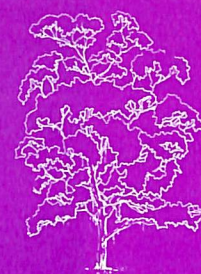




Melbourne
and Metropolitan
Board of Works

Dandenong Valley Metropolitan Park — News



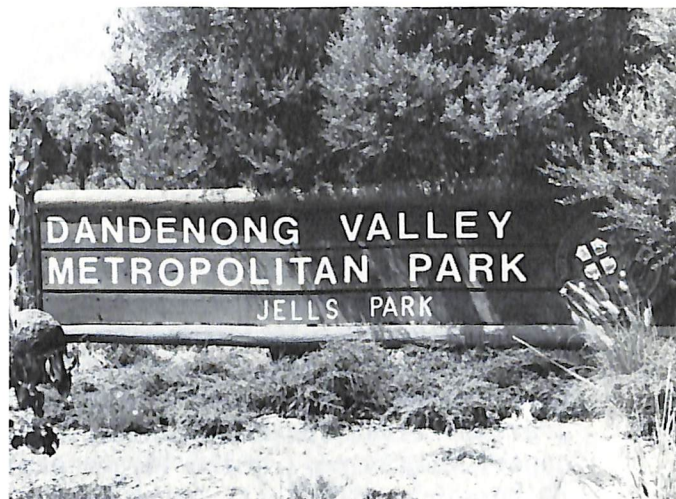
No. 1, Winter, 1984

FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD - MR RAY MARGINSON

I am pleased to have the opportunity to launch this series of quarterly newsletters for the Dandenong Valley Metropolitan Park.

The newsletters are intended to advise neighbours and near neighbours of the Park of the facilities available to them and to keep them informed of developments within the Park.

The metropolitan parks of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works are different in size and also in character from Melbourne's other park systems. The five parks are neither single properties nor single parks and form a very large scale enterprise designed to provide a variety of recreational and educational opportunities for regional rather than local populations. Totalling 4,466ha the metropolitan parks are located at Dandenong Valley, Maribyrnong Valley, Yarra Valley, Point Cook and Braeside. The first three locations occupy long stretches of river valleys, and the restoration and protection of these riverine landscapes as well as other significant natural features are among the prime objectives of Park development.



Parks are for people and it is by community involvement that the Board's awareness of the needs and desires of park visitors and residents of adjacent districts is heightened. It is then in a better position to develop the park to best meet community wishes. The Board will be pleased to receive community comment either directly or through its Dandenong Valley Advisory Committee.

This inaugural issue acknowledges the major contribution to the Dandenong Valley Metropolitan Park since 1974 by all the members of the Advisory Committee and especially its Chairman Cr Alan Patterson, MBE, JP, a member of the Board.

Ray Marginson



DANDENONG VALLEY METROPOLITAN PARK



Jells Park

The Dandenong Valley Metropolitan Park is one of a series of large regional parks being established by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works in Melbourne's urban area to provide recreational and educational opportunities on a scale larger than is possible with local parks.

Location

The 1330 hectare Park follows the course of the Dandenong Creek for 8.7 km between Boronia Road and Wellington Road through the Cities of Knox, Nunawading and Waverley. It is 1 to 2.5 km wide and is divided laterally by the Burwood Highway, High Street Road and Ferntree Gully Road. The Park is further subdivided into nine sub-areas of differing character and which are at different stages of development.



Jells Park Visitor Centre

Description

Land use within the Park reserve is fairly diverse but the overall intention is to emphasise passive recreation and to restore and preserve rural activities and landscape, as well as natural bushland, particularly along the creek. Some areas have been allocated for agriculture and sporting facilities, often behind screens of native vegetation. In some parts, the Park merges with the surrounding farmland with the result that the Park boundaries can be difficult to distinguish.

The nine sub-areas and some of the land uses which they encompass are:

Koomba:	Grazing, sports ovals, tennis and netball courts, natural bush, wetlands
Nunawading:	Golf course
Bushy Park:	Market gardens, orchards, vineyards, cattle grazing, horse agistment, Nunawading tip
Brickworks:	Clay quarries, grazing, orchards
Nortons:	Picnic area, sports facilities, market gardens, pony club, conservation zone, de-commissioned purification plant
Waverley:	Golf course, Waverley Womens Sports Centre
Jells:	Picnic area, wildlife lake, stream zone, playgrounds
Devon Meadows:	Grazing, stream zone, wetlands
Rigby:	Grazing, sports facilities, mini-bike track

At present, of the total Park reservation of 1330 ha:

- 671 ha is Board of Works owned or Crown land managed by the Board.
- 414 ha is privately owned.
- 245 ha is owned or managed by Municipal Councils.



Vegetation

Great diversity of native plants is one of the major assets of the park.

Vegetation near the creek is a mixture of eucalypts and wattles, with some tea-tree, paperbarks and bullrushes. Introduced species near the creek include willows, blackberries and many other kinds of weeds.

Remnant bushland on the hill slopes is dominated by Eucalypts, with some Acacias and Wild Cherry. There are some patches of sweet pittosporum, which is not native to the park, and which is of mixed benefit, particularly in view of the way it spreads.

Introduced species within the park also occur in conifer windbreaks, orchards of apples, pears and other fruits, market gardens, private gardens with deciduous trees and remnants of old private gardens.

Where grazing stock have been kept out and human access minimised, native plants are regenerating, quite strongly in some places. Many exotics are also regenerating, including some that are not so demanding of good site conditions, particularly Monterey pine and weeds such as blackberries, gorse, wild watsonia and wandering jew.



The Pond at Norton's Park

Animal Life

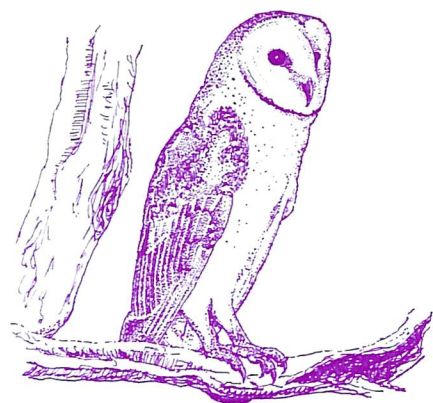
Most of the mammals in the park are nocturnal. They include ring and brush-tailed possums, bats and sugar gliders. Platypus have been seen in the creek within the last 20 years. Birds are abundant, and about 90 species have been recorded, including many water birds. This is due to the extent and variety of habitats available; dense forest, open woodland, shrubland, grassland and water areas.

Several species of lizards and snakes are present, frogs are abundant, and fish and yabbies may still be found in Dandenong Creek. Insects are present in great numbers and diversity.

Introduced animals such as rabbits, foxes and feral cats live in the park. Because they compete with and prey upon native animals, our aim is to reduce their numbers.



The Natural Bush of Koomba Park



RANGERS COLUMN : RECENT EVENTS IN DVMP

By Area Superintendent : Peter Goudy
and Ranger-in-Charge : Ray Cromie

Discovery Trail

The discovery trail at Jells Park has been re-opened after an extended 'closure for repairs'.

Dismounted Fauna Display

A number of specimens from the fauna display at the Jells Park Visitor Centre suddenly vanished recently. Amongst the stuffed animals and birds stolen were a mountain brushtailed possum, a ring-tailed possum, an eastern rosella, a brown rat and a goshawk. If you should find them wandering around Waverley or if the children have brought home any exotic pets of late, please send them back to Jells.

Wildlife Lake

A wildlife lake is proposed for Koomba. Although funding restraints have reduced its size, it is hoped to excavate for a small lake in the near future.

Grass

The Dandenong Valley Rangers now have a new species of introduced weed to eradicate. Recently while slashing in the back blocks of Koomba, some of the Rangers came upon a plantation of 100 marijuana plants concealed inside an enclosure of blackberries. The Board opted not to take advantage of the retail value of the crop and police destroyed the plants. Rangers have not yet been able to contact the owners of the crop.

Wildlife Jottings

A sudden and fatal affliction overcame many of the denizens of the Dandenong Creek at Koomba recently. Tests are being carried out to discover what killed 200 eels and many other fish.

A herd of 30 horses being grazed at Bushy Park was recently involved in a remarkable incident which shows that people aren't the only creatures to have traffic accidents. The whole herd was frolicking and dashing about the paddock at full tilt, but as they neared a fence and tried to slow, many of them skidded and fell, several of them somersaulted, and the whole confused mass crashed through the fence knocking down a long section of it. None of the horses were hurt. For those who saw it, a sliding, tangled heap of 30 horses made quite a spectacular sight.

Big game fishing at Jells Park is becoming a serious and competitive business. One angler of about ten summers allowed himself to be photographed with a particularly fine catch only on the condition that Park staff not release the story and photo to the press, lest his mates find out where his fishing spot is.



Best Fishing Hole in Waverley

Another astute, young angler is supplementing his pocket money by selling eels caught at Jells to his neighbours.

Bookings for the Christmas period at Jells Park opened on 1 March and promptly filled and closed again on the same day.

The Jells Ranger and the Underground Cow

During February, Jells Park Assistant Ranger Jack Dinkgreve was trying to round up (or rustle?) a stray heifer from a neighbouring cattle paddock when he succeeded in chasing it into a drain pipe. Since it couldn't turn around the cow was content to keep going straight ahead undeterred by the narrowing of the pipe diameter from four to two feet. A posse of Rangers managed to block its passage at a manhole about 400 metres up the pipe and finally extricate it after 4 1/2 hours. Perhaps a few hours of Rawhide and a bit of lasso work should be included in basic Ranger training?



Mini Moomba

Cattle Grazing

Cattle can be seen grazing in various parts of the DVMP. Some are on agistment and some are Board of Works cattle from the Werribee farm.

Additional grazing land has been sown at Koomba and will soon be fenced for use.

Problems with some of the Public

Duck shooters have been reported in Bushy Park on two occasions - none have been apprehended as yet, however extra patrols have been undertaken to try to prevent this loss of park resource.

Despite being prohibited, dogs are still being let loose in Koomba. They must always be kept on leashes.

Koomba Flood

On November 30 last year, after 2" of rain had fallen in the area during the previous 24 hours, the Dandenong Creek topped its banks in Koomba Park, inundating most of the parklands and washing away in excess of 70 tonnes of crushed rock from the access road.

Waverley Mini Moomba

On Wednesday 7 March, Waverley Family Day Care held their Mini Moomba celebration at Jells Park. A goodly sized crowd of Waverley pre-school children and their mothers were entertained with a magic show, balloons and face painting by Zodo and Rainbo the clowns and two Moomba Princesses who looked pretty cold in their regalia of white gowns and sashes on such a wet and windy day.



Moomba Princesses, Mayor and Clowns

Arbor Week

In observance of Arbor Week, 9-13 April, Jells Park was the venue for a series of talks and demonstrations for school groups by Park rangers and gardeners. Each two hour session included a talk on the value and importance of trees and demonstrations of plant propagation including taking cuttings and grafting. The students rolled wood veneers and filled the tubes with soil in which they planted seedling Hakeas which they were allowed to take home. Each student was also able to plant a tree in the Park.

Arbor Week also saw the opening of the Tree Walk at Jells Park.

DANDENONG VALLEY METROPOLITAN PARK
ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Advisory Committee was formed in October 1974 to assist in the planning of the Park. It is comprised of representatives of the Cities of Knox, Nunawading, Ringwood and Waverley, the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation, the Conservation Council of Victoria, Forests Commission, Dandenong Valley Authority, Road Construction Authority and State Electricity Commission as well as the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works.

One of the principal responsibilities of DMPAC members is to represent local people, Park visitors and special interest groups in matters of park planning, development and management. If there are any matters affecting the DMP which you would like to raise with the Committee, please contact a Committee member or write to: The Secretary, Dandenong Valley Advisory Committee, C/- MMBW, 625 Lt Collins St MELBOURNE Vic 3000.

The DMPAC meets quarterly in February, May, August and November.

Current members are:

MMBW

Mr A R Patterson MBE JP, Chairman
82 2517 (H)

City of Knox

Cr W H Tew, MBE JP 758 1273 (H)
Mr R J Ladd 220 8222

City of Waverley

Cr D C McIntosh 277 4260
Mr J N Halford
Deputy City Engineer 560 9011

Department of Youth, Sport and Rec.

Mr R Russell 602 1566 (B)

City of Nunawading

Mr D Wilson
City Engineer 874 2211

From the minutes of the February
Advisory Committee meeting:-

The "Native Fish Australia" organisation has applied for the use of the tanks in the de-commissioned Shepherd Road Purification Plant for the breeding of native fish with which they hope to stock Victorian watercourses.

It is intended to construct a trail connecting Jells Park and Koomba.

The Board is to prepare a report on the results of the archaeological dig at the Clow Homestead in the southern part of the park.

The Committee recommended that the Board carry out improvements to the surface of the cricket ground at Wantirna Reserve.

Tenders have been received for the provision of a bicycle hire operation at Jells Park.

City of Ringwood

Mr A C Robertson
City Engineer 870 4311

Conservation Council of Victoria

Mr B C Loft 561 2381 (H)

Forests Commission, Victoria

Mr S W Calder 617 9222

Dandenong Valley Authority

Mr M Robinson 791 2744

Road Construction Authority

Mr P McCulloch 878 0555

State Electricity Commission of Vic.

Mr L Stubbs 615 3425 (B)

Cr Alan R Patterson MBE JP

Cr Alan Patterson of Hawthorn is the Chairman of the Dandenong Valley Metropolitan Park Advisory Committee and is also the Board's representative on that Committee.

He responds to many different forms of address in the field of local government: Councillor, Commissioner, Area Chairman and Board Member. His continuing enthusiasm for, and belief in, the importance of local government is evident after 42 years serving as a Councillor.

Cr Patterson is Chairman of the Eastern Area Commission of 14 Councils whose population totals 1 million in the eastern suburbs. He is also Chairman of the Lower Yarra Advisory Committee and a Trustee of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Superannuation Fund.

Cr Patterson was appointed to the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works in 1956 and in 1982 he was appointed Acting Chairman prior to the taking up of that position by Mr Ray Marginson.

WINTER ACTIVITIES AT DANDENONG VALLEY
METRO PARK

Throughout winter 1984, DVMP will be conducting a series of demonstrations and guided walks each Saturday, aimed at providing basic information for the public in relation to a number of interesting activities. These activities will include:

- Guided bird walks
- Guided nature walks through various sections of the DVMP.
- Talks on the history of the park
- Talks on care and maintenance of native plants.
- Breeding and management of native fish.
- Safe use of chainsaws

Further information including dates and times can be obtained from the Jells Park Visitor Centre or phone 561 4776.

Walter Harry Tew

Walter Harry Tew was born at Lang Lang on 18 May, 1915. He took up residence at Ferntree Gully early in 1922, when his parents moved to that area, and has lived in Ferntree Gully continuously since that time. Attended Ferntree Gully State School (a third generation now attends the same school) and Dookie Agricultural College.

During the War he trained as a pilot with the RAAF and served in the European theatre, being seconded to the RAF.

Cr Tew worked for T and G Life Society as a life insurance salesman for 31 years before starting his own business as an insurance broker; which continued until his retirement in 1977.

Cr Tew was elected to Council in 1966 representing Ferntree Gully Ward and despite regular opposition has retained that position. He was the last Shire President, and was the first Mayor when Knox became a City on 4 July 1969, and has since served three further terms in that office.

He was appointed to represent Knox on the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works in 1969 and continued in that role until the change in the Board. Since then he has been Knox Council's representative on the Eastern Area Commission.

Cr Tew was Knox representative on the original committee formed to advise on the development the Jells Park area, the first meeting being held at Waverley Civic Centre some 10 years ago, and represents Knox on the present Metropolitan Park Committee.



BILL THE BARD LEAVES THE BOARD

On May 4 this year, the Ranger-in-Charge of Dandenong Valley Metropolitan Park, Liam "Bill" McGrath retired. With his leaving, many of the educational services of the park may have to be suspended as no comparable poet, writer, raconteur, authority on Gaelic history or dog expert is likely to be found to replace him.

Visitors to Jells Park who have encountered Bill will recall him as the snowy-haired Irishman whose voice is still redolent of the "ould sod" even though it was long ago in 1949 that he came to Australia.

A former member of the Royal Air Force, Bill was in charge of the RAF dog training school in the Middle East before coming here to join the Victoria Police and starting their dog training school.

After his spell with the Police Force Bill became a Security Officer for a while before joining the Board of Works 18 years ago. Bill's career with the Board commenced at O'Shannassy Reservoir where he was firstly Assistant Caretaker and then Caretaker.

He then went to Cardinia Reservoir for a few years before becoming Ranger-in-Charge at Dandenong Valley Metropolitan Park at the Park's inception.



Bill McGrath

A prolific writer (and even more prolific raconteur) Bill has written hundreds of articles and a book on dog training, some 300 poems in Erse (Irish Gaelic) and English, and three novels: "The Scotsman Wore a Shamrock", "The Torn Prayerbrook", and "The Broken Wishbone". Many of his poems have been published in Australia and Ireland, his third novel is with a publisher at the moment and a book of his poems is to be published in Ireland next year.

Bill has found it necessary to retire to give himself a chance within the next ten years to write himself out and to get all his works published. In the meantime he intends to settle at Port Fairy where he hopes to set up a small business, and next year return to Ireland for a spell.

POSSUM PROWLs: WILD NIGHTLIFE OR NIGHT WILDLIFE AT JELLS PARK

Each Tuesday night from 6 March to 12 June and 7 August to 13 November, torchlight tours of Jells Park are conducted to enable groups to study the nocturnal animal life in the Park. Known as 'Possum Prowls' these tours run for about 2 hours from 7.00 pm or dusk (whichever is later) and are limited to 30 persons. Such is the popularity of Possum Prowls that 1984 is already booked out.

VISITOR STATISTICS

JELLS PARK, DANDENONG VALLEY METROPOLITAN PARK

