

# Birrarrung



**March to May 2021**

Issue 1/2021

## **Newsletter of the Friends of the Yarra Valley Parks**

Incorporating Manningham Conservation Society

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See the web-site for previous newsletters, and any updates to activities.

If you no longer wish to receive a printed newsletter please email us and we'll send your newsletter by email.

## **ACTIVITIES – all welcome**

Sunday Activities - **4th Sunday of the Month, 10 am to 12 Noon**, March to November.

### **WHAT TO BRING:**

**Covid-19 measures:** *We prefer that you sign in for each activity on the Parkconnect website <https://www.parkconnect.vic.gov.au/> Morning tea will **not** be provided – please bring your own. To minimise sharing of tools, please bring your own if you can. Bring your own gloves. Some tools can be provided and sanitiser will be available. Bring a mask and wear it if distancing cannot be maintained.*

*You will need old clothes and sturdy shoes, gardening gloves, a parka, or hat and sunscreen, and a water bottle. You may also like to bring insect repellent.*

*You don't have to stay for the entire session - even an hour of your time would make a valuable contribution to the Yarra Valley Park environment.*

**Sunday 28 March - Pettys Orchard, Homestead Rd. Templestowe** (Mel 22 B12) 10 am to 12 noon  
Turn right into Homestead Rd. (Don't go into the cafe car park.) Park near the Friends sign. Maintenance around previous plantings. Bring a mattock or other tool if you have one for weeding around the plants.

**Sunday 25 April - Martins Lane, Viewbank** (Mel 20 J10) 10 am to 12 Noon  
Drive past the east end of Martins Lane, Viewbank, into an informal car park next to the planting site. Maintenance of previous planting near the Plenty River. Bring a mattock or other tool if you have one for weeding around the plants. Long grass, so wear long pants.

**Sunday 23 May - Murundaka Park, Lower Plenty** (Mel 32 K2) 10 am to 12 Noon  
Follow Cleveland Ave all the way around past the Rosanna Golf Club (Mel 32 K2). Park near the Friends sign in Cleveland Ave. Walk through the nearby gate and follow additional signs down to the site. Maintenance of previous work. Bring a mattock or other tool if you have one for weeding around the plants.

**Committee** meetings are usually **4th** Thursday at 7.30 pm in the Meeting Room at Westerfolds Park (Mel 33 F1). Next meetings are Thursdays: 25 March, 22 April, 27 May.

## March 28 activity at Pettys Orchard

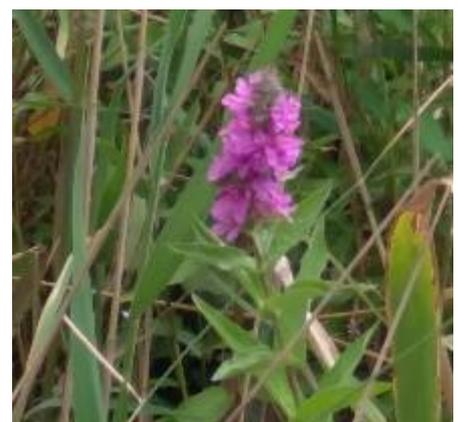


Working beside the lovely *Riverglen* wetland beside Pettys orchard, we will confront the quandary of when to take the guards off the sheoaks we planted. The guards are clearly restricting the growth of lower branches, but that may be preferable to making them available for wallaby food. What do you think?

If we finish maintaining the guards early, we may be able remove some of the dozens of ugly weed mats from trees put in more than 30 years ago.



**On 23 May we will be at Murundaka.** During 2020, water filled Murundaka Swamp to a level not seen for many years. The indigenous purple loosestrife was flowering in March 2021.



## TreeTops Adventure Park

It seems that approvals are nearing conclusion for this development at Yarra Flats just south of the Banksia Street bridge (Mel 32 C6).

From the proponent's publicity (Ecoline Pty Ltd):

'TreeTops offers self-guided high-rope courses, that involve climbing through challenging obstacles such as rope-ladders, wobbly bridges, tunnels and cargo-nets all interspersed with flying foxes (zip-lines). The courses are open to a wide age range from 3 years old to the young at heart. All courses increase in difficulty as participants progress through the various levels. All the action takes place in the trees so there is no requirement for any area to be closed off to the general public. Outside of operating hours the access ladders to the courses are not accessible.

The activities will be operated under a Lease from Parks Victoria, in line with the planning conditions applied by Banyule City Council.

The new adventure park will have minimal impact on the area.

- Our structures (courses and offices) are temporary and will leave no footprint once removed. They are designed to integrate into the forest.
- The design of our activities is based on external assessments and recommendations from arborists and ecologists and strictly controlled by Parks Victoria.
- No trees are removed, minimal undergrowth is trimmed, and branches are only removed when dangerous to the public.
- Existing pathways are used & maintained.
- A bush regeneration plan is developed to restore indigenous species to the site and weeds are progressively removed.
- The toilet block currently locked, will be renovated and open for use during operating hours.
- The existing restricted carpark and road will be restored.
- Families who had never visited Yarra Flats will be provided with the opportunity to enjoy this beautiful area.'

The Friends objected to this development on principle – we believe that precious public open space should not be alienated for private use. We also fear that the trees on the site, some red gums hundreds of years old, will be put at risk. The wildlife corridor along the Yarra River, already squeezed here by the Banksia Street bridge, will be made less viable by this development.

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## Good news for the environment

Melbourne Water will soon submit a planning permit application to develop a new solar farm in close proximity to the Winneke Water Treatment Plant in Christmas Hills near the Sugarloaf Reservoir. Pending planning approval, the proposed solar farm is planned to generate renewable electricity to help meet the plant's power needs.

From

[https://www.melbournewater.com.au/building-and-works/projects/solar-farm-winneke-treatment-plant:](https://www.melbournewater.com.au/building-and-works/projects/solar-farm-winneke-treatment-plant)

'Melbourne Water is committed to reducing our net carbon emissions to 50% of baseline levels by 2025 and examining a pathway to zero by 2030. Establishing the proposed onsite solar farm to help power Winneke Treatment Plant is a practical way to cut our greenhouse gas emissions and tackle climate change.

A solar farm designed to help power the Eastern Treatment Plant in Carrum Downs has recently been approved, with construction due to commence in early 2021.

The proposed solar farm at Christmas Hills and the newly-approved farm at Carrum Downs are initiatives to help meet our ambitious emissions reduction goal, alongside other projects including hydro and biogas power stations and transitioning our car fleet to zero-emissions vehicles.'

## Friends of Westerfolds Manor

This new group has recently formed with the aim of looking after the surroundings of the Manor. Ranger Lauren Shearman is supporting their efforts. Three of us joined with them on 7 March and did some weeding and mulching. Our long-standing member Pat Grey has been working here for several years, and is very glad to have much-needed extra help. You can contact the group via [friendsofwesterfoldsmanor@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofwesterfoldsmanor@gmail.com). Or keep an eye on our website for further activities.



Photo: Shaun Ruigrok

## 'City Nature Challenge'

'In 2021, eight Councils in Eastern Melbourne (Boroondara, Greater Dandenong, Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Monash, Stonnington and Whitehorse) will join forces to participate in the City Nature Challenge for the first time! We'll compete with cities from around the world by taking pictures of wild plants and animals between the 30th April to the 3rd May 2021 using iNaturalist. Let's show the world the incredible biodiversity of Melbourne's East.

During the 4-day window of this challenge, snap a photo of a plant or animal and upload it to iNaturalist making sure to include the location! The observations will automatically be pooled to this project so that we can compete with participants from cities all over the world!

Friends of the Yarra Valley Parks will be hosting an event on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> May 10 am Westerfolds Park, Templestowe. After entering the park from Fitzsimons Lane, veer right immediately, then turn left at a roundabout, and follow signs to Manna Gum car park. It is late autumn, so if we wander for an hour or so, we should see some fungi, mosses and lichens, as well as invertebrates – spiders, beetles etc. Check our website closer to the date for how to book in.

More information on the challenge can be found here: <http://citynaturechallenge.org/participate/>

### Corrections:

Some of the plants pictured in *Birrarrung* of October 2020 are wrongly named:

'*Pimelea humilis*' is actually a different species of *Pimelea*.

New Holland daisy '*Vittadinia muelleri*' should be *Vittadinia cuneata*

Creamy candles *Stackhousia monogyna* should be *Stackhousia subterranea*

Thanks to Ranger Cam Beardsell for the corrections (Ed.)



Bonus photo for digital version:  
Australasian grebe at *Riverglen*,  
March 2021