

Major projects on the Merri

This year will see the start of three major projects affecting Merri Creek: Northern Sewerage works; the Merri Creek Improvement Project in North Coburg and the Clifton Hill Rail Project. FoMC has participated in consultations on these projects, the benefits of which will flow way beyond Merri Creek. However, people using the path or the parklands in the project areas might face some temporary inconvenience.

Northern sewerage works

Two major sewerage projects are commencing that will affect Merri Creek over the next several years. Both projects will help protect Merri Creek from wet weather sewage overflows and ensure that the sewerage system can cope with growth in the northern suburbs. Both FoMC and Merri Creek Management Committee (MCMC) are represented on Community Reference Groups for these projects.

Stage 1 of the Northern Sewerage Project is the first of the major sewerage works to affect the creek. It is managed by Melbourne Water and will connect the Merri Creek sewerage pipe, at Carr St North Coburg, to the pipe at Brearley Reserve Pascoe Vale, to Werribee Sewage Treatment Plant. Most of this work will take place well underground and its main effects on residents will be at those two sites.

Site set-up works for this project will take place on the Merri Creek at DeChene Reserve, Coburg, from May, and at Carr St, North Coburg, in the first quarter of 2008.

Yarra Valley Water (YVW) will also shortly be starting on Stage 2 of the Northern Sewerage Project, with site-set-up works at Newlands Rd Coburg. This project involves duplicating the Merri Creek sewerage pipe from Carr St North Coburg to Cochin Reserve, Reservoir. Later stages of the project will take the pipe all the way to Craigieburn. (The northern section is called the Epping to Craigieburn Sewerage Project). The biggest effect of the YVW project on Merri Creek will occur at Jukes Rd Fawkner and at Galada Tamboore, between Barry Rd and Horne St Campbellfield, but this won't happen for a couple of years yet.

For further information on these sewerage projects, see the Yarra Valley Water website: www.yvw.com.au

Merri Creek Improvement Project – North Coburg

Melbourne Water proposes to do major creek improvement works from Queens Pde Fawkner to Carr St North Coburg. Melbourne Water invited inspection of the site on 11 July 2006 and MCMC attended and made comments in August. An evening consultation was held on 8 November 2006 and FoMC provided comments later that month.

Features of the plan are: the staged removal of most willow trees and woody weeds including Poplars, Elms and Ash, followed by plantings, including extensive aquatic vegetation along the creek edges; creation of wetlands at the drain outfall in the vicinity of Borang St Nth Coburg; major work on the Merlynston Creek confluence; erosion control works on creek banks which face strong water flow; and removal of stepping stone crossings.

Thompson Berrill Landscape Design P/L has drawn up maps for Melbourne Water and copies have been sent to MCMC and to FoMC's representative, Nicole Lowe. Nicole

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Friends News

Help show the Friends' DVD

The FoMC Committee has been working to distribute the DVD about the Friends group entitled: *Restoration and Regeneration*. The DVD was funded by a Victorian Volunteer Small Grant from the Dept of Victorian Communities with the aim of attracting new volunteers to the group, so we want it to be seen as widely as possible.

Already it has been screened on Channel 31 on Sunday 25th March at 8.00pm. Channel 31 wants to use the DVD to fill vacant spots, so it is likely to be screened again.

Dean Lombard has designed a great cover for the DVD, so now all we need is your help to ensure that as many people can see it as possible. If you have a contact with a school, library, or community group etc that would be interested in the DVD, or even if you would like to see it yourself, please contact Ray Radford at work (MCMC) on 9380 8199 or on 0422 989 166.

Forgotten activities for 2006

In the Secretary's Report of Activities for 2006, which appeared in the November newsletter, two significant activities were omitted, much to the Secretary's embarrassment.

Firstly, there was the weeding at Merri Park wetland on 28 May 2006, which was attended by 16 people. This activity is worth mentioning as it pushed the grand total of people attending FoMC events to 511, breaking the magic 500 mark.

Secondly, there was the production of our professional-looking black and white FoMC information leaflet, with its cut-out membership form, that we give to people interested in joining our group. This was a long awaited replacement

for the original leaflet which had been photocopied for years and which carried out-of-date information with hand-printed alterations. Belated thanks to Dean Lombard for persisting through a multitude of changes to create the excellent final leaflet.

Hume's Natural Heritage Strategy

Congratulations to the City of Hume for its Natural Heritage Strategy, which was launched on 6th March, at Woodlands Historic Park. FoMC Secretary, Ray Radford, who represented our group at the launch, said that the Strategy seems to be quite good and it includes the areas in Hume that FoMC wants to protect. Although it doesn't guarantee protection of those areas, it certainly helps our cause.

Powerline prunings on the Merri

In most years, a number of tree removals and pruning occurs along Merri Creek to ensure the safety of the overhead high-voltage power lines. In most cases, only the odd tree here and there are removed, but unfortunately this year it was necessary to remove a whole section of trees alongside Kirkdale St Park, East Brunswick.

Although the scene looks fairly shocking, almost all the trees were either already too close to the powerline or they would be too close in a few years time and the wattle trees were nearing the end of their life. FoMC and MCMC are involved in consultations about tree pruning and it was agreed that it would be preferable to cut down the trees and replant with suitable low growing and understory species, rather than having to return and prune every year. ❁

MAJOR PROJECTS ON THE MERRI *continued from previous page*

or Pascale Pitot will bring the maps along to FoMC weekend activities that occur near this section of the Creek. If you would like more information, contact Nicole on 9354 5045.

Clifton Hill Rail Project

On 24th October 2006 FoMC members Ray Radford and Paul Prentice, and MCMC personnel Luisa Macmillan and Katrina Roberg, met with Dept of Infrastructure officials at the site of the planned new rail viaduct over the Merri between Clifton Hill and Westgarth, which will reduce delays on both the Hurstbridge and the Epping lines.

We were impressed by their keenness to minimise visual impact, revegetate properly afterwards, and improve pedestrian links; however there is as yet no commitment to a footway on the viaduct, like the one between Rushall and Merri stations which we owe to the perseverance of Louise Elliot.

The only access proposed to Clifton Hill East is by stairs from the Merri Path to the Coulson Reserve - not much fun for people with prams, tricycles or wheelchairs. At least the latter will be able to reach High St via a path of the statutory 1 in 20 gradient, replacing the unnecessarily steep present one.

A footway could begin at Urquhart St Northcote and cross the creek on the east side of the new viaduct, 2.5 metres below it; this would allow a connection to the planned path to High St and to the S.W. corner of the Coulson Reserve, with a maximum gradient of 1 in 22.

Friends are urged to write to their local Council and M.P., and to the Ministers for Roads and Ports (Hon. Tim Pallas) and Public Transport (Hon. Lynne Kosky) supporting the idea. ❁



Streamteam finds Mayflies

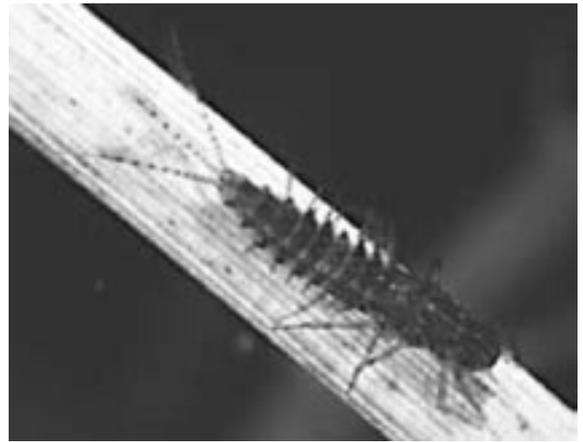
On Sunday 5th March, the Friends of Merri Creek Streamteam probed through lots of algae in the water samples taken from the hardly-flowing creek to find 20 mayfly nymphs (Ephemoptera Baetidae). This find is quite exciting as the group has only ever had two unconfirmed mayfly sightings in the past.

Some types of mayflies are only found in non-degraded waterways. Although the Baetid mayfly is not the most pollution sensitive of all the mayflies, it was great to see a new order of water bugs amongst those present in the creek water - and in such large and convincing numbers.

Baetid nymphs occur in almost all freshwater habitats, including the fast flow riffle zone of rivers to slow flow areas of rivers on macrophytes, wetlands, billabongs and farm dams, but are most diverse in cool, flowing waters.

After the first sighting of caddisfly larvae by the group in 2005, and now this discovery of mayfly nymphs, it is tempting to think that the creek water quality may be improving. However, before we celebrate, the improvement could just be due to the long drought - resulting in very little stormwater, with its inevitable pollutants, entering the creek.

BÆTID MAYFLY NYMPH



The Streamteam is always on the lookout for new helpers at their monitoring events, on the first Sunday of each month (see calendar on back page). If you are interested in joining the fun or finding out more, please contact the coordinator on 9354 9885. ♣

Friends' Committee member honoured

Congratulations to new FoMC Committee member, Wendy Moore, who was honoured at the Moreland City Council Honouring Women Awards on 14th March.

Wendy received her award for advocacy on behalf of Merri Creek and her leading role in the campaign to save the Upfield Railway Line.

Wendy has worked to protect Merri Creek, Craigieburn Grasslands, the Growling Grass Frog and the Golden Sun Moth. She is currently the convenor of the Friends of Merri Grasslands and this year she joined the FoMC Committee. Wendy regularly contributes articles on wildlife to the newsletter and she often dons her own hand-made Growling Grass Frog costume, singing environmental songs that she writes to familiar tunes.

Currently, her other environmental interests, include the Green Singers - a local choir with an environmental message, and she assists with native



WENDY MOORE ACCEPTS HER HONOURING WOMEN IN MORELAND AWARD
(Photo: compliments of Krystelle Donald, Stellar Images)

gardens at Fawkner Neighbourhood House and at Jewell Station.

Wendy was Vice President of the Public Transport Users Association for three years and is a long-term member of Council's Greening Moreland Forum.

The award is a tribute to the way that Wendy has managed to be so active despite suffering from severe chronic depression.

A major article about Wendy appeared in the Moreland Leader of 12/3, giving the reasons for her award and explaining how she endeavours to increase the awareness of depression in the community.

Wendy is the second FoMC Committee member to receive one of these awards. Our Vice President, Ann McGregor, was awarded one in 2003.

Wallaby seen on the

Local resident, Erin Schroeder, was walking along the creek on Sunday, March 25 at approximately 12pm, when she spotted a wallaby hopping along the Merri path just north of the soccer pitch at Sumner Park, East Brunswick.

The wallaby was very dark, almost black in colour (sounds like a Swamp Wallaby) and it probably came down from the native grasslands at Galada Tamboore, Cooper St or Craigieburn. Erin says that she was completely stunned as she never would have expected to see this.

However, it is not as unusual as you might think. The Merri Creek parklands continue to be used as a wildlife corridor and this sighting is further proof of it. About 13 years ago,

a number of people in different suburbs saw a wallaby in the process of making its way down the Merri Creek all the way to Yarra Bend Park. Recently there was a spate of Echidna sightings and there is also the family of Eastern Grey Kangaroos currently living in Central Creek Grasslands, Reservoir - much to the delight of the nearby residents.

The main threat to wildlife in our urban areas does not come from humans, but from roaming dogs. ♣

Imagining a future for Edgars Creek

The oft forgotten Edgars Creek now has an organised group of enthusiastic friends with the recent establishment of the Friends of Edgars Creek (FoEC).

Edgars Creek is the largest tributary of Merri Creek. It flows along a 17km course from its headwaters in Wollert through the highly urbanised suburbs of Epping, Thomastown and Reservoir, finally joining the Merri Creek in North Coburg.

Around Reservoir, the creek flows through the recently constructed Edgars Creek Wetlands and then into Edwardes Lake, resuming its downstream journey to the Merri on the other side of the weir wall.

Edgars Creek is a naturally seasonal creek, susceptible to drying out during the hot seasons and flooding during periods of high rainfall. Between 1850 and 1912 it was in fact known as Dry Creek.

Before European settlement, the Wurundjeri-willam people gathered freshwater mussels, yabbies and trapped migrating eels in Edgars Creek. Back then; the creek plains were periodically burnt by indigenous people to promote the growth of the Murnong, or Yam Daisy, and to encourage emus, kangaroo and other mammals to graze fresh growth after fire.

While several sites along the creek retain spiritual and cultural significance to the Wurundjeri People, the condition of the creek is very different today.

Although sections of the creek around North Coburg remind us of how the creek once was before urbanisation, much of the creek between the headwaters and Edwardes Lake Park in Reservoir is now artificially channelled. Only 55% of the creek remains in semi-natural form with approximately 11% of the creek no more than a concrete drain.

Despite the impact of urbanisation and a history of questionable management of the creek as a 'drain', the creek still comprises some very significant geological features and provides important habitat value.



The Friends of Edgars Creek was established early this year to help improve the environmental and recreational quality of the Edgars Creek reserve by:

- advocating for the management of this important waterway as an entire freshwater ecosystem;
- working with local Councils and Melbourne Water to ensure any maintenance and development works deliver a real and direct benefit to the creek corridor;
- organising and facilitating events for the community to be involved in restoration works and environmental educational; and
- communicating with developers to ensure they understand how strongly the community values the creek reserve from both an environmental and recreational perspective.

Planned group activities include plantings and hands-on activities; litter cleanup; talks, walks and tours; campaigns against major threats to the Creek; community education; and water quality testing.

The first official FoEC activity was a planting site identification tour in late March 2007 around the confluence of Edgars and Merri Creeks in North Coburg. In consultation with Melbourne Water and MCMC, we have selected some appropriate sites for an initial community planting during winter this year, given that much anticipated rain arrives. FoEC is currently in the process of applying for grants to finance these community plantings and other FoEC activities.

The Friends of Edgars Creek (FoEC) of course welcomes new members with open arms. Membership means you can join other friends on walks and tours and become involved in hands-on activities to help restore the creek.

We do very much hope you will join us by becoming a member of FoEC and share in these exciting times for Our Creek.

STEPHEN NORTHEY *President, Friends of Edgars Creek*

For more information

Write to: Friends of Edgars Creek, 17
Boyne Street, North Coburg 3058.

Email: edgarscreek@freshwater.net.au

Phone: Anita on 041 931 9770

Or visit: www.freshwater.net.au/community/foec.htm



Melbourne Water disaster on Edgars Creek

In one badly thought out operation on Edgars Creek in Coburg, Melbourne Water contractors somehow managed to: remove indigenous vegetation; deposit the removed silt on top of other indigenous vegetation and also on a sedimentary rock face; and damage a geologically significant rock ford. All this was done without consultation with Moreland Council or Merri Creek Management Committee (MCMC).

It then turned out that the whole operation was not even necessary! Apparently, Melbourne Water was merely responding to requests by Pascoe Vale MP, Christine Campbell, to "clean-up" Edgars Creek. The contractors said that they didn't know about the indigenous vegetation, or the geological significance of the rock face and the ford. Well, maybe they should have asked! The whole disaster could have been avoided with a simple call to MCMC.

The disaster could have been even worse but for the presence of Moreland Councillor, Andrea Sharam, who happened to be in the area for a photo shoot. Cr Sharam rang MCMC whose staff contacted Melbourne Water. Works were then stopped and on-site discussions were held about how to remediate the site.

The remediation works were organised by the new Waterway Planner for Merri & Moonee Ponds Creeks, Michael Hobbs, who knew nothing of this disastrous operation until alerted by MCMC.

Michael agreed that Melbourne Water would: remove the deposited silt to a new site; provide revegetation and ongoing weed control in the area; temporarily leave some of the basalt rocks to block vehicle access to the waterfall, which was being used as a ford; remove the silt from the escarpment, leaving an exposed rock face; and retain the original topsoil and



stockpile it for future use in rehabilitation of the escarpment.

One positive that came out of the bungle is that the newly established Friends of Edgars Creek group were given the opportunity to apply for a community grant to revegetate the escarpment.

Let's hope that this is the last time that Melbourne Water will perform any works on waterways without consultation with the appropriate organisations.

RAY RADFORD Secretary

Save Merri & Edgars Creek Parklands

The Merri and Edgars Creeks Parklands are still under threat of being sold into private hands. 10 Ha of parkland; one of the last areas of open parkland left in the Northern Suburbs, is being treated like a commodity.

There have been no guarantees and no positive responses from the responsible Government Ministers. It is an issue for the Victorian government to act on what should be a simple solution that is in keeping with all the environmental and planning policies. This is an opportunity for the Government to show what their policies can do; by creating long term positive outcomes for the people and not a momentary financial gain for the Roads Corporation.



The Moreland Council has stated that they want the land gifted and have ensured that it would be retained as parkland. The council is yet to pursue this vigorously and formally with the government.

The MECPG (Merri and Edgars Creeks Parkland Group) have been very active with a rally on the steps of Parliament house, strong visible presence at Council meetings and most recently at the Sydney Road festival.

We need your help by writing to the responsible ministers (Tim Pallas and Justin Madden) stating your concerns that publicly owned parkland should not be sold. The government responds to public pressure. Once it is sold it will never be replaced.

**For more information visit www.mecpg.com
or contact Greg Carden on 0425 86 33 86**

Meritorious service

With a combination of luck and good judgment, the Merri has fared as well as most of our urban waterways: lakes, grasslands, wetlands, parklands; handsome bridges and artworks; an effectively complete footway to the outer suburbs; little intrusion by motorways, and apart from its tributary the Merlynston Creek, almost no concreting or undergrounding. What did get banished beneath the surface, following our earlier activism in the eighties, was the Brunswick to Richmond powerline.

It's got plenty of company... There's the picturesque Mordialloc Creek where rails and roads and bikes and boats come together; the Elster Creek which passes through a couple of genuine old-fashioned fords on its way to becoming the stately Elwood Canal; Gardiner's Creek, flowing from the Blackburn Lake to Melbourne's most strategic bike bridge; the Darebin Creek, featuring the multi-faceted Bundoora Park and the splendid Darebin Parklands; the Moonee Ponds' serenity and greenery amid industrial machinery; the panoramic Maribyrnong River with its "Blackbird" cruises; the Kororoit Creek which passes by its own mountain in Plumpton (100 metres higher than Bundoora's Mt Cooper) before reaching the Bay near the Jawbone Marine Sanctuary off Williamstown.

As for our major river, one should first mention the serious state of its health and the all too slow efforts to phase out septic tanks in its catchment, before going on to more cheerful aspects: charming Warrandyte, elegant old boathouses, the outdoor art collection on Herring Island, rowers and cruise boats and bikes and barbecues beside the Botanic Gardens; and the transformations that the Southbank and Docklands developments have made to the shape and feel of the city.

The Merri certainly ends its career with a flourish, from both the natural and the human points of view: most obviously in the fine rock faces, from Rushall's vertical plunge into the water, the cliff opposite Creek Parade and the towering crags below the Oldis Gardens to the smooth, tilted slabs by the Roseneath St footbridge and the colourful sedimentary layers above Dight's Falls.

Among the revegetation efforts, it's hard to believe that a quarter of a century ago there were scarcely any trees in Clifton Hill's Hall Reserve, and that a Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works depot extended from Arthurton Rd to Sumner Ave in Northcote: now the latter is all parkland including a billabong, apart from some housing at the north end, and the MMBW has become Melbourne Water. More recent changes include the removal of the elms and poplars below Rushall station: personally I still miss them, however when the native shrubs and grasses (no trees, we don't want their roots interfering with the power cables) are established,



MERRI - YARRA CONFLUENCE

they'll provide a lovely foreground to the small natural lake and the steep green bank beyond.

The golden onion domes of the Russian Orthodox Church in East Brunswick, and its matching hall – rather like St Paul's Cathedral and its complementary neighbour – make an appropriate start for this last rich section of the creek; reflections in the Jones Park pond and sometimes in the little seasonal wetland near the velodrome double the spectacle; no less fascinating is the historic farmhouse next door; much less conspicuous is the A.C.E.S. Aboriginal retirement home; the golf course on the east bank is a great visual and environmental as well as a recreational asset.

Another recollection for those who've been around the creek a long time: on the south side of Albion St one used to have to struggle past along an earth slope before the flat owners agreed to allow the installation of the retaining wall and the concrete path. Same with the bridge over the stormwater drain below Sumner Park, that's comparatively recent; and of course the Merri Creek Coordinating Committee commemorative arched footbridge was built after the trail-blazing body was superseded by the MCMC and the Friends in 1989.

Kingfisher Gardens, like Zoe Circuit in Northcote, typifies smart individualistic medium-density housing; and then there's CERES, enthusiastically endorsing energy efficiency, fossil-fuel substitution, recycling, active earthworms, composting, mulching, indigenous flora, bicycles, etc., and including that modern necessity, a café! If the planet is going to hell in a handcart, this mob are doing their best to apply the brakes.

Some attractive earthworks around Sumner Ave have created protective levees and a large hollow for a wetland to keep everybody happy; the classic old Merri Creek Primary School, Northcote High School and Albion Charles Hotel make their successive contributions to the cycle of people's lives, as does the housing complex at the end of Walker St, recently rebuilt in the best of the modern style. The dense plantings near Barkly St and the footbridge beside the Epping rail line testify to the determination of some of our predecessors, Andre Rigoni and Louise Elliot; while across Merri Parade from the new mural, designed by two Northcote High students, is the former Groves Timber Yard site which was almost given a permanent industrial zoning. Whew.

Another escape: the orientation of one of the rail bridge piers was clearly meant to allow for a link between Holden St and Westgarth St, but it's probably not going to happen now. Yet another: the vetoing of an adventure playground between the railway and the creek – not a safe location. There is a magnificent one at the end of Ramsden St in Clifton Hill, however; and following the spinning pedals and the birdies, bunkers and bogeys mentioned earlier, there are opportunities for fitness and enjoyment with creekside facilities for Aussie Rules and cricket, soccer and baseball, and athletics.

So many worthwhile things achieved, as well as undesirable ones averted or alleviated, over these thirty years: near the end of Holden St, for example, we find the most subtle and

MERRI CREEK FROM RUSHALL CLIFFS



unobtrusive of the Merri's artworks, the Concrete Spiral with plants in the interstices. Further south in the Thomas Kidney Reserve there's an artificial hillock with a gravel path running up and over and down to a bridge spanning a pebbly "creek bed": from its summit, amid native grasses and trees, one can gaze across the valley to Rucker's Hill,

or view the community garden of the Choppers of Rushall Reserve.

Rushall – Fitzroy's only station – must be one of the most scenic on the entire network, along with Heyington, Tecoma and Williamstown: not least because of the adjacent century-old retirement village, an architectural and horticultural treasure-house. The ornate red-brick High St bridge has a rare combination of trains, trams and buses passing by; next to it is the heritage-listed rail viaduct, then the no less significant bluestone Heidelberg Rd bridge... and that steep section of path which causes strenuous dissent, or very reluctant assent.

Stone retaining walls in Clifton Hill and the former quarry on the east bank echo the past; likewise the mysterious tunnel under the Oldis Gardens, which is believed to have been dug to provide secure storage for munitions during the Second World War, and the two huge cannons in High St of even greater antiquity. More peaceful recent times have given us the picnic shelter beside the Hall Reserve wetlands, the geometrical Labyrinth in Hewson's Hollow and the Earth Heron on Quarries Park's bigger artificial hill.

So we come to Dight's Falls where waterways, bikeways and historical byways meet: the weir and the mill, the scene of a famous high dive off a cliff at Deep Rock, not far from the Pioneers' Memorial Cairn; the site of a short-lived school for indigenous children in the mid-19th century, whose well-meaning founders failed to appreciate the already existing lifestyle and culture; the timeless Koorie garden, so strongly imbued with the spirit of the land. Then there are the intrepid kayakers who pit their skills against the swirling rapids but may have to move elsewhere for health reasons; the Capital City Trail, centrepiece of Melbourne's vast network of cycle routes; and just downstream, narrowly saved from destruction, the Collingwood Children's Farm and the Abbotsford Convent.

And one final reminder, if I may presume on your patience, of the need for eternal vigilance: some M.M.B.W. bureaucrat wanted to put a footbridge across the weir! Once again common sense prevailed.

PAUL PRENTICE *Committee member*

Sultry sign from noisy icon

While in the grip of yet another dry spell, I was looking forward to a rather wet planting day at Rushall Station which was scheduled for the 12th of Nov. '06. However, weather forecasts can change daily so when Sat. 11th came around, I was not surprised to learn that no chance of rain was expected for that night and less than 70% chance of rain for the Sunday.

But I took on board another cue: while talking to a neighbour, comparing our gardens and discussing drought survival techniques, the air felt very dry to me and looking across a clear blue sky, I was a little concerned for the planned Rushall planting.

Then suddenly, I heard the explosive sound of a cicada - the first I had heard this cicada season. It was a *Cyclochila Australasiæ*. At up to 120 decibels, this cicada species is believed to be the world's loudest insect! Soon others joined in, giving me greater hope for a successful planting, as these amazing little animals generally emerge in response to air moisture and with any luck, rain was on its way.

To my surprise, that night there was reasonable rain. The next morning, from the windows of the train that took me to the planting site I could see more good showers preparing the soil to receive Melbourne's all but forgotten floral heritage.

Growing up amongst Sydney's cicada culture in the 70s and 80s, I quickly learned the language of the cicada hunting youth with names like Flourey Baker, Double Drummer, the highly prized Black Prince and perhaps the most valued of them all, the Cherry Nosed Black Prince, being music to my ears.

One species, the aforementioned *Cyclochila Australasiæ*, was an early introduction to genetic variation with names including Greengrocer, Yellow Monday, Orange Tuesday and Chocolate Soldiers used to describe the different coloured forms. Even their patterns (which always had perfect symmetry) varied, causing envy amongst competing cicada collectors.

We all had a great day at the planting. There were even a couple of surprises in store for us: for a start, we planted several new plant species, which I look forward to seeing flourish and add their own qualities to the natural landscape.

We were also treated to a massed display of dazzling blue *Juncus* Beetles amongst the *Juncus* reeds! What better way to end the planting season than with a visual feast such as this?

ANTHONY SZASZ-SAUNDERS
Active Regeneration Group member



Friends of Merri Creek Events Calendar 2007

MAY

Sunday 13—Planting & BBQ

Central Creek Grasslands, Davidson St, Reservoir, 10am-1pm. Melway map 8 B12. Funded by Melbourne Water Community Grants Program grant to MCMC. Phone Megan at MCMC 9380 8199.

Sunday 20—Woody Weed Removal

Cooper St grasslands, Epping, near Istrian-Australian Social Club, 10am-1pm. Melway map 180 K10. Or car pool outside the MCMC office, 2 Lee St East Brunswick, by 9.30am. Light refreshments afterwards. This is part of our Parks Victoria Community Group Grant for works in native grasslands. Phone Ruth 9489 5259.

Saturday 26—Planting & BBQ

Moomba Park, Fawkner, 10am-1pm. enter from car park off McBryde St and follow the flags, 10am-1pm. Melway map 8 A12. Funded by the Natural Heritage Trust. Note this is a Saturday. Phone Megan at MCMC 9380 8199.

Sunday 27—Rio Trio Walk

Departs from the lower bridge at Coburg Lake, 1pm. Melway 17 J10. A relaxed ramble up the Merri, past the Merlynston to the drive-in; across to the Edgars, down to the suspension bridge and return. Phone Paul 9489 5062.

JUNE

Saturday 2—Planting & BBQ

Central Creek Grasslands, Davidson St, Reservoir, 10am-1pm. Melway map 8 B12. Funded by the Natural Heritage Trust. Note this is a Saturday. Phone Megan at MCMC 9380 8199.

Saturday 2—MECCARG* Planting (continued)

Just south of Murray Rd bridge, Coburg, 1pm-3pm. Melway map 18 11. Wear gloves, and sturdy footwear and bring watering can, bucket, and digging tool if you can. Funded by Melbourne Water Community Grants Program.

Sunday 3—Planting & Litter Clean-Up

Friends' site near Strettle wetland, Thornbury, 10am-12 noon. Melway map 30 B3. Help to expand the site managed by the Friends with the support of the Darebin Bush crew. Light refreshments afterwards. Funded by the City of Darebin. Phone Paul 9489 5062.

Sunday 3—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 9354 9885.

Sunday 17—Planting & BBQ

Moomba Park, Fawkner, enter from car park off McBryde St and follow the flags, 10am-1pm. Melway map 8 A12. Funded by EPA alternative sentencing payment to MCMC. Phone Megan at MCMC 9380 8199.

Wednesday 20—Yarra Riverkeeper presentation

Darebin Council Chambers, 1st floor Darebin Town Hall, 350 High St Preston, 7.00pm. Don't miss this wonderful presentation from Yarra Riverkeeper, Ian Penrose.

Friday 22—Deadline for articles for the next newsletter

Please send to admin@mcmc.org.au.

Saturday 30—Friends of Edgars Creek Tour of Westgarthtown

Edgars Creek, Coburg. For details phone Stephen Northey 041 050 4212.

JULY

Sunday 1—Litter Clean-Up

St Georges Rd, North Fitzroy, 10am-12 noon. Melway map 30 C10. Phone Paul 9489 5062.

Sunday 1—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 9354 9885.

Saturday 7—MECCARG* Planting (continued)

Just south of Murray Rd bridge, Coburg, 1pm-3pm. Melway map 18 11. Wear gloves, and sturdy footwear and bring watering can, bucket, and digging tool if you can. Funded by Melbourne Water Community Grants Program.

Sunday 8—Planting & BBQ

Aitken Creek, Craigieburn – park in Mitford Crescent and walk down Hexham Court, 10am-1pm. Melway map 387 B12. Funded by Australian Govt Envirofund grant. Phone Ray McMahon 0425 735 151.

Sunday 15—Planting & BBQ

Cooper St grasslands, Epping, near Istrian-Australian Social Club, 10am-1pm. Melway map 180 K10. Or car pool outside the MCMC office, 2 Lee St East Brunswick, by 9.30am. This is part two of our *Black and Blue* project funded by Melbourne Water Community Grants Program. Phone Leslie 9481 7365.

Sunday 22—Planting & BBQ

Rotunda wetland, Hall Reserve, Clifton Hill 10am-1pm. Melway map 44 H1. This is part three of our *Black and Blue* project funded by Melbourne Water Community Grants Program. Phone Ruth 9489 5259.

Sunday 22—Friends of Edgars Creek Planting

Edgars Creek, Coburg, For details phone Stephen Northey 041 050 4212.

Sunday 29—Darebin City Council Planting (National Tree Day)

Edwardes Lake Park, Reservoir, 10am-1pm. Melway map 18 E4. Meet near the Scout Hall.

Sunday 29—Yarra City Council Planning (National Tree Day)

Gallagher Reserve, Park St Carlton North, 10am-1pm. Melway map 29 H10.

AUGUST

Saturday 4—MECCARG* Planting and handweeding

Just south of Murray Rd bridge, Coburg, 1pm-3pm. Melway map 18 11. Wear gloves, and sturdy footwear and bring tools and buckets if you can. Funded by Melbourne Water Community Grants Program.

Sunday 5—Planting & BBQ

Kirkdale St, Brunswick, 10am-1pm. Melway 30 B8. Help revegetate this very deserving area around the powerline terminal station. Funded by Landcare Australia/SP Ausnet. Phone Megan at MCMC 9380 8199.

Sunday 5—Litter Clean-Up

Keady St, Nth Coburg, 10am-12 noon. Melway map 17 H8. Phone Paul 9489 5062.

Sunday 5—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 9354 9885.

Sunday 12—Planting & BBQ

'Manna Gum escarpment,' Fawkner, enter from Jukes Rd and follow the flags, 10am-1pm. Melway map 18 A1. This is part four of our *Black and Blue* project funded by Melbourne Water Community Grants Program. Phone Paul 9489 5062.

Saturday 18—Planting & BBQ

Imaroo St, Fawkner, 10am-1pm. Melway map 17 K6. Another opportunity to help keen local residents continue the restoration of this previously degraded escarpment. Funded by Landcare Australia/Spicers Paper grant to MCMC. Note this is a Saturday. Phone Megan at MCMC 9380 8199.

Sunday 26—Planting & BBQ

Aitken Creek, Craigieburn, enter from Axminster Dve, 10am-1pm. Melway map 386 J10. Help to improve bank stability, control erosion and improve the diversity of riparian verges. This is part four of our *Sedges for Edges* funded by the Australian Government's Community Water Grants. Phone Ray 0422 989 166.

Don't forget to keep an eye on the Friends' website—www.vicnet.net.au/~fomc

* MECCARG = Merri & Edgars Creek Confluence Area Restoration Group