So I ask all members to consider saving on paper and postage by making this choice: log on to the website as a WILDCARE member and in your personal details click the option to receive Wildtimes (or a link) by email. We'll do the rest.

Craig Saunders

Volunteer Wanted – Our Treasurer Needs A Deputy

WILDCARE is seeking a volunteer (or several volunteers) to take on management of WILDCARE finances for the first half of 2010 while the current treasurer takes some well earned leave.

This is a challenging but rewarding role in the 'engine room' of the 'WILDCARE machine'. To carry out this role you'll need 1-2 days free each week, a general familiarity with small business finances and a willingness to handle the fine detail. You'll

need an internet connection at home (or wherever you want to work), but WILDCARE can supply a new laptop. Experience with accounting package MYOB would be very handy.

Above all, you need to be keen! We can provide training in most of the rest. If you're interested contact our current treasurer Craig Saunders on 6266 3148, 0429 868 833 or Craig.Saunders@parks.tas.gov.au



Wildtimes Publication Schedule

EDITION #	COPY DEADLINE	PUBLICATION
37	1 March 2010	1 April 2010
38	1 July 2010	1 August 2010
39	1 November 2010	1 December 2010

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

ON THE FRONT COVER:

Wellington Park Bushcare volunteers Ted Milne (left) and Greg Kidd survey the scenery overlooking Mountain River. See more on page 3



A Park Close to Home

Weeds gave birth to the Wellington Park Bushcare Group. It all started when some Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) was noticed growing on an abandoned fire trail and into the edge of the bushland. It was at an altitude of 950 metres and not far below the summit of Collins Cap in Wellington Park.

Although thought to be only a small task, we assumed that it would not be at the top of priorities for the area manager, the Parks and Wildlife Service. "We should offer to tackle the outbreak", were the thoughts of Jean Taylor, John Hamilton and Peter Franklin, and this proposal was taken up by the park managers.

It took two trips to clear the Gorse and pockets of Spanish Heath (*Erica lusitania*) discovered nearby. Some members of the Australian Plant Society along with bushwalking friends helped and after such a successful venture, there was an urge to do more and thus the Wellington Park Bushcare Group was formed.

That all took place in early 2002 and since then we have formed links with the Hobart and Glenorchy City Councils as well as the Wellington Park Management Trust and the Parks and Wildlife Service.

The group provides opportunity for volunteers to repair environmental damage stemming from weeds and gain a sense of achievement and involvement in a project that has long term environmental and community benefit.

A day is spent each month on a working bee at various locations in the park, mostly getting rid of Erica, Gorse and Broom (*Genista monspessulana* and *Cytisus scoparius*). Additional working bees are held, including surveys and recently we have extended our activities to include walking track maintenance in some of the remote locations within the park.

Attendance on working bees varies from four or five, up to a dozen people and, despite some weed infestations looking quite daunting, at the end of the day surprise is often expressed about how much has been achieved. This is helped by the three or four Hobart City Council bush crew who work with us when we are in their part of the park.

We have managed to strike up a good relationship with the staff looking after fire breaks and this has resulted in a coordination of our work and the Council weed spraying programme. Transend have also come to the party by spraying outbreaks under power line easements.

Wellington Park Bushcare Group has been successful in obtaining three Envirofund grants (the fore-runner of the new Caring for our Country grants).

The first of these was in 2003 to rehabilitate priority sites by targeting an area which posed threats to the biodiversity values on the mountain, namely weed areas on track sides which are providing infestation sources for deeper into the reserve. This project included undertaking weed mapping across the park, building on existing data and focusing efforts on removing prioritised isolated weed infestations.

The other grants have been to rehabilitate and protect highly significant populations of the threatened Epacris species. One for *Epacris acuminata* in Goat Hills and the other for *Epacris virgata* near the Tolosa entrance to the park.

In both instances these rare plants were at risk from invading Spanish Heath. Dense old stands Gorse were also tackled as



Ted Milne, Dave Tucker and Greg Kidd on Thark Ridge

part of all three projects.

We have managed to get a grant from the Australian Government to purchase equipment such as safety items, first aid packs and good quality tools to make our work easier and safer and have supplemented these from Landcare grants and in October 2009 we secured a grant from WILDCARE to further our work.

We are always very happy to welcome along new volunteers and our email contact is wellingtonpark@iprimus.com.au or you can ring the President, Mike Bowden on 6278 7295 or Peter Franklin on 6228 4889. The Wellington Park Bushcare Group has a group page on the WILDCARE website.

Peter Franklin
Wellington Park Bushcare

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2010 Tasmanian Lighthouses Swan and Goose Island Calendar

NOW ON SALE

Once again WILDCARE branches Friends of Tasman Island (FOTI) and Friends of Deal Island (FODI) have joined to publish a Lighthouse Calendar for 2010.

After featuring Tasman, Maatsuyker and Deal Island in past issues next year the 'lucky' islands are Swan and Goose Islands.

Located off the north east coast of Tasmania these two islands, their beauty and history, their lighthouses and the keepers' quarters, are once again stunningly presented in the calendar produced by Tasmania 40 Degrees South.

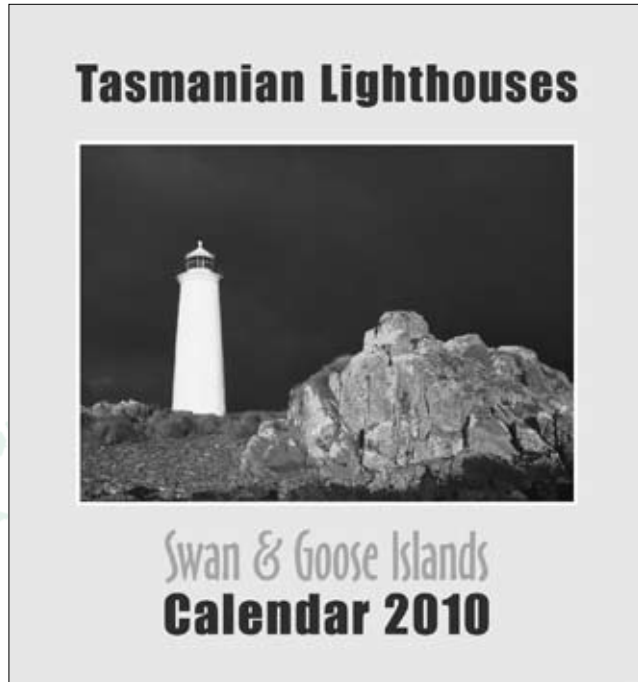
Showcasing a remarkable series of images sourced from highly renowned photographer John Ibbotson, private collections, the National Archives of Australia and the State Library of Tasmania's collections, as well as photographs taken by volunteers and caretakers, this year's Calendar captures the splendour and wild remoteness of these tiny Bass Strait islands and their light stations.

An exciting addition is the inclusion of four historic record sheets for the collector.

Sponsored by the Cascade Brewery Company and Tasmania 40 Degrees South, the Tasmanian Lighthouses Calendar series is one of the major fundraising projects for FOTI and FODI.

Working in partnership with the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service these two groups are dedicated to the preservation of the natural and built heritage of these lighthouse islands.

You can purchase your limited edition calendar now as a stunning gift for yourself, family and friends and know



2010 Lighthouse Calendar Cover

that you are helping to support the ongoing work of these WILDCARE groups.

Visit www.wildcareas.org.au to purchase a calendar on line or to download an order form or email taslighthousescal@netspace.net.au to place your order!

Carol Jackson
Friends of Tasman Island



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Deal Island leads the way with fundraising success

(from WILDCARE Treasurer, Craig Saunders)

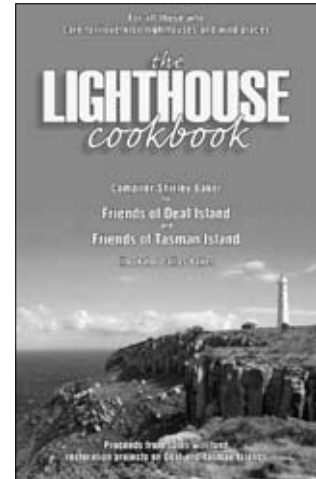
It's become a familiar pattern over the last few months: receiving another application form in the mail, followed by a press release to say the application has been successful and noting the WILDCARE branch involved: Friends of Deal Island, again!

While FOTI is not our only branch having success with fundraising, this group has been so successful lately that I thought it worth tallying up their achievements over the last six months or so.

Their grant application successes have included:

Caring for our Country (Aust Govt.) \$33,044; NRM North Community Grant \$5,000; Tasmanian Community Fund \$10,670.

Add to this a still outstanding application to the Aust Govt Jobs Fund and successful fundraising publications The 2010 Swan and Goose Island Calendar (see details elsewhere in this issue)



Lighthouse Cookbook Cover

and the Lighthouse Cookbook (soon to be released) and you can see how busy this group has been.

So, congratulations to Dallas, Shirley, Bob and Penny and the rest of the team from all at WILDCARE.

A Postcard from Deal Island Working Bee October 2009

(This message arrived from Deal Island attached to an exhausted carrier pigeon just as I was completing copy for this edition. ... editor)

Our team of eight met up in Whitemark on Friday evening, 16 October, ready for a 5.30am start the next morning. We loaded the Strait Lady in drizzly rain, and eased away from the jetty as the first light lit up the Strzelecki Peaks.

A four hour trip in reasonable conditions saw us arriving in East Cove. Caretakers Janine and Laurie welcomed us and transported all our gear to the top of the hill.

By lunch time we were settled in to the visitor's house and had commenced assembling the first of the new bunks courtesy of a grant from Tasmanian Community Fund.

By midday Sunday all five beds were completed. Our new pots and pans and a variety of utensils were unpacked.

The new stove and fridge had not arrived on Flinders Island, so after many phone calls, they were both located in the suppliers warehouse.

Now at the halfway point of the working bee, we have weeded dozens of tiny arum lilies from several sites, removed regrowth sea spurge from all three beaches, marram grass at Winter Cove has been wiped with herbicide, the introduced cumbungi has been cut off below water level at Typha Pool leaving the native typha intact, creticum mullein and great mullein rosettes have been removed from sites at Garden Cove, horehound has been weeded from most of the known sites, and ragwort removed from a few of the outlier sites at Winter Cove and Garden Cove.

Thanks to NRM North Community Action Grants for sponsoring this work.



Deal Island Working Bee Hard At It

We have dismantled a defunct water tank from the museum and removed it to the tip, built a new longer clothes line, and measured up a number of jobs for future working bees.

The weather has been fine every day, and the water is warm enough for quick swims by several of the team.

Jobs for the rest of our stay includes marking and mapping weed patches, building a series of enclosures at East Cove to measure the impact of wallaby grazing, more weeding, and various maintenance tasks.

Cheers from Sally, Sue, Kev, Steve, Shirley, Dallas, Penny and Bob.

Ecological Burning to Enhance Orchid Population

The WILDCARE group, Threatened Plants Tasmania (see Wildtimes Issue 23, December 2008) is using some of its Community Grant funds from the World Wildlife Fund Threatened Species Network to discover the extent of endangered orchid populations by burning key habitats.

In April 2009 ecological burns were conducted in four different areas at Rubicon Sanctuary near Port Sorell and a unit of a property near Hobart Airport.

At Rubicon Sanctuary, the Marsh Leek Orchid, *Prasophyllum limnetes* and the Pretty Leek Orchid, *Prasophyllum pulchellum* had previously been seen in the areas that were burnt.

These threatened orchid species live in marshes that are usually wet in winter.

The two orchid species are known to respond well to fire, producing onion-like leaves and flowering stems about 20–30cm high from their underground tubers.

A lot of preparation is needed before the day the fires are lit: slashing fire breaks around the areas to be burnt; raking up the slashed vegetation and carting it well away from the fire areas; slashing around the bases of trees and removing low branches.

The District Fire Officer and the head of a nearby fire brigade gave us advice and selected the day and the time for the burn: a scientific process that involved assessing the wind speed, humidity and soil moisture.



Ecological Burns at Rubicon Sanctuary

They knew that we wanted a burn that was hot enough to clear all surface vegetation but not so fierce as to ignite the peaty soil.

Members from four local fire service crews were involved on the day itself, using the burns as opportunities for their volunteers to observe fire behaviour in the open.

They brought their big water tanker and several smaller fire trucks on site to provide enough water to wet down the fire breaks and powerful pumps to douse any small fires that might get up into hollow tree branches.

It was impressive to watch how one member of the fire crew lit up strips of vegetation using a petrol drip can whilst the rest patrolled the edges.

After an initial down-wind strip of vegetation had been burnt, each subsequent strip burnt with the wind behind it into a strip that had been burnt before.

Alternatively, the down-wind strip would protect a fire that was lit around the perimeter of the unburnt area; in this case the heat rising from the blaze sucks the fire inwards creating a short-lived inferno.

In these ways the fire is kept well under control. It all looked so easy in the hands of well-trained fire fighters who were able to respond rapidly to any small breakouts.

Once the flames had died down, we all adjourned to a well-earned barbeque, keeping an eye on the blackened patches of ground that were re-checked before the fire volunteers went home.

Now we live in expectation that as spring warms up the two threatened orchid species will have been stimulated by the fire to flower again.

We are already tracking the development of likely looking leaves.

Robin Garnett and Phil Collier
Rubicon Sanctuary and Threatened Plants Tasmania

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Friends of Melaleuca

Friends of Melaleuca is a WILDCARE group formed in autumn this year with the aim of caring for Melaleuca, in far South West Tasmania.

The group will work in partnership with PWS and private leaseholders to assist with maintenance of infrastructure including buildings, and to care for the natural values in the Melaleuca vicinity.

The group kicked off with a BBQ in May at a congenial setting among the hills of Glen Huon, where we were tantalized by a view into the edge of the South West.

Great ideas were shared, and a few decisions made which were followed up and consolidated at another meeting in August.

Friends of Melaleuca hopes to organize its first working-bee in autumn 2010, and the plan at this stage is to target the Charles King Memorial Hut, which is suffering somewhat from damp and mould.

Treating the ceiling and painting the roof are likely priorities as well as planning and measuring-up for future work.

Early this year an area encompassing the bushwalkers huts, the Kings' residency lease and part of the tin mine was listed on the Tasmanian Heritage Register.

The historians among us suggested that a conservation plan for the listed area should be prepared prior to any work being undertaken by the group.

The Conservation Plan will provide guidelines for an appropriate works program. Archaeologist David Parham and historian Ian Terry will visit the site in January to undertake the groundwork for the report.

As with other remote reserves, particularly the islands, access makes transport of materials one of the big issues. This requires long-term planning and is expensive. Therefore fundraising is the current priority of the group!

To this end, Friends of Melaleuca held a film night in July,



Charles King Memorial Hut

raising over \$2,000 in donations.

This was an encouraging start, and the audience obviously appreciated the opportunity to view a number of interesting segments of historical footage of Melaleuca and Port Davey.

The program included a presentation about an expedition in 1910 to view a solar eclipse from Port Davey; the 1961 film of a bushwalk from Lake Pedder the Port Davey—'Five South West'; the Launceston Walking Club film 'Tin miners of Port Davey' shot in 1983; a short sequence featuring Deny King, made by a visiting French film crew; and 'Return to Port Davey', James Middleton's documentary made in 2002 about crayfishermen, the South Coast and Port Davey.

Some beautiful stills by Luuk Veltkamp and Geoff Fenton were also shown. After the films, old friends and acquaintances caught up over supper, and a good time was had by all.

If you missed that show, there is a chance to catch the same program in Launceston on 20 November 2009, or in Hobart in March 2010.

Janet Fenton

President, Friends of Melaleuca

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Lillico Penguins Prepare for New Season

Friends of Lillico Penguins (FoLP) have been busy during the off season continuing to implement our weed strategy programme and preparing to start our guiding activities.

During a working-bee on the 11 July 2009 a few members re-seated some of the man made concrete burrows and cleared entrances of excess foliage. Unfortunately, last year some members of the public lifted up burrows to look inside when there were no guides or Parks and Wildlife staff present.

This behaviour is completely unacceptable and could cause the penguins to desert their eggs or young, and we hope that this will never happen again. A second working-bee was held on 15 August. This was well attended with Steve Mansfield and Kelvin Barratt from PWS and eleven members from FoLP. We removed a large amount of Cape Ivy (*Delairea odorata*) and other invasive weeds such as thistles.

After working hard we held an end of season/beginning of season BBQ provided by Steve and Kelvin. The BBQ was held at the Central North Wildlife Care and Rescue Centre at Forthside.

Alaistair Ross and Julia Butler-Ross showed us their new educational facilities and talked about their work before we tucked into a hearty lunch.

The rain just held off for a short tour of the outside structures and Alaistair described his work with injured raptors. Everybody enjoyed the day, which combined work, information and a great lunch.

FoLP need to recruit at least two more guides for the coming season. We can provide any new guides on-site training and an experienced partner until you feel confident.

Volunteers would need to:

Live close to Lillico (which is between Devonport and Turners Beach), as guiding involves being at the platform from about 1 hour before dark to two hours after dark.

Be concerned for the welfare of penguins and enjoy watching them.

Be keen to share the wonder of Little Penguins with visitors from Tasmania, interstate and abroad.

If you think you would enjoy guiding and could devote one evening every one, two or even three weeks, please contact John Coombes, Hon. Secretary Friends of Lillico Penguins, phone 64246795 or email jjcb@iprimus.com.au

Hazel Britton



Friends of Lillico Penguins at the Central North Wildlife Care and Rescue Centre, Forthside"



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Pete Smith joins the WILDCARE Board

Tasmania's historic environment is an integral feature of our island State, and adjunct to our natural environment. As Australia's second oldest permanent European settlement we have a rich, important diverse collection of historic heritage places spread across our whole State.

The protection and sound conservation of this diverse historic environment can be attributed to the work of various owners, volunteers, groups, private operators and the three level of Government, along with bodies like the Tasmanian Heritage Council and the National Trust of Tasmania.

One person helping to lead a new approach to the statutory management of Tasmania's historic environment and a new member of the WILDCARE Board is Pete Smith the Director of Heritage Tasmania in the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment.

Pete came to this role six years ago, from a relatively quirky background in health and human services, as a social worker with a Master of Public Administration. A strong client focus, interest in community development and sound public administration has guided his work in this time.

'Most people appreciate the importance and value of heritage, but not surprisingly we have found that the best results are achieved by working in collaboration with owners, being more proactive and ensuring the systems and processes we use are clear, fair and predictable', Pete said.

The development of a more client and community minded approach and the reform of the National Trust in Tasmania are two outcomes Pete is particularly proud of achieving; building upon his role in closing and redeveloping the services provided at Willow Court into new statewide services.

The historic environment is subject to ongoing reforms. New legislation is being drafted under Pete's guidance aiming to generate greater clarity, consistency and certainty in the statutory management of heritage. Further details are at www.heritage.tas.gov.au/act_reform.html

'Tasmania is a beautiful and stimulating place to live and work. As a local who has travelled widely I know that Tasmania is a unique place that offers a unique lifestyle. We shouldn't take it for granted, and need to work hard to sustain those things that are most important to us', Pete said.

Having lived, studied and worked in both ends of the State, and with an active involvement in local theatre, art and culture through the Playhouse Theatre and TMAGotts, Pete has a real appreciation of the creativity, stories and people that have and continue to shape Tasmania's future.



Pete Smith on the Overland Track

With a background in government, the voluntary and community sectors we are sure that Pete has much to offer WILDCARE, and we take this opportunity to welcome Pete to the WILDCARE Board.

Pete Smith and Craig Saunders



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Another Chance for Tasman Island Lantern Room

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) recently granted the Friends of Tasman Island (FoTI) the loan of the original lantern room from the Tasman Island Lighthouse which was removed when the light was automated in 1976.

The lighthouse, together with its lantern room, was manufactured in kit form by Chance Brothers of Birmingham, England.

On arrival on Tasman Island, the individually numbered cast-iron plates were bolted together and the 1st Order dioptric Fresnel lens, also a product of Chance Brothers, was installed. The light first gave its warning flash on 4 April 1906.

In preparation for automation in 1976 a smaller lantern room and light were installed. The original lantern room was dismantled before being removed from the island and stored in various locations over the years.

Rather than see the lantern room come to an ignominious end, FoTI has rescued it from its latest location – the Hobart Cat Centre.

Despite the fact that it was AFL grand final day eleven willing volunteers assembled at the Cat Centre on Saturday 26 September. Looking rather like a giant Meccano set, the pile of heavy lantern room components were manhandled out of the enclosure.

With equipment kindly lent by the Cascade Brewery the move to a secure location in central Hobart went smoothly. Here it is planned to reconstruct the lantern room.

There will now also be more room for errant moggies at the Cat Centre!

The following weekend a start was made on assembling the pieces. Unfortunately there was a dearth of volunteers this time.

However, with the aid of Cascade's small hydraulic forklift, Chris Creese and his brother Nick set up enough dome ribs on the curved lower sill to support the upper dome ring. Then, singlehandedly, Chris started bolting the parts together which form the dome, encouraged by Erika Johnson who captured it all on camera.

By the end of the day the dome looked almost complete from one angle. However, an inventory revealed that some of the original Chance Brothers components are missing or broken so the hunt is on to locate original parts or replacements.

The original Fresnel lens is on permanent display in the Australian Maritime Museum in Sydney. Now, thanks to AMSA's Lyndon O'Grady with help in funding the relocation, FoTI now hopes to be able to find a permanent place to display the lantern room itself.

If you know of any pieces of the Tasman Island lighthouse - or any other lighthouse - please let FoTI know – phone President, Carol Jackson 03 6265 9785 or email Carol.Jackson@dpac.tas.gov.au.

Erika Johnson
Friends of Tasman Island



Chris Creese Reassembling Domed Roof of Tasman Island Lantern Room in Hobart



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WILDCARE Nature Writing Prize Award Winners

These stories were awarded minor prizes (\$250) in this year's WILDCARE Nature Writing Prize competition.



*Noëlle Janaczewska is a Sydney-based multi-award winning writer whose plays, libretti, open texts, essays, spoken word, poetry, gallery and online explorations, and radio scripts across drama and non-fiction, have been performed, broadcast and published throughout Australia and overseas. Most recently, her feature for ABC Radio National, *There's something About Eels ...* won the 2009 AWGIE Award for Best Original radio Script. Find out more about Noëlle's work at <http://outlier-nj.blogspot.com> and www.noellejanaczewska.com*

THE CITY LORIKEETS

By Noëlle Janaczewska

It was the start of the barbecue season. Sydney back in short sleeves, days getting longer, street trees flaunting new leaves. In the community garden at the top of Distillery Drive there was silver beet ready to be translated into spanakopita or saag dhal; in the IGA supermarket there was a new crop of Polish girls working the checkouts, and at home there was a voicemail waiting for me when I returned with the shopping.

'Dad died this morning.'

Four words from my mother on the other side of the world. Words I'd always assumed would come in the middle of the night, because that's when bad news is supposed to come, isn't it? Not at twenty-to-five on a Wednesday afternoon.

I was alone when I got the news. My partner was away at a writers' retreat in Ireland. I called her, I cried; I called my mother, I cried; I called Qantas, e-mailed my brother in New Jersey, wandered around the apartment—and cried some more. That was when I saw them on the balcony railing, looking for all the world like long leftover Christmas decorations: six rainbow lorikeets. I watched them until they flew off in a noisy, wind-stretched column. A flash of brightness on a forlorn evening.

Two days later I took off on my own flight. QF31 to London.

Landscapes impose their own relationships and patterns of looking. In Hertfordshire, in south-east England where I grew up, the winding lanes and hedgerows brought the horizon close. When I lived in Katoomba, it was the opposite. The town is famous for its panoramic vistas: stand on the escarpment and you can see the Blue Mountains unfolding for miles. In Pymont, where I live now, the roads are straight and the contours largely man-made. It's an inner city suburb of apartments and recent redevelopment, a hop, skip and jump from the Sydney CBD. Since moving here in 2006, I've acquired a different perspective and learnt to appreciate a different register of nature. I focus on the shadows across the street and the scent of the body corporate gardenias; on the pelican that hangs out at the nearby Fish Market and the flocks of greasy seagulls that swarm like Hitchcock extras; on the weeds that grow inside the tram tracks, and on the rainbow lorikeets.

Rainbow lorikeets are widespread along Australia's eastern seaboard. They are also found in Indonesia, New Guinea and on several Pacific islands; are said to fly at tremendous heights when shifting from one location to another, and their occurrence in some areas is curiously sporadic. They are complicated birds, perhaps more complicated than we realise, but this much we do know. They belong to a family zoologists refer to as Psittacidae, but which the lay person knows as parrots. Loud, gregarious and multi-coloured, they satisfy the parrot stereotype, and judging from the blogs and websites thrown up by a simple internet search, are popular pets. When not caged however, the lorikeets' habitat is a wooded one, be it tropical rainforest or downtown park. It's these urban birds that capture my interest.

Although prevalent around Sydney in the early decades of European settlement, in the late nineteenth century rainbow lorikeets became a rare sight. Until sometime in the 1950s when their numbers began to recover. By the 1990s, as *Homo sapiens* was leaving the Big Smoke for the quieter life of the coast or country, *Trichoglossus haemotodus* was bucking the trend, and flocking to the city.

After the funeral, I sorted through my father's personal library. I needed to do something besides talk and drink cups of tea. I needed a way of managing my grief. So I organised my father's study, which is how I came across *The Observer's Book of Birds*. The *Observer's* were a series of hardcover, pocket-sized titles covering a variety of topics in the fields of natural history and hobbies. Published in the UK, they were all the rage for schoolkids in the 1960s and 70s, and that particular one Dad gave me my final year at Goff's Oak County Primary. Later I added, *Wild Flowers*, *Mosses*, *Weather* and *The Observer's Book of Larger Moths* to my collection. Up until the age of twelve or thirteen, I was keen on animals, geography, botany, reading and science experiments. Then the three Cs took over: clothes, calorie-counting and close encounters of a more romantic nature.

Until I moved on to field-guides and the real thing, fictional owls were the predominant bird of my childhood: Beatrix Potter's pompous Old Brown, Owl from Winnie The Pooh, and that one that went to sea with a cat in a pea-green boat.



In recent years, the barn owl population of Hertfordshire has declined dramatically, but back when Dad gave me *The Observer's Book of Birds*, you could lie in bed and the owls' hoots in the nearby spinney defined the night.

In Oxford it was the kingfisher, in London it was your basic brown bird, the humble house sparrow. In the Blue Mountains it was the crimson rosella that came to represent not only my relationship with the place, but also the place I was in—where I was, psychologically speaking, in my life. The rainbow lorikeet is my Pymont bird.

On a sweaty pig of a day in December, not long back from England, while people rushed towards their affairs, while a businessman bellowed into his phone outside the Indian restaurant, and a group of students from Brazil waited for the 443 bus, a pair of rainbow lorikeets zipped past. We all stopped our conversations to watch them as they swooped low above the traffic, a brilliant pulsing in the fading light, living fireworks, drag-queen-gaudy amongst the pigeons, honeyeaters and Australian magpies.

Generalisations can be treacherous, but I think it is fair to say that post colonisation, some indigenous bird species took a nose-dive, while others adapted and thrived. A number of theories have been put forward to explain the metropolitan migration of rainbow lorikeets, but most researchers agree that food supply is a key factor. And thanks to the communities who lobbied for more green space, the councils and planners who cranked up their environmental agendas, and everyone who planted more native trees and shrubs, our cities now have a lot more to offer the potential avian immigrant.

It's fanciful I know, but I like to think that the lorikeets found me, rather than the reverse. When I returned to Sydney, I started to notice these hyperactive foragers more and more. 'Like backpackers on a pub crawl,' grumbled one local. 'Seldom alone and bloody raucous.' I know what he means. Mornings the residents of Pymont get an earful as the birds' metallic squawks clatter around the neighbourhood—although as far as I'm concerned, it is a pleasant overture before the garbage trucks, construction machinery and leaf-blowers rock up. Then towards dusk the pairs congregate again, gathering on eaves and on the upper levels of the Nokia building to descend on flowering eucalypts, paperbarks and other native vegetation.

Where do they go, and what do they do, between dawn and twilight? Does a lorikeet in mid-flight cast a shadow? How do they navigate the distance, the vast emptiness of air, and know which course to follow? What makes this bird resilient, and some species vulnerable? And why do parrots as a family storm the mind's landscapes so powerfully? Is it something to do with the various paradoxes they embody? Companions and familiars on the one hand, plumes of raw energy on the other; a symbol of both imperialism and pre-conquest rapture; a bird haunted by loss, but in a way that simultaneously conjures up the possibility of recovery.

How long is it normal to grieve?

Rafts of dead leaves floated on the water's surface, enveloping a cardboard cup, cigarette butts and other, less identifiable crap that had been thrown, or found its way into the harbour. I stared at the mess clinging together in a dark scum as the tide shuffled in. I envied the lorikeets their purpose.

Later on, when our time zones were in civilized alignment, I phoned my mother. I told her about the rainbow lorikeets.

'Oh, parrots. We've got them in England now,' she said.

They have, and by all accounts, this feral population is increasing. How they got there is the subject of much conjecture and urban myth-making: Jimi Hendrix was responsible; they escaped during a film shoot; were released from aviaries damaged during the great gale of 1987; broke free from a container at Heathrow airport. The most likely scenario however, is a combination of accidental escape and deliberate release from homes and pet shops. Milder weather, few obvious predators, and food provided by humans have all contributed to the boom in numbers.

Birds arrive, birds leave, birds blow in from elsewhere. They fly towards us in a colourful outpouring, move, turn up in places no one expects, and yes, sometimes that does cause problems. In Perth the rainbow lorikeet is an official pest. Ditto in parts of New Zealand, where it is responsible for crop damage and displacing local species. Even in Sydney, the birds are not always welcome.

Classifications link things and bring them into association with other things, but no logic, no set of labels conveys the imaginative space these lorikeets create. When they open their wings like a display of coloured pencils, they let me glimpse a different, borderless Australia. And they lead me, a city girl, out of my concrete jungle and into the lush terrain of imagination and memory.

To a distant English winter drawing in, and a classroom alive and kicking with language as we pored over Ted Hughes's *Macaw* and *Little Miss*, a poem remembered far beyond the requirement of 'A' level English Lit. The eponymous macaw lives in a wire cage 'the size of a man's head', and the poem explores what we forfeit if we cut ourselves off from our own nature.

To very early one morning in 1992, travelling by rail between Da Nang and Ho Chi Minh City, when the sun rose on a denuded wasteland of lifeless, leafless trees. The train stopped, I pushed down the window, and where once there must have been breath and birdsong, there was only silence. Sad, eerie, overwhelming silence.

To the library, and the perhaps not surprising discovery that there is a lot more published about the rare and endangered than the commonplace. A sub-genre of prose about the 'ghost species' that haunt human history. Within parrots alone, I find books about the paradise parrot, Spix's macaw and the Carolina parakeet. Google 'extinct birds' and you get over a million hits. Try 'near extinct birds' and the figure drops to about six-hundred, a revealing, if somewhat disturbing, disparity. The deader the dodo, the more alive the public interest, it seems. Although a less cynical interpretation is this: I think that in some ways we are all naturalists, enthusiasts and students of ecology on a quest for the unusual or distinctive. The danger comes when the price we put on scarcity blinds us to the beauty and value of the everyday. Is there anything less worthwhile, less evocative, about an encounter with a common species? Especially one as magnificent as the rainbow lorikeet.

The Latin word *Trichoglossus* means hairy tongue. The lorikeet uses it like a paintbrush to mop up the nectar and pollen that constitute their basic diet, along with soft fruit, the odd insect—and doughnut. I've been trying to persuade a friend that it isn't an act of kindness to feed them *Krispy Kremes*, but I fear it is a lost cause. Birds Australia and the New South Wales Department of Environment and Climate Change warn against feeding lorikeets, as does just about every other wildlife agency. Until I started observing the Pymont tribe I accepted this advice unequivocally, and I still do in principle ... but I have a few reservations, queries really. Plus I'm wary



of the nationalist reflex that debate about interactions of the indigenous and exotic often ignites in Australia. It's not that I'm an apologist for cane toads or lantana—or for my friend with the doughnuts—it's more that I'm uncomfortable with the idea that there is a right and wrong way to understand nature. Which leads me to wonder: when city-dwellers feed native fauna, does it unsettle, or in some way challenge, our construction of 'wild' life? I don't have any answers to this, in fact, I'm not even a hundred per cent sure where my own opinion lies on the matter, except to say: I believe that a longing for a world where all parts speak to one another runs deep within us. So three cheers for the wilderness, the sanctuaries and remote national parks, but the fact is, most of us live at home, and in Pymont, most of us live in units with pot plants on the balcony and gardens maintained by contractors. Our opportunities for meaningful contact with the natural environment are limited.

Since that desolate evening when they alighted on the balcony, my relationship with the Pymont lorikeets has expanded into a kind of evolving narrative, packed with questions, mysteries, slow-soaring lines of poetry, darts of optimism—and yet more questions. It has been almost six months since my father's death. I don't know how long the process of mourning will last. In the meantime, here is a response to another unknown plucked from the darkness: According to some ornithologists,

birds have what might be described as a primitive GPS system that matches the surface of the earth with a map in their brains. That's how they know where they're going.

The heatwave broke on the weekend and dragged the sky away. After days of uninterrupted blue, I watch the clouds as the wind pushes them west; I watch the rainbow lorikeets as they curve around the apartment blocks and ride the uplift. A flick of bush in the heart of the city.

At this time of day the walking wired are out in force along the foreshore, plugged into their iPods. A bunch of empty-nesters share a bottle of wine while their dogs chase everything that moves. I stop in my tracks to watch a cargo carrier being manoeuvred into dock by a couple of tugs. On its hull the ubiquitous black circle. And in my ears, Dad's voice patiently explaining why this circle is called a line—the Plimsoll Line to be exact, a mark painted on merchant ships to indicate the depth to which the vessel may be safely loaded. As the tugs cut loose and sail out of White Bay and back to wherever it is tugs live, I think about the eponymous Samuel Plimsoll and about lines literal and metaphorical. The lines that link child to parent and nature to nurture. About how far we should go to try and retrieve what has been lost. And what elements and echoes of the past we embrace to guide our lives now and in the future.



Louise Crisp lives in East Gippsland, Victoria. Her poetry collections include Ruby Camp: A Snowy River Series, Spinifex Press 1998; and Uplands, Five Islands Press, 2007.

Recently a multimedia version of her long poem on the Snowy River and Monaro region entitled Grasses was broadcast on ABC Radio National's 'Poetica' program.

It can accessed at <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/poetica/stories/209/2607438.htm>

HOLDING PATTERN

By Louise Crisp

(In the Lotus Sutra the bodhisattva Dharanimdhara or Earth Holder is said to preserve and protect the earth.)

It is many decades since the golden fish of the Snowy River made their journey upstream from the estuary at Marlo to the high country of the Monaro. Only the females ever made that journey.

The Snowy River bass (*Macquarie novemaculeata*) or 'golden perch' came down to the estuary in spring to spawn. They traveled on the full flood of the snowmelt from the Alps. As the floodwaters spilled over the river flats the brackish estuary provided abundant food. Strong tides entering the estuary carried the bass eggs above the mud and the salt water hardened and protected them. Soon many hundreds of thousands of little fingerlings swam among the sea grass beds of the lower Snowy.

By early summer the female Snowy River bass began their journey upstream. The males accompanied them a short way. Some of them remained in the deep pool under the bridge span at Orbost, the sound of log trucks rumbled overhead.

Others continued on with the females, traveling upstream over the sand plug at Jarramond, finding their way through the narrow channels and cool pools. Black and white dairy cows stood in the river watching them. The fish swam on, around the big sandy bends of Wood Point, Long Point, Sandy Point and Lucas Point. In places the river doubled back on itself. The ironbark forest came down to the riverbank. At Balley Hooley, the big pool on the junction of the Snowy and Buchan River, the last of males left the group, to stay until spring.

The golden fish swam on upstream into gorge country. They passed below the nine caves of New Guinea Ridge where Little Bent Wing bats sheltered their young. In the midst of Bengal Jungle they rested a while in deep water. A Powerful Owl flew out of the rainforest dangling a Sugar Glider over the river. The river became fiercer as the fish entered Tulloch Ard gorge. They struggled through the turbulence of the 'Washing machine' and the 'A-frame'.

Summer thunderstorms suddenly raised the level of the river and it was difficult to see through the muddy water. The full moon came and went.



The golden fish traveled on to Little River Junction where children splashed on lilos and men sat around camp drinking beer and laughing loudly. They swam on to McKillops Bridge. The bridge stretched high above the river and the girders cast a maze of patterns on the water. The sisters swam on over the clear rocky river bed below Mt Bulla Bulla to Suggan Buggan junction and then up a low waterfall that crossed the river below Barrabilli Creek. At Gattamurh Ford four charcoal brumbies drank at the water's edge then galloped off over bare red ground through the Snowy pines.

The golden fish swam on easily towards the border at Willis, the grade was gentle and the river warm. They waited a few days below Pinch Falls. Pinch Mountain cast a dark shadow over the valley until early afternoon. One after another the fish attempted the Falls, thrashing their strong tails to reach each little pool up the waterfall and then into calmer water.

They passed Tongaroo River junction and then the Moyangul, which flowed so clear and icy from up near the Cascades. Upstream, past Slaughterhouse Creek they swam, single file through the 'wall of glass' anxious to reach the safe pool at Reedy Creek. Up on Milligans Mountain a nest of horses bedded down in the afternoon light. Around the river bend at Paupong a woman in a long dress led a bay mare between the boulders. Further upstream fishermen and kids camped in tents along Paupong Flat. The river headed south here but soon turned east under Wild Woman Ridge and Black Jack Mountain. The smoke of bushfires tainted the river but the water ran deeply and the fish were not harmed.

The full moon rose and sank behind Windmill Hill. The sound of Snowy Falls could be heard from a long way downstream. The golden fish circled in a sandy pool. Some of them chose to remain here till the next snowmelt raised the river. Others approached the roar of the Falls.

They had been taught the river path up the waterfall by their mothers and grandmothers. The fish entered the base of the falls leaping to one side of the main channel to avoid the pounding water. They followed a narrow route up through the white water, gaining a tail hold here and there in the smooth stone ledges. At last all the fish surfaced at the top of the falls. Wearily they continued upstream towards Warm Corner and Corrowong Creek, some of the group left them here. The golden fish swam on to Burnt Hut Crossing. They passed under the rusty steel wires of the flying fox that once carried Merino rams across the river. Around the bend the Quidong flowed in from the east.

Now the Snowy turned directly north. The fish circled a while at McLaughlin River junction feeding on dragonfly nymphs. Mopokes slept in the stringybarks.

The fish continued upstream, waiting a few days for a summer thunderstorm to raise the river to find their way between the giant slabs of Stone Bridge. Into the spate they swam, up through Bungarby Gorge, past ramshackle camps among the apple box trees. Then they were out into the open country below Ironmunjie Crossing. The clear Monaro stars shone down upon them. At last the golden fish had reached the high country. The moon and the stones welcomed them.

In 1967 everything changed.

Jindabyne Dam was completed and 99% of the Snowy River was captured by the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme and diverted west over the Great Divide. The top third of the river virtually stopped flowing.

The Snowy River bass had their last successful breeding season in 1987.

The females are now at least 22 years old and at the end of their life span.

The species is at risk of local extinction.

Although Macquarie novemaculeata are found in other east coast rivers, Snowy River bass had adapted to the distinctive Snowy River ecosystem. The Snowy River with its source up on Mt Kosciuszko, was characterized by huge spring flows from to the snowmelt off the Alps.

A local East Gippsland politician kept bass from the Snowy and another river further up the coast, in a dam at Cabbage Tree Creek and discovered that the Snowy bass spawned later –timed to take advantage of the spring snow melt floods.

Since the construction of Jindabyne Dam the Snowy rarely experiences anything like the high flows the bass had adapted to. The smallest annual flood recorded at Jindabyne prior to the completion of the dam was 10,600ML/d. In the last seven years floods measuring less than one tenth of that volume have occurred only a few times at Dalgety and only lasted a couple of days.

Snowy River flows are too low to keep the entrance open to the ocean all year round. The tidal movement is insufficient to keep the Snowy River bass eggs suspended and out of the mud.

Then after spawning, the female bass cannot make the journey back upstream to the high country. Low flows combined with a century of Monaro erosion have created a sand plug at Jarramond where the river first enters farmland above Orbost. Fishermen have caught bass with deep striations and scoring on their belly from their passage over the sand. The channels and side pools that once existed through the sand plug have in more recent years become increasingly in-filled, the water flow over the sand is warmer and fish cover is reduced. The bass struggle to make it through to Balley Hooley. Further upstream, across the border, the main barriers of Pinch Falls, Snowy Falls and Stone Bridge have become impassable due to the low river flows.

In the 1990's it was evident the river was dying. Following the collapse of the local fishing and tourism economy at Dalgety, an interstate alliance of community groups was formed in the late nineties to campaign for the return of 28% minimum environmental flow for the Snowy below Jindabyne Dam.

A turning point in the campaign was the election of the Bracks Labour Government in Victoria in 1999. Bracks relied on the support of an East Gippsland Independent to form government and in exchange he made a commitment to restore the Snowy River. In 2002 the two state governments Victoria and New South Wales and the Commonwealth legislated to return 28% of the Snowy headwaters to the river. A total of \$425 million has been committed to return 15% to the Snowy and additional water to the Murray by 2009, and 21% to the Snowy by 2012.

However seven years on not much has changed.

In 2008 less than 4% flow was released into the Snowy River from Jindabyne Dam.

So much money and so little water in the river!

The Snowy River bass have stopped breeding.

The pattern of their annual journey upstream to freshwater and their return on the snowmelt to spawn in salt water has



been irrevocably broken.

In an attempt to save the Snowy River bass, a restocking program was initiated in Victoria and NSW to artificially breed fish from wild stock. Breeding attempts in the first three years failed.

In 2007 bass fingerlings were successfully bred in NSW at the Narooma hatchery from brood stock of two males and four females. Only the females were Snowy River bass. In November that year 70,000 fingerlings were released downstream of Jindabyne dam and some were taken by helicopter and 4-wheel drive into the Byadbo Wilderness area of the river.

Did the fish know which way to swim when they were released in freshwater hundreds of kilometres upstream from the estuary, their natural place of departure as fingerlings? Will the young fish as they came to sexual maturity in 3-6 years time know when to go down to the estuary?

Will the combined genes of Snowy and non-Snowy River bass instinctively direct them to migrate at the time of the absent spring snow melt flows or not? Will they ever be able to travel right down to the estuary? Once the bass released in the middle reaches of the river migrate downstream how far back up river will they be able to travel? Are the promised flows a mirage?

In May 2008 some Snowy River males were caught near Buchan River and sent to the hatchery at Narooma. In November 2008, 50,000 pure Snowy River bass fingerlings were released into the upper reaches of the river between Jindabyne Dam and Bungarby.

Under current flow levels it is impossible for these fish to migrate downstream past Stone Bridge. Without major increased flows in the river in the next few years they will be trapped between river barriers and their longing for the estuary. On the lower Snowy, 100,000 fingerlings from the same stock were also released, between Orbost and Buchan River junction. How far will these fish be able to migrate upstream, utterly dependant as they are on river flows to make the journey their grandmothers made?

The bass released into the Snowy are not expected to breed in the next few years as conditions in the river and estuary have simply not improved.

It is said that many baby bass bred in captivity die in the first month after hatching 'when they get their emotions'. How many more fingerlings may die when they are dropped by helicopter up river in the wrong season? Unable to breed because they can't migrate to the estuary – will they become stranded creatures between high and low, waiting for thunder and the river to flow?

The Snowy Hydro Scheme was an ecological disaster. However despite the mountains of legislation enacted in three parliaments over the past decade, intended to heal and restore the Snowy River ecology, there is barely any more water in the river. If the Snowy had begun to flow, as the politicians promised, the bass population would be on its way to recovery. The golden fish are in a holding pattern, while together we wait for the river to flow.

May the river memory of the golden fish remain strong, may they endure and survive.

Twilight Tarn Hut reopens after works by PWS Staff and WILDCARE Volunteers

After closure in October last year, the historic Twilight Tarn Hut in Mt Field National Park is once again open to the public.

Constructed in 1926, the culturally significant hut is located in the Mt Field National Park alpine area, and was originally built using locally sourced timber poles and rock. All other materials, including corrugated iron sheets, were brought in by packhorse. The hut was the first construction on the mountain and played a significant role in the early days of skiing and winter sports in the area. In its heyday the hut and was occasionally the scene of moonlit ice-skating parties.

Last winter the verandahs, which had been reconstructed in 1981 by Parks staff led by Chris Eden and current visitor reception officer Greg Peters, were damaged by weather, forcing the closure of the hut for public use.

PWS field officers, assisted by WILDCARE Friends of Mt Field volunteers, replaced much of the timber, fastenings and footings but kept the corrugated iron with Greg Peters' original paint work. Many heavy loads of tools and premix cement were carried several kilometres to the site by the volunteer group and Parks staff.

The reconstruction is in keeping with the original bush pole construction but modern fastenings have been used to increase



Greg Kidd, Peter Franklin and Micah Kleinert Outside Twilight Tarn Hut

the strength of the structure. Careful selection of local timber by Parks staff minimised the impact on the environment.

This project is part of an ongoing maintenance program for the Twilight Tarn Hut, and other huts in the Mt Field alpine area.

Article courtesy of Michael Hanson, Parks and Wildlife Service

Park staff I've Worked With...

Next in a series of articles by WILDCARE chair Bill Forsyth on Parks staff he has worked with over the years. You may recall that Bill left us last time having just arrived at Frog Lodge, aka The Birches Inlet Hilton, for his first volunteer efforts on the Orange Bellied Parrot Recovery Program. He's working with PWS ranger Krissy Ward and her parents visiting from Queensland. Read on ...

We settled into Frog Lodge, at the same time talking to the volunteers we were relieving. They gave us all the 'doings and brewings' of the place for the time they were in here.

That done, I escorted them in the dinghy back to the Charter Boat. I returned to Frog Lodge and here we were, for the next 14 days in one of the remotest areas of the State.

During our stay, unexpectedly, we had a visit from Glenn Atkinson and Jody from the Wildlife section, come to eradicate starlings that had moved into a couple of the nesting boxes around the area.

This meant sharing Frog Lodge with them. Their routine was to go out into the area, across the button grass, across the creek and up onto the hill with shotguns at the ready to eliminate the starlings.

I asked Glenn what the tally was when they returned in the evening and he said, "Three starlings and a feather". Their mission was successful and they came out with us when we finished our stint.

Krissy had been with Parks for quite a while in Strahan. She knew what she was about. Very capable. A few years on Krissy and her partner went to Africa to adopt a daughter. And recently, they went again to adopt a young boy Besu (2) and a girl, Mekdes (6). When they arrive back Krissy will be taking a year off to settle the family in to life in Devonport, because since I last saw Krissy she has transferred to Ulverstone as Regional Planning Officer.

Now, back to the Hut Warden Program at Waterfall Valley. Over the years I had spent a lot of time during the walking season in the Cradle area and of course you get to know the staff. A couple of the Rangers had been at Cradle for a number of years. Ted Bugg was one and Eddie Firth another. More about Ted and his trips to Antarctica to work on repairing Mawsons Hut later.

Eddie has been working for Parks for fifteen years. Mainly at Cradle and on the Overland Track, with trips away to Macquarie Island and one stint to the islands south of New Zealand.

The main reasons for this work were feral eradication on the islands. Eddie grew up in the Latrobe area and being so close to Cradle, spent his younger days walking in the Cradle area. When he was a kid he came once to Cradle with an old walker in this old soft top vehicle. The old walker was Major Smith. And now Eddie has Major Smith's vehicle in his vintage car collection on his farm at Barrington.

Eddie has been a farmer for about fourteen years. He couldn't think of anything better than to spend days off on the farm. Nice place, plenty of water and lays well to the sun.

Eddie and Jenny crop and fatten cattle. Jenny also works for Parks at Cradle. I remember her when her first job was in the ticket box at the entrance to the Park. She spent a part of one summer as a Track Ranger on the Overland. Now she works in the Visitor Service area at Cradle.




Bill Forsyth April 2009

Both Eddie and Jenny have returned from long service leave recently. They visited Alice Springs, walked on the Larapinta Track and went further north to catch up with Hank Schenke and family in Darwin. Travelled by train, vehicle based camping and walking. Eddie is back setting up for this season's Overland Track walkers.


During my years as Hut Warden Coordinator I had a lot to do with Eddie and found him good to work with.

Next time I'll tell you about Ranger Kathy Van Dullaman

Bill Forsyth



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Friends of Bay of Fires Fires Up

The Friends of Bay of Fires has recently commenced activities on the North East coast of Tasmania.

The area was named by English navigator Captain Tobias Furneaux in 1773 when he observed numerous fires burning along the coast.

We are a dedicated team of people who love nurturing nature. Our key role is to support the local Parks and Wildlife team in caring for the coastline along some of the best beaches in the world.

We undertake weeding, planting and rehabilitation of areas with local plants species (often grown by us from seed) and other odd jobs such as fencing around sensitive environmental areas. We are also involved in education activities.

We meet on the first Sunday of every month from 10am. Typically we finish by lunchtime however over summer we will have some activities that continue into the afternoon.

In December we are running a Sea Spurge Information Session – hosted by NRM north's Weed Officer, Greg Stewart followed by a walk and Sea Spurge removal along the coast to The Gardens.

A BBQ lunch will be supplied for those participating in the walk through to The Gardens and a Car Shuffle will be organised for the event.



Friends of Bay of Fires team assisting Parks and Wildlife to restore fencing around the coastal Conservation Area at Jeanneret Beach

Wayne Linton
Friends of Bay of Fires

For more information about this new WILDCARE branch contact Wayne at walinton@bigpond.com, phone 0409 259 586

Volunteers Landscape and Rehabilitate with Tasmanian Native Plants

Under cool and blustery conditions, volunteers from the Tamar Island Wetland Centre, Launceston were recently able to complete the first stage of the landscaping and rehabilitation plan for the car park and adjacent areas along the wetland edge.

A hardy group of five members supported by the Business Centre Coordinator, Alison Moore planted along the wetlands in front of the car park with Tasmanian native plants commonly found in those habitats.

The first stage plantings will improve environmental conditions along the wetland riparian zone by providing increased plant species and habitat diversity.

In addition to improving the visual amenity of the car park from the West Tamar Highway, the project will also be used to display and promote the use of locally common native plants in landscaping and rehabilitation.

The second stage will be undertaken during late spring to early summer and will involve the area between the car park and the highway.

Funding for the project was provided by the Australian Plant Society Tasmania under their annual grants program to encourage the use of native plants in gardening, landscaping and rehabilitation.

Species selection was planned by the volunteers and the Parks and Wildlife Service, supported by members of the Northern Branch of the Plant Society, Launceston.

John Duggin
Tamar Island Wetland Volunteers



Volunteers Audrey Crisp, Bill Edmondson (seated), Sandy Duggin and John Duggin celebrate the end of planting Stage 1 of the landscaping project at Tamar Island Wetlands Centre. Absent: Helen Jack. Photo by Alison Moore

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Revegetating Caves!

(Linda Overend from the Parks and Wildlife Service at Mole Creek provided this article in response to my question as to why the WILDCARE Gift Fund Committee had allocated \$3,000 to revegetation of what I thought were caves.

Linda educated me about what was really going on. Read on and you will be too...)

The aim of this project is to build resilience and connectivity into the Great Western Tiers (GWT) reserve system, which includes high conservation value ecosystems and species, and the maintenance of the karstic ground water system.

This will be achieved through seed collection, propagation and revegetation of up to 18 hectares of land.

The Parks and Wildlife has recently acquired a number of parcels of land, reserved for outstanding karst value, which have created management issues as they had been cleared in the past and used for agriculture.

Those issues include weeds such as small patches of gorse and wildfire, both threats to the biodiversity values of the reserve.

In addition, the degraded state of the sites impacts the cave system and the local farming community's water quality as karstic hydrological systems are particularly sensitive to disturbance due to the complex relationship between the vegetation and the groundwater processes.

Baldocks Cave has particular natural significance as the type locality for a number of troglobitic species.

One of the most important features of this project is that it will enhance the reserve system, strengthening corridors of protected habitat (originally reserved to protect karst systems



Farming land acquired by PWS Above Baldocks Cave

as they drain water down the GWT from the valley connecting up to the World Heritage Area from north to south providing critical opportunities for gradual distribution changes in species in response to our changing climate including one endangered ecosystem and at least 12 threatened species.

We proposed that our group will, with the assistance of a contract grower, propagate a diversity of species (10), up to 9,000 plants, with provenance to the local area. With in kind assistance from the Parks and Wildlife Service we will then work to ecologically restore three sites.

We'll report again at the end of this project.

Linda Overend, Parks and Wildlife Service
David Wools-Cobb, Mole Creek Karstcare

WILDCARE Gift Fund Distributes WILDCARBON grants

At its meeting on the 9 September 2009 the WILDCARE Gift Fund committee received and considered applications from 5 projects requesting funding from the WILDCARBON Fund 2009 funding offer.

The WILDCARBON FUND was co-founded by WILDCARE Inc and Leishman Associates (conference organisers) to fund bio-diverse native planting on reserved land for management, habitat, threatened species and climate change benefit.

As the Gift Fund had allocated up to \$15,000 to this funding round, and since all 5 projects satisfied the necessary funding criteria, all projects received the maximum \$1,000 available under this program.

The five projects were:

1. Butlers Point – Friendly Beaches North (Land Rover Owners Club)
2. Adventure Bay Foreshore Reserve (Friends of Adventure Bay Inc)
3. Wet Cave Revegetation (WILDCARE KarstCARE group)
4. Baldocks Cave Revegetation (WILDCARE KarstCARE group)
5. Herberts Pot Revegetation (WILDCARE KarstCARE group)

(See the article elsewhere in this issue describing why we have invested \$3,000 revegetating caves!!)

This exercise was a landmark for the Gift Fund, being its first public offering of funds through (what could have been) a competitive bidding process.

With this success behind them the committee looks forward to further distribution of funds in the near future.

Craig Saunders

'WINDOWS INTO WILD PLACES'

an exhibition of multimedia works by

Susie Meech (pastels)

Robyn Rader (photography)

Jennifer Livett (fabric collages)

Trauti Reynolds (woven tapestries)

at Meadowbank Winery,
699 Richmond Rd, Cambridge

In the TOWER GALLERY from
14 February - 10 March 2010

Open from 10am to 5pm seven days a week.

As this space is sometimes used as a meeting room it would be a good idea to ring ahead (6248 4484) to ensure that the gallery is open to the public on that day.





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- Posters
- And more

10% discount to WILDCARE members

Suzie's Last Ride

Visitors to Maatsuyker Island over the last 10 years (and much longer if you visited before PWS took over) will have fond memories of island taxi Suzie Suzuki.

You'll remember the slowly rusting exterior with holes in the floor and the deep ruts in the island's only road, tailor made for Suzie's tyres.

Well, Suzie is no more! In June this year the Parks and Wildlife Service shipped in (by helicopter) a replacement in the form of Darrell, David, Dianne or whatever we'll call the new Daihatsu 4WD 'mini-truck'.

And at the next volunteer caretaker changeover in October Suzie had her last ride back to the mainland by helicopter, onto a trailer near Cockle Creek, and back to PWS Huonville for retirement (destination unknown at this stage).

Through the winter caretakers Phil and June Harper (of Lindisfarne) acclimatized the new vehicle to the island – widening the wheel ruts by about 100mm.

Phil and June had the extra 'honour' of probably being the first ever caretakers to go through their entire 4 month stay without a single visitor – no resupplies, no mail, nothing (their own choice).

And they came out smiling and full of beans. Well done!

Replacement caretakers were Annette and Trevor Walsh from northern NSW, back this year for summer after previously doing the winter shift in 2008.

They were keen to see how 'their' island had fared over the year they had been away and quickly settled back into caretaker life.

Maatsuyker Island Volunteer Caretaker Program manager Pip Gowen from the Parks and Wildlife Service at Huonville has just completed the selection process for next year's caretakers and reported a very high standard of applicant.

Any readers interested in finding out more about the program can contact Pip at Huonville on (03) 6264 8463 or Philippa.Gowen@parks.tas.gov.au

Craig Saunders



Suzie Suzuki on the Trailer for Her Last Ride

“Tasmania’s wild places give us our inspiration”...

(A new WILDCARE Gift Fund Donations Campaign)

Now days almost half of Tasmania is in reserves (42% at last count). The reserve system in fact defines Tasmania’s character. When people think about Tasmania it is usually the reserved land that lingers in the mind and tugs on the heart strings to return. For many people it provides their employment directly or indirectly, their lifestyle, their recreation.

Tasmania’s wild carbon gives us our healthy environment” ... (WILDCARE Wildcarbon Fund)

For many it provides defining and life-changing experiences. We know that from surveys, ably undertaken for PWS by WILDCARE volunteers that tell us that many people feel that the Overland Track walk was the most significant thing that they have ever done. For many industries and agricultural activities the clean, healthy environment underpinned by our reserve system also underpins their local and export reputation.

“Tasmania’s world heritage gives us our wild heart” ... (WILDCARE World Heritage Wilderness Fund)

As children many Tasmanians spend time in the bush, over the back fence or further afield. Most of that activity is in fact undertaken on reserved land.

“Tasmania’s wild animals give us our unique identity” ... (WILDCARE Injured and Orphaned Wildlife Fund)

So we have a lot of reasons to thank the environment and particularly Tasmania’s reserves. Now, it is time to pay back for what the environment gives us. For volunteers this is often the motivation for offering their time free of charge to the environment. Now those locals and visitors who value the experiences and benefits that Tasmania’s natural environment provides can also payback, through the new donations campaign developed in cooperation with Parks and Wildlife Service.

“Tasmania’s whales give us a sense of wonder” ... (WILDCARE Whale Rescue Fund)

WILDCARE Inc has been working with the Parks and Wildlife service to develop campaign materials for the WILDCARE Gift Fund. We now have three pull-up banners for shows and other events, A Prospectus folder and content to use when talking to large and corporate donors, a bequest information card for distribution to will-makers (WILDCARE also now advertises with Pro Bono Australia which distributes information to will-makers), some advertisements and donation “gift vouchers” (looking like Australian banknotes) and table-top display stands. These materials were based on needs identified in a PWS scoping paper “A Strategy for Receiving”.

Tasmania’s coastlines give us our heart and soul” ... (WILDCARE Tasmania Coast Conservation Fund)

Every campaign needs to have a call to action – something that attracts attention and is clear in what you need to do. It is also true that it is the life experiences and beliefs that people have that drives their donating to a particular cause. So those people who have had a memorable experience in Tasmania’s natural areas, and those who believe that our natural areas are important and valuable places are the people who are most likely to donate to the cause.

Hopefully, this promotional material will start to be seen around the traps, giving people an opportunity and inspiration to pay back to the environment to say thank you for all that it gives us.

NOW ... IT’S PAY BACK TIME.

If you would like to find out more about the WILDCARE Gift Fund and its natural partner Funds, or would like to make a donation go to www.wildcaretas.org.au to make a donation on line, keep an eye out for WILDCARE’s promotional materials when you are out and about or complete the donation form attached to the advertisement in this edition of WILDTIMES.

Andrew Smith

Co-Chair WILDCARE Inc



TASMANIA'S WILD PLACES GIVE US OUR INSPIRATION. NOW, IT'S PAYBACK TIME.

WILDCARE GIFT FUND

WILDCARE Inc. is a community volunteer organisation dedicated to caring for Tasmania's many parks and reserves, as well as its native plants and animals. We're out there every day, on the ground, getting our hands dirty. But we can't do it alone. Tasmania's amazing natural environment gives us so much. This is your opportunity to give something back. You can be certain your tax-deductible donation will go straight to where it's needed most. To find out more visit www.wildcaretas.org.au



Please fill out your details below and mail to WILDCARE Inc. c/- GPO Box 1751, Hobart, Tasmania 7001. Thanks for your donation! It will go straight to where it's needed most.

Your name: _____

Address: _____

State: _____ Postcode: _____

Cheque (made out to WILDCARE Inc.) or money order (attached) or please fill in your credit card details:

Visa Mastercard American Express

Card number: Expiry date: /

Name on card: _____

Signature: _____

WILDCARE takes your privacy seriously. For information on our privacy policies click on the Privacy & Confidentiality link at www.wildcaretas.org.au. Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible. Thank you!

Which WILDCARE fund are you donating to?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gift Fund (general projects) | <input type="checkbox"/> Whale Rescue Fund |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Injured and Orphaned Wildlife Fund | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildcarbon Fund |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tasmanian Coast Conservation Fund | <input type="checkbox"/> World Heritage Wilderness Fund |



TASMANIA'S WILD PLACES GIVE US OUR INSPIRATION. NOW, IT'S PAYBACK TIME.

WILDCARE Inc. supports projects that help to manage Tasmania's spectacular national parks and reserves, and the special plants and animals that live in these reserves and on private land managed for conservation.

Please fill out your details below and make a cash donation at the sales counter.

Or take the voucher with you and pay later by cheque or credit card.

Thanks for your donation! It will go straight to where it's needed most.

Please print your completed voucher to WILDCARE, GPO BOX 1751, HOBART TAS 7001. WILDCARE takes your privacy seriously. For information on our privacy policies click on the Privacy & Confidentiality link at www.wildcaretas.org.au. Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible. Thank you!

Your name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

State: _____

Which WILDCARE fund are you donating to?

Gift Fund (general projects)

Injured and Orphaned Wildlife Fund

Tasmanian Coast Conservation Fund

Whale Rescue Fund

Wildcarbon Fund

World Heritage Wilderness Fund

Credit card Visa Mastercard American Express Cheque or money order Cash (paid at counter)

Card number: Expiry date: /

Name on card: _____

Signature: _____



WILDCARE Gift Fund Donations

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

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

Phil Wyatt, Chris Arthur, Ingrid McGaughey (Rehabilitation Tasmania), Chris Cheatley, Brian Lassen.

Donations up to \$100

Howard Smith, Andrew Smith, Richard White, Martin O'Dea, Tracey Simpson, RK Floyd.

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	One size fits all
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	One size fits all
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	

Name Address

..... Telephone

Payment details **Total cost of all items \$**

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Take the WILDCARE Option

This summer WILDCARE has embarked on a campaign to increase membership numbers from the 20,000 or so Tasmanians who purchase a Parks and Wildlife Service Annual (or Two Yearly) All Parks Pass.

At the moment WILDCARE membership hovers around just under 2,000. Of those 2,000 around 1,500 purchase their membership through the joint marketing arrangement with the Annual All Parks Pass (AAPP).

You will probably be aware that PWS offers a \$25 discount on a AAPP to WILDCARE members, and since the WILDCARE membership is itself \$25 then you can effectively get both 'products' for the normal cost of the AAPP.

But why do less than 10% of AAPP holders take WILDCARE membership, even at no extra cost?

The answer to this question probably has many parts. Complexity of Parks Pass fee structure, complexity of forms, and a hazy understanding of just what WILDCARE is all probably contribute.

Our 'Take the WILDCARE Option' campaign will address some of these issues, aiming at increasing the level of WILDCARE membership among AAPP holders to 20% in the first year, an increase in income of \$62,500, and a further 10% each year after that.

In general we aim to make the 'WILDCARE Option' the standard option among AAPP holders.

The campaign elements are quite simple. We will target people renewing Passes and those purchasing Passes for the first time at Parks sales centres.

The core message will be simple: support community involvement in the conservation of our natural and cultural resources at no extra cost by 'Taking the WILDCARE Option'.

For those reading past the headline we will illustrate the message with a simple example: 'Take the WILDCARE Option' and \$25 of your Parks pass price is redirected to WILDCARE to cover your membership.

We'll use this \$25 to buy and can of paint (for example) and return it to Parks on one of our WILDCARE projects with volunteer painter 'attached'.

Ignore the WILDCARE Option and PWS can still buy the can of paint, to sit on the shelf. How could you argue with that? Tell your friends

Craig Saunders

Buying or renewing your All Parks Pass?
Then why not ...

*Take the
Wildcare
option*



Take the WILDCARE Option advertising image



4WD carries new helicopter to Maatsuyker Island? Not quite right, see page 19 for more.



Bob Tyson reassembling Tasman Island. See more on page 10.



Peter and Sue Franklin relaxing? See what they're up to on page 15.



WILDCARE burning the bush? See why on page 6.



WILDCARE Inc

Tasmania's largest incorporated volunteer organisation, caring for wild places, wildlife and cultural heritage.

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