

WILD TIMES

Edition 38 September 2010



PHOTO COMPETITION WINNERS

NEWS FROM THE ISLANDS

BATTLE OF THE BOXTHORN

NATIVE ANIMAL RESCUE

Editorial

I took some time off in the middle of this year to enjoy a 3 month cycling holiday in France and England. I had a great trip and didn't look at one Wildcare email the whole time! While I was away I left the treasurer's job in the very capable hands of Bob Tyson and since it was winter, didn't expect him to be too busy.

Well, I probably should have known better, because things really have been busy right through the normally quieter winter season. Inside, out of the weather, grant application writers have been active. While I was away Wildcare Branches received no fewer than 9 separate successful grants totalling over \$150,000. Outside also there has been plenty of work with working bees all over the state; many of them are reported on in this issue of Wildtimes.

And now as the spring sunshine takes effect our thoughts turn towards another busy summer ahead. Our 40 active branches are gearing up for our busiest volunteer season yet. Add to that many volunteer programs run directly by the Parks and Wildlife Service.

If you're keen to get involved this year, whether that be a few hours weeding at a local urban reserve, or a two week volunteer adventure in a remote national park, then contact us soon before someone else takes your seat!

Craig Saunders



Tour de France

WILDCARE Gift Fund Donations

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

Large Donations of over \$1,000

Dick Smith (\$100,000), Rob Pennicott (\$35,000)

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

Phil Wyatt, Chris Arthur, Ingrid McGaughey

Donations of under \$100

Andrew Smith, Martin O'Dea, Tracey Simpson, Jill Whitty, Adrian McRae, David Wyatt, Jessica Nilsen, Robert Joyce, John McKenna, Douglas Beath, Adam May

Wildtimes Publication Schedule

EDITION #	COPY DEADLINE	PUBLICATION
39	1 December 2010	1 January 2011
40	1 April 2011	1 May 2011
41	1 August 2011	1 September 2011

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

ON THE FRONT COVER:

Our front cover photo is Patsy Campbell's winning entry in this year's Wildcare Blundstone Volunteer Photo Competition. It shows Native Animal Rescue group members Norma Baker (feeding a very photogenic wombat) and Lorraine de Weys (feeding a very small tasmanian devil).



Campground Host Program Expands

The Parks and Wildlife Service has for the last four years run a volunteer campground host program at Cockle Creek at the south eastern entrance to the Southwest National Park and a similar volunteer caretaker program at Schouten Island in the Freycinet National Park.

For the coming summer season a campground host program at Melaleuca in the far south west (Southwest Conservation Area and Southwest National Park) is to be added to this list of popular volunteer opportunities.

Whether you're a campground host or camp caretaker the roles for volunteers in each case are largely the same.

The main duty is to meet and greet visitors to these popular destinations, point out appropriate places to camp and highlight the local 'do's and don'ts', especially the *Leave No Trace* camping ethic.

Along the way volunteers are called upon to answer a huge range of questions from visitors: about the natural and cultural heritage and history of the area, the best walks to take, when the next bus leaves for Hobart, and even directions to the nearest loo!

They might also be called upon to carry out minor maintenance of Parks infrastructure.

At Cockle Creek and Schouten Island volunteers are on site usually for 2 week 'tours of duty', but at Melaleuca the PWS are hoping to have volunteers on site for a full month (depending on applicants of course).

Pip Gowen, PWS Volunteer Facilitator for the Southern Region said that, "Volunteers tell me they love being based at such a scenic place, helping PWS out while they are so busy over



Campground Hosts Gloria and Stan Barker assisting visitors at Cockle Creek

summer and chatting to folks from all over Tasmania, Australia and overseas. The volunteers say they get a lot of satisfaction out of helping look after a favourite place they care about. So much so they often come back year after year."

Volunteers at Cockle Creek and Melaleuca are accommodated in PWS staff quarters and at Schouten Island in a palatial purpose built campsite.

If you are interested in taking part in these programs contact Pip Gowen at PWS Huonville (for Cockle Creek and Melaleuca) on 0427 648 463 or Fiona Everts at PWS Freycinet (for Schouten Island) on 0457 758 232.

Craig Saunders



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Deal Island Museum Restoration

Deal Island is the largest of the three main islands which comprise the Kent Group of Islands and is situated in Bass Strait approximately 80 km south-east of Wilsons Promontory, Victoria.

In 2001 this group of islands was declared Tasmania's newest and most remote national park – The Kent Group National Park and Marine Park.

A recent grant allocation to Friends of Deal Island from the Tasmanian Community Fund has enabled the group to proceed with restoration works on the old Superintendent's Residence, built in 1846.

The Superintendent's Residence on Deal Island in Bass Strait is one of Tasmania's most intriguing 19th century buildings. It is part of a complex of buildings that make up the Deal Island Lightstation, one of Australia's most intact lighthouse complexes.

This residence is remarkable because it ceased being used as a house in the 1930's and was not modernised. The building was then used as a store for the intervening period prior to the deactivation of the light.

It is very easy to imagine the life of a 19th century light keeper and his family by visiting the building, and one must admire the incredible resourcefulness of the people who lived here during that period.

Furnishings have, of course, long disappeared - either because the original occupants removed them or because they simply fell apart from intensive use. The building was well used as early keepers' families were often large.

Many clues to those early lifestyles are part of the fabric of the building, such as the tiny rooms upstairs (scarcely larger than cubicles where an extra tot may be bedded), the magazines and newspapers used as wall paper in the bedrooms, the empty gun rack in the top floor corridor, hand-made pegs adjacent to doors awaiting that well soaked oil-skin!

Supply vessels were few and infrequent and much was made of that 19th century virtue of thriftiness. Rather than replacing a whole pane of broken window glass, an off-cut from another job would simply be "patched" over the broken section and then mortared-in over the top.

Scarcity of maintenance materials necessitated these measures. Many a Head Keeper complained to his superiors in Hobart regarding the conditions, resources and supplies (or lack of them) endured on the island.

In the 1930's a new house was built for the Head Keeper and his family who began to enjoy a twentieth century lifestyle in terms of improved pay and conditions.

The old residence remained a store until the early 1980's when it was decided to dedicate the two front rooms on the ground floor to the cultural history of the lightstation and the natural history of the Kent Group of Islands (which included Deal Island).

The late Dr. Stephen Murray Smith, historian and founding member of the nearby Erith Island Mob was instrumental in supplying display material for the Deal Island Museum.



Superintendent's House (Museum) Deal Island August 2010

The Deal Island Museum is a popular destination for yachties, fishermen and other visitors to the island, and many a visitor to the Kent Group looks forward to signing the visitor's book.

Since the Kent Group National Park was gazetted in 2000, the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service has managed a continual Volunteer Caretaker Program on Deal Island.

Caretakers (minimum of two persons) spend a term of three months on Deal Island. During this time they provide a presence on the lightstation and carry out a series of maintenance tasks.

Most past caretakers are members of Friends of Deal Island and provide the group with an invaluable and well informed foundation as they are personally conversant with the idiosyncrasies and priorities of the island and its natural and cultural heritage.

Restoration work completed on the Superintendent's Residence (Museum) over recent weeks is the installation of a new support beam at the rear of the building and the complete replacement of the timber component of the back wall and entrance.

The exterior walls of the residence has been coated with Murobond Primer prior to painting with Pentimento Limewash.

The grant from Tasmanian Community Fund has also funded the purchase of sufficient timber palings and support beams to erect a wind-break surrounding the precinct vegetable garden. This garden supplies fresh vegetables for volunteer caretakers.

Purchase of a Working-at-Heights Safety Pack, consisting of two personal 'fall arrest' harnesses, ropes, karabiners, etc has also been funded through the Tasmanian Community Fund.

Wildcare Inc Friends of Deal Island are most grateful to the Tasmanian Community Fund for this vital allocation of funding which supports ongoing work projects on Deal Island.

Shirley Baker

Friends of Deal Island

(see our adjacent article, Return to Deal Island describing Nell Edwards return to the island after a break of 80 years)



Return to Deal Island

Nell Edwards went to Deal Island with her father, mother and older sister at the age of five. Her father, Roderick Johnston had been appointed the Head Light Keeper in March 1930, and here on Deal, she spent a memorable four years until the family was transferred to Low Head Lighthouse in April 1934.

In May this year, Nell returned to Deal Island to visit her daughter and son-in-law, Trish and Bob Smith who were the volunteer caretakers for the autumn period.

For Nell, the memories of eighty years ago came flooding back, and she could pinpoint significant places with clarity.

Anecdotally there was the grave of a baby outside the Superintendent's house (now the museum), and Nell remembered it so well that she was able to go to the present vegetable garden, and stand on the spot where she believed the grave to once have been.

This confirms the story of another family member who also cited the same position.

Nell took them to the hill above Winter Cove where she recounted the antics of her father and herself. They would stand on the hill and "coo-ee", to have the echo reverberate around and around – obviously to the delight of a young girl. Her father maintained a vegetable garden at Garden Cove and Nell recalled eating the freshly picked cob of corn released from the husk by her father.

The water supply in the nearby dam was also fondly remembered.

Being the child of a Lighthouse Keeper was one of simplicity, but shadowed by the extremely hard work carried out by her parents.

It was only upon revisiting Deal Island that Nell gained a deeper appreciation of the intensity of her father's position. She recalled that besides being the Head Lightkeeper her father also had to maintain his vegetable garden, which was about 3-4 km from the house.

There were a few domestic cows and sheep which provided milk and meat. Butchering was not a familiar skill, nor was tanning hides or placating ex-race horses that wanted to gallop instead of working the whim.

He was also responsible for provisioning the supplies needed to keep the lighthouse in working order. Nell remembers her mother setting milk in a crock to then skim the cream and produce butter in the churn.

An orphaned baby wallaby was Nell's pet during her four years on Deal Island, and she described how it was put into a special carrier and live in the kitchen close to the wood fire.

Besides the wallaby the only other diversions for Nell were books, and she opened the very cupboard where these were lovingly housed.

A group of interested and polite people would send gifts to the children on Lightstations, and Nell was the proud owner of a doll's cane furniture set.

It was a pity that she didn't own a dolly to sit at the table or on any of the chairs.

Nell felt the time was right to donate this special child's gift back to the museum on Deal Island, and the night before she left was able to present it to Wayne Dick, the Manager of Parks for the Furneaux Group for future generations to enjoy.

Nell believes that her family was the last to reside in the Superintendent's house, as a new home was built in 1934 for the following Head Lightkeeper.

Trish and Bob regard their time on Deal Island as both a privilege and a unique opportunity to live in the footsteps of their forebears, and appreciate the opportunity given to them by Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service.

Trish Smith



Nell Edwards with PWS ranger Wayne Dick and Nell's gift to the island museum.

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RAW Times at Freycinet

Acronyms abound. FOMI, FOTI, FODI. But FOF? Sounds like someone is telling us to go somewhere. But let me tell you that Freycinet National Park is like no other place in Tassie.

World class scenery, one of the 10 best beaches in the world, the magnificent Hazards, and the jewel in the crown, Schouten Island. And we want to go there!

At a working bee on Schouten in April this year, the Wildcare Friends of Freycinet group was reformed from a previously dormant state to continue the work done over many years controlling gorse and other nasties on the island.

Schouten Island: Life in the RAW, (Remote Area Weeding). Unfortunately working on Schouten Island requires a little more effort than just rolling up for the day.

The location dictates reasonably calm seas, a spare Ranger or two, boatloads of gear, and a self sufficient team willing to work for at least 6-7 days.

The rewards? Time to enjoy swimming (in the RAW), beachcombing (pick up Rubbish as you walk, and look out for Sea Spurge), peakbagging, (oops, bushwalking), and just RAW (resting as well). But the real reward is to compare the gorse distribution now with that some years ago.

We may be just several years away from complete eradication if that is ever possible with gorse, but the island offers real hope.

There is an infestation at Sarah Ann Bay that has never been treated, and this will be our main focus along with constant follow up of previously treated areas. Sarah Ann Bay will require people who are adept at scrub bashing to a remote and possibly poor campsite, and working very hard in difficult conditions.

After this we may change our focus to other weeds such as Blue Periwinkle and the thistles. The periwinkle will be a long way down the track and then only if PWS need our help.



Friends of Freycinet enjoy a break on Bear Hill, Schouten Island

There are also ongoing efforts dealing with Sea Spurge "on the mainland", and any other fun jobs that PWS can find for us.

At the time of writing we have applied for a small amount of funds to purchase tools and for transport to the island 2/3 times a year, possibly in September and after the successful caretaker program that is undertaken over the summer period (funding application successful – editor).

The group will be entering into a partnership arrangement with PWS whereby objectives and strategies will be agreed.

We will also actively promote all of our activities and we encourage new members who like hard work and live in the raw!

Oh, and did I tell you that RAW actually stands for really adventurous weeding? Contact us if you are keen:

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Sally Salier, Secretary, Phone 6223 3831 email: scalier@bigpond.com

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Lillico Prepares for Summer Visitors

The Friends of Lillico Penguins Wildcare Inc held their annual working bee on 17th July 2010 to prepare for the coming penguin viewing season.

Our focus was on the area around the viewing platform and the main tasks were weeding, pruning back native vegetation, particularly the coastal wattle (*Acacia sophorae*) which had overgrown a large part of the area, and repositioning some of the artificial burrows.

The aim was to make it easier for the Little Penguins to access their burrows as well as enhancing the viewing experience for visitors.

Working with PWS, we are also experimenting with a newly-constructed ladder to help the Little Penguins climb up the steeper parts of one of their main runways between the beach and their burrows on the dunes.

This runway has become badly eroded and there has been a decline in the number of birds using it. We hope the ladder will encourage them to return.

Volunteers from the Friends of Lillico Penguins are on duty at the viewing platform every evening from September to the end of March.

Our aim is to protect the penguins and to provide visitors with an interesting and educational evening.

If you would like to learn more about the fascinating world of Little Penguins and enjoy talking to people, why not consider joining our guiding program?

We provide training and have a very flexible evening roster.



Friends of Lillico Penguins Cleaning up for the Visitors!

For more information, please contact Patricia Ellison from the Friends of Lillico Penguins (6428 2062) or Stephen Mansfield from PWS (6429 8727).

(Acknowledgements: Many thanks to Kelvin Barrett from PWS for his work on constructing the penguin ladder; photo of the ladder by Kelvin Barrett, photos of the working bee by Stephen Mansfield of PWS)

Patricia Ellison

Friends of Lillico Penguins





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Bushwalking tracks for Little Penguins

Friends of Maria Island

Working with Fossils, Aborigines, Frenchmen, Convicts, Concrete, Flora, Fauna and Floods!

On the morning of the 29th November 2009 a tremendous flood roared down Bernacchis Creek (on the north of the island close to the historic Darlington settlement), triggered by exceptional rainfall in the catchment.

Considerable damage to infrastructure occurred including a weakening of the dam, damage to the main bridge and a scouring out of the creek bed.

This flood seriously modified vegetation including removal of some weed patches (Canary Broom) and their associated seed bank. There was some seed redistribution down stream.

For Parks this has led to a great deal of ongoing additional work and for Friends of Maria Island a modification of priorities and disruption to scheduled contract weeding.

Perhaps a timely reminder that 'Natural Heritage' is a dynamic environment and not a museum piece! But what a place to work.

Friends of Maria Island organizes several working bees each year, building on a long tradition of voluntary work on the island.

Past achievements include the renovation of historic buildings, but since the formal inception of Friends of Maria Island as a branch of Wildcare Inc in 2005, the control and eradication of weeds (in particular Canary Broom - *Genista monspessulana* and Spanish Heath - *Erica lusitanica*) has been our main focus.

These weeds are prioritised because of their potential to colonise large tracts of native forest.

The Broom has a scattered distribution in the Bernacchi Creek Valley on the north of the island close to the historic Darlington settlement.

Volunteers have mapped the weed distribution in detail and are steadily working to reduce its extent with primary control (or knockdown) and systematic 'follow-up' work to curtail regrowth.

Primary control has now been completed over seventy one hectare plots, assisted by 3 successful grant applications to fund contractors to work on some of the dense infestations.

Recent work has tackled seedling growth due to the flood, otherwise work has continued in selected locations including some difficult to access follow-up work in a quarry, first weeded five years ago and still largely clear.



Special Skills required: Peter Booth Weeding in a Quarry on Maria Island

The Erica is confined to two small areas; one near Robeys Farm (south of the isthmus) and the other at a remote location near Haunted Bay (far south of island).

On a recent follow-up survey of the Haunted Bay site, 12 months after two extended working bees, a handful of seedlings were all that remained of this longstanding two-hectare infestation.


The Erica at Robeys Farm is well on the way to meeting the same fate!!



For a bit of light relief we have also tackled 'pasture weeds' such as mignonette, horehound, greater mullein, and periwinkle. Archiving historic artefacts, construction and renovation work have also been substantial achievements of some of our band.

So... Invigorated by the ferry trip across the Mercury Passage and comfortably established in Parks well appointed 'workshop' accommodation, the action begins. Another enjoyable spell of work on a special island...

Peter Booth,

Friends of Maria Island

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All go on Tasman Island

In preparing material for this magazine I looked back over recent newsletters from Wildcare branch Friends of Tasman Island (FoTI).

I thought it might be an easy job to pinch some of their material, but wow, they have been doing so much good work that it was hard to condense it into a small enough space to fit here!

So here's a summary of some of what they have been up to recently

Two volunteer working bees have been held on the island since February, coordinated by tireless group members Chris Creese and Erika Shankley. Erika's report from the Easter working bee details a long list of successful works undertaken.

These included installing a new water tank at Quarters 3, renovation of and then reconnecting the electrical circuits to the oil store and Quarters 1 and 2, mowing and brushcutting and weeding.

As part of this working bee the local Rotary Club also ran their annual Tasman Island Open Day. 50 visitors visited the island throughout the day, shuttled back and forth from Safety Cove by helicopter.

On the island, lighthouse tours were conducted by Lyndon O'Grady of the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) and Chris Creese from FoTI, while John Cook related some of his stories from the 'old days'.

There have also been regular visits to the island this year by the Feral Cat Eradication Project team and apparently there is now possibly only one cat left on the island! This project has been a co-operative effort between Wildcare Inc (through the Wildcare Gift Fund), PWS and DPIPW.

FoTI has also been busy on the fundraising scene. The Lighthouse Cookbook and 2011 Lighthouse Calendar projects (see promotion in this magazine) in partnership with the Friends of Deal Island continue to provide a valuable source of funds.

Add to this a successful raffle and continuing success with grant applications and it's pretty clear why the balance sheets look so healthy.



Tasman Island Working Bee - April 2010



Chris Creese and Erika Shankley at work on Tasman Island – Photographer Scott Bell

In the near future FoTI will be making good use of skills that members picked up during their recent refurbishment of the original Tasman Island Lighthouse lantern room by contracting to AMSA for cataloguing and crating the lens from the Cape Sorell light.

If you would like to get involved in this project or any other on Tasman, give FoTI a call at friendsoftasmanisland@gmail.com

Carol Jackson & Erika Shankley



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WILDCARE – Blundstone Volunteer Photo Competition

In the last edition of Wildtimes I announced the Wildcare – Blundstone Volunteer Photo Competition, offering great prizes for digital photos depicting 'Wildcare – Tasmania's largest incorporated volunteer organisation, caring for wild places, wildlife and cultural heritage'.

Well, the competition has been run and won, with 10 entrants entering a total of 25 separate photos. The judges were myself (Craig Saunders, Wildtimes editor) and Pip Gowen, PWS Volunteer Facilitator based at PWS Huonville.

And the winners are:

Our first prize (on the front cover of this issue) goes to Patsy Campbell of Lebrina (near Launceston) from Wildcare branch Native Animal Rescue for her shot of Lorraine de Weys and Norma Baker feeding orphaned wildlife. (See our article in this issue about the great work of this group)

Patsy wins \$200 worth of clothing from the Wildcare shop, and a pair of Blundstone leather walking boots. And for being published on our cover, the extra honour of free Wildcare membership for 2011. (Sorry, no steak knives)

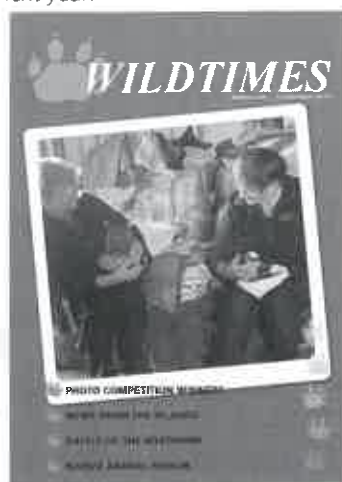
Second prize (see back cover) goes to Reg Hills of Newtown from the Friends of Mt Field for his photo of Greg Kidd and Shirley Fish on a trackwork working bee at the Tarn Shelf, Mt Field National Park.

Third prize (see back cover) goes to Janine Cranney of Wynyard from Threatened Plants Tasmania for her shot of Peter Tonelli and Phil Collier searching for threatened plant Arthur River Greenhood (*Pterostylis rubenachii*).

Reg and Janine win a Wildcare polarfleece jacket and a pair of Blundstone walking boots. I'm sure they will find these will be handy sometime in the near future.

Keep an eye open, and your digital camera handy, we'll run the competition again next year.

Craig Saunders



Stage 2 of the Tamar Island Wetlands Centre Landscaping and Rehabilitation Project Completed

In August the Launceston rain held off long enough for Tamar Island Wetlands Volunteers along with PWS staff to plant Stage 2 of the landscaping and rehabilitation plan for the car park and adjacent areas along the wetland edge.

By the end of the project second day the new plants were well watered in with about 12 mm of rainfall falling over night and in the morning.

Eight members of the Volunteer's group and four representatives from PWS planted, protected and mulched the area between the car park and the West Tamar Highway with native plants commonly found in the Tamar Valley.

The work for Stage 2 was completed in August 2010 while the initial planting along the wetland edge for Stage 1 was completed in October 2009.

Plant growth for Stage 1 was excellent following good seasons and regular watering over the summer months by the volunteers while survival after ten months was very good at 88%.

Funding for the project was provided by the Australian Plant Society Tasmania under their annual grants program to encourage the use of native plants.

The TIWC Volunteers appreciated receiving the grant for the work and anticipate that their efforts will improve the entrance to the Wetlands Centre by isolating the car park from the highway and wetlands.

The project has dual aims of improving the amenity of the car park by planting along the wetland edge and the highway as well as promoting the use of Tasmanian native plants in landscaping, rehabilitation and home gardens.

John Duggin

Tamar Island Wetlands Volunteers



Tamar Island Wetlands Volunteers and PWS rangers enjoy the completion of Stage 2 planting with a well earned morning tea break. Photo by Alison Moore,

Native Animal Rescue

Native Animal Rescue is a self-funded team of 26 dedicated and committed wildlife enthusiasts whose sole aim is to rehabilitate and release injured and orphaned Tasmanian native species.

The group covers mainly the north and northeast of Tasmania but has members at Wynyard and Penguin. Covering this vast areas requires extensive travelling and time to pick up injured and orphaned animals and birds and again later to release them from where they came from if possible.

Even after release, some young animals still require supplementary feeding until they re-establish themselves and regain or learn to feed themselves. Callouts can be at any time and usually in the poorest of weather.

Many of the orphaned wombats, wallabies and possums are extremely small and hairless. They have included a 28 gm possum and 71 gm wombats. These require specialist care and a lot of dedication over many months. A hairless wombat may need two years before it is developed enough to be released into the wild.

The Carers work tirelessly 24/7, whether it is gathering bush tucker, 2 hour bottle feeding orphans, erecting soft release pens, cleaning cages, making and washing pouches and bags.

Lorraine de Weys, the Co-ordinator, at Underwood and Norma Baker at Bridport would each take in between 200 and 300 animals per year.

The other carers receive fewer animals as they generally specialise in species like possums or wombats or small birds or larger birds like owls, parrots, magpies, frogmouths, etc, where special cages and pens are required. Others concentrate on pre-release care - the time between intensive care and large enough for release.

Lorraine is currently caring for three orphaned Tasmanian Devil pups as a part of Save the Devil programme. The pups have come from mothers suffering the devil facial tumour disease and who were eventually euthanased. A BBC documentary film team recently filmed her work with these pups and other baby animals in her care.

Lorraine de Weys was awarded an OAM and Norma Baker was awarded Australia Day volunteer award by the Dorset Council, for their dedication and ongoing commitment to wildlife.



Matt Hope working on demountable animal enclosure at Bellingham



Lorraine de Weys and Tasmanian Devil pup.

There is not much spare time, but in between all this, they manage to organise fundraising. The proceeds are used to offset the cost of special marsupial milk powder and special feed for birdlife. Other costs are for feed bottles, teats and other materials for caring for orphans and injured animals and birdlife.

The next fundraiser will be on October 16th, 2010, and will be an open garden day at 22 Denis Drive, Riverside. Native Animal Rescue will be providing morning and afternoon teas and the proceeds will be used to purchase marsupial milk.

Further information available from Lorraine de Weys Phone 6326 3502


Lorraine de Weys

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Park staff I've Worked With...

Wildcare co chair Will Forsyth continues his chats about the Parks staff he has worked with over his many years as a volunteer with the Service

Ted Bugg has been with Parks for a long time. Twenty one years at Cradle! But now he is stationed at St. Helens. As a matter of fact, that was where Ted grew up. He has turned full circle.

A carpenter by trade, lots of Ted's work is evident in the Cradle area. For instance, the helipad at Waterfall Valley was Teds' creation. And talking about Waterfall, I am the caretaker of the old Waterfall Hut and Ted is responsible for all the Heritage Huts in the Highlands. We have had frequent discussions about the old Waterfall Hut. Prior to rebuilding the porch, Ted and I perused the Old Waterfall Valley Hut Plan of Management. Inside the Plan is a yellow sticker- it reads:

Error: Pencil Pine is referred to several times in this plan. In each instance, it should read King Billy Pine. Signed Ted Bugg 25/8/91.

The Hut was built around 1928 and the materials to build it were brought in by pack horse. Hence, I suppose, this is why the Horse Track up onto the Plateau was called the Horse Track!

One particular time I was doing a stint as Waterfall Track Warden. I received a message from a walker who had passed through Windermere that a lady was unable to continue the Overland due to sickness. Cradle was radioed and advised that I would go to Windermere and check out the situation.

Luckily, in this instance there was also a doctor at Windermere and we decided that she could walk back to Cradle with an overnight stay at Waterfall. I carried her pack. Before setting off from Waterfall the next morning Cradle radioed that a ranger would meet us and take over from there and I would return to Waterfall. The ranger who completed the task was Ted. Mission accomplished.

Ted had a couple of stints to the Antarctic. It was a private concern rehabilitating Mawson's Hut. They would journey



PWS Ranger Ted Bugg at Mawson's Hut, Antarctica

down there by private yacht during the September to December period, or thereabouts. Ted, in all instances was the leader, I think, of the expeditions.

One time the weather kept them down there over Christmas. There supplies were low. Beer and cigarettes had finished. Christmas was a fairly bleak affair. Ted, at that time had a young son James who was expecting his dad to be back for Christmas. He had to wait until mid January.

Last time talking to Ted he mentioned another trip to work on the Hut coming up soon. Ted wants to be a starter. James is now six and spends time with his father on school holidays. Now the visits will be to St. Helens

Stay tuned, the next Parks staff I want to tell you about is not with Parks now but very much involved with Wildcare.

Will Forsyth

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Film Review: South Solitary

Mary Finsterer's haunting theme music from the Australian film South Solitary was playing on ABC FM as I drove to the State Cinema.

Memories came flooding back. The year was 2002 and I was on Maatsuyker Island as a voluntary caretaker. A visitor, we were told, was to accompany the ranger on his monthly inspection of the island. Script writer and film maker, Shirley Barrett, had had the germ of an idea – a film about life on a remote island lightstation in the '20s, after the Great War. Where better to base her story than Maatsuyker Island!

The day was unusually fine – not at all what Shirley expected from Australia's most southerly lightstation.

We spent the day, together, showing her the original light tower, built in 1891, with its double airlock front door, clockwork mechanism with weights which had to be wound up every half an hour and its magnificent prism made up of 540 separate pieces of precisely cut glass. Then we toured the island inspecting the keepers' houses, the pigeon loft, and the old haulage.

Some years later the then Minister for Economic Development, Paula Wreidt, announced with great fanfare that the "Big budget movie South Solitary, set to be filmed in a remote Tasmanian lighthouse, is expected to draw big Hollywood names, with reports circulating that Golden Globe nominee Maggie Gyllenhaal and British star Paul Bettany will star in the film."¹

Shirley already had a string of TV credits as a director, including episodes of Police Rescue, Heartbreak High and A Country Practice and her first film Love Serenade was winner of the Camera d'Or at the 1996 Cannes Film Festival for the best first feature film.

However, the logistics of shooting a film at such a remote location proved too difficult and instead, the budget was pared down to a mere \$6.5 million with South Solitary being filmed at three Victorian locations – Portland, Cape Otway and Cape Nelson. The film was premiered at the Sydney Film Festival in June this year.

Reviews have been many and various. "If you're thinking - why on earth would I watch an entire movie dedicated to lighthouse-keeping? ... think again", says one reviewer. "There's enough scandal, secrecy and psychosis to entertain most in Shirley Barrett's new film South Solitary." And Stuart Diwell remarked in the Sunday Tasmanian's Movie Guide "It makes a nice change that my most positive review for the week is an Australian movie."

This film is one of those rare occasions when life on an Australian lightstation is highlighted in a credible manner, albeit with all the nuances between the disparate characters who live there.

Australian actors, Barry Otto and his daughter Miranda, star in the film – Barry as George Wadsworth, the crusty head lightkeeper - a stickler for attention to detail - and Miranda, his on-screen niece Meredith, escaping from her past. Both did a lot of research into the roles and give fine, convincing performances. Tasmanian actor, Essie Davis plays the long-suffering wife of rebellious womaniser Harry (Rohan Nichol), an assistant keeper, while Annie Martin gives a tremendous performance as Nettie, their mischievous daughter, with her



A Scene From South Solitary

quirky collection of scabs. New Zealander Marton Csokas, as Jack Fleet, gives a compelling performance as the third light keeper - reticent, brooding and battle scarred from the Great War.

Some reviewers complained about the pace of the film, with the burgeoning love story only surfacing in the closing sequences. However, the film was inspired by true stories gleaned from light-keepers log books from Maatsuyker, Tasman and Deal Island, amongst others, before the days of telephone, television and satellite communications.

Pigeon post and semaphore were the only forms of contact with the outside world and the pace of life was necessarily slower.

For the pharophiles amongst the audience the scenes in the light tower, lantern room and haulage are very well done. The mind boggles, however, if keepers on Maatsuyker or Tasman had to winch the laden trolleys up by hand!

The scene in the lanternroom where Meredith with assistant keeper Jack Fleet light the kerosene lamp is particularly evocative – reminiscent of a similar scene in A Big Country with our own John Cook, whose name appears in the credits.

In South Solitary Shirley Barrett has a strong cast whose performances add authenticity to the script. I found my attention held throughout the film and wanting to know more about those lighthouse islands. A sequel perhaps?

Enka Shankley

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¹ ABC News 24 June 2008

The Battle of the Boxthorn

A civilian's guide

1. Know your enemy

African Boxthorn is thought to have been present in Tasmania since 1845, and was probably introduced as a hedge plant. The scientific name says it all: *Lycium ferocissimum* (from the Latin *ferox*, meaning "fierce, wild, bold, savage"). Plants can reach several metres in height and width, and are covered in long rigid spines.

2. Identify the battle zone

There's plenty of boxthorn to be fought. The Friends of Bass Strait Island have undertaken work on several of the Furneaux islands – both primary control and ongoing maintenance. One of the targets for 2010 was Roydon Island, just off Leeka on the west coast of Flinders Island. A working bee was held there in 2009, but large areas of the island remain infested.

3. Appoint a commander and recruit some troops

Seasoned Campaigner Commander Ziegler was chosen to coordinate the attack, fresh from the Goose Island Boxthorn Tour (as were Kat, Mark and Laura). Another seven recruits were flown to Flinders Island to join the party.

4. Assemble weapons of mass destruction

Chainsaws and fuel, hand saws, large loppers, spray bottles and chemical weapons were procured.

5. Arrange transport to the battle zone

This was a serious logistical exercise. Food for eleven people for nine days, safety and communications equipment, weapons, gas, cooking and lighting equipment and personal gear – plus all drinking water! It really was an amazing effort by Karen and her helpers, given that they had only two days between trips.

Equipment was assembled at Allports Beach near Emita on Flinders Island. Troops and supplies were transported by Captain Mike Nicholls in supply vessel "Bass Pyramid", and landed on the beach at Roydon Island (with numerous dinghy trips at each end). A water tank was taken and placed on shore, and filled by pumping from the boat.

6. Set up HQ

We were fortunate to have the use of a small hut which became kitchen, mess hall and camp headquarters. Army carpenter Mark put his chainsaw skills to great use in making a number of improvements while we were there. A small solar panel was set up to provide some battery-charging capability.

Troops went in search of any flat, open pockets suitable for a tent (unaware at the time of how close they were to the penguin highways!).

7. Mount the attack

With chainsaws fuelled, spray bottles filled and loppers at the ready, the peace was shattered when the attack was launched on the south-eastern section of the island, expanding on the area covered by the 2009 battle. The previous battle zone was scoured, to hunt down any enemy not taken in 2009.



The Enemy at Close range

8. Keep the troops well-fed

Food was quite a highlight. Karen and Kat did a marvelous job with all the planning, buying and packing. Many a fine damper was enjoyed for morning tea. In the evenings, huge stews and curries were cooked up. All camp oven pudding experiments were eagerly tested!

9. Call for reinforcements

Troop numbers were boosted when we were joined for a day by members of the Westside Landcare group from Flinders Island. Two dampers that day!

10. Organise a concert to keep up the morale

No fly-in performers here! We had our own ukulele band (Laura, Kaely and Rosie), who gave their first public performance of the original Boxthorn Song:

"You gotta know when to cut 'em, know when to roll 'em, know when to hack away, know when to run....."

11. Celebrate the victories

Even after days of crawling amongst boxthorn, nursing scratched wrists and pulling thorns out of hands and knees, everyone still attacked the job with much enthusiasm and good humour. Spending several days there gave us the chance to become more familiar with the island and to gain greater appreciation of the place (especially the non-boxthorn parts!).

continued next page...



Boxthorn soldiers advance against the enemy



...continued from previous page

As well, we had the reward of seeing that progress is being made. About one third of the island has now been cleared of mature boxthorn plants.

12. Plan the next battle (hope for more money in the war chest)

This project was supported by the Tasmanian Conservation Trust, working with Wildcare Friends of Bass Strait Islands (FOBSI), with funding from the Australian Government Caring for Our Country Program.

Volunteers on this trip were:

Karen Ziegler (co-ordinator), Mark Alexander, Laura Bussolini, Vicki Campbell, Mike Hitchcock, Rosie Hohnen, Kat Hopkins, Dave James, Kaely Kreger, Peter McGlone and Sue Meech,

Work will continue – subject to funding! To become involved, email christian.tas@gmail.com

Vicki Campbell!



Susie Meech Engages in hand to hand combat

SPRATS Gear up for Another Summer

A Call for bushwalkers to help protect Tasmania's wilderness coastline.

In a 2006 report beach weeds were identified as one of the largest emerging threats to the Tasmanian coastline.

Sea spurge and marram grass are weeds which if left unheeded would have completely compromised coastal parts of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA).

The TWWHA is one of the last true wilderness regions and encompasses a greater range of natural and cultural values than any other region on Earth.

The threat from these weeds was enormous and immediate and set to compromise internationally recognized geo-diversity values, Aboriginal cultural sites, coastal herb-fields, grasslands and shrublands, as well as habitats for rare and threatened international migratory shorebird species.

Wildcare branch SPRATS (Sea Spurge Remote Area Teams) was formed in 2007 to establish and maintain an eradication zone for sea spurge and marram grass along some 600 kilometres of Tasmanian wilderness coastline.

An enormous challenge, but to date SPRATS has completely eradicated mature sea spurge from over 95% of the region and is on track to completely eradicate mature sea spurge by the 2011-12 summer.

SPRATS has implemented the first 3 field seasons of a 10 Year Plan with operations funded through Australian Government Grants and the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service.

Last year SPRATS won the Community Award in the Tasmanian Awards for Environmental Excellence. At a national level, SPRATS was a finalist in the 2009 Banskia Awards and is again in 2010.

As a community group, SPRATS is at the forefront of a new ethos in adventure conversation volunteering. The SPRATS Adventure Weeding program tackles a conservation threat in a location where traditional agency implemented programs have been unable to succeed alone.

This community partnership with the PWS has generated real benefits for wilderness conservation and provides fulfillment and fun for volunteers. SPRATS concentrate on getting the work done but work hard at having a good time.

SPRATS is now forming teams for deployment on their most ambitious season attempted so far. Some 3 million plants are targeted for removal during the coming summer.



SPRATS volunteers Jon Marsden-Smedley, Andy Macqueen, Nigel Ricketts and Liz Macqueen enjoy a break on Tasmania's West Coast.

Nine teams will be deployed by helicopter, fixed wing or boat for between 10 and 20 days each and together will cover the entire coast from Macquarie Harbour to Cockle Creek. All sectors are breathtakingly beautiful, and offer the freshest air in the world.

The weather is of course highly variable. Strong winds and heavy rain must be expected, although hot, dry days are also likely.

Regardless of the weather, experience shows that positive team spirit prevails, and most participants have such a good time that they come back for more.

If you are an experienced, self-reliant bushwalker who wants to spend time on some hard-to-access coast, and put something back into the environment, this is for you.

There are opportunities for bushwalkers with a variety of fitness levels.

Interested? Go to the SPRATS page on the Wildcare website and download the SPRATpack (which contains all the information you need) and complete the Expression of Interest form.

We need to hear from you soon because teams are already being put together.

Geoff Luscombe
SPRATS

The Lighthouse Kids of Maatsuyker Island

Maatsuyker Island, off the remote and rugged southwest coast of Tasmania, has the most southern lighthouse in Australia. Fortunately the island is free of introduced animal pests and, therefore, the seabird and land bird communities are diverse and abundant.

Fur seals live around the coast of the island but only one species of native mammal lives on the island – a small marsupial called the swamp antechinus.

Since the departure of the last lightkeeper in 1998, the Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) has managed a volunteer caretaker program for Maatsuyker Island.

Jonah (aged 7) and Evie (aged 4) Wiltshire were lucky to be the first children in more than 10 years to explore and discover the 'magic of Maat'.

They lived there from February to May 2010 with their Mum and Dad, Sheryl Hamilton and Al Wiltshire, who were volunteer PWS caretakers as well as Bureau of Meteorology weather observers. Jonah and Evie had a fantastic time helping with caretaking duties like clearing the drain along the edge of the old road and cleaning at the old lighthouse as well as watching the wildlife, riding their scooters and flying their kites.

They also spent lots of time drawing and painting pictures while at the lightstation or out on excursions and picnics to other parts of the island.

With the help of Mum, Jonah and Evie have created a children's book called "The Lighthouse Kids of Maatsuyker Island: a true Tasmanian adventure" which is being published with the support of Forty Degrees South Publishing.

The book tells the story of Jonah and Evie's adventures and discoveries during their four month stint as Maatsuyker 'junior caretakers' and is illustrated with their drawings.



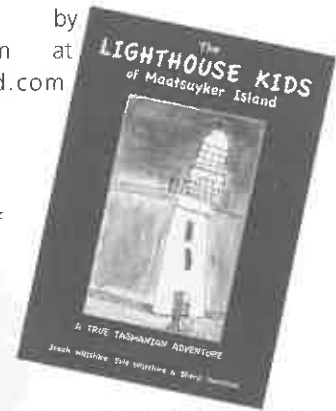
Lighthouse Kids at Work

Some of the proceeds from the sale of the book will be donated to Wildcare branch Friends of Maatsuyker Island (FOMI) to help with restoration work on the island.

The book is due to be launched at the FOMI AGM and annual dinner on October 14th. It will be available at selected local book retailers, through the Writers Market at www.fortysouth.com.au or by contacting Sheryl Hamilton at hamilton.wiltshire@bigpond.com or on 0448174298.

Sheryl Hamilton

The Lighthouse Kids of Maatsuyker Island – Book Cover



Guess Where Lighthouse Kids



Lighthouse Kids Family Portrait

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On Being a weather observer on Maatsuyker Island

It's 8.30am and time to head to the Met Office to do the observations and prepare the 9am weather report. It's blowing hard and has been for about 36 hours.

Deb did the 6am observations this morning and checked the instruments to find that the wind hit 59 knots (109km/hr) at about midnight.

We struggle up the steps, holding on tight to the handrails, wearing gumboots, gloves, raincoats done up tight and hoods tied on securely.

In this sort of wind loose clothing and straps can cause serious injury if they flick into your eye. While Deb assesses the cloud I head onto the lawn south of the office to gauge the wind.

There is an automatic anemometer here for measuring wind speed and direction but the Bureau ask us to do a manual assessment of the wind speed and direction at sea level – 150 metres below us.

As I stand there facing into the wind, my eyes start to water and my nose starts to run. I make my decision but to write it on the pad I have to take a glove off, making sure it is tied to my wrist first!

Back into the office to talk over the cloud with Deb and a rain shower arrives, along with the associated increase in wind speed. Next I have to work out the swell height.

Can't see through the windows due to the rain so I take the binoculars out into the lee of the building and try to focus on a couple of distant rocks we use to measure swell height.

Even in the lee I am constantly knocked sideways by the wind that is now gusting to 55 knots (100km/hr). I have to watch the swell for some time to get an average height and at last, with eyes and nose running again like taps I decide it's about 4 metre and head back inside.

Deb has logged onto the computer and is gathering data from the weather station and preparing to send it to the Bureau. She heads outside to check the rain gauge.

Trying to read the gauge is a challenge in the conditions but she completes the reading and tries to put the top back on the gauge. She has trouble so reluctantly I leave the shelter of the office and go to help her wedge it back in place and weight it down so it doesn't blow off.

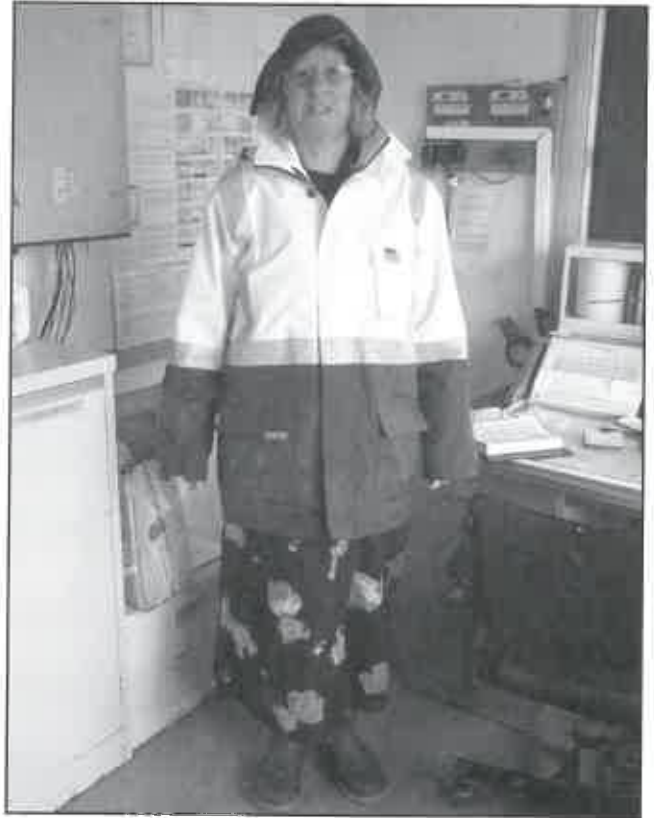
The rain is being driven sideways and is almost hail, with visibility down to about 3 kilometres. Had to take my gloves off when working on the rain gauge and both hands are now wet and frozen.

The last outside job is to read the four thermometers in the Thermometer Screen and, because it is Monday, we also have to change the cloth wicks on the two wet bulb thermometers. Out we go. Deb tries to shield me while I make the readings and she writes them down. I have to shout to make myself heard and she is only about half a metre away.

Even in a double louvered box the minimum thermometer has been vibrated so much by the wind it is not functioning correctly and is reading a ridiculous figure of -25 degrees.

Time to change the wicks, a fiddly job at the best of times but a brute in these conditions. I pull the old wick off and start to put the new one on. Can't see properly because of streaming eyes, finger tips are numb.

I fumble and grope and the new wick is last seen heading to New Zealand. Deb says something, probably just as well I can't hear her, and staggers back inside to get another wick.



Deb Searle in raincoat and pyjamas set for the 6am weather observations

At last we get the job done and collapse into the office. Half an hour in this wind feels like doing 15 rounds with Mike Tyson while getting a shiatsu massage at the same time.

The building is shaking and vibrating as the wind screams through the guy wires that hold everything down.

Maatsuyker Island is a magnificent place and I couldn't think of anywhere I would rather be!

Craig Searle, July 2010



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Goings on at the board

The peak body in the Wildcare Empire (!!) is the Wildcare Board of Management. The Board meets every two months and handles all those matters which concern Wildcare as a whole.

That means looking after our 40 or so active branches as well as around 4,000 individual members.

The Board also determines the agenda for the independent Wildcare Gift Fund Committee, a separate forum that meets as necessary to manage (which generally means disperse or 'hand out') all those donations made to the Gift Fund.

On the lighter side, Board meetings are generally held at appropriate venues, dotted all around the state and are noted for lavish lunches, log fires and a few laughs (along with some serious chatting of course).

In August 2010 the Board accepted an invitation from Stephanie Burbury to lunch and meet at the family property Bowsden, near Jericho.

Stephanie convenes the Wildcare branch, Jericho Heritage Centre, that has recently taken a lease on St James Church Jericho and is converting the building to a museum.

So you might well ask who is tasked with this incredibly important role. Up until 2007 the Board largely comprised presidents of our many branches but oddly enough these people had other (more practical) things to do and had trouble finding time to attend board meetings.

So, from 2007, in an effort to make the board more workable, it was reconstituted to include just three branch presidents and three representatives from the general membership.

So who's on the board today? Here's a full list:

Appointed Co Chair: Andrew Smith, Manager Community Partnerships, Parks and Wildlife Service

Elected Co Chair: Will Forsyth

Secretary (appointed by PWS): Wanita Wells

Treasurer: Craig Saunders

3 Group Presidents:

Dallas Baker (Friends of Deal Island)

Christian Bell (Friends of Maatsuyker Island)

John Duggin (Tamar Island wetland Volunteers)

3 Membership Representatives:

Karen Ziegler

Bob Tyson

One position vacant

Agency Representatives:

Tim Turner (Parks and Wildlife Service)

Pete Smith (Heritage Tasmania)

Michael Pemberton (Manager Biodiversity Conservation Branch, DPIPW)



The Wildcare Board at Bowsden, Jericho in August 2010.

The Board members are elected at an AGM held each year in March.

If you're interested in getting involved in our work at this statewide level then give one of us a call. There's plenty of room at the table!

Craig Saunders



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Threatened Plants Tasmania members Phil Collier and Peter Tonelli continue the search for the rare Tasmanian orchid Arthur River Greenhood (*Pterostylis rubenachii*) after finding the one shown in the foreground. (photo Janine Cranney)



Friends of Mt Field members Greg Kidd and Shirley Fish doing the hard work on a recent working bee on the Tarn Shelf, Mt Field National Park. (photo Reg Hills)



WILDCARE Inc

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