

Friends of Merri Creek



NEWSLETTER

Feb–April 2004

Deadline for contributions for next issue is **Friday 26th March**

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New Friends President

At the Friends' Annual General Meeting on Saturday 15 November 2003, Max Sargent stepped down after five incredibly hard working years as President of the Friends.

Max was an outstanding President who held the position during the height of our high-level campaign against the Merri Creek Freeway. You can read more about Max's considerable achievements in the article on page 2.

The new President is David Redfearn who, like Max, is an honorary Life Member of the Friends (his history featured in the Newsletter in February 2003). David has been a Friends representative on the Merri Creek Management Committee (MCMC) for many years including a nine-year term as MCMC President. David will be bringing his wealth of experience to the Friends Committee for the first time.

2004 Friends Committee

Office Bearers

President	David Redfearn
Vice President	Ann McGregor
Secretary	Ray Radford
Treasurer.....	Vacant
Membership Secretary.....	Julie Mason
General Committee Member.....	Jack Svendsen
New Members Welcomer.....	Louise Hayward

Are you interested in any of these vacant positions on the Committee?

Treasurer

Someone interested in managing finances.
(Thanks to Linda Hood for volunteering to do the bookkeeping.)

Walks, Talks & Tours Coordinator

Someone interested in helping to arrange tours.

If you are at all interested in any of these positions, please contact Ray Radford on 9380 8199 (w) or 0422 989 166:

We also welcome to the Committee Jack Svendsen, who has been working regularly in the Friends' office, and Julie Mason, who has taken over the role of as Membership Secretary from Anne Elvey. A big thank you goes to Anne for her fantastic job in her three years as Membership Secretary, presiding over member numbers that are probably the highest of any locally-based Friends group. Anne's replacement, Julie Mason, has represented the Friends at a number of MCMC meetings.

Unfortunately, the position of Treasurer is still vacant from last year.

Sub-Committee Coordinators

Planting Group:	Gail Brammar
Litter Group:	Paul Prentice
Streamteam:	Chris Sullivan
Newsletter (layout):	Dean Lombard
Walks, Talks & Tours:	Vacant
Campaign Group:	Vacant (redundant)

Representatives to MCMC

The following six members will represent the Friends on the Merri Creek Management Committee in 2004:

Trevor Hausler, Ann McGregor, Allie Dawe, Alan Brennan, Paul Prentice, Peter Mollison.

The main change to last year's line-up is that Max Sargent has not re-nominated and his position is now taken by Peter Mollison, who has represented the Friends on MCMC before—way back in 1989, when MCMC was formed!

Substitute Reps to MCMC

The Substitute Representatives, David Redfearn, Julie Mason, Clair Dougherty and Harold Mackrell will have plenty of chance to represent the Friends on the various MCMC Sub-Committees.

Ray Radford Secretary

Friends' Life Members: Max Sargent

The sixth in a series of short histories of the Friends Life Members

Max Sargent's interest in conservation grew out of involvement in the anti-uranium movement and the peace movement, that began during his teens in his home town of Warragul. Max wanted to participate in something local and more practical, where he could see the results of his efforts. He also recognised the need for sustainability and he was becoming interested in indigenous plants. Consequently, in 1993 he planted out his front garden with indigenous plants and the following year he joined the Friends of Merri Creek.

He started off by voluntarily planting a box of Redgums, left over from Merri Creek Management Committee (MCMC), along various parts of the Creek. Then, in 1995, he joined the Friends' Committee as Membership Secretary and Campaigns Coordinator. He continued these roles in the 1996 Committee that reformed the Friends and he also began eight years as one of the six Friends' representatives on the MCMC, including at least two years as MCMC Vice President. In the following years, he occasionally deferred the role of Campaign Coordinator, particularly in 2000-01, to Linda Parlane, without whom we would not have been able to wage such a large Campaign.

In 1998, Max became the Friends Vice President and he worked on our submission to the State Government's freeway inquiry, which advised the Planning Minister on the Merri Creek freeway. Then, in 1999, he became President, the full campaign against the freeway got underway and Max attended all the sessions, at the table of the government freeway inquiry.

The Campaign continued under Max's Presidency until July 2003. During this time, Max personally represented our case to various Federal and State Members of Parliament and he negotiated with municipal Councillors, gaining the support of Darebin, Moreland and Yarra Councils. He issued numerous media releases, sometimes almost weekly and he spoke passionately at a number of public rallies. He also wrote articles in our newsletter to inform members about the progress of the campaign, he was interviewed on a weekly community radio program and he supervised the volunteers working in our office. Max also attended (again at the table) all the second round of panel hearings, established by the new Bracks Labor Government in 2001. Max ensured that the freeway campaign became a factor in Federal, State and Council elections.

Somehow, during all this, Max led a protest against a gas pipeline and power station that AGL proposed to build at



O'Herns Rd Somerton in September 2001. We were concerned that the gas pipeline could ruin the habitat for the best colony of the endangered Growling Grass Frogs in Merri Creek. Although the pipeline was built, the campaign motivated AGL to put \$100,000 into a government trust fund for Growling Grass Frog habitat along Merri Creek.

In 2002, Max was present throughout our successful Federal Court challenge against the Federal Government's refusal to release their reasons for their decision to fund the freeway. The Commonwealth conceded on all points in the case and agreed to pay our legal costs. Max was again present at our Federal Court case in July 2003, where we unsuccessfully challenged the Commonwealth Government on their decision to build the freeway. This loss was a huge disappointment to all of us, but particularly to Max, who had worked so hard. Nevertheless, he was able to look at the positives from the campaign, especially the new Merri Creek Regional Park alongside the freeway.

In the later years of his Presidency, Max was not only Campaign Coordinator, but he was also the Newsletter editor and virtual Treasurer (with much help from his partner Denise). Due to the great scope of his work, the Friends awarded him an honorary life membership in February 2003.

During this campaign, Max's commitment and dedication never waned. Nevertheless, he still attended many of the Friends' plantings, stalls and other events. Around the same time as the highly disappointing court case result, Max led the Friends' opposition to a proposed 80 metre long rock wall that Melbourne Water wanted to build on the east bank of Merri Creek, south of Normanby Avenue Thornbury. This opposition led to Melbourne Water completely abandoning the rock wall and adopting a much more consultative approach with the Friends.

After such an intense time as President, Max stepped down in November to spend more time with his family and to pursue new directions in his life. He says that he would not have been able to put in the time and energy that he did without the support of his partner Denise Chevalier and his daughter Zoe, who turned 12 in December 2003.

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Ray Radford Secretary

Rapt in the flash trash trap!

One of the Merri's hidden treasures is its last tributary: the charming creeklet that flows through the Northcote Golf Course and joins it opposite the Brunswick Velodrome – two very different sports among the forty-odd recreational activities that people enjoy beside or on our waterways, from angling, baseball and canoeing to xerophyte (drought-resistant) planting, yachting and zoo visiting. Miniature railways and pony clubs, skateboarding and bungee jumping, punting and picnicking... such diverse ways of getting out there and having fun.

The small stream squeezes some spectacular scenery into its short stroll, as it glides into deep ravines, over slippery rocks, between massive boulders and through serene pools. Unfortunately rubbish had been getting into it from Preston Market: the Friends removed heaps a few years ago, and now Melbourne Water has come to the rescue with a state-of-the-art litter trap, whose four tapering wire nets are easier to empty than rectangular cages.

Two booms, on the Merri and the Yarra, can also capture the junk; meanwhile how good the creek is looking as it ripples through the rocks near Albert St, East Brunswick, now that the view is no longer blocked by those basket willows. In golfing terms, one might say that Melbourne Water has avoided a bunker mentality, strengthened its links with the community and gone a fair way towards putting things in order!

Paul Prentice Litter Collection Coordinator



Melbourne Water's litter trap in Northcote Golf course

Sewage and rubbish in Merri Creek

Few of us in the northern suburbs avoided being in some way affected by the storm that occurred on the night of 2 December 2003. Some of us enjoyed the amazing sound and light show. Others were more unfortunate as the storm dumped around 100mm of rain and huge hailstones.

Damage ranged from flattened gardens or hail damaged cars to overflowing gutters and overloaded drains resulting in flooded houses.

For some unfortunate areas it was also 'garbage night' so they had the added horror of rubbish from overturned bins washing into their flooded homes.

This extreme flood served to strongly illustrate what happens every time there is rain. All the rubbish and litter dumped in our streets washes into the gutters, down the stormwater drains and into the creek, then out into the bay. Because the water level in the Merri Creek rose dramatically in the storm, much of this rubbish now festoons the adjacent vegetation, and is hard to miss.

Another result of such a dramatic storm is that sewers are overloaded. Many of these run adjacent to Merri Creek and, when there is a huge surge like this, they overflow and raw sewage flows straight into the creek.

Sewers should not overflow in a storm. They are provided to remove wastewater from our kitchens, laundries and bathrooms. However many buildings have illegal stormwater connections to the sewer system. This means that during storms the sewers can't cope with the sudden inflow surge and overflow.

We can all help to minimise this pollution of our lovely creek and bay by ensuring that we don't contribute to litter in the streets. It would help further if you are able to pick up any litter and put it in the bin. It is also worth checking around your home to see if there are any suspicious downpipe connections from the roof into the sewer instead of into street drains. 🌿

A Farewell to Arms

Merri Creek activist, passionate believer;

Always courteous and patient and thorough, far-seeing;

X-ray perception of issues, achiever

Still seeking to work for the Creek's well-being.

Appearing in the papers to further its claims,

Representing the cause at meetings uncounted;

Given backing by Denise and Zoe, beaut James;

Environ-friend traveller; on bicycle mounted.

Now five years as Pres. must end, time to relax:

Thanks to someone who always did things to the max!

Paul Prentice The Friends' own Litter-ary gem?

Environmental artists

The Friends were delighted to see the Merri and the Yarra featured in a number of oil paintings by Thornbury artist Susan Anne Wellington, in an exhibition held at Synergy Gallery in High St, Northcote, late last year. The works ranged from naturalistic to expressionistic, and many of them found buyers, including the flagship, the dramatic "Orange Crush".

One could regard this series as a modest modern counterpart of the Heidelberg School, or as a complement to the striking black-and-white photographs of the Merri by David Tatnall, the watercolours of Irene Baker (who uses them in gift calendars) and the drawings of plants and animals by Brian Bainbridge of the MCMC.

Outdoors, there are the Koorie mural near Galada Tamboore, the Moomba Park rock balls, the "carpet roll" and the antique crane in Brunswick; the spiral garden of North Fitzroy, the powerful abstract murals in Creek Pde Northcote and the great Earth Heron in Quarries Park Clifton Hill. CERES has even more, from the wood-and-rubber skink and the corrugated-iron fish to the rustic cousins of Gog and Magog – Cactus Man and Woman!

Engineers have contributed a rich assortment of bridges, as well as the drystone retaining walls of Clifton Hill; whereas we have architects to thank for the ornate Russian Orthodox Church and hall, the old red-brick Rushall Station and the adjacent historic retirement village. There's an interesting link between the two professions in the location of many prominent buildings, such as mansions in Bakers Rd and McLachlan St, the Maronite and Merri Creek schools, the art-deco Red Robin and the picturesque Albion Charles Hotel dating from 1887. That's right, they're all next to bridges...

Last but not least, what a combination we have of elegance and serenity, of relaxation and recreation beside the Coburg and Edwardes Lakes and in the Oldis Gardens; and not on this waterway but close to it, in the Fairfield and Studley Park boathouses and the Abbotsford Convent. They are places that make one feel glad to be alive, and privileged to be a Melburnian.



"Orange Crush" by Susan Anne Wellington

In short, it's some inspired human creativity added to this priceless natural asset that makes the Merri such an icon of urban creeks. And here or elsewhere, people who do planting and weeding, remove litter by hand or trap, oppose harmful intrusions or report pollution to the EPA, care about the beauty as well as the health of the environment; while producers of art and craft, whether it be cave paintings, carved animals, landscapes or holograms of butterflies, help us to relate to and appreciate the wonders around us.

Paul Prentice Committee member

Various examples of the artwork referred to by Paul in this article appear in this Newsletter.

Artist's inspiration

Artist Susan Anne Wellington, whose Merri Creek-inspired paintings were exhibited at Synergy Gallery, Northcote, from 28 October to 9 November, is a Friends member. She conveyed some of her artistic inspirational experience in the following (edited) statement for that exhibition:

"To create the paintings for the Merri Creek series, I regularly visit the Merri Creek from Thornbury along to Dight's Falls to record, through drawing and photography, the physical and spiritual attributes of the landscape. I find it interesting that the Merri Creek is, on the one hand, an area where the local community can go to engage in exuberant social activities, and on the other, as a place where they can feel safe to be solitary, introspective and more deeply emotional. I also find the constant care, restoration and revegetation of the Creek by various environmental groups and individuals an inspiration."

"I am particularly interested too, in the range of responses that trees exhibit to changes in their environment — to the weather, to flora and fauna, to the earth and the water. ...Trees seem particularly sensitive to each other's presence and appear to support and communicate with whatever is around them. ...The way all the elements of nature, too, seem to mirror each other's patterns and shapes... is a constant revelation."

"I incorporate these emotions and activities into the initial painting through exaggerated colour (to symbolise the addition of positive human energy into the landscape), while the basic forms of the landscape remain naturalistic. I (then) tune into the landscape's energy in my heart and mind and transform the image to express the intuitions about the landscape that come to me as I paint."

Loss of Green Wedges

The Green Wedges Coalition is a network of local community and environment groups from around the fringes of Melbourne, formed a couple of years ago to protect Melbourne's green wedges. Last month, Ann McGregor and I represented the Friends at the Coalition's first meeting for 2004.

What are Green Wedges?

The 1968-71 Melbourne metropolitan planning process officially established nine green wedges between development corridors. These non-urban areas form a valuable community asset for agriculture and market gardens, nature conservation, resources such as sand and stone, infrastructure like airports, recreation and open space for present and future generations. Protecting the catchments of our creeks and rivers is another important role.

Threats and losses

Although housing, industrial and other intensive development was to occur along the transport corridors, there has been increasing pressure on municipal councils to allow development of the green wedges. Since the mid-90s, over 3,000 ha have been removed from the wedges and converted to residential use.

There have been losses from our local green wedges. The new suburb of Epping North (300 ha—8,000 houses) including the Aurora development, Cooper St Industrial Precinct (407 ha) and the Merri Creek Freeway are carving out huge chunks.

Melbourne 2030

In response to lobbying by groups such as the Green Wedges Coalition, the State Government has recently legislated to protect the green wedges as part of its metropolitan strategy, 'Melbourne 2030'.

An Urban Growth Boundary has been drawn, but this has already been adjusted to allow more development of former green wedge areas. An additional 570 ha of residential land and 200 ha of industrial land in the Hume Growth Corridor has been allowed.

The Friends of Craigieburn Grassland and FoMC are very concerned about the 'possible future growth' area centering on the Merri Creek and extending 10km north from Craigieburn Grassland Reserve to Kalkallo/Bald Hill. Such a development would completely isolate the grassland from habitat corridors. Already the Hume Highway and Craigieburn and Somerton developments to the west and the new Merri Creek Freeway to the east enclose the park.

New planning zones are being introduced over the designated green wedges, but environmentally valuable areas are still under threat. The Green Wedges Coalition is preparing a response to the proposed zones, and continuing its campaign against inappropriate development in the wedges.

Wendy Moore Friends of Craigieburn Grasslands



The Merri Creek at Galada Tamboore, photograph by David Tatnall, which David has generously allowed to be used in the new Friends information leaflet (see page 4)

Liaison with the Friends of Darebin Creek

This year we hope to get to know our neighbours, the Friends of Darebin Creek. Already, each group is inviting the other to attend one of their events. This will give both of them the opportunity to see how the other one operates and to learn from each other. Our invitation is to a planting and BBQ at Merri Park Wetland on 30th May.

We are also supporting the Friends of Darebin Creek in opposing two inappropriate developments along their creek. This is because the Merri Creek and other inner suburban waterways are currently under threat of similar kinds of inappropriate development that is being proposed along the Darebin Creek. Work by the community, supported by local Councils and state agencies, has meant that it has become much more desirable to live nearby to our suburban waterways. Consequently, there are likely to be more and more proposals for housing overlooking

the waterways, resulting not only in the loss of open space and wildlife corridors, but also in the loss of any feeling of a bushland park in the metropolitan area.

If either of the proposed developments went ahead, it would create a precedent for future developments along the Darebin Creek resulting in a loss of open space and vegetation, a narrowing of the wildlife corridor and a loss of amenity for the general public, particularly as this area is proposed for the continuation of the Darebin Creek Shared Trail.

We must do all that we can to protect and extend these waterway parkland areas that we've helped to create. Together with the Friends of Darebin Creek, we are working on a joint letter to put these concerns to the Planning Minister, Mary Delahunty, and to the Minister for Environment, John Thwaites.

Ray Radford Secretary

Merri Christmas Discovery

In early December, MCMC Technical Officer and FoMC member Brian Bainbridge was working at Craigieburn Grassland Reserve on Parks Victoria-funded weed eradication. He noticed numbers of fast, day-flying moths. This triggered a memory for him of rare grassland moths — the Golden Sun Moth — that he had read about.

Returning later with Friends members we captured (and released) a specimen, for closer examination. It definitely appeared to be a Golden Sun Moth. Moths were observed for the full 3km length of Craigieburn Grassland Reserve.

Following a hunch, we investigated other sites where the Sun Moth caterpillar's food plant, Short Wallaby Grass, occurred. On private and VicRoads land near Cooper Street and Barry Road Grasslands, we found a second population.

Golden Sun Moth, *Synemon plana*

The moth is about the size of a Bogong Moth (wingspan ≈3cm). Forewings are brown or grey, with silver white markings. The female's ('under') hindwings are bright yellow-orange or "golden", with some dark spots - hence the common name: in the male they are bronzy-brown and black. These moths have distinctive clubbed antennae, like butterflies, not feathery ones like most moths.

Adult moths appear mid- November to mid-December, depending on the site and season. They are diurnal (day flying). The male zooms around the grass tops, about a metre above the ground, looking for a signal, a flash of her golden hindwings, indicating she is ready to mate, from the semi-flightless female, waiting on a Wallaby Grass plant below. The female has wings nearly as big as the male's but perhaps because of the heavy eggs inside her body does not fly. She may also be hiding from predators.

Once fertilized the female lays her eggs deep inside a Wallaby Grass tussock. It is thought the newly emerged caterpillars tunnel into the grass stalks to feed. As they grow bigger they construct short, silk-lined tunnels in the soil and feed on the plant's roots and rhizomes. How long the caterpillar takes to develop is not known, but it is suspected to take 2-3 years.

Pupation occurs in a vertical tunnel opening to the soil surface. This takes 6 weeks. The moths emerge and are active on hot sunny days. With no mouthparts they cannot eat or drink so survive for only about two days.

Status and distribution

The Golden Sun Moth is listed as "Critically Endangered" (one step off extinct) under the Federal EPBC legislation. It is also listed as "Endangered" under the Victorian FFG legislation, likewise in NSW and the ACT.

The moth is known from only 5-7 other Victorian sites. The nearest is Mount Piper, near Broadford, where the moth is an important local emblem. Local conservation group, Broadford Environmental Action Movement/Mitchell Environment Group, has worked to conserve the site and raise public awareness about

the moth and its habitat preservation. Most other sites are near Nhill, in the far west.

Formerly the distribution was far greater but is now very limited due to loss of habitat. Native grasslands and grassy woodlands are one of the most endangered ecosystems in Australia, 99.5% having been lost since European settlement.

Verifying the find

To verify the new sites and the species ID it was necessary to lodge voucher specimens with the Museum of Victoria. This was a rather difficult ask for conservationists thrilled by the discovery of new populations of such a rare creature. However we did manage to do it, and we didn't have to kill the Sun Moths.

Robber Flies are a natural predator of Golden Sun Moths. This we found was the case at the Merri Creek sites. The Robber Flies catch the moths and poison them to eat. While we observed them with their Sun Moth prey, the Robber Flies sometimes dropped the dead, but otherwise intact, moths. We were able to collect these moths to lodge at the Museum. The ID has now been confirmed.

Parks Victoria, DSE, Melbourne Water, Hume and Whittlesea Councils and Melbourne Zoo have also been notified about the find.

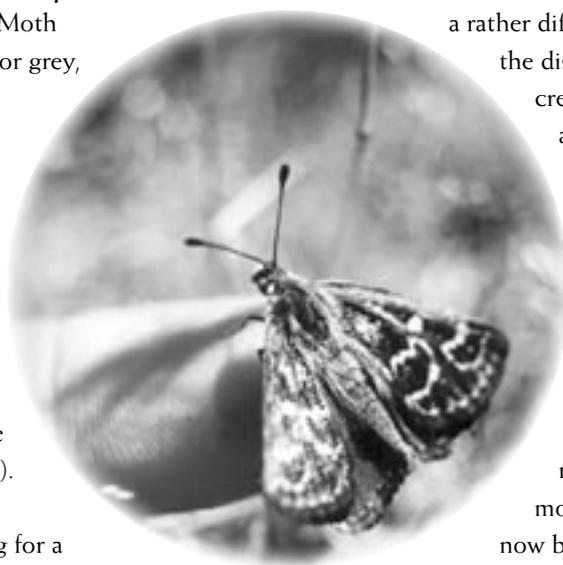
The value of conservation campaigns

Due to the efforts of grassland conservationists and scientists, Craigieburn and Cooper Street Grasslands were purchased by the government for grassland conservation reserves. For many years FoMC has fought to stop the Merri Creek Freeway. While the freeway is now being constructed, we did succeed in having the route changed so it would be less damaging to the creek and grasslands. The original freeway route ran right through Craigieburn Grassland and through the other Sun Moths site. If not for the successful campaign to move the freeway route, these wonderful, newly discovered populations of Sun Moths would have been destroyed, without us even knowing.

I wonder what other exciting treasures await discovery in the Merri Creek Wildflower Grasslands?

Wendy Moore
Friends of Craigieburn Grasslands

Robber Fly with Sun Moth prey



My First Merri Creek Kingfisher

It's a Sunday afternoon and after much indecision about whether to take my dog for a run, I am soon rewarded by the presence of a Sacred Kingfisher by the Merri Creek footbridge. It stands out like a brilliant blue opal on a rock!

Yes, it's that time of year again. The days are getting longer and warmer and every stroll down the Merri Creek is a chance to add to my growing list of Kingfisher sightings.

When I was growing up here, there were no Kingfishers to admire, not even a footbridge to cross the creek, or a path to venture along. In fact, the creek always seemed very inaccessible, with poor water quality and lacking the natural vegetation so important for sustaining the variety of wildlife that creek visitors can see today.

These days, of course, there are the shared foot/bike paths, as well as playgrounds set amongst a peaceful corridor of indigenous plantings where children can play, joggers can exercise and dogs can run in a safe sanctuary away from the hazards of the streets.

A quick glance through the vegetation can reveal much wildlife, adding colour and excitement to the scenery. There are the Rainbow Lorikeets, with their "coats of many colours"; the fiery red Firetail Finches; the gold-flashing New Holland Honeyeaters and Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos; the butterflies and other insects, with their well coordinated colours and patterns...but what's that sound I hear?

It takes me back to a summer's day in 2000 when I heard something unusual and larger than life. My eyes wandered, hoping to find the source, and settled on a blue form, rather like a Kookaburra in shape, but smaller and what a glorious blue colour! It was a male Sacred Kingfisher, heralding his arrival from the north and eager to court a female, to start a family right here on the Merri Creek. It was my first local sighting of this magnificent bird.

These birds are often talked and written about, but what better advocates for environmental networks, such as the Friends of Merri Creek, than our brilliant feathered friend? This is why I am a Friends' volunteer and member.

People who haven't seen the Merri change around them often focus on the work that is yet to be done. Perhaps these people would like to become volunteers themselves or to spread the word about the Friends group. We could be surprised by the positive impact of getting the "Bush Telegraph" into action!

Anthony Szasz



Watercolour on the cover of "Creek Life" by Brian Bainbridge (see page 4)

For the Birders...

- A **Collared Sparrowhawk** caught and flew off with a sparrow from a gum tree adjacent to the MCMC office. (29/1/04—Wendy Moore)
- At least one recently-fledged **Collared Sparrowhawk** has been calling conspicuously in Edinburgh Gardens, about 100 metres south of North Fitzroy Primary School for the last month or so. The same observation was made at this time in 2002-03 (when regular observations began at this site). (14/1/04—Paul Peake)
- At least two **Long-billed Corellas** have been heard near Mayer Park, Thornbury; the first record in 13 months' residence here. (12-14/1/04—Paul Peake)
- A very recently-fledged, hungry but otherwise healthy, **Nankeen Night Heron** was found near the corner of Leinster Gv & Woolton Ave, Thornbury—raising the possibility of a breeding site nearby (perhaps along the Merri Creek which is about 300 metres away). (3/1/04—Paul Peake)
- A male **Scarlet Honeyeater** was seen in Northcote feeding in a flowering Lemon-scented Gum (*Corymbia citriodora*). (21/11/03—Lawrie Conole)
- A **Red-whiskered Bulbul** (an exotic species) was present in Stafford St, Northcote. (5-6 11/03—Lawrie Conole)

Main Source: Birdline Victoria Update (archive)
<http://menura.cse.unsw.edu.au/>

Friends of Merri Creek Newsletter

Editors: Ray Radford, David Redfearn, Paul Prentice
Layout & design: Dean Lombard

Contributions invited and welcomed

Please send to PO Box 93, Moreland Vic 3058
or admin@mcmc.org.au

Deadline for contributions for next issue:

Friday 26th March 2004

Help is needed with the mailout!

Come along to the FoMC office at the Brunswick Town Hall
(cnr Sydney & Glenlyon Rds), 11 am on Friday 23rd April

Friends of Merri Creek events calendar

FEBRUARY

Sunday 15—Yarra Council Community Festival

Edinburgh Gardens North Fitzroy, 11am-6pm. Melway map 30 B12. Look for the Friends' stall.

Sunday 29—Moreland Council, Sydney Rd Street Party

Sydney Rd Brunswick, 12 noon-7pm. Melway map 29 G8. Look for the Friends' stall near the Brunswick Town Hall. Phone Ray 0422 989 166.

MARCH

Sunday 7—Streamteam water quality testing.

Upstream side of St Georges Rd bridge, enter from Miller Street North Fitzroy, 2-3.30pm. Melway map 30 C10. Phone Chris 0439 884 030.

Wednesday 10—Friends' Committee Meeting

MCMC Office, 2 Lee St East Brunswick, 7.30-9.30pm. All members welcome. See how your Committee operates.

Sunday 14—Litter Clean-Up

Alister St Fitzroy North, 10am-12 noon. Melway map 30 C9. Phone Paul 9489 5062.

Sunday 14—Monitoring significant species

Jukes Road Grassland Fawkner, 10am-12noon, with MCMC. Melway map 18 B1. Phone Barb at MCMC 9380 8199 (w).

Sunday 21—Triple Treat!

Cycle from CERES Café, Brunswick, to the Fairfield Boathouse via Dight's Falls and/or walk from the Boathouse to Chandler Highway and return and/or row up the Yarra! Meet at CERES Café at 2.00pm or at the Fairfield Boathouse at 2.45pm. Phone Paul 9489 5062.

Friday 26—Deadline for articles for the next newsletter

APRIL

Sunday 4—Weeding

Friends' site, near Strettle wetlands Thornbury, 10am-11.30am. Melway map 30 B3. Phone Ray 0422 989 166.

Sunday 4—Litter Clean-Up

Murray Rd Coburg, 10am-12 noon. Melway map 18 A11. Phone Paul 9489 5062.

Sunday 4—Streamteam water quality testing

Upstream side of St Georges Rd bridge, enter from Miller Street North Fitzroy, 2-3.30pm. Melway map 30 C10. Phone Chris 0439 884 030.

Wednesday 14—Friends' Committee Meeting

MCMC Office, 2 Lee St East Brunswick, 7.30-9.30pm. All members welcome. See how your Committee operates.



Watercolour of Murray Rd bridge by Irene Baker—used on her 2003 gift calendars (see page 4)

Carpet roll sculpture near Brunswick velodrome (see page 4)



Sunday 18—Woody weed removal & BBQ

Imaroo St Fawkner, 10am-1pm, with residents and MCMC. Melway map 17 K6. Phone Barb at MCMC 9380 8199 (w).

Friday 23—Newsletter Mail out

Friends' office, Brunswick Town Hall, corner Sydney & Glenlyon Roads, Brunswick. From 11am. Phone Ray 0422 989 166.

MAY

Sunday 2—Planting afternoon

Merri Park Wetland Northcote, 1pm-4pm with MCMC (FoMC PowerNet Grant). Melway map 30 C8. Phone Leslie 9481 7365.

Sunday 2—Litter Clean-Up

Normanby Ave Thornbury, 10am-12 noon. Melway map 30 A5. Phone Paul 9489 5062.

Sunday 2—Streamteam water quality testing

Upstream side of St Georges Road bridge, enter from Miller Street North Fitzroy, 2-3.30pm. Melway map 30 C10. Phone Chris 0439 884 030.

Wednesday 12—Friends' Committee Meeting

MCMC Office, 2 Lee St East Brunswick, 7.30-9.30pm. All members welcome. See how your Committee operates.

Sunday 16—Planting & BBQ

Robinson Reserve Thornbury, 10am-1pm, with MCMC. Melway map 29 G2. Phone Nicole 9354 5045.

Saturday 22—Friends of Organ Pipes Woody Weeding

Get together with the Friends of Organ Pipes in this woody weeding at Craigieburn Grasslands. Phone Ray 0422 989 166 for details.

Sunday 30—Planting & BBQ

Merri Park Wetland Northcote, 10am-1pm, with MCMC (MCMC Landcare Grant). We have especially invited the Friends of Darebin Creek to join us for this planting and an informative tour of the wetland by MCMC staff. Melway map 30 C8. Phone Pascale 9484 5752.