



WILD TIMES

Edition 40 April 2011



ALASKANS IN TASMANIA



WILDCARE AT MELALEUCA



BLIND ON BARN BLUFF



GIFT FUND PROJECT SUCCESSES, AND MUCH MORE ...



Editorial

Another summer season is behind us and more than ever this edition of Wildtimes is a celebration of the many fantastic Wildcare projects taken place and individual volunteers' stories I have come across since Christmas.

I think you'll especially enjoy reading about individual volunteer experiences from Steve Cronin, Helen Young and Alaskan visitors Clay Alderson and Claudia Rector. Ann Stephen's and Gerry Delaney's account of one harrowing afternoon on the Overland Track offers much food for thought, even perhaps debate.

Before we put last summer behind us, make sure you look through those digital photos taken on Wildcare activities and send in your entries for this year's photo competition. Our theme this time is 'Wildcare Volunteers at Work and Play', and the prize is \$1,000 to the Wildcare branch nominated by the winning photographer. Entries close 29 July 2011. More details inside this issue.

If you're one of Wildcare's newer members wondering how to get more involved in our on-ground project see our piece on 'Better Pathways to Volunteering'.

Personally, I'm revisiting a previous Parks career as a trackworker, with 3-4 months work on a great new project at Melaleuca. This means I'll be hard to get hold of through Autumn but please keep those contributions coming in via email.

Craig Saunders



Summer Sailing in Bass Strait, photo Steve Cronin see page 16

APOLOGY

The Wildcare Board of Management apologises for the late notice by mail for this year's Annual General Meeting, held at Mt Field National Park on Saturday 26 March 2011.

Minutes of the meeting are now available on the Wildcare website at www.wildcaretas.org.au

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

Ingrid McCaughey, Ann Stephen, Phil Wyatt, Chris Arthur, Peter and Jo Voller, Karen Waldon-Manning

Donations up to \$100

Helen Cavanagh, David Jones, Wayne and Dian Clayton, Peter and Bunty Jackson, Lisa Marshall, Joan O'Brien, Margaret Morgan, Lyn van der Meulen, Petrina Nettlefold, Frederick O'Leary, Ward Hartman, Mark and Jenny Garnsey, Denise Shultz, Stanley Read, RC & SF Mitchelson, John Murison, Mabel Mitchell, Lyndon O'Grady, Jaimie Cleeland, GM Pollard

Wildtimes Publication Schedule

EDITION #	COPY DEADLINE	PUBLICATION
41	1 August 2011	1 September 2011
42	1 December 2011	1 January 2012
43	1 April 2012	1 May 2012

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

ON THE FRONT COVER:

Wildcare's newest board member Shane Pinner (left) and Dave Reynolds enjoying the volunteer life at Melaleuca (see more on page 3 opposite).



All on at Melaleuca

Melaleuca in the far Southwest was exceptionally busy this summer with the Wildcare logo ever present.

For the first time since the 2004-2005 summer the Parks and Wildlife Service ran a Campground Host Program at Melaleuca. This program involved volunteers (usually a married couple, sometimes with children) staying at Melaleuca for around a month. Duties included providing a 'meet and greet' service for the hundreds of visitors arriving by aircraft, by foot and by boat. When not chatting there was a range of maintenance tasks to perform.

The Harkin family as well as volunteer regulars Annette and Trevor Walsh and Kate and Bruce Frankcombe each stayed for around a month providing a wonderful welcome to all.

Alongside the Campground Hosts DPIPWE continued to run the Orange Bellied Parrot monitoring program.

Wildcare volunteers (again, usually a couple) stay at Melaleuca for around 2 weeks, monitoring the local bird population each morning and evening from the Deny King Bird Hide. Volunteers have reported that bird numbers have been well down this year.

To complete the Melaleuca volunteer summer a team of 9 volunteers from Wildcare Friends of Melaleuca arrived in mid-March to carry out essential maintenance on the Charles King Memorial Hut, a project funded with a grant from the Tasmanian Community Fund. The team replaced badly corroded roofing iron with a new roof, complete with paint job. Thanks to excellent weather there was time to assist 'locals' Janet and Geoff Fenton with a range of jobs around the King family lease.

Janet and Geoff's wonderful hospitality was a real treat! The team enjoyed dinner in the King 'residence' one evening and were treated to a boat trip to Bathurst Harbour in beautiful sunshine on the last morning.

If you would like to spend some volunteer time at Melaleuca next summer contact Pip Gowen at PWS (pip.gowen@parks.tas.gov.au) for the Campground Host Program, Mark Holdsworth at DPIPWE (Mark.Holdsworth@dPIPWE.tas.gov.au) for the Orange Bellied parrot Program and Janet Fenton at Wildcare for Friends of Melaleuca.

Craig Saunders



Melaleuca Campground Hosts Kate and Bruce Frankcombe



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Alaskans in Tasmania: A Volunteer Summer with the PWS

"Ever since I was a small boy I have wanted to go to Australia," I offered, gazing out the window of our cabin watching the snowline recede under the pines.

The Yukon winter was turning into spring with longer days and warmer temperatures. For the preceding two winters we had volunteered with the U.S. National Park Service and with other agencies. My wife Claudia and I found volunteering to be a logical and rewarding extension of our many years of professional service in the national parks.

"I've been to Australia but it was a long time ago and I would love to go back," responded Claudia. "Especially to Tasmania since I haven't been there. We could see if they would be interested in having us volunteer in their parks."

That sent us to the computer and a search for "Tasmania, Parks, Volunteers" which led us to an message from Pip Gowen, Volunteer Coordinator for the PWS Southern Region recruiting campground hosts for Cockle Creek.

For the next year we enjoyed the pleasant task of planning, corresponding with Pip and reading up on the natural and cultural history of Tasmania. We scoured the internet (especially the PWS site) and our local libraries. Each morning's breakfast included time to share information about a few birds or Captain Cook's adventures or some other aspect of Tasmanian life. Happily, we had been accumulating airline miles for a number of years and this trip of a lifetime was the perfect time to use them.



Claudia with Cockle Creek Weeds

In mid-November we arrived in Hobart to begin our 5 month visit. We scheduled a brief stay in Hobart to shake some of the travel cobwebs from our brains and then we were ready for our first face-to-face meeting with Pip.

It was great to finally meet her and to officially begin a friendship that is destined to last a lifetime.

There had been a certain amount of good faith exhibited on both sides of the negotiations since Pip did not know all that much about us and we were not certain just what we were getting ourselves signed up for.

All that uncertainty vanished in the first five minutes as the comfort level was quickly achieved.

A few days later we drove to Huonville, where we met many of the PWS staff. We met with Beth Russell, site manager for Hastings Caves, our first volunteer assignment. Beth outlined the work that we would be doing and welcomed us to the park family.

We then drove south to Hastings Caves and moved into "The Chalet" a beautiful 1930s style residence that would be our home base for the next two months. Our work consisted of cleaning the Chalet, painting park signs, preparing boardwalks for painting, and a number of similar jobs.

We assisted Beth in initiating a recycling program. We also worked with her staff to help launch an educational outreach program. It was an exciting time and one in which we were very proud to be a part of the park family.

We worked closely with park staff and shared our park experiences.

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Clay on Roydon Island

It was a time to build rapport with the park staff and to prove ourselves as competent workers willing to take on any job that needed to be done.

From Hastings Caves we went even further south to Cockle Creek where we spent four weeks as campground hosts. Evenings were spent pulling weeds and picking up trash, familiar tasks from our own parks.

It was a great experience for us, living on the edge of the World Heritage Area and meeting the traveling public.

These experiences were rewarded when we were invited to join a weeding bee to remove African Boxthorn from Roydon Island, a small island near Flinders Island. This took us to a beautiful part of Tasmania for some hard work among wonderful people.

We came away with aching muscles but with memories and friendships to be cherished forever. Nothing brings people together quite like hard work amid remote circumstances where you must rely upon each other to accomplish your assignment.

With the end of our stay in Tasmania looming less than a month away we are now travelling to other parts of the island, exploring PWS sites and meeting park staff. Park workers we meet are dedicated to caring for parks and to protecting the priceless Tasmanian environment.

Few complain about tight budgets and lack of adequate staffing. They are more likely to talk positively about accomplishments and how volunteers are assisting park staff to reach their goals.

In a month we will be back in the familiar surroundings of our cabin in the Yukon wilderness and the cycle will start over with the question, where do we want to spend next winter? If we have the opportunity we will return to Tasmania to volunteer in the parks. We are pursuing opportunities to return to

this wonderful place in a year or two for new volunteering adventures.

Best of all we would enjoy the chance to visit the wonderful people that we have met. This landscape is breathtaking but without its warm friendly people Tassie could just be another beautiful island in the Great Southern Ocean.

Clay Alderson and Claudia Rector



Clay and Claudia meet the locals

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Roydon Island Revisited - (from those Alaskans)

Just how much African Boxthorn can nine Wildcare volunteers eradicate from a 37 hectare island in two weeks? This is what our group wanted to find out when we departed from Flinders Island on the morning of February 13. Under the able leadership of Karen Ziegler the crew included Willi Watts, Fred Lemon, Kat Hopkins, Steve Cronin, Scott Bell, Tuesday Phelan, and Clay Alderson and Claudia Rector, two Parks and Wildlife Service volunteers from Alaska.

Local Flinders Island Landcare member Dave Conn and Mike Nichols of Flinders Island Dive provided the transport for the crew along with our food, personal gear, tools, drinking water, and supplies needed to sustain us for two weeks. The trip to Roydon Island included a cruise around the island in order to familiarize everyone with the lay-out of the work site.

Once we were safely unloaded on the beautiful sand beach on the east side of the island, the next step was to convert the roomy hut above the beach into our center of operations. It would be the kitchen, assembly area, medical center, and social center for the duration of our stay.

Through the years various groups and more recently the Flinders Island Landcare group have made improvements to the hut making it very snug and livable.

The first order of business was a safety briefing to make everyone aware of the potential hazards that could be encountered and to give guidance on how to work with this thorny plant with a minimum of injury.

This was followed by a walk to the top of the ridge dividing the east and west sides of the island and through the area to be weeded. This weeding assignment was designed as primary treatment for approximately 5 hectares of the aggressive and invasive boxthorn plant as well as follow-up on areas previously treated in 2009 and 2010.

The boxthorn is a dense, woody shrub growing to heights of over two meters. The most obvious feature is their thorn that can grow to a length of 8-10 centimeters. It grows in impenetrable clumps that can measure 10 meters across.

We divided into groups composed of chain saw users with their off-siders and the "crawlers". The sawyers plunged into the largest of the plants of boxthorn removing the thorny outer layer of branches until they could access the main stems supporting the plant.

Those lovingly referred to as "crawlers" tackled the smaller bushes and seedlings and clipped them off with loppers. In all instances the remaining stub of the plant had to be sprayed with herbicide as quickly as possible.

On our last day, all workers joined together to revisit previously weeded sites to remove any regrowth on previously treated plants or newly germinated plants. A wet growing season had stimulated strong regeneration and seedling growth so



Roydon Island Team

this follow-up was an important step in assuring that boxthorn would not become re-established. It also gave workers a chance to appreciate the effectiveness of this treatment regime.

Most of the group had worked together on other projects and were familiar with the routine.

Clay and Claudia were familiar in concept having worked for many years with the U.S. National Park Service and quickly integrated into the fabric of the work and the social life of the island.

After a couple of days of hard work Karen gave us a day to recover and enjoy the island. The day was spent resting, cooking, exploring, swimming, and just enjoying our time. By evening a storm was gathering and during the night we were pelted by torrential rain driven by strong winds.

Several tents took on water and the front of the hut had rainwater forced around the window panes by the strong easterly wind. We spent the next morning drying out and taking care of the aftermath of the overnight deluge.

Karen had purchased plenty of food to last for a week and had arranged a food delivery for later in our stay. With many talented and creative cooks we ate very well and enjoyed a variety of favorite dishes.

Steve and Karen harvested abalone from the rocks along the shore and Scott kept us supplied with fresh fish to add to our menu.

On the last day of our stay we were visited by Rosemary Grant, Rural Reporter for ABC Launceston. She was as delighted to find us all in such good spirits as impressed by our accomplishments. We all could tell her we had shared a great two weeks of hard work and fun, satisfying accomplishment, excellent company of new and renewed friends, and the pleasure of being on such a beautiful island.

She interviewed members of our group for a segment on rural activities that will air on the ABC network.

Clay and Claudia



Blind on Barn Bluff

On Saturday 10 December 2010 Ann Stephen, along with a party of friends from Sydney, left the carpark at Dove Lake and headed south along the Cradle Mt – Lake St Clair National Park Overland Track. Ann was a plucky, but inexperienced walker, and was no doubt just a little daunted by the poor weather and big hills in front of her. Here is Ann's own account of what eventuated that day.

My mother always said I was accident prone. At 5.30 pm on Saturday the 10th December 2010 all her worst fears were to be realised when I became lost on the Cradle Mountain Overland Track in a blinding storm that swept across the rugged mountains of north west Tasmania.

Background to 'the incident'

That morning at 9.30 our party of seven had stepped out on the long raised board walk from Ronny Creek car park, all virgins of the track unnaturally clad in an assortment of gortex space suits and plastic over-pants, assembled over weeks of emails on logistics and dodgy knees, big boots, bad backs and over-sized backpacks required for the six day walk.

We were all old friends, in both senses, having known one another for decades and older than the average trekker, so we had goaded one another on to take this epic adventure. Our calves & thighs began to register the first shocks on the ascent up the steep cliff that first morning. We collapsed in a heap at lunch inside 'Kitchen Hut' a rough wooden shelter with no light or heat, relieved to rest from the savage cold wind and rain. We took out the stoves and ate our first round of dehydrated foods, then a novelty. Our gloves and boots were already quite sodden.

By two that afternoon we were back on track climbing in a south easterly direction up a high ridge that wound its way past the base of Cradle Mountain. While the narrow track was awash with rain, intermittently double planks of board covered



Barn Bluff from Waterfall Valley

by chicken wire offered sounder footing.

The mountain was on our left but only occasionally visible when the wind whipped up the mists revealing a boulder field from which massive dolerite 'needles' of rock rose. Our first and most athletic members led our slow march with me in third position followed by the four chattiest members of our crew. As the hours wore on, the gaps lengthened between us.

On these high plains, swept by the elements, I confess I enjoyed the exhilaration of isolation. This was wilderness, I thought as I was stopped in my tracks by a large wombat that

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was waddling along the duckboard track. When realising there was company, the burly startled animal fled at a remarkable pace through the low bushes. The isolated terrain, so hostile to humans was Aboriginal land, the guidebook told us that it had been occupied by 'about 350 people in seven groups known as the Big River tribe', with Cradle Mountain flints being found in many parts of the island.

Up the Bluff

On that first day vision was increasingly restricted to a small field at one's feet as the only way to cope with the driving rain was to have your hood zipped up and your beanie pulled low on your forehead leaving only your eyes exposed to keep a watch just beyond each step for the next foothold. 'This first day' we had been told by veterans 'was the hard one, if you made it through the rest was easy, just stick to the path.'

To my surprise around 4 that afternoon the track itself appeared to peter out. It was true that I had not looked carefully at the map before we left, in fact I did not even remember the name of our destination, as I just expected a hut to appear on the horizon, like a bus stop. Instead I was faced with a massive rocky base, I doubled round imagining that I had missed a turn but all I could find by way of directions forward were several

prominent mounds of rock, these cairns placed high on the surrounding boulders, were arranged to form arrows pointing upwards.

These agile markers used by climbers to show a passage through a rocky landscape hold a certain allure, made from what is close at hand and with an economy of means, so that the next pile only becomes visible from the last. With a certain trepidation and adventure I began to slowly trace my way from cairn to cairn, every time relieved to find the next small improbable fragile placement.

The weather was worsening, and my track around the base of what I would later learn was Barn Bluff, Tasmania's fourth highest mountain, led straight into the direction of the storm, with biting rain cutting into my face and rivers coursing down the track.

The precipitous path required me to drag and squeeze my way up crevices on all fours, as testified by the small rough tears on my jacket and pants. The lichen on the rocks had the appearance of camouflage; in the storm it all looked bleak. It must have taken me an hour of tense negotiating up the rocks until I finally made it to a flat rock face at the summit marked by 3 large rock piles and a triangular cut in a horizontal rock face. It was at this point that I had to admit to my lost state as there was no hut and no sign of my friends. I had clearly missed the turn off and was now facing a long night in deteriorating alpine weather.

I climbed off the rock shelf of the summit and sought shelter from the wind on the western side, finding patches of alpine grass in between old snow drifts, I gathered up some bunches, in the vain hope of making a soft ground shelter, but could not find any cave, so I sought protection behind a high vertical rock.

I crouched on the ground, removed my pack and withdrew its unfamiliar contents, a stove I did not know how to light, my sleeping mat and two 'power bars' which I consumed. By this stage my teeth were chattering, my hands and feet were soaked. I decided to unwrap my sleeping bag, took off the boots, trying to minimise the amount of clay and water I took into the bag while climbing into its reassuring purple folds in the still bright light.

I prepared myself to wait out the night and then descend the mountain in the morning, hoping that the storm would have passed. I was daunted by the twelve hours I would have to wait alone. I considered taking sleeping pills to see me through the night but then decided against that option. I was growing increasingly cold.

At 5.30 I retrieved my mobile, and to my amazement I was able to send a message to Michael, one of our non-walking partners who had left us at the walk in the morning. My lips were tight from cold so I knew my voice sounded strange but I didn't want to scare, so I said I was lost on the mountain but was OK and planned to spend the night there.

I was quite uncertain that I was doing the right thing. I felt like heading straight down the sheltered side into the reassuring

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bush below but realised that would be fatal. I was scared about losing heat. I wondered when my absence had been noticed. I knew my friends would now be very anxious. I felt terrible that my headstrong folly would derail our entire holiday. Remarkably, as I was contemplating the awful prospect of sitting alone all night I was thrown a life line. It was about 6.30 when my phone rang.

On my second attempt to retrieve it from my zip pocket with my gloves on in the driving rain I heard the reassuring voice of a National Park ranger, who had been alerted by Michael. He said that the police had been notified, but needed to know my position. I did not know the name of the mountain but explained my plans for camping out till the storm passed. He asked if I had a torch or whistle. NO. Then he rang back & said to pack up as I had several hours of day light and to carefully follow the cairns back down the mountain. He said that they had sent a man out and in about an hour's time I was to call very loudly. I knew that nothing would be heard above the wind.

I was reassured by the advice and was now on a mission, though the actual task of retracing my footsteps was tricky, I was disorientated and initially circled around the same half dozen piles on the summit not sure which way was down. After a false start I slowly edged my way along the crevices, recognising certain features. It must have taken me just over an hour to clamber from cairn to cairn, once or twice reduced to desperation because the next small pile was not visible in the fading light and my glasses kept fogging in the driving rain.

As I was almost at the base, through the swirling mists I saw the top half of a small figure waving in my direction. It was my rescuer, who I learned was called Gerry Delaney, a volunteer who every summer for several weeks was based at the first hut to assist strays like me. He was tall and thin and nimbly picked his way across the rocks and welcomed me with as much delight as I had for the sight of him. He said my friends had been out looking for me but had had to turn back. He said we still had a couple of hours of light but needed to move fast to get back to the hut before dark.

I would have been happy to follow him to the ends of the earth. I gratefully accepted his offer to take my pack, and so, half lopping, half running I hobbled for the next 2 hours behind Gerry, keeping up with his rapid pace warmed me up. Occasionally to give me a rest he would pause and have a chat. He told me I should have consulted with the wombat that I'd met on the track. He made a point of stopping at the sign and track junction I had missed, he warned against stepping into the black mud holes that now pockmarked our way. The track was completely waterlogged, and the final downhill descent to the Waterfall Valley hut was like wading down a cascade, as he brought me limping like a lost sheep to the stark wooden hut where my six friends were huddled in the dark in sleeping bags in a tense wait.



Track Junction to Barn Bluff

I hugged and thanked him profusely. And then after much hugging despite my sodden gear from my relieved friends I stripped down and Liz gave me her dry tights and Bronwen her socks and I swallowed down Meredith's couscous, like it was ambrosia. That night I never slept, my body had gone into spasms of fatigue, my feet and hands still in shock from being so cold. My mind kept going over the events, how easily I had risked my life, let alone scared my friends and put our holiday at risk.

Post mortems

The following morning before we set-off on day two on the overland track I went again to thank Gerry, who was in the warden hut, a Spartan room but with a working stove. In daylight I realised he was much older, his face was heavily lined, despite his athletic gait and stamina. At my repeated thanks he kept replying that it was his pleasure, and that volunteering for 'Wildcare' in Cradle Mountain made him feel useful, and was more challenging than golf. He was indeed a modest hero.

Over the following days as I recovered my equilibrium we talked a lot between ourselves of the rescue, of how Marian my partner and Martin had gone out searching in the storm, and had made it to the base of Barn Bluff but turned back exhausted and not quite believing I could possibly have thought to climb. They told me how around 6.30pm that night Gerry, who would have received the National Park ranger's message, had quizzed them. Asking how I would react (they said 'not panic') how fit I was ('not at all') but that I would take 'high risks'. Gerry then had said he had a hunch where I might have gone... and set off to find me on Barn Bluff.

Over the following days, news of Gerry's rescue circulated up and down the overland track. The sociality of trekkers is strong and one large family group from Queensland who we got talking to at each overnight hut swapped intrepid tales & talked of making a blog for a school project called 'Gerry and Ann' about the volunteer who saved an old woman from the mountain in the middle of a storm. Even super fit 'hardcore' trekkers, who were inclined to cover two days in one, were impressed by my adventure.

Gerry had said no one he knew had ever climbed up Barn Bluff by accident! Writing up these events I can scarcely imagine how I came to lose myself, only the numb tips of several of my fingers remind me it was real.

Ann Stephen

January 2011

After reading Ann's account I contacted Gerry Delaney to hear his side of the story. He very kindly provided this version of events for publication.

The weather was bad that Saturday but fair to say most of us have seen worse in December. My involvement started around 3pm at which time I took a stroll from Waterfall Valley Hut up to the cirque to see how things were. On my way up I passed 2 of Ann's party heading for the hut a few minutes apart and had a chat, hearing from them that there was another 5 to come.

I spent 5 minutes up on top before the weather sent me back down to the hut. Before heading back I spotted a couple of walkers in the distance. They arrived at the hut in due course and then soon after 4pm another 2 arrived saying they were the last of the party. We soon confirmed what I already suspected: that one of the party, Ann Stephen, was missing! After hearing her companions describe Ann's place in the group I formed a strong feeling that Ann had missed the turn and was heading to Barn Bluff.

My initial thought was that she may walk to where the track entered a boulder field below the main summit climb then turn back. Two of the males in the group were keen to go looking so I suggested they could go up along the Barn Bluff track and would probably meet Ann on her way back. That was about 4.30pm. By Parks radio I was able to advise Cameron back at Cradle Base what was going on when doing the 4.30pm radio sked. I gave the guys instructions to stick to the track and to turn back regardless to be back to the hut by 6.30pm.

My plan was that if they didn't come back with Ann I would be ready to head off myself at 6.30pm, knowing I still had enough reasonable daylight to do a return trip. I was pretty sure then that she has missed the turnoff and was taking shelter on the lower boulder field.

At this stage it was good to have Cameron on the radio at Cradle and while he queried my judgement, he did back it which was important at the time. Anyway, when the 2 guys came back minus Ann I was packed up with some basic gear, well fed and ready to go a bit after 6.30pm. I did consider some other options but was comfortable with the decision to go solo. I took with me the PWS satphone and EPIRB (emergency position indicating radio beacon).

It was an interesting walk along the cirque and I started thinking Ann might have been blown off into the scrub so I decided to cover that angle on the way back. I arrived at the boulder field about 7.45pm with still no sign of Ann where I had previously decided she would most likely be.

It was then a case of one side of the brain saying "You're wrong, give up and turn back." and the other saying "She is



Gerry Delaney

here somewhere, keep going." I decided to give myself 15 mins of climb, then if I didn't find Ann try and to ring Cameron on the satphone and considering further options. The 15 minutes must have nearly gone when up ahead there appeared an outline of a figure among the rocks. Elation does not quite describe the feeling I got in seeing her but it was pretty good. Funny thing was my first thought on getting closer was "What is she so bloody happy about?" then I realized we both probably had something to be happy about.

The first thing to do on meeting Ann was to shelter and phone Cradle. I had mobile coverage - great. Then there was that walk down. It was a bit like Ann describes though I doubt if there was much running and it took about an hour. After dropping Ann off at the old hut I got back to the main hut to find a group had come in with wet sleeping bags and with the main heater on the blink I dried some in the warden's room until 10.30 which I guess is pretty standard for hut wardens.

Looking back now it was remarkable that Ann went to the top of Barn Bluff but now it all makes sense to me time wise - she is quite a lady! It was interesting to hear Ann confirm something I have suspected for awhile - that I can be quite youthful looking, though only in the near dark.

It's privilege to be able to volunteer on the Overland Track with Wildcare. I find I have an affinity with that country which demands total respect. I like to think I give it that and in turn one is allowed to do things that one may not otherwise normally do. I am always conscious that most my time at Waterfall Valley is spent indulging myself so it's great to have the opportunity once in a while to do something useful and have a good outcome.

Gerry Delaney

February 2011



More News From Waterfall Valley: A White Christmas

Setting off from Dove Lake on Boxing Day afternoon, en route to Waterfall Valley, our conversation soon centred on the endless possibilities of weather.

Ruth says 'Snow'!

Helen says 'No Snow'!

After reaching our destination at 7.30pm, followed by a well-earned dinner, a viewing outside revealed not just the fading sky, but the silent arrival of snow. By morning a white winter wonderland awaited us. No, not London, not Dublin, nor Paris, but Waterfall Valley, Overland Track, Southern Hemisphere! Soft, powdery, pristine snow, everywhere! Our very own White Christmas! There was stunned disbelief on the faces of the walkers, with Brisbane's forecast for the day, hot and humid, and Perth, 40 degrees. Plans for the day's walking became a novel adventure. But as with the way of snow in summer, it was gone 2 days later.

Walkers came and went, including the usual morning quest to climb Barn Bluff, and a much-anticipated afternoon swim in either Lake Will or Lake Windermere, or both. Nearing New Year's Eve, the conversations turned to celebration.

'Come to the Helipad party!' exclaimed the Ranger to incoming walkers on Dec 31st. 'All welcome!' Anticipating a memorable night, How? We would have to wait and see.

First guests arrived around 7.30pm, complete with a pack of UNO cards and a honey-flavoured tippie to share. Before the first hand of UNO was won, others arrived to join the circle, each with their night's offerings, including Astronaut's icecream. Two very large pots containing left-over dinner arrived by express, via a runner sent from a private camping group – no takers to carry it on the next day! The parmesan cheese followed! Everyone dressed for the occasion. Someone even sported a furry bow-tie! The mood strengthened and the night's entertainment began.

A yoga and circus performer from San Francisco soon had volunteers performing her precise balancing acts – the bird and the candlestick. The boys were most impressed by her strength. The helipad was the perfect stage, surrounded by an amphitheatre of mega proportions. (I did hear later that 12 walkers squeezed into Dixon Kingdom Hut in the Walls of Jerusalem on New Year's Eve to be entertained by a French professional story-teller and 2 travelling guitarists!)

We too had story-tellers! Lots of them! We learned how chefs' hats get to be so tall. Growing by rank, imagine how tall the boss chef's hat is with 8 working below him? The same story teller (chef, of course) shared the business of deciding how much gas to bring on the walk. He experimented at home. He cooled a litre of water to 4 degrees C, then boiled it for 3 minutes. 18 grams of gas was consumed! A Eureka moment!



Summer at Waterfall Valley

The PWS ranger was quizzed about her ambition to become a ranger. It all started with a dream at 12, in which she attended Ranger School where everyone wore big hats, and native animals ran around!

The sky was a myriad of stars and galaxies. Orion, the pot and the saucepan, was renamed the 'shopping trolley'. As we gazed at orbiting satellites and shooting stars, someone thought they detected Google!

Deeper into the night, the dew was settling, layers were being added and just a few hardy souls resisted the temptation to tuck up in cosy tents before midnight. 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 0. Happy New Year! A few hugs and kisses and a scurry to bed!

During our 10 days at Waterfall Valley walkers and rangers arrived and departed daily. Our constant companions were a pair of Welcome Swallows hell-bent on building their nest on a ledge above the door leading into the main hut. Like us, they are drawn to Waterfall Valley each summer, each with a job to do, in a very special part of the world.

Helen Young
Volunteer Track Warden.



Wildcare at Bay of Fires

The Wildcare branch, Friends of Bay of Fires, has had an active year, meeting monthly to tackle a range of natural resource activities.

The group works in the Bay of Fires area but especially concentrates on the coastal strip around Binalong Bay.

The group's main activity is weeding and members have already had a substantial impact on the main species of environmental weeds including the Mirror Bush (*Coprosma repens*) and Sweet Pittosporum (*Pittosporum undulatum*).

Other highlights throughout the year include working with the Break O'Day Council to establish landscaping and planting of local native species around a new car park and toilet block.

We also held a very successful Planet Ark Tree Day in the Bay of Fires camping grounds to assist with the rehabilitation of these sites.

Over 40 community members were involved in planting over 300 native species, some grown by the local members of The Understorey Network.

In November we held our annual Sea Spurge Walk from Policeman's Point to the Gardens, covering 11 kilometres of stunning coast.



Friends of Bay of Fires at a recent chainsaw training session

The local Bird Observers North East Group, led by Liz Znidarsic, joined us to combine weed removal with shorebird education and awareness raising.

The group was fortunate enough to be recognised for their hard work and commitment to the environment by winning the annual Break O'Day Council Natural Resource Velvet Worm Award.

Alison Hugo
Friends of Bay of Fires



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SPRATS: Sloop Point To Cape Sorell, January 2011

We headed off from Hobart on the 19 January for Strahan. The draft sector plan said a group 10 for Sector 1 but only five of us fronted up. The intrepid five were our esteemed leader Graeme Marshall who knew the area well being a Strahan local. The crew were Shirley Fish, Colette Harmsen, Glenda & Ron Fehlberg. We all had experience in the eradication of the wretched Sea Spurge.

The night of the 19th was spent at the National Parks office in the old Strahan Customs office. A good bed and a shower put us in a good mood as we headed off for Strahan airport next morning. The helicopter was there waiting.

Graeme and Colette took off first with some gear and a couple of rather large empty rubbish bags. Shirley, Glenda and I arrived on the next flight to Sloop Point where the big clean up of the fisherman's camp site was well under way.

We all spent the next couple of hours on a very hurried and exhausting clean up. There was hundreds of cans, bottles, bits of tin, paper etc, all put into two large fish meal bags.

It was not long before our garbage collecting helicopter arrived back and the bags attached to a hook, with a long line fitted up to the chopper.

The pilot then slowly took up the strain, gaining height till the bags lifted off and away they went.

We spent the first five nights at Sloop Point, walking down the first day to Gorge Beach. We checked every inlet and beach for sea spurge, fortunately only a few small patches were found.

The next few days were spent heading north, up to approx. five kilometres, with large patches of spurge and Marram Grass removed and treated. It was then time to move on. Our next camp site was over six kilometres away.

Graeme our leader had found this site and had used it on previous trips. It was a nice sheltered site where we stayed for the next four nights. Once again the same procedure, up and down the beaches with very heavy infestations of spurge being removed.

The next move involved walking with packs in excess of eight kilometres and setting up camp not far from an old four wheel drive track. This made some of the walking much easier. There were mountains of spurge in this area.

We had a half day off during the next four days, when all but Graeme walked out to the Cape Sorell lighthouse. This was the main reason I chose sector 1 in the first place.

The last night, the 14th night was spent at a fisherman's shack at Pilot Bay.

One of Graeme's friends owned one, so we had our last dinner sitting on proper chairs at a nice table and drinking clear water out of a tank. It felt like being in a 5 star hotel.



Rubbish Bags Departing the West Coast

Next morning we headed off for the jetty at Macquarie Heads where the National Parks boat with Chris at the helm picked us up to take us back to Strahan. What luxury, having a shower after fifteen days.

We walked over 60 kilometres, pulled out 140,659 spurge plants and treated hundreds of Marram Grass clumps. We traipsed over rocks, up and down sand hills, through rough scrub, worked in the rain and the boiling sun.

Our sincere thanks go to Graeme who guided us, was our inspiration to keep going, even though at times we all felt exhausted and worn out.

It's a great feeling knowing that there are lots of us who care about our coast and spend thousands of hours volunteering with Wildcare.

Ron Fehlberg
SPRATS



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Wildcare Promotional Video in Production

In 2010 the Wildcare Board identified a need for a short visual presentation to depict the many areas of Wildcare work.

This video, probably in DVD format, will be available to potential donors, sponsors and other business partners.

Rob Pennicott from Bruny Island Cruises (and regular donor to the Wildcare Gift Fund) generously offered to sponsor the project and Wildcare member, OBP expert (and more recently newest Wildcare board member) Shane Pinner was appointed to get the footage in the can.



Wildcare Co-Chair Will Forsyth and Shane Pinner 'on location' at Melaleuca

Shane has now spent a good part of the summer chasing Wildcare volunteers around the countryside and when last seen at Melaleuca in March was just about ready to edit the final product.

Keep an eye open for previews of what promises to be a great asset to help us with Wildcare promotion.

Craig Saunders

Island Booklets Promote Wildcare Work

The Friends of Tasman Island (FOTI) and Friends of Maatsuyker Island (FOMI), two of Wildcare's ever active island care groups, have recently published information booklets on their respective islands. The information booklets are designed to inform visitors of the natural and cultural heritage of the islands, to promote the work undertaken by the groups and to facilitate corporate sponsorship of the island care programs. They were a big hit at the recent Australian Wooden Boat Festival in Hobart.

The two high quality booklets were produced in a similar style by volunteers from FOTI and FOMI under the guidance of the Interpretation Section of the Parks and Wildlife Service. Material is from various sources, mainly group volunteers drawing on their experiences of the many working bees over past years.

The booklets cover both Aboriginal and European history of the islands and also present a wealth of information on the islands' natural history. The images used to illustrate the booklets are stunning.

There is no doubt these booklets will become collector's items. If you would like to get copies then contact me at wildcare@wildcaretas.gov.au and I will forward an order form.

Craig Saunders



Australian Wooden Boat Festival

Lighthouse Islands Shine

Wildcare's three lighthouse groups, Friends of Tasman Island, Friends of Deal Island, and Friends of Maatsuyker Island joined forces at the Australian Wooden Boat Festival Hobart 11-14 February 2011 to promote their work on the islands.

Each of the lights has a colourful history associated with the days of sail and early sea transport around Tasmania, and continues today as significant landmarks.

Volunteer caretakers on Deal Island and Maatsuyker Island still provide radio communications to passing vessels, and on Deal Island maintain a museum which is visited by hundreds of boating visitors each year, including vessels travelling to and from the festival between Tasmania and the mainland.

The display covered some of the history of the lights and the recent work undertaken by volunteers including restoration and ongoing maintenance of keepers' houses and other infrastructure, maintenance of grounds, and nature conservation projects including weeding and vegetation management.

It also promoted the role of Wildcare in these conservation projects. Included in it were posters and photographs, video clips and slide shows, albums, sketch books, and Tony Parsey's fantastic scale model of Tasman Island lighthouse.

The display was ideally situated between Muirs and Kings Pier Marina, the main venue for hundreds of wooden boats. The tent was staffed by a roster of six or more volunteers at a time from midday Friday until 3pm Monday, and literally had thousands of visitors during that time.



ABC presenter Chris Wisbey draws the raffle winner assisted by Bob and Penny Tyson

Many visitors had family connections with the lighthouses or lightkeepers, and lots of interesting information was collected and contacts made. Many visitors also learned about these islands and their locations in Tasmanian waters for the first time!

Each group had merchandise for sale including books, calendars, postcards, caps and beanies, and also ran a raffle which was drawn at the end of the festival.

All in all the display and the fund raising was very successful and well received by the Festival organisers and the estimated 100,000 visitors.

Watch out for our stall at the next Festival in two years time.

Bob Tyson



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One Fantastic Summer

This summer I did a lot of volunteering across Tassie, and what a wonderful summer it has been!

I have been volunteering with Wildcare for years doing predominantly biodiversity conservation work/issues.

This summer started with 12 days down the west coast doing remote area sea spurge weeding (with Wildcare SPRATS). This trip was with three other wonderful people Col/Pat and Josie.

We choppered in on the 2nd of Jan to Pennerownne point (put in a resupply at Spero river camp site on trip down) and proceeded to walk the coast to Endeavour beach.

Main mission was to deal with any sea spurge plants and to deal with Marram grass. We had wonderful weather and covered our allotted territory as well as we could. On the 11th of January we choppered out from Endeavour beach to Strahan.

Following this trip I did a yacht retrieve from Sydney to George Town for the next couple of weeks.

The day after the return from a lovely, fun yacht trip (oldest son owner/skipper) travelled to Hobart for two weeks on Maatsuyker doing weeding work with Wildcare Friends of Maatsuyker Island.

This is a long term program started in 2004 that has seen the almost total demise of three major weeds on this beautiful island (blackberry, Montbretia and Hebe). This trip was accompanied by a Parks building crew that did work on the guttering on houses 2 and 3.

A fantastic group of people that had a great time and did heaps of valuable conservation and cultural work.

After Maatsuyker I went back to paid work for two weeks and



Roydon Island weeders take a break then flew to Flinders for two weeks on Roydon Island.

This trip was about dealing with Boxthorn on this beautiful Bass Strait Island off the main islands west coast. There has been a program dealing with Boxthorn on Bass Strait islands since the mid 2000's.

Nine people went to Roydon (pronounced Roden by the locals) and toiled to deal with a section of Boxthorn on the south western side of the island.

These trips are a chance to give something back to the natural world, but really they are so wonderful that I feel selfish.

You meet so many lovely people, some of which become friends for life, and your world becomes so much richer and better for your time and effort.

Do it if you can, be a person who gives and you will get twice in return.

Steve Cronin



Looking South from the Maatsuyker Island 'Office'



Wildcare Photo Competition

Wildcare will again this year be sponsoring a photo competition open to all members.

The subject this year will be:

“Wildcare volunteers at work and play”

This year's prize will be \$1,000 paid to a Wildcare Branch (nominated by the winning photographer) to assist with that group's work.

Any member may submit a maximum of three digital photographs, to be emailed to the Wildtimes editor at wildtimes@wildcaretas.org.au no later than Friday 29 July 2011.

Photographs should be in JPEG format with file size around 1-3 MB each.

Photographs must have been taken over the period 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011 and not previously published.

The winning entry will be published on the cover of Wildtimes Issue 41 due in September 2011.

Entrants must make all entries available to Wildcare for publication in future issues of Wildtimes or other publications as required by Wildcare Inc.

So get those digital cameras clicking (or whatever digital cameras do these days) or search through those photos already in the can from this summer's work in the field. I'm sure your group could use the prize!

Craig Saunders



Tamar Island Wetland Centre

Bill Edmondson Photo Exhibition

Bill Edmondson, a volunteer at the Tamar Island Wetlands Centre, has a second exhibition of his work featuring various wetlands hanging at the Centre. Bill and his wife Pam have been volunteers since February 2008 and are working most weeks at the Centre except during the winter months when they take off for warmer climes in central Queensland.

The idea for his first exhibition about other wetlands in Australia came when his photographic club, the West Tamar Camera Club, came to the Centre in the early hours one morning for one of their regular outings. The club mounted an exhibition of their photos, several of which were Bill's work.

The photos for the current exhibition were taken around wetlands from the Bundaberg region in central Queensland. Bill is keen on photographing landscapes and nature, particularly when he can 'get in close and personal' to take detailed photographs. Photos of birds, animals and wetlands for the current exhibition were taken last winter on their jaunt north. Bill said, "I think it's appropriate to broaden people's horizons about wetlands in Australia particularly in relation to their structure and wildlife diversity".

The exhibition includes photos of water birds, terrestrial birds and raptors in flight and has received good comments from visitors, particularly bird enthusiasts from overseas.

Some of Bill's Queensland subjects are also commonly seen at the Tamar Island Wetlands, along with occasional visitors such as the Royal Spoonbill and the Tawny Frog Mouth.



Bill Edmondson and his exhibition

Bill is not only a keen photographer but he is also a keen collector of cameras of all styles and vintages. "I had a collection of over 250 cameras but have now cut down to a mere 60 or so as we were running out of storage for them" he said. "I am certainly not in the big league but I enjoy understanding the mechanisms they employ."

Bill and Pam enjoy volunteering at the Centre as they are able to continue their interests in observing and identifying birds and being around natural environments.

The Tamar Island Wetland Centre is on the West Tamar Highway just north of Launceston. The Centre is staffed by Wildcare volunteers from the Tamar Island Wetland Centre group. If you're keen on getting involved call the Centre on (03) 6327 3964.

John Duggin

Tamar Island Wetland Centre Volunteers

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STOP PRESS: Nature Writing Prize Winners Announced

As we go to press the winners of the Wildcare Tasmania Nature Writing Prize – 2011 have just been announced.

This year's winner is Peter Shepherd (NSW) for "In the Land of Nod". Peter will receive the \$5,000 first prize plus airfares to Tasmania to take part in a two-week writing residency.

Runners up are Elizabeth Bryer (Vic) for "Of Stars and a Lake" and Amanda Curtain (WA) for "On the Uses of the Dead to the Living". Each will receive \$250.

Wildtimes (and Island Magazine) will publish all three entries in upcoming issues.

Craig Saunders



Wedge Island Shearwater Study

Short-tailed shearwaters or 'muttonbirds' return to Tasmania in late September from northern Pacific foraging grounds to take up temporary residence on coastal dunes, offshore islands and other remote coastal areas to lay eggs and fledge their chicks. The University of Tasmania has been monitoring the Wedge Island colony for the last eight years and has witnessed a dramatic decline of 16% per annum of breeding adults. This summer saw many Wildcare members join in the ongoing research.

The current research includes continuing the long-term breeding success survey. This involves surveying around 800 burrows in December for the presence of an egg and again in April to measure fledgling success. Chick growth and adult meal mass was also calculated by regular daily weighings of chicks in about 50 burrows.

This information may lead us to make predictions about local and distant prey resources and other constraints on breeding adults. To complete the study the Integrated Marine Observing System provided us with 40 geolocation tags allowing us to track the movements of the adults during the pre-breeding, incubation and chick rearing stages. Initial tracks have shown that many birds travel south west to the polar frontal region before they breed. One adult tracked from early November embarked on a pre-laying flight of over 10 000km for 30 days.

The project is ultimately about conserving this species and indeed protecting the whole ecosystem that it lives in. As this area of the world becomes subjected to increasing pressures from fishing and tourism, as well as the effect of the East Australia Current (EAC), which is bringing warmer waters further south and for longer time periods it is important to understand as much as we can so that problems can be prevented now so that the risk of various threats such as introduced predators, competition with fisheries and pollution from marine traffic, can be quantified and minimised.

The more knowledge we have of seabird populations in Southern Tasmania, the greater our ability to protect them.

Since October we have had six wonderful trips out to the island each of around ten days long. There are no facilities out on Wedge Island so volunteers were instructed to bring a tent and energy to burn. Each trip had different highlights. I thought I'd share the best with Wildcare readers...

- crawling through thick kangaroo apple to find lost sampling quadrats
- a sighting of supposedly the last cat on Wedge Island
- banana pancakes for breakfast prepared by the project leader... every morning!
- 150 dolphins herding fish into Wedge Bay
- our friend the sea eagle who never won a fight against the breeding pacific gulls
- auditory evidence that fairy prions may be back on Wedge!
- 45 knot winds that brought many albatross up into Wedge



Jaimie Cleeland at work on Wedge Island

- Bay and also had the better of a few tents
- camp fires and marshmallows
- the loo with a view
- the first time we used the homemade burrow lights, which turn on when an adult returns from a feeding trip
- rescuing an injured penguin
- watching the Wedge Island yacht race
- the first dissection of a dead chick which revealed it had died of plastic ingestion
- catching our first fish
- birthday cake at camp
- retrieving so many geolocators

We hope that the partnership between the Wedge Island research group and Wildcare is an ongoing one and that interested volunteers will keep an eye on the Wildcare website for next year's field opportunities.

I would like to thank this season's volunteers: Peter Vertigan, Ben Arthur, Kym Spathinos, Christine Baro, Phil Allen, Andrea Polanowski, Louise Emmerson, Libby Lewis, Clare Lawrence, Franck Baladens, Aude Peyron, Lucy Quayle, Bruce Jackson, Brianne Whitcraft, Mike Johns, Jos Kramer, Andrea Walters, Courtney Cleeland and Owen Daniel

Jaimie Cleeland

(Jaimie's project was supported by a \$2,000 grant from Wildcare's Internal Grants Program)



January trip crew Libby, Jaimie, Clare and Peter, photo Peter Vertigan

Gift Fund Supports Parks Projects

I recently wrote my biggest ever cheque as Wildcare treasurer when I paid the Parks and Wildlife Service \$138,712.43. We don't do this every day but when we do it's worth writing about. This cheque was to cover the Wildcare Gift Fund support for two significant Parks projects: the Tasman Island Cat Eradication Project (\$27,500.00) and the Frenchmans Cap Trackwork Project (\$111,212.43).

Having handed over the money I was interested in just how the projects were going so I gave the project officers a call.

Parks Ranger Luke Gadd is the Project Manager for the Tasman Island Cat Eradication Project. I caught him at the PWS Southern Regional Office at Glenorchy where he is also working on the Macquarie Island Pest Eradication Project.

Luke was very positive about the results the Tasman Island project has achieved. He reported,

"We've been visiting the island once every month and haven't seen a cat since May 2010. We will continue monitoring with specially trained dogs and about 15 motion sensitive cameras and if we don't see any cats in March, April and May 2011 we will finish the project.

Up to now we've removed around 50 cats all up, by trapping, poisoning and shooting. On an island of just 120ha that was a very high population density. We estimated before control measures they were killing around 50,000 birds each year.

We've also just finished producing a 12 minute documentary on the project, and ABC News will be on the island with us on the next monitoring trip. So it will be great to share the news of our success with the Tasmanian public.

Parks Senior Ranger Sandra Beams is looking after the Frenchmans Cap Trackwork Project. I caught her in the office at Queenstown.

Sandra reported that trackworkers had been on the job for most of the summer and were due to finish off for the season in March.



Luke Gadd and the enemy on Tasman Island

"This summer we've started on the re-route across the South Loddon Plains. We've had four trackworkers and a ranger on site for 6 or 7 shifts (each shift is usually 10 days), working with an excavator, power carrier and a gravel compacter. It was quite a challenge getting the trackworkers accredited on all the machinery, especially the excavator."

Sandra explained that PWS had purchased a small excavator for the job and could easily use another! The work at Frenchmans Cap has been largely funded through donations from businessman Dick Smith who has promised a total of \$1,000,000 over 10 years for the project. Sandra told me that she wouldn't have any problems getting through \$100,000 a year for the next few years.

So, well done to Luke and Sandra and their respective teams.

Craig Saunders



Excavator Arrives at Frenchmans Cap



Sue Robinson and friend on Tasman Island



Wildtimes Book Review

Win and Clyde

Side by side in Tasmania's far South West

Janet Fenton, 2010

Forty Degrees South Pty Ltd

If you've spent any time in Tasmania's south west chances are you would have heard something of the early tin miners at Melaleuca, in particular of Deny King and his family.

You might also know that Deny and family weren't the only residents of the rugged south west in the pioneering days immediately after World War 2.

The King's neighbours were Win (Winsome King, Deny King's younger sister) and Clyde (Clyde Clayton, Huon Valley fisherman). In this book Deny King's daughter, author and artist Janet Fenton tells their story.

'Partly a personal memoir, largely a meticulously researched history, Win and Clyde: Side by side in Tasmania's far South West opens the window on the lives of two persons who were not in the common mould.' (Christobel Mattingley's forward to the book).

This is the story about two people who could turn their hands to almost anything: Win the homemaker, gardener and constant companion of Clyde, the fisherman.

It is a story of the sea and of boats. In fact Janet gives maritime buffs a special appendix to the main story detailing each of Clyde's 9 boats from the ketch Mary May that Clyde bought in 1936 to the ex pilot boat Matthew Flinders on which Clyde made his last visit to Port Davey in 2004.

Janet recounts childhood memories of visiting the 'neighbours' first at Bond Bay in Port Davey and then after 1962 at the relocated home at Claytons Corner at the mouth of Melaleuca Inlet, a short 10 kilometres from the King's own house at Melaleuca.

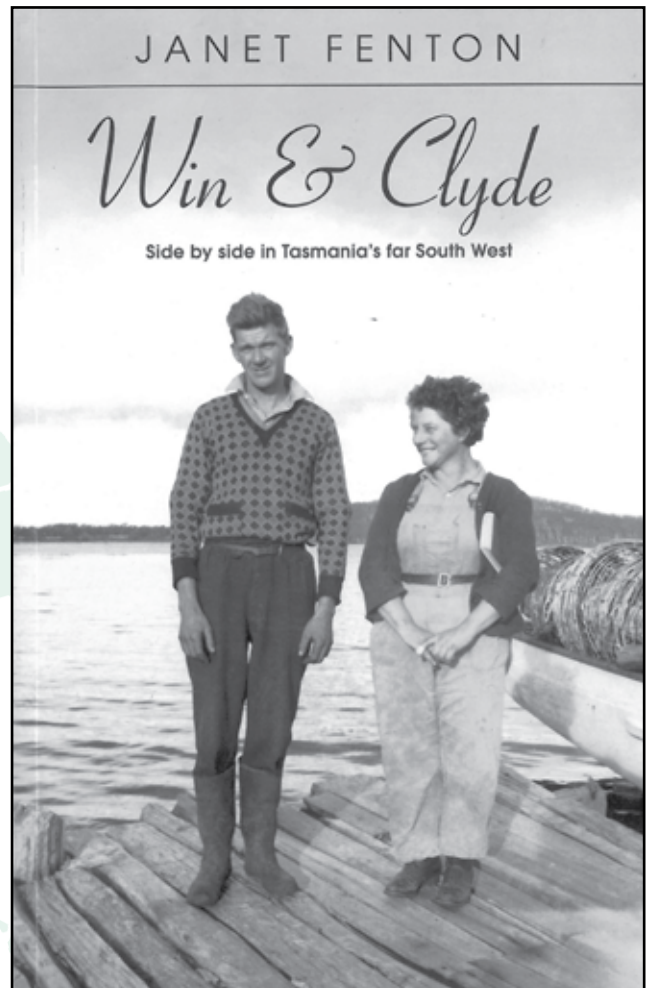
I wasn't lucky enough to meet Win, but I did meet Clyde a few times at Port Davey. You could always tell Clyde was about because he was the only person allowed to have his dog with him in the National Park (unofficially of course!)

Like many others lucky enough to visit the south west regularly I am reminded of Win and Clyde each time I visit their cottage at Claytons Corner (renovated by members of Friends of Claytons, a Wildcare branch).

There's not much of the garden left but always in late January a few delicious blueberries to pick!

Janet Fenton's account of Win and Clyde's life is available at selected bookshops or from Janet directly. Email me at wildtimes@wildcarea.org.au and I'll pass on your requests.

(Deny King's story is told in King of the Wilderness: The Life of Deny King by Christobel Mattingley, 2001.)



Win and Clyde: Side by side in Tasmania's far South West

Janet Fenton is currently president of Wildcare branch Friends of Melaleuca. If you are interested in getting involved in Wildcare's work in south west Tasmania at either Claytons Corner or Melaleuca, contact us at Wildcare soon.

Craig Saunders



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CALLING ALL WILDCARE MEMBERS!

Through 2010 and now into 2011 Wildcare has experienced incredible growth in membership. Thanks to our 'Take the Wildcare Option' campaign our membership has grown from around 2,000 in 2009 to now edging past 5,000!

Such growth has come not without its problems. Let's call them growth pains. If you were sitting around our volunteer office around membership renewal time this summer you'd know exactly what I mean. The workload on Mike, Annie and Lyn has been huge so well done team for coping so well (so far!).

As our newer members settle in to their membership of Wildcare other problems have emerged. One of the most worrying of these is that some of our newer members are experiencing difficulty identifying pathways to volunteering.

Let's not forget what Wildcare is all about: we are working in partnership with land managers to provide opportunities for community involvement (mainly through volunteering) in natural and cultural heritage management.

People join Wildcare to both support this work and in many cases to become part of it. Wildcare these days is structured as a central administrative core which includes our membership office, a finance office and the Wildcare Board of Management. Our co-chairs Andrew Smith and Will Forsyth are making the day to day decisions that keep this core operating in support of 'Wildcare in the field', that is our 60-70 Wildcare branches.

Almost all of our volunteer opportunities are it turn generated by these Wildcare branches. (Look at our website home page and click on Groups for details of the branches.)

Communication between Wildcare branches and Wildcare members is then the key link in providing pathways to volunteering. For better or worse Wildcare relies very heavily on electronic communications through the internet for communication with members. If you aren't 'connected' then I can apologise but really this is a fact of life for the future.

Both Wildcare members and Wildcare branches have responsibilities to make sure this communication process works, and this is how it happens (or is supposed to):

Calendar of Events

This is a simple start. Wildcare branches can (and should) advertise their branch activities on the Calendar of Events on the Wildcare website (see the link on our home page).

This posting doesn't go direct to branch members but is available to all Wildcare members, (as well as the general public). Members can contact the group directly using details in the calendar entry.

Email to Branch Members

This is the direct approach. The website provides the ability for any Wildcare member to 'join' any number of Wildcare branches. If you haven't already done so you can do this by firstly logging on as a member on the website.



Volunteers at Lake Nicholls Hut Mt Field NP

Your user name will have as default setting your email address and the password is your current year membership number.

You can change these settings, and enrol in branches of your choice by going to 'Manage Contact and Membership Details'. Make sure you answer yes to the question "Do you want to receive call up notices by email?"

Once you have joined any branch then the branch itself has access to your details. The branch president or secretary can email all members of their branch through the email service provided on the website. Any such call up notice will arrive at the members headed 'Wildcare Notice'.

We can help

If any member is experiencing difficulty making this process work then I can help if you contact me directly at wildtimes@wildcarea.org.au (I am also a website administrator). I might have strife coping with 5,000 requests though!

For key people in Wildcare branches (presidents and secretaries) we are preparing a special training package that will help you to communicate efficiently with all those new members keen to join you in the field. For more details contact me as above or more appropriately our Group Facilitator Jodie Epper at wildcarefacilitator@gmail.com

Let's make it work.

Craig Saunders



Maatsuyker Island Weeders Loafing About Feb 2011



WILDCARE Inc 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)	
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 \$**

Cheque or Money Order attached (made out to **WILDCARE Inc**)

Credit Card VISA Mastercard

Credit card number _____ Expiry ___/___

Name on card

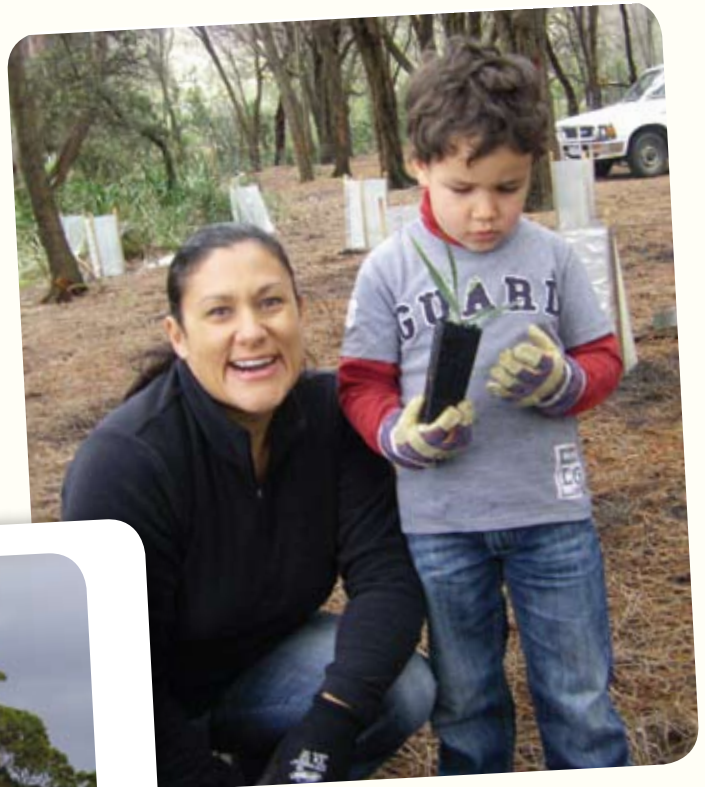
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Bob Tyson and Chris Creese at the Australian Wooden Boat Festival, see more on page 15



Friends of Bay of Fires Volunteers Lisieux Afeaki and son Ka, see more on page 12



Friends of Melaleuca volunteers in the King Family 'Blue Boat' with Captain Geoff Fenton, see more on page 3.



WILDCARE Inc

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

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