

Birrarrung



June 2021

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Newsletter of the Friends of the Yarra Valley Parks

Incorporating Manningham Conservation Society

Website: YvFriends.org.au

Email: info@YvFriends.org.au

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/FOYVP>

President and Web: Clive Edington Ph. 0417-705-064

Treasurer and membership: Joy Hick

Newsletter editor: Graham Patterson Ph. 9432-0163

Activities – all welcome

WHAT TO BRING: *an expanded list so you can keep yourself safe from infection*

- Disposable gloves, hand sanitiser
- BYO drinks/thermos, cup, nibbles for morning tea at 12 noon. None of these will be supplied.
- Bring your favorite weeding tool if you have one and/or a hammer for stakes, knee pads if you need them. Some tools will be provided, with ways to disinfect them between uses.
- The usual old clothes and sturdy shoes, gardening gloves, a parka, or hat and sunscreen, insect repellent and a water bottle.

Sunday 27 June – Westerfolds Park grassland enclosure (Mel 33 F1) 10 am to 12 Noon

Planting and maintenance. Enter Westerfolds Park from Fitzsimons Lane, and then follow the signs to the Eucalypt Picnic Area, Red Stringybark carpark. Follow signs to the planting site.

Afterwards, you are invited to stay for a bbq/picnic to celebrate the 30th year of our group. BYO everything.

Sunday 25 July – Main Yarra Trail, west of Pettys Orchard (Mel 21 J11) 10 am to 12 Noon

Planting and maintenance. Park opposite 50 Homestead Rd, Eltham, (Mel 21 H11). (Enter via Hohnes Rd. which is accessed from a right turn immediately after the entry to Eltham Lower Park from Main Rd.) Cross the footbridge over the Yarra and turn left (east) onto the Main Yarra Trail, following signs about 500m to the planting site.

If you haven't done so already, please 'join' our group on the ParkConnect website

<https://www.parkconnect.vic.gov.au/Account/Login/Register>. This will save us from having to record your emergency contact details on the day:

1. Create your account, or log in with an existing account,
2. Go to menu items Volunteer > Search for Programs and Groups
3. Then put "Yarra" into the Group Name Box, and click Search.
4. Then click on "Friends of the Yarra Valley Parks"
5. You will see a description of this group and a "Join group" button.
6. Click "Join group" so you receive notifications of new or cancelled activities of this our group.

You will be able to sign in for the activities above when they go up on ParkConnect soon.

Please stay away If you, or anyone in your "household group" has had any fever or Covid-19 symptoms during the last 2 weeks, and/or has been identified as a 'close contact' in the last 2 weeks.

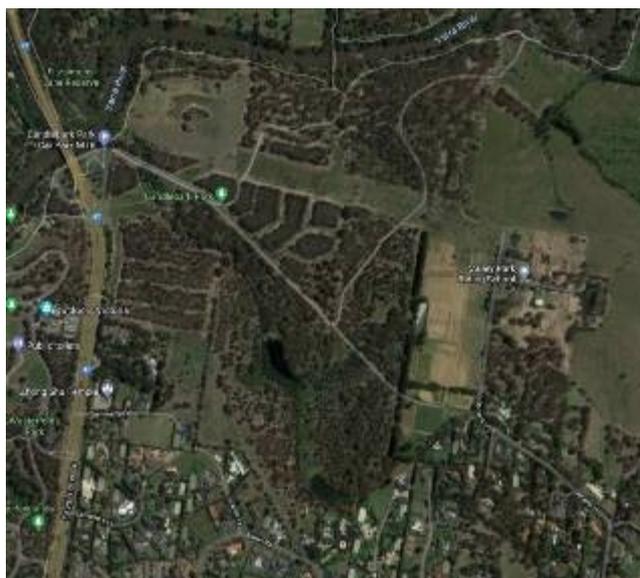
The Plant Nursery is being maintained at this time of low demand, but no extra help is needed at present. **Committee** meetings are usually 4th Thursday at 7.30 pm in the Meeting Room at Westerfolds.

A Walk in the Park

Glenn Jameson, former Parks ranger and life member of our group, returns to Candlebark. Glenn is currently a class facilitator for [Nature Stewards](#)



Candlebark Park 1958



Candlebark park 2021

Maps supplied by Alan Noy

I hadn't visited many sections of the Yarra Valley Park for a good many years and began to wonder how the Candlebark Park was going after having been almost completely revegetated over the past thirty years, mostly in the early days by Doncaster and Templestowe Conservation Society members. In particular I thought about the ex-Thomson property, part of Candlebark, which still maintained a large section of native grasses at the time we began revegetating. It was the most easterly section of the Candlebark Park taking in a north-south gully which had wetlands added to it during the late 1980s by Westerfolds staff under Patrick Fricker.

Many revegetated sites look just that, like revegetated sites- often characterized by even aged cohorts, military-type plant spacing and mostly lacking a broad and continued programme of revegetation which would aim to add a wider range of species over time, thereby increasing biodiversity.

Candlebark is interesting botanically, being an interface between two bioregions; the Gippsland Plains (on the Westerfolds side) and Highland Southern Falls (on the Petty's Orchard side). I visited the site with Alan Noy in late May this year and we found Candlebark Park and in particular the Thomson property, a spectacularly successful site with vigorous natural regeneration adding to the revegetation. Park staff, led by Cam Beardsell had erected a fenced plot to protect rare biodiversity with the park running to over 100 indigenous plant species. The direct seeding sites were well established providing habitat for a range of fauna. Nearby a family of white-winged choughs foraged amongst the trees as we walked up the Pipe Track.

The vegetation was so vigorous that I found it difficult to orientate myself to a section of land that I thought I knew very well – but it had been 24 years since I had been there. There was a very heavy cover in the middle storey of Chinese Scrub *Cassinia arcuata* [now called *Cassinia sifton*] across the whole site, a plant that is now thought to be an introduced native. Perhaps there needs to be a treatment of cultural burning, that is low level fire management to reduce this plant's abundance.

When we were planning to revegetate the site, we decided that it would be a good opportunity to have a monitoring protocol set up so that we could monitor the site's development under the revegetation program. We had the whole site gridded out into 50m X 50m blocks with a star picket marking the lower left/south east corner of each block. We engaged the botanist Damien Cook to assess and map the vegetation quality. Damien established and collected data from 12 quadrats, each 900 square meters, and in each quadrat recorded all vascular plant species and mosses that could be identified, and assigned a visually assessed cover/abundance scale from the modified Braun-Blanquet scale (Gullan 1978).

A Walk in the Park continued

Damien mapped most of Candlebark into one of four vegetation qualities:

GREEN: areas of indigenous vegetation where the native plant community's structure, species composition and diversity are intact, and which have a very low cover of weeds **75-100% INDIGENOUS**

BLUE: areas of indigenous vegetation where native plant community's species composition and diversity are comparatively intact, although there may be moderate infestation of weeds **50-75% INDIGENOUS**

ORANGE: areas of indigenous vegetation where a high cover of weeds has substantially reduced the diversity of indigenous vegetation **25-50% INDIGENOUS**

RED: Areas where the indigenous vegetation has been severely modified and weed invasion has displaced almost all indigenous species **0-24% INDIGENOUS.**

Needless to say, there were no green bits mapped, but the whole Park in this area has been improved substantially with the revegetation program that was implemented mostly by volunteers. Surely it is time to get a botanist, preferably Damien, to return and re-assess the vegetation quality so that we can learn the lessons of the project and hopefully celebrate the substantiated achievements of volunteers and staff in protecting and enhancing our Natural Heritage.

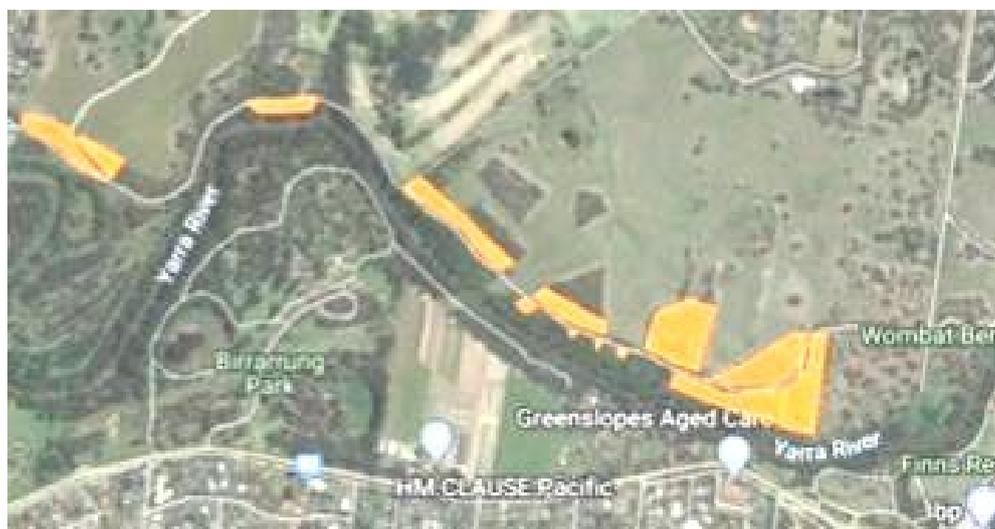
The revegetation on the Thomson property was so successful, partly due to the condition that the land was in when it passed over to the then Board of Works. The Thomson property, along with the Morrison property, were pieces of land that was managed partly for their intrinsic, conservation values by the families who owned them. They are an important legacy in the history of the Parklands along the Yarra valley.

Upcoming planting in the Park

The North East Link Project will plant 310 Studley Park Gums at the sites shown. These significant trees are a hybrid of the River Red Gum and Swamp Gum. Fencing to protect the plantings is already in place



Yarra Riverkeepers have funding to put in 2200 plants along the Main Yarra Trail west of Bonds Road. The sites (right) were revegetated decades ago, and are now dominated by eucalypts and wattles. The plan is to create an understorey of shrubs and smaller plants.



Yarra Riverkeepers continued

An event at Westerfolds planned to publicise the Yarra Riverkeepers projects had to be replaced by a web presentation. President of the Friends, Clive Edington, participated in the session and you can have a look at the recording at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kY8glDyuMSI>.

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Banyule Billabong filled

Heavy rain on the weekend of 12-13 June caused the Yarra to break its banks and fill Banyule Billabong (Mel 32 F3) – the first time this has happened naturally for years. Our 2017-18 planting site nearby is also under water. This could be good for some of the plants but lethal for others, depending on how long the water remains. If the bird hide built by the Friends on the Main Yarra Trail in 1992 had not been burnt down, you would have been able to use it again to observe water birds!



Planting site June 2021



Remains of bird hide June 2021

Friends of the Yarra Valley Parks Inc.



If undeliverable, please return to:
Friends of YVP
C/o Joy Hick
13 Haldane Road
ELTHAM VIC 3095