

The Glenfern

The Official Newsletter of Friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands Inc.

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KOOKABURRAS THRIVE IN GLENFERN

Kookaburras are one of the most recognisable birds around eastern Australia. They are often seen in Glenfern. Their laughing call can frequently be heard even if you do not spot them. They are there all year round. Glenfern provides an ideal home for Kookaburras. There are suitable trees and the reserve provides enough insects, worms and small mammals, frogs and birds for them to prey on. Small prey is eaten whole, but larger prey is killed by repeatedly bashing it against the ground or tree branch.

The older trees along Ferny Creek have many natural hollows that are great nest sites for our many native birds. In spring, we discovered a nesting hollow being used by a family of Kookaburras, close to Ferny Creek, opposite Forest Park Reserve. During October and November, the whole Kookaburra family was busy feeding young. The adults



were observed coming and going about every 5 to 15 minutes. The extended family support the feeding task, including offspring of the previous one to two years, who act as 'helpers' during the breeding season. Every bird in the group shares all parenting duties – what a wonderful system.

Red Stringybarks make a comeback

The photo shows a Kookaburra flying away from the nest, the entry to the hollow is hidden by the bird's tail.

As part our reserve rehabilitation and diversity program Red Stringybark (*Eucalyptus macrorhyncha*) trees have been reintroduced into the Glenfern reserve.

Glenfern volunteers were out and about on a damp morning in September 2017 to plant

these Red Stringybark trees. This variety of eucalypt was previously known to exist in Glenfern, but has been lost for an unknown reason. Some very good specimens can be seen nearby in Forest Park Reserve and on neighbouring properties near that small reserve. Historically the Red Stringybark was common enough around Upwey, in our reserves, backyards and on our roadsides too. The plantings, just a couple of dozen, can be seen in the general area at the high end of Hill Track. The tree prefers a higher and well drained position. Red Stringybarks are available from the Southern Dandenongs Community Nursery. They have been grown from locally collected seed. Red Stringybark flowers are especially attractive to birds and yield a tasty honey.



Linda Fullagar planting a seedling

BREAK UP PICNIC AND NIGHT WALK

The end of year for the Glenfern Valley Bushlands Friends' group involved an enjoyable evening picnic at the amphitheatre in the old quarry. As evening fell the group set off on a walk along Wildflower track down to the creek and then along towards the council depot and then back up to the main car park.

The weather was perfect and the participants were rewarded with many wildlife sightings.

These included a powerful owl (pictured on page two), a sugar glider and many ringtail possums. Anne managed to capture some beautiful shots of the sugar glider picture in this article. It was a rewarding experience for all participants. The excitement of the young walkers and their enthusiastic torch work at wildlife spotting was greatly appreciated.



friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands Inc.

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PRESIDENTS REPORT

The Friends have worked on our much loved Glenfern project for 16 years and I believe we have completed one of the best years yet. Our enduring task has been "To conserve and enhance the diversity of native flora and fauna of the Glenfern Valley Bushlands while preserving community access and encouraging education and compatible uses for the enjoyment of current and future generations." I can report that in the last 12 months we have achieved that in spades.

I would like mention just a few of the highlights, in no particular order

- Glenfern has removed more Sweet Pittosporum last year than on any other year.
- Glenfern had completely overhauled Forest Park Reserve.
- Glenfern has hosted our largest yet student educational program.
- Glenfern has installed nest boxes for the first time.
- Glenfern has worked on a neighbouring property for the first time.
- Our membership is strong and increasing— around 110 members.
- Our financial position is very secure.
- Our teamwork is fantastic, and our knowledge and know-how continues to grow.
- We are a strong social group, and finally,
- Glenfern has never looked so good.

We still have our challenges ahead. We, the long term members know we must eventually find a new and younger group to take Glenfern forward for the decades ahead.

There are some organisations and special people that we, the Committee, would like to thank. UniPrint Pty Ltd prints our Newsletter for free — it has made our Newsletter an outstanding part of our work. Cr Noel Cliff has been a true believer in our project, and we thank him for that. We thank Yarra Ranges Council, and in particular Gavin Prentice, Jen Ellinson and Steve Feather for their ongoing support. The Upwey CFA has been a steadfast supporter of our work. Melbourne Water continues to be a generous sponsor of the reserve. In the last 12 months we worked closely with the Port Phillip and Westernport CMA on pittosporum removal. We thank also StopPitt for their support of the work on Forest Park Reserve. We especially thank all our volunteers, members and the local supporters for their valuable time, skills, enthusiasm, donations and loyalty.

I would particularly like to recognise our Committee who carry out our administration. The Newsletter, Memberships, Secretary, Treasurer, Working bee coordination, Public Officer, Website, minutes, weed maps, Website, first aid, talks, photographs, environmental volunteering, fantastic morning teas — it is a very long list of activities. The many tasks done by the Committee all deserve our special thanks. I thank Andrew and Rory for being Vice Presidents and for keeping me on track. I would also like to thank Richard Homersham for his contribution to Glenfern over many years; Richard is standing down from the Committee, but will be staying on as a member.

Glenfern is a great team. Our Bushlands will always be a source of delight.

- David Moncrief....report from the October AGM



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GLENFERN VALLEY BUSHLANDS: A VITAL COG IN YOUTH EDUCATION...

Our contributions to environmental education are continuing to grow. Last year the Glenfern Valley Reserve provided a venue for local Fairhills High students and the first year international students from Melbourne University's Trinity College. On September 18th the Fairhills students (pictured) experienced an afternoon of exploring of the reserve while also making contribution to the maintenance of the reserve by spreading some mulch where needed.

Trinity College's international students have been visiting the reserve for many years now and the response from the teachers and students is always extremely positive. Two different groups visited the reserve in



2017; One in May (140 students visited and it involved the volunteers for a whole day - full report was presented in the last newsletter) and the other in late October. These visits are always an eye opener for both the students and the volunteers. The students hail from many countries including China, Malaysia, Taiwan, South America and Africa and while language and spelling of our flora and fauna can be a challenge, it is always pleasing to see the excitement and wonder the students display as they explore the reserve.



SOME ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS IN GLENFERN VALLEY BUSHLANDS...

SWAMP RATS



There are plenty in Glenfern Reserve – but rarely seen. Glenfern Valley Bushlands is an important habitat for Swamp Rats as they are only found in areas of native vegetation and avoid areas of human

habitation. Swamp rats are native to Australia and have been here for about a million years. Sadly, this little fellow was found dead – not sure of the cause.

THE BOGONG MOTH????

Is it or isn't it? This image of a moth was taken during the night walk at the end of last year.

It was a big moth and was a speckled grey brown in colour and approximately 5cm in length. After checking out the Australian Museum site it seemed to fit the criteria.

The Bogong Moth belongs to the Noctuidae family and its larvae are known as Black Cutworms.

It is native to Australia and it derives its name from the Bogong High Plains where, as an adult moth, it congregates in large numbers over the summer months. In a bumper year the moths have been known to invade built up areas and create problems with air-conditioners and sports grounds especially during night games as, with all moths, they are attracted to lights.

An adult sized moth grows to around 5cm in length. It can be found throughout southern Australia including Tasmania. During the summer months the moth is dormant and survives on its fat reserves. Its larvae cannot tolerate cold conditions so the moth heads north to breed and this can be an issue for farmers as the cutworms caterpillars like to feed on crops. Wide leaf plants in inland regions are their favourite food.

The adult moth was an important source of protein for the aborigines. They would roast the moths then mash them into 'moth meat'. Apparently the cooked moths have a nutty flavour.



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WORKING BEE DIARY

FEBRUARY-JULY 2018

- Sunday February 18th - Area 9
- Saturday March 17th - Area 7
- Sunday April 22nd - Area 13
- Saturday May 19th - Areas 4 & 5
- Sunday June 17th - Areas 2 & 12
- Saturday July 21st - Area 6

Meet at the central car park, Glenfern Road, Upwey
Melway Map 74 G10

9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (Morning Tea 11-ish)
Members, Committee and interested supporters meet on-site to take part in weeding, planting & talks about indigenous plants, animals & weed ID. Everyone is welcome. Bring a water bottle and depending on the weather, a hat or wet weather gear. Please wear long pants and sensible shoes/boots. In the event of a Fire Ban or inclement weather the working bee will be cancelled.

DETAILS OF EACH WORKING BEE CAN BE
FOUND ON THE WEB SITE
AND FACEBOOK.



By being a financial member of Friends of Glenfern Valley Bushlands, you enable the group to gain valuable Funding Grants to finance works in the reserve.

If you would like to become a financial member, please download the membership form from our website at:

www.glenfernvalleybushlands.org.au

MEMBERSHIP IS ONLY:

\$5 Concession, \$10 Individual, \$15 Family or
\$50 for a business sponsor.

Three year memberships and now also available.

REFERENCE LIBRARY FOR MEMBERS

The Friends group has a range of books and articles that are available for borrowing. The list is available on the website with details about how to contact Luke and borrow items.

CORPORATE SPONSORS

Uniprint Pty Ltd

419 Riversdale Road, Hawthorn East VIC 3123

Printer of this newsletter

Call (03) 9882 4905 for all your printing needs.

NATIVE VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

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Photos:

David Moncrieff, Anne Comer, Linda Fullagar
and Sharon Twining.

Visit our Facebook page:

For up-to-date information & befriend us!

*We are troubled by the amount of
Rubbish being dumped on the
perimeter of the reserve recently*

PLEASE

Report rubbish dumping to:

Shire of Yarra Ranges

Ph: 1300 368 333

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