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MELBOURNE
Parks & Waterways

pawPrint

AUGUST 1995

Dandenong Ranges Gardens Edition

Printed on recycled paper

DIRECTIONS



I am pleased to report that Melbourne Parks & Waterways has performed very well over 1994/95 and most key objectives of the Business Plan have been met.

One of the existing milestones was the establishment of the Customer Information Centre and Waterways "shopfront" at Banana Alley. The Information Centre handles the thousands of ratepayer enquiries, previously handled by Melbourne Water, at less cost to Melbourne Parks & Waterways. It also gives Melbourne Parks & Waterways a far better knowledge of the concerns and enquiries of ratepayers than ever before. Welcome to the new staff at the Centre.

The Centre also plays a vital role as the Waterways "shopfront" which is ideally placed between Southgate and the new Casino.

Welcome also to the staff of the Dandenong Ranges Gardens who will bring a whole range of new skills and experiences to the Melbourne Parks & Waterways' team.

Without a doubt the biggest challenge for the early part of the new financial year is to reach agreement of the new Enterprise Agreement.

Melbourne Parks & Waterways' current work practices are all suited to a weekend business, and the new Enterprise Bargain will provide us with flexibility to allow us to continue to perform well as Australia's best park and waterways manager.

I urge you to support this Agreement which will provide for secure long term employee and staff development for all Melbourne Parks & Waterways' employees.

by Jeff Floyd

FROM THE EDITORS

This month's edition provides a special insight into the Dandenong Ranges Gardens. The feature on pages 4,5 and 6 looks at the history and attractions at each location, with visuals to tempt a visit.

Pawprint Editors would like to recommend a great event at one of the parks this month. **The Horseshoe Bend Farm Country Fair** is on again on Sunday 20 August from 10am until 4pm. Last year's event was very popular and this year's full day of activities promises to attract even bigger crowds.

There will be plenty of action with working dogs, sheep shearing and pony rides. Devonshire teas by the old homestead and a free sausage sizzle will guarantee that nobody goes home hungry.

Children will be well catered for with amusements, pony rides, give-aways, and

sack races to give parents a chance to check out the art and craft stalls.

There will also be helicopter rides to give people a chance to view the beautiful Maribyrnong River Valley and nearby Brimbank Park from the air.

Horseshoe Bend Farm is located in Keilor off the Old Calder Highway (Melways Ref. 14 K9). Give Carl Bennett a call on (03) 9336 3911 for more details.

Some of you will already know about this event thanks to Carl's innovative invitation - thanks Carl, it will help the trees in the garden! See you there on the 20th of August.

The deadline for contributions for next month's edition is 18 August. Please keep those stories and photographs coming in. Email your contributions to Mark Ryan or Caroline Pitcher, or fax them through on 9816 7099.

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The Light is shining through the tunnel at Banana Alley

by Michaela Green

On 3 July the Customer Information Centre at Banana Alley was enthusiastically launched.

The Centre was established to provide information for customers who wish to know about Melbourne Parks and Waterways, what it does, and where the money from the 'Parks Charge' goes? The Customer Information Centre aims to satisfy customer enquiries about the 'Parks Charge', improve awareness of Melbourne Parks & Waterways and its role, increase visitation, and, provide Melbourne Parks & Waterways' customers with a 'one-stop-shop' of general information which will increase satisfaction.

Through interaction with customers, the Centre's staff promote visitation opportunities for each customer to take advantage of. Besides handling general enquiries, the Centre staff provide a valuable link between customers and Melbourne Parks & Waterways by providing a 'listening base' for comments and suggestions that will be fed back into the organisation.

The public can contact the Centre on 13 9663 and in time it will become the main focal point for all customer telephone contact.

Mark Deshayes explaining park facilities at the service desk



cles, products and services familiarity, and training in telephone and enhanced customer service techniques. Knowledge has been reinforced and strengthened by on the job experience.

The first month

The Centre staff have been kept busy during the first month, taking an average of between 200 to 350 calls per day, with the length of calls

compliment Mark Deshayes, Customer Service Representative, on his commitment to customer service. To satisfy the customer, Mark needed to follow up his call with further information and then try and re-contact Brian. Being a busy man, Brian was difficult to contact, but Mark persisted until he was able to track him down and supply him with the information he required. Brian rang myself to con-

Ready to serve the customer.
From left to right: (back)- Simon Middleton, Frank Ritters, Mark Deshayes, Travis Mitchell, David Rey, Mathew Chiaruttini, (front)- Michaela Green (Manager), Penny Vatmaridis, Chris Reid, & Marilyn Leder



The Team

A pool of highly customer focused and enthusiastic representatives were selected and have been contracted for a three month period to effectively manage the enquiries generated from the billing of the 'Parks Charge'. The environment is very conducive to team support activity and each member is required to have fun while providing excellent customer service.

Training

An extensive program was developed including park and waterway field visits, presentations of Melbourne Parks & Waterways' history and poli-

varying from 5 minutes to 45 minutes depending on the type of enquiry and the challenge of satisfying the customer.

Previously, all enquiries relating to the 'Parks Charge' were handled by Melbourne Water staff, but as Melbourne Parks & Waterways is now a truly separate identity it was necessary to be able to handle customer enquiries directly. Being a customer focused organisation, this direct contact will obviously provide benefits and future possibilities.

Just one of the good news stories

Mr Brian Kramer of Tubby's Toys rang to

gratulate Mark. He said, "I couldn't have been more delighted with the service provided - he couldn't have done more!"

Some interesting calls

The Centre has had a few calls from the public who really think that the 'Parks Charge' is related to car parking. "If I pay my Parks Charge does it mean that I don't have to pay for parking my car in the city area anymore?"

"Why should I pay this charge - I don't even have a car!"

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DANDENONG RANGES GARDENS COME TO MPW

by Mark Ryan



Jenkin Drive -
George Tindale
Memorial
Garden

On 30 June this year, the Minister for Conservation and Environment, Mark Birrell, announced that six Gardens of the Dandenong Ranges would be transferred under the management of MPW.

The Gardens of the Dandenong Ranges are some of the most significant cultural, botanical, and eco-tourism assets in Victoria. Situated less than two hours drive from the heart of Melbourne, the Gardens are already viewed as popular destinations for tourists.

With the Gardens coming under the management of MPW, their cultural and botanical heritage will be protected and secured. With improved coordinated marketing and additional funding, the Gardens are sure to become one of Melbourne's most recognised and treasured tourist icons.

The individual reserves are already well recognised as significant botanical and cultural sites. The National Rhododendron Garden will be maintained to ensure its present status as having the largest diversity of any rhododendron garden in the world, whilst the

William Ricketts Sanctuary is already recognised as one of the most significant outdoor clay sculptured gardens in the world.

Existing full time and part time staff at the 6 Dandenong Ranges properties will be offered positions within Melbourne Parks & Waterways and the new management structure will be filled at first from existing staff.

The Gardens have a fascinating history surrounding their evolution to present day. The availability of the Gardens to the public has only become possible following the generous contributions of some well respected Australians, and the invaluable support of the Gardens many volunteers.

National Rhododendron Gardens

The gardens are famous around the world, not only for their beautifully landscaped gardens but also for the magnificent views of the Australian Alps and sweeping views across Silvan Reservoir.

The gardens were established in the 1960's when some members of the Ferny Creek Horticultural Society formed the Australian Rhododendron Society and approached the Forests Commission for a suitable site for their gardens. A 20 hectare site, which extended to 40 hectares in 1975, was selected on the eastern edge of Mount Dandenong in the Olinda State Forest.

The gardens are a collection of individual plantings, all linked by a central rhododendron theme, featuring 15,000 rhododendrons, 12,000 azaleas, 3,000 camellias, 3,000 ornamental trees and shrubs, plus 400 cherry trees. The Cherry Tree Grove is the result of a joint initiative between the Japanese Consul General, the Japanese community in Victoria, and the Gardens. The highlight this year will be the traditional Sake Ceremony undertaken when the cherry trees blossom.

The giant mountain ash form a backdrop for individual gardens that each have rhododendrons chosen for their growth habit and their relationship to other plants in the garden.



National
Rhododendron
Garden -
Olinda

The gardens also contain collections of numerous other plants including conifers, magnolias, cherry trees, proteas and many rare plants. In season, massed displays of plant varieties attract large crowds on average of around 60,000 visitors each year.

Birdlife is plentiful, with waterfowl at home around the pond and lake, while a few large remnant mountain ash near the lake provide nesting places for kookaburras and black cockatoos. Feeding the geese and ducks is a popular pastime with children.

September through to November is one of the busiest times at the gardens with daffodil shows, rhododendron and azalea displays,

Alfred
Nicholas
Gardens



One of the
beautiful clay
carvings at
William
Ricketts
Sanctuary

The Alfred Nicholas Memorial Garden

The garden of 13 hectares was originally part of the property Burnham Beeches, which was established and developed in the 1930's by Alfred Nicholas, founder of the Aspro empire. During its prime the 'hill station' garden was reputed to be the best private garden in Victoria and possibly Australia.

The gardens however became overgrown and neglected after the death of Alfred Nicholas in 1937, with many exotic plants disappearing. In 1973, responsibility for the gardens was transferred to the State Government from the Shire of Sherbrooke, who original acquired the land as a gift in 1965 from the Nicholas Institute as a memorial to Alfred Nicholas.

The task of maintenance, restoration and development continues today to regain the splendour of the grand landscapes of the property.

The grand scale of the complex leaves one to wonder what it would have been like in its heyday.

There are walks along the many paths and walkways. Visitors can have a picnic, watch the birds, feed the ducks and take photographs of the diverse scenery.

and a competitive rhododendron display on Melbourne Cup weekend.

There are three different walks that people can take around the gardens ranging from the 45 minute walk to a one and a half and a three hour walk, the latter taking in the entire gardens.

Cafe Vireya is open daily and in fine weather alfresco dining is popular.

William Ricketts Sanctuary

The William Ricketts Sanctuary attracts more

than 40,000 visitors annually, including many from overseas. William Ricketts established the sanctuary more than 60 years ago after buying four acres by instalments. He quietly worked on dried clay sculptures amongst the tree ferns before his creations became increasingly popular with locals and then tourists. Some of his sculptures convey his passionate feelings of how white man has mistreated the earth.

Blending natural and spiritual realms, William Ricketts established a unique sanctu-

George Tindale Memorial Garden

This marvellous mountain garden offers garden lovers different highlights for their visit all year round thanks to the foresight of George Tindale and his wife Ruth. Mr Tindale, a research scientist with the Victorian Department of Agriculture, set out to develop and expand the garden after purchasing it in 1958. Previously the property had been cleared and farmed but had some magnificent mountain ash trees. The Tindales gradually built up the garden to establish a horticultural highlight each month of the year.

In 1980, Ruth Tindale donated the garden to the Victorian Conservation Trust in memory of her husband, with responsibility transferring to DCNR five years later in 1985. Mrs Tindale continues to be a caring overseer through her commitment and care for the garden.

The garden has a large Friends group, and is part of the Australian Open Gardens Scheme.

Pirianda Garden

The Ansell family, of Ansell Industries, developed Pirianda garden in the late 1950's whilst travelling widely to collect rare plants from across the globe. Pirianda contains an important collection of trees, all labelled, which blend with the native surrounding forest area. It is very steep with some impressive views to the south, and includes an extensive path network with some rock terracing, rock gardens, and a fern walk on the lower areas.

Prior to the 1950's, the property had been cleared and farmed since around 1900. The property was covered with regrowth of blackberries, blackwood and mountain ash when the Ansell family arrived. The huge task of clearing and establishing the garden took a number of years.

In 1977 the gardens were opened to the public when the Ansells gave the property to the State Government.

Several walking trails cross the steep slopes of the gardens. Extensive stonewalling, the combination of botanically significant trees, and the southern views on a clear day make a visit to Pirianda worthwhile.

RJ Hamer Arboretum

Following the devastating 1962 bushfires which destroyed the mountain ash forests and pine plantations that covered the site, a forest type arboretum was established through a series of plantings during the 1970's. The arboretum was officially opened in 1977 with the last planting occurring in 1985.

The 200 hectare tree lined site has spectacular views of the Yarra Valley. Tree species



are from all over the world including species from China, Europe, and America.

A native bushland portion of the site (approximately 100ha) is to be retained as part of the Dandenong Ranges National Park.

There are a number of informal and formal trails throughout the arboretum which are perfect for bushwalking.

For further information contact Brett Cheatley, who has been appointed Manager Dandenong Ranges Gardens, on 9755 2912. Brett will continue his role at Kew in the Parks Services Bureau 2 days a week. Melbourne Parks & Waterways has established an office for the 6 Gardens at Alfred Nicholas Memorial Garden, located off Sherbrooke Road in Sherbrooke (Melways Reference 75G1).



Clare Ash at Pirianda Garden

Crowds flock to Braeside Park

by Kathryn Muir

"Come One, Come All" said the banner. And they did - all 3000 plus visitors to Braeside Park's inaugural Open Day. The rain stopped, the skies cleared and the sun shone for this great event. An early start by the Braeside crew had them creating a fire pit for billy tea and damper, preparing designer-made holes for the tree planting and finishing touches to the sound and light at the sensational new display in the Visitors Centre. Dig and Ernie made last minute alterations to the train (a tractor in disguise) and the Friends set up their display and prepared for bird watching and plant propagating, whilst busily blowing up balloons, with an endless supply of air courtesy of a noisy compressor.

Earth Encounters set up for their activities, ponding and face painting, and were kept busy stoking up the fire for billy tea and damper. Anne, our resident artist worked the clay for the tiles to be made and Kath was jumping around checking everywhere to make sure everything was O.K.

As tummies started rumbling, the Friends group fired up the 'barbies' and limbered up for the onslaught of visitors by getting their snags in bread. Meanwhile the infamous mascots of Braeside Park, the Friends Pelican and our own Ocky the Cocky, prepared to greet the visitors as they came en masse to enjoy the festivities. As the day progressed, the crowds increased and our distinguished guests arrived for their luncheon in an elaborate marquee complete with picket fence - many thanks to Peter Day.

The visitors were periodically halted upon arrival by the friendly Pelican as the Braeside train went on its merry way, hooting its horn as it made its way to the train station. Ernie, giving his excellent conducted tour of the park from the infamous back carriage, was occasionally interrupted by a large 'bang'! What could possibly stop Ernie talking for even a second?! No, it wasn't a tyre bursting, but one of the many balloons on the train popping in the fists of little kiddies. When the train came to a halt, the excited crowds were greeted by one of our mascots and escorted into the art studio to make a clay tile to be included in a walking track soon to be constructed outside the art shed.

As the next load of noisy travelers jostled for a seat on the train, a loud blast sounded from the train whistle and the call of "All Aboard" was heard above the raucous. We were off down the main driveway where sev-

Everyone
tried their
hand with the
artist in
residence
activities



eral Kew staff members were seen trying to catch a lift, to be told by train driver extraordinaire Dig, "Sorry boys, we're all full up!"

First stop was the compound where the Friends were demonstrating the art of propagation, showing how seed is germinated, and how seedlings are pricked out into tubes before being planted out in the park.

Following this, the train continued its journey to the bird hide, where birds could be viewed through the Friends' birdscope and birdo's were on hand to talk about the many species of birds that flock to Braeside's wetlands. The next stop was pretty easy to guess as the smell of freshly cooked damper and brewed billy tea wafted through the air to greet the hungry hordes on the train. Another short hop and we were at the planting site where we were met by Priscilla "Not the Queen of the Desert" Stevens. All passengers were strongly encouraged, if not dragged off the train, to get out and plant a tree or two, after

being expertly taught by our tree planting staff and helpers. Workers were rewarded for their efforts with another cup of tea and some hot damper with jam by the roaring fire.

The train then continued on to the hallowed turf of the former training track where the legendary Phar Lap once trained. Passing by the heathland the train wound its way to the Yabby and Mozzie Ponds where Earth Encounters were busy ponding with eager little children, amazingly, none of which fell in!! It was fascinating to see just what actually lives in the ponds!

The train moved onwards past the huge adventure playground, which was crawling with bodies as they clambered over, under and through the various structures. Just past the playground a large white marquee loomed near the Visitors Centre, where there was a hype of activity including face painting, bike hire, and people milling around to claim balloons and look at the displays, especially the miniature heathland with its subdued lighting and lavish ponds set up with running water.

You could then drop by the bike hire and kiosk to get an ice-cream or a cold or hot drink, and if that wasn't enough you get yourself one of the thousand snags that were donated to us by Dingley Tuckerbag with the bread kindly donated by Tip Top Bakeries.

The day was a huge success with special thanks to "The Team" (Braeside staff), Earth Encounters, Friends of Braeside Park, Volunteers (V.I.P.s), Dennis and Toni (Braeside Bike Hire) and Anne, our residential artist for the many tiles that were made.

A special thanks also to our fearless Park Manager Steve (Tiger) Turmaine who said "Run with it guys", and so we did!

One question though. When's the next one?! - Soon I hope!



The Friendly Seagull flew in to help out on the day

FACES & PLACES

Pawprint Competition

Last month's Pawprint competition to select a suitable mascot for Melbourne Parks and Waterways received numerous creative and innovative entries, despite the exhaustive criteria that was set.

The most popular entry was undoubtedly the fictional bunyip character. Some people even tried their hand at illustrating the character - with mixed rates of success. Another popular entry was the bilby, which has become increasingly popular at Easter.

Entries ranged from both fictional fluffy animals to role model rangers in costume.

Some people had suggested that the criteria was too restrictive and felt that an existing brand image fauna emblem may be more appropriate.

The judging panel carefully appraised all entries and an image for the mascot has been recommended. Unfortunately at the time of printing an official winner had not been approved, so the winner will have to be notified and published in next month's edition of Pawprint.

Test Your Knowledge

Next month's competition will test the knowledge of all staff about the parks, waterways, trails and staff of MPW. The winner will be the person selected from those who correctly answer all ten questions, or alternatively the most correct answers. The answers to some of these questions are contained in recent editions of Pawprint if you do not already know the answers.

1. Name the 6 Dandenong Ranges properties that have recently come under the management of MPW?
2. What was the name of the event recently held at Westerfold Park that attracted alternative forms of transport?
3. Which Yarra Area Ranger recently demonstrated great customer service and initiative in returning a visitor's camera?
4. How does one cross the Burnley Harbour along the Main Yarra Trail?
5. Which Waterways staff member was chased by a cow recently at Collingwood Childrens Farm?
6. What is the new telephone number for the Customer Information Centre, and where is it situated?
7. In which month was Lakeside Drive opened to show off some of the early improvements to Albert Park?
8. Which park launched camping as an added attraction for visitors this year?
9. Name the Parks: (a) Has the koala as its brand image?, (b) Is situated on tram route nos. 70 and 71, (c) Phar Lap used to train here, and (d) Home of the Living Museum of the West?
10. Who won the Golden Platypus award at the last staff briefing session at Station Pier?

The winner will receive a dinner/lunch for up to four people to the value of \$80 at 'Hiltons by the Yarra Restaurant'. Each month one lucky winner will receive this prize which has kindly been donated by the management at Hiltons by the Yarra. A reminder to all staff that Hiltons by the Yarra offer a **10% discount** to staff of MPW. Simply mention this offer when booking.

Entries for this month's competition close on **18 August**. Fax or Email your entries to Mark Ryan on **816 7099**.



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Essential reading behind the scenes at the Customer Information Centre - Simon Middleton



Jeff Saker & Maria performing on their big day last month



Brian Welbourne (Digger) played train driver all day at Braeside



CLAWPRINT

Taking Paper Recycling Too Far?

At a recent Quality Council meeting relating to archiving systems a member of the council was noticed with a white tail coming from his appendage. Obviously after a visit to the flash new first floor loo a souvenir was thought appropriate.

Y is it so?

A former school teacher, now a member of staff at Kew (with regular visits to the Dandenongs), recently explained the details of a graph to a group of attentive people who noticed that he consistently misrepresented the 'x' and 'y' axis on the graph. Obviously it's been a while since the Form 5 maths classes.

Jump in my Car

Which goodlooking blonde couple have left their phones and tracing paper to be seen SCHUTTING red CELICA doors and speeding off for regular lunch dates?

There's Doing Business & there's Doing Business

Talk about carry your business with you. One dedicated Silvan Group Supervisor, intent on having the capability of doing business whilst doing his business, had a most unfortunate mishap. Whilst carefully and gently extricating himself from the repository of beautiful bums, and following his delicate depression of the water control release valve (otherwise known as the dunny button), watched in horror as his most valuable possession (his mobile phone of course) slip into the bowl. He claimed he was just trying the phone out for use at the Sugarloaf sailing centre, or was it a 'you beaut' idea from the land of the long white cloud?

Sakes Ties the Knot - MAAAATE!

Yarra Valley Parklands staff can expect some real concentration on PARK issues now. Jeff Saker, their erstwhile leader, recently tied the knot with Maria Ryan. Jeff and Maria were married on 8 July at St Margarets church in Eltham, followed by a great wedding reception in town. Best man Steve Turmaine looked resplendent in his 'tux', as did guest Ross Young in his flash suit. Jeff and Maria sensibly decided to vacate our cold shores and fled to Thailand for their honeymoon.

For Cliff Sake!

Cliff Ashley, Ranger at Maribymong Valley Parklands, recently approached a 'man' in Brimbank Office walking towards the female toilets. "Excuse me mate - can I show you where the men's toilets are?", assisted Cliff. "No - the ladies will be fine", SHE said.

New Columns for Pawprint

Starting next month, Pawprint will introduce a new column for all those bleeding hearts and frustrated staff who can't find true meaning in their lives. Confide in the anonymity of this new column 'Straightjacket' - share your problems and stresses now with our guest columnists - there'll be a new one each month! We want to share in your misery, and then hopefully offer you advice.

REVIVAL OF WATTLE PARK DAY

by Nicole Board

Shout out if you have heard of Wattle Day?? SILENCE ALL ROUND! For the last two months, I have been doing my own research to find out about Wattle Day and what it means to people. Wherever I was, whoever I spoke to - friends, family, work colleagues, park visitors - no one knew exactly what Wattle Day was and when it was celebrated.

Well I can tell you all that it is coming up soon on the first day of spring - 1 September.

The Wattle Day tradition was very strong in the early 1900's. People wore a sprig of Wattle on their clothes to represent a symbol of independence, nationhood, patriotism, future wealth and prosperity for the nation. Like the flag, the Commonwealth Arms and the national anthem, the wattle stands in history as a symbol of Australia.

I spoke to my mum and dad and tried to refresh their memories and allow them to

reminisce back to the 'good old days'. They both vaguely remember their mums putting a sprig of wattle on their school jumper and giving them a penny to put towards the day's activities at school.

Wattle Day is a day to consider Australia's floral heritage. My aim is to revive the tradition with the current generation, especially school children. The local primary school children will be invited to plant wattle trees and decorate one of the trams that travel to the Park with a wattle theme on the day.

Wattle Park staff are inviting all MPW employees to join in the tradition and wear a sprig of wattle on Wattle Day and come to the Park and plant a wattle tree. While you're here, we'll treat you to a sausage sizzle at lunch time in the beautiful surrounds of Wattle Park.

The tree planting day and sausage sizzle will take place on Friday 1 September from



12.30pm until 2.00pm. Mark this date in your diary and please RSVP by 30 August on 9808 2504 so that we know how many snags and plants to purchase.

by Serene Hodgson

Wattle Park is "lighting" the way with solar technology in our Parks. The first solar lights for Melbourne Parks and Waterways were installed during May this year in Wattle Park's barbecue and picnic area.

As dusk approaches our solar power comes back to life. The beams of light allow our visitors to continue cooking, socialising and playing on the trams. Illuminating the area by night also improves the security of the area.

The entire Park is listed on the National Estate and the 'Heritage Precinct' is registered by the Historic Buildings Council (HBC). The style of the lights was carefully selected to ensure approval would be granted by the HBC so that a permit would be issued for the installation.

The lighting was part of the restoration of the picnic and barbecue area and will complement the new tables and seating, all of which were funded through the Melbourne Parks & Waterways Program.

On the whole, the solar lights look great, are cost effective, fully automatic, energy efficient and, of course, environmentally friendly.

Switched On



Solar lighting at Wattle Park

A lasting relationship is formed

Stuart Ord and Dennis Nation at the presentation to Emmaus College students. Also present are Lindsay Bergin and President of the Forest Hill Rotary Club Stuart Williams



National Environment Week kept Badger Weir Park's Rangers very busy. Tours were provided for secondary school groups, colleges, and adult students from Box Hill College of TAFE. The most successful program however involved students from Emmaus College.

As a result of National Environment Week, and previous guided tours provided by park staff, a positive relationship has formed between Emmaus College and Badger Weir Park. This relationship involves a five year agreement which will incorporate 180 students into Environment Week each year. Students will participate in

activities such as tree planting, plant identification, soil analysis, water quality testing, animal habitat, and park management.

This successful ongoing program evolved when the keen eye of Dennis Nation noticed the school visiting the park on a number of occasions. Dennis approached the school with a view to set up an ongoing program, and alas, a wonderful relationship has formed.

However, Dennis' efforts did not stop there. He then approached the Forest Hill Rotary Club to sponsor the entire program. They happily agreed and will provide a barbecue

lunch for the students each year, a plaque commemorating the program, and a certificate for each student participating in the program.

The program started off on a successful note with students becoming involved in numerous activities which included soil testing, management of walking tracks, plant identification, and temperature readings. Park staff at Badger Weir will look forward to the continued success of this program over the coming years, while looking at other opportunities to build fruitful relationships with local groups and the community.

Waterways Operations Customer Face

Waterways has increased their customer focus with the new Waterways "shopfront" enquiries office which is located at Banana Alley.

The location on the Yarra River opposite Southgate is ideal for the Waterways' crew to assist cruise operators on the river. The Centre operates as an information centre for events and activities on waterways, public boating and regulations for boating on waterways, barge and plant hire, and other park and waterway facilities.

Neil Thompson and Larry Wooding - Waterways Operations Customer Service



Delighting Our Customers: The Sky's Our Limit!

Melbourne Parks and Waterways has recently undertaken an initiative to develop a Training Program for all staff in Customer Service. To assist with the implementation of this first class training program specifically designed to suit the needs of MPW staff and its customers, two leading consultants were commissioned - Royce and Chandler & McLeod.

The first stage of the Program involved the Teaser Mail-Outs and a letter from Jeff Floyd introducing staff to the initiative.

With this letter, staff were asked to give ONE idea to change the way we do things at MPW to help *delight our customers!!*

The winner of this competition was Marie Cox from Albert Park who has been given the opportunity to partake in the Maiden Voyage of the soon to be launched MPW Hot Air Balloon.

(Look out our feathered friends of the sky!!)

Following on from Marie's winning idea of a MPW Mascot, submissions were invited for ideas on what this Mascot should be. The submissions have been very creative and a winner will be announced shortly (refer page 8 - Pawprint competition).

Following the introduction of the Program, the consultants Royce and Chandler & McLeod ran 3 Focus Groups in June with a cross section of staff at the MCG. Over the 3 days, many attendees were seen gazing longingly out into the MCG oval reminiscing of their "could have been" days as star footballers ripped to shreds due to the ol' knee injury of '63. However, for those who were able to escape this "fantasy", 3 hours were spent under the skilled guidance of Chris Reilly from

Chandler & McLeod "brainstorming" concerns and issues relating to Customer Service in the Organisation. (Summary copies of the results from the Focus Groups may be obtained from Sally Stott on 9816 7013)

A Planning Session was then held with the Senior Management Team to review the results of the Focus Groups and begin addressing the issues for the Training Program.

Phase 2 of the Program (Motivation and Skills Development) is about to commence and all staff are expected to complete Customer Service Training by October 1995.

Stay tuned for the next update of the Customer Service Training Program. In the meantime, if you have any queries, please contact Sally Stott.

Battle of the Boxthorn

by Jo Davies

Destruction is such a rare thing in our type of work with planting and protecting the environment being more common pursuits. So when the call came to 'destroy', I took notice.

The first 'Battle of the Boxthorn' took place on June 4 at one of our newest parks - Cheethams Wetlands. The activity, which took place as part of World Environment Day activities, was attended by 30 other 'destroyers'. While the other parks were planting trees and saving soft and furry animals, Coastal Parks was ripping up and poisoning.

The Friends of Skeleton Creek and local residents joined park staff and a local Green Task Force for the first community day at Cheethams Wetlands.

The day was very successful with large trucks full of boxthorn removed. Unfortunately, not all plants can be removed at once as they provide valuable habitat for birds. The removal of the boxthorn will be an ongoing project with suitable native habitat replanted for the birdlife at the wetlands.

Battle of
the
Boxthorn



Naturalist in Residence Writer at Westerfolds Park

Glen Jamieson, Environment Ranger at Yarra Valley Parklands, has been a prolific writer of stories and articles about environmental issues in the Yarra Valley Parklands over the past few years.

Glen's creative flair and interesting style has been recognised by the Field Naturalist

Club of Victoria who recently selected Glen as their 'Naturalist in Residence' writer for 1996.

This is quite an accomplishment for Glen and goes some way to recognise the quality of workmanship and dedication to the environmental management and research that he consistently undertakes.

To give everyone an appreciation of Glen's great work and knowledge of his beloved parklands on the Yarra River, Pawprint has included the following recent article which appeared in last month's Field Naturalist magazine.

Searching for the rare white bird

If Dreaming places collect power through the stories that are generated by their spirit, then perhaps the Glynn's property comes close to being the White Cockatoo Special Place.



They sweep through the Gorge valleys & across the River flats in ecstatic, shrieking clouds. An amorphous white mass moving like crazed mist above the muddied waters of Birrarung, the Yarra Yarra.

In numbers of over one hundred, they replace the small bird chatter & hypnotic chime of the Bell Miner with raucous song & chorus of the days events. Piercing chants of Cocky lore break the skies. Sometimes the sound that they generate rises to such levels, that it can challenge the noise coming from the cars along Warrandyte roads; quite a splendid effort.

It is reminiscent of the intense sound levels generated by Magpie Geese on Wetlands at Kakadu, but they haven't always been in such a position of strength. In the early 1980's, the Sulphur-crested White Cockatoo

numbered perhaps a dozen or so birds in the Forests around Warrandyte, having gone through an intensive recent history of persecution & casual slaughter. It was the incorporation of the Glynn's property into the Yarra Valley Parklands, a Melbourne Parks & Waterways park, around this time that gave them a safe refuge & the opportunity to still call Australia home.

Observing the changes that come to an area set aside as a Sanctuary as has happened to the Glynn's property, can illustrate how the Flora & Fauna can recover when given the opportunity. Glynn's is at the upstream extent of the Yarra Valley Park. It is the land that is enclosed by the next River meander down stream from the Pound Bend & you see it across the River from the Pound Bend Picnic

Reserve looking westward. The bends in the River that create the Pound Bend also create the biggest incised meander in the Australian River systems; the Glynn's meander contributes to this extraordinary geological wonder.

This story has the theme of three species of White Birds (well, almost white), Sulphur Crested-Cockatoo, Sacred Ibis & the white form of the Grey Goshawk. It is not the full story of all that has happened on the Glynn's property, a selective vertical slice through observations from the past ten years.

It is late afternoon, one warm & balmy day just on the 1993 Summer solstice & the first few Silent Scouts of the White Cockatoos glide over the Warrandyte Tunnel, cross the River & fly into Glynn's. They follow the downstream flow of the River & move to strategic

vantage points, commanding views up & down the River Valley.

A little while later, the first of the Proclaimers leading the Cocky Mob follow the same path with exalted, loud & confident voices, calls that carry for a surprising distance. They are calls that are unafraid of who hears the Big White Parrot & their resonance stamps the ground as Cocky Country.

Those Birds whose responsibility it is to keep watch from the ridge country, part from the main Mob & effortlessly slip across the high ridges to carry out a patrol of the next valley. All the while that highly communicative voice of each individual, sending information back to the Mob who are now tentatively roosting on a massive Manna Gum overlooking the Wetlands & River at the bottom of the property in the south-west corner.

The collective knowledge of the 100 or so Cookies that make up the Glynns Mob must be immense. Individual birds have been known to live to one hundred years old. They are strong fliers who can cover large areas in an attempt to satisfy their insatiable curiosity, those black eyes shining with wisdom & mischief, scanning the forests & streets for news & opportunity. In a Yellow Box across the River from Glynns, at the bottom of Longridge (also Yarra Valley Parklands), are a small group of Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos. The younger Black Cocky birds, as usual are cawing to the parents, whose call is a gentle whistling when compared to the White Cookies.

A White Cocky Patrol of angry young Turks discover the Black Cookies & immediately descend upon them in a fierce attack. The Black Cookies are panic struck, two bolt down the River & the other five birds haphazardly make their way to another large tree nearby. The Black Cookies remain there, totally shattered & uncharacteristically quiet, for the rest of the early evening. Meanwhile outraged Patrols of White Cookies speed up & down the River, screaming out warnings & threats to any others who may be lurking on their Trees, now strangely leaving the Black Cookies to themselves.

The Black Cookies regroup & later slip off under the cover of night, wishing to avoid any more unpleasant confrontations. The drama subsides, another story to be re-enacted out in front of the Cocky Mob on the Manna Gums. The River meander resounds to the screeching howls & hoots of territorial superiority. From the top of the high ridge at Longridge members of the Trick Cookie Troupe take advantage of the steep slope to aerially dive & soar down at terrific speed. Half way down the slope, they turn upside down, twist & weave in spectacular aerobatic displays. It is breathtaking, larrakin showoff bravado at its best & the crowd on the Manna Gums just about do the

Mexican Wave in appreciation. The Summer is theirs.

Early Autumn and the White Cockatoos, reminiscent of grazing sheep, wander in a huge flock across the elevated River terrace, digging and eating Onion Grass (*Romulea rosea*) and Sour Sob (*Oxalis pes-carpe*) combs. They must consume vast amounts of these weeds in search of the carbohydrate stored in the combs. Late afternoon is spent back on the big Manna Gums, a tribe in each tree, where continued and sporadic disturbance sends one group or another up into the air to slowly flutter, circle and eventually return to roost. They are the image of those wonderful tourist momentos; plastic domes encapsulating your favourite destination, that silently float fake snow through the water when you shake them.

It is now early Spring, a week after the 1994 equinox. The dry conditions inland have begun to bring interesting visitors & extended the stay of migrating regulars such as the big mob of Ibis (Sacred & Staw-necked, at least two hundred birds who have been at Glynns from early Winter).

The Ibis mobs' favourite overnight roosts are the massive Manna Gums overlooking the River in the south-west corner of Glynns. Previously the favourite roost of the Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, who are so severely crest-fallen they have barely raised a scrawk since the Ibis moved them on.

The occupation of the site by the Ibis could not be in more contrast with the previous reign of the White Cookies. The Ibis return to their roosts in Glynns in the dusking early evening, after a full days honest slog in the wet meadows & swamps feeding on insects. None of this turning up mid-afternoon like larrakin Cookies full of bragging wind. The Ibis stream into Glynns with meticulously ordered flight patterns, awesome, immaculate lines that enthralled Pharaohs & still generate an aura of timeless antiquity. Demur honking of the Ibis is faintly heard on the breezes, from a distance it can barely be heard at all.

The Ibis flight path usually follows the River as they return from the extensive Billabong & Wetland system of the Yarra Flats (Heidelberg and Ivanhoe), downstream. As their stay lengthens due to dry inland conditions, the Ibis come from more disparate directions, Kangaroo Ground, Eltham and Pantom Hills.

Finally, one night in late October, as the Ibis arrivals at Glynns started to become more irregular, they showed their dry sense of humour when a few late arrivals to the roost parodied the Trick Cocky Troupe by doing a couple of 'upside-downers' coming in to land. It must have kept the whole Ibis mob in quiet, honking laughter all night each time they thought of it. The White Cookies detested them. Disgruntled, the White Cookies kept to

the Eastern end of Glynns and bided their time, Summer had to come and the Ibis had to eventually leave.

Do the Cookies pose a management problem due to their dominating numbers? Are they a positive for Park management or do they threaten other wildlife and the health and integrity of the remnant Bushlands? They have been observed locally harassing Wedge-tail Eagles, Whistling Kites and of course the Yellow tailed Black Cockatoos. Could they be over-harvesting local Eucalypt and other remnant Bushland seed?

The overclearing for agriculture that has previously occurred on Glynns (and the surrounding residential areas) and the resulting unbalanced ecosystem, has created an ideal situation for the explosion of their numbers to occur. The Cookies, who prefer open lightly forested habitats, are behaving like classic colonizers taking advantage of a vacuum, a niche that must be filled. Colonisers invade in waves of succession, just as Cassinias, Wattles and Wallaby grasses do in some cases in the plant world. Niches that get filled and then succeeded by another assemblage of organisms as conditions change due to the affects of the colonizers' life cycles. This is what we are observing, a vital stage in the initial phase in the restoration of the urban Wilderness. As the revegetation fills out and other Fauna find Glynns, it will become less attractive habitat to the White Cookies who will be less able to dominate the site.

Once the Glynns Wetlands becomes a suitable site for the Ibis to breed they may have a resident mob who will make it even more uncomfortable for the White Cookies. The Cocky mob may have helped establish a small group of Long-billed Corellas who have been in residence for the past years. Even a cage-escaped Major Mitchell Cockatoo flew with the Cookies a few years ago, until apparently falling prey to the Whistling Kites who also use Glynns.

What is apparent is that when we also consider the recruitment and generation of other Wildlife within Glynns, the power that 'Sanctuary Areas' have in restoring the ecology, is immense and of the greatest importance to the Urban Wilderness.

Their high numbers may be antagonising the local Human community. Damage that they can do to fruit and nut trees and in some cases, to timbers on houses and the racket they make, can make them unpopular and an unwelcome fauna for some parts of the local Human community. Park management may be seen as not being fair and reasonable managers of Wildlife to allow numbers to become greater and may get the local community offside. However it is up to Park Management to continue the educative process in the

manner that the ParkCare programme formalised and persuade those parts of the Community who may be negatively inclined that we all have to make allowances in the process of environmental reconciliation. There have not been many recordings of the white form of the Grey Goshawk in the middle Yarra region. It is an uncommon and mysterious visitor/vagrant, probably coming in during hard times elsewhere and this, 1994, was the year for it.

The white form of the Grey Goshawk (the other form is, surprisingly, very grey) is the dominant form of the bird around the coast of Victoria, in Tasmania and over in the Kimberley region. One of the preferred habitats of the White Goshawk is heavily timbered edges of water courses. The bird is reputedly a particularly powerful, highly skilled hunter and I caught sight of it near the Annulus Billabong (Yarra Flats Park, Ivanhoe) in April, at first thinking it to be a White Cookie because of the size of its wings.

A good view of it as it sat calmly whilst we scrutinised its details, confirmed it as the white form of the Grey Goshawk, probably a female which is the larger of the sexes.

Observations of probably the same bird or perhaps its partner, were made in Warrandyte and on the Yarra Flats during Winter and a later Springtime observation of the bird calling from the large Sugar Gum that rises above the canopy on the crest of the Glynns hill.

The white form of the Grey Goshawk was recorded at Glynns around the summer sol-

stice of 1994 and there is speculation that it may be breeding locally. Would it breed so far from its territory? Would it take up permanent residence? Glynns certainly provides opportunities that make it attractive for the Goshawk to stay. They have been known to fly with flocks of White Cookies, using them as camouflage to take smaller birds who haven't noticed the slightly different bird in the flock. The mix of open grassy areas, regenerating slopes, dry sclerophyll hill country and the Riparian forest, River and Wetlands gener-

ates a wide variety of prey and habitat. It is these qualities that create biological opportunity and give importance to an area such as Glynns, especially in a regional context, providing refuge in times of environmental stress in other parts of the State.

It is the thrill of seeing the rare white bird finding and using these resources that is a reward for all the planning and work needed to restore the urban wilderness. It is a benchmark of the success of the Park vision to record a rare white bird as part of the fauna.



VIP Program



'Caring through involvement'



Nigel Caswell and Andrew Grayston present Hyong Nguyen with her graduation certificate for the VIP program

In November 1994, Melbourne Parks and Waterways launched the Volunteer In Parks (VIP) Program. The program was developed after examining other volunteer programs in Australia and overseas and taking the best elements of these to put together a world class program.

The VIP program is a customer focused program aiming to increase the level of customer service provided to park customers. This complements the valuable work of park Friends groups and community groups who already contribute many valuable hours of voluntary work in environmental projects.

To ensure that volunteers have the skills and knowledge of Melbourne Parks and Waterways a nationally accredited training course was developed with William Angliss College. This course will be recognised as a qualification when volunteers seek paid employment and is something that MPW gives to volunteers in return for their commitment.

In March of this year the Minister for Conservation and Environment, Mark Birrell, presented the first group of 24 volunteers with their certificate from William Angliss College and on July 11 the second group of 48 volunteers graduated from the training course.

The program is coordinated corporately by Andrew Graystone and each park has a volunteer supervisor who works with volunteers developing projects and working rosters. Typical projects that VIP's are working on include staffing visitor centers, developing Park Notes and Park News sheets, preparing self guided trail information and leading small groups of people on park tours.

The next recruitment of VIP's will take place in October this year.

For more information about the VIP Program please contact Andrew Graystone on 816 7015.

WHAT'S ON

Summary Of Events Coming Up In Parks & Waterways

HOTLINE 816 70 70

August

13	Dawn Walk	Cardinia Reservoir Park	Earth Encounters (03) 9558 1434
16	Night walks	Horseshoe Bend Farm	Envirotechniques (03) 9439 9599
17-18	Daffodil Show	Nat. Rhododendron Gardens	(03) 9751 1980
17	Possum Prowl	Braeside Park	Earth Encounters (03) 9558 1434
18	Campfire Night	Braeside Park	Earth Encounters (03) 9558 1434
19	Forest Bike Ride	Badger Weir Park	Dennis Nation (059) 62 3719
20	Weed Eradication with Friends	Truganina Swamp	Judy Hindle (03) 9398 4402 -
	Open Day - Country Fair	Horseshoe Bend Farm	Carl Bennett (03) 9336 3911
23	Possum Prowl	Jells Park	Earth Encounters (03) 9558 1434
30	Horticulture and History Tour	Werribee Park	Susan Bridekirk (03) 9741 2444
31	Night Walks	Westerfolds Park	Envirotechniques (03) 9 439 9599

September

1	Spring Planting Festival Launch	Westgate Park	Adrienne Smith (03) 9654 1800
	Wattle Day	Wattle Park	Nicole Board (03) 9808 2504
3	Fathers Day Special	Nat. Rhododendron Gardens	(03) 9751 1980
10	Spring Planting/Sausage Sizzle	Point Cook	Jo Davies (03) 9395 1132
17-18	Daffodil Show	Nat. Rhododendron Gardens	(03) 9751 1980
17	Open Day	Horseshoe Bend Farm	Carl Bennett (03) 9336 3911
	Tree Planting	Truganina Swamp	Judy Hindle (03) 9398 4402
23	Emergency Week Activities	Badger Weir Park	Dennis Nation (059) 62 3719

October

7-8	Azalea & Camelia Show	Nat. Rhododendron Gardens	(03) 9751 1980
15	Open Day	Horseshoe Bend Farm	Carl Bennett (03) 9336 3911
	Parks Week '95 Launch	TBA	Annie Volkerking (03) 816 7008
16-22	Parks Week '95	TBA	Annie Volkerking (03) 816 7008
20-27	'Palette Pab' Art Exhibition	Wattle Park	Nicole Board (03) 9808 2504
22	Spring Planting Festival	Candlebark Park (Mel 33G1)	Denine Moloney (03) 9846 4499
	Cultural Day	Wattle Park	Nicole Board (03) 9808 2504



PEOPLE'S DAY AT THE PARK

22 October 1995

*Return to Albert Park for a day of fun and activity and view the improvements to the Park
The Herald and Weekly Times and Shannons Classic Cars have come together with MPW to create a very special day*

VicHealth/Herald Sun Bike Tour Finale
Ride with the stars criterion
Largest static display of classic cars in Australia

Tethered hot air balloon rides
Art show, Army Band, and school bands
Enquiries: Marie Cox (03) 9816 6924

SEND ALL INFORMATION FOR THE EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES
CALENDAR TO MARK RYAN BY FAX 9816 7099 OR EMAIL.