

The Understorey

Vol. 1, Issue 1, Winter 2013



A welcome message from Lorna Long

Hello to members both new and old and welcome to the Friends of the Porongurup Range Newsletter. We hope that this will be the beginning of a regular update on our activities as well as articles on various aspects of environmental heritage, sustainability and conservation.

As I write this greeting, sitting at my computer I am able to gaze on the beauty and majesty of the range for which I feel truly blessed. As the Friends of the Range we are honoured to be able to take a part in the care and protection of such a precious part of our environment.

As always the Friends continue to undertake weeding and restoration work in the National Heritage listed Porongurup National Park and its environs under the guidance of Lisa Braun who I know would welcome your help on the first Sunday of each month. The reward for this is usually a picnic lunch and a time to socialise with other members.

Our other major project is not only the care and maintenance of the Friends' Twin Creeks Conservation Reserve but also the redevelopment of the current buildings to make them habitable and available for various activities and events. This activity is being managed by Lucia Quearry. Speak with her if you are interested in this project.

Whilst members may not be drawn to sit on the Executive Committee I would encourage you to consider contributing to one of the various activities we undertake such as the work at Twin Creeks, Art in the Park, weeding and restoration, or social event planning. Extra hands and new ideas are always welcome.

My thanks go to Maggie Shanklin for getting this newsletter underway. It's gestation has been long but it promises to be a great way for us to stay in touch with all our members.

Lastly, I want to welcome Robin Surridge to the Executive Committee. Robin has agreed to take up the position of secretary and we are happy to have her on board.

I look forward to writing to you in the next and continuing newsletters. Should you have comments, issues you wish to raise or ideas to contribute please don't hesitate to contact me.

My best wishes to everyone,

Lorna Long (President)

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Dieback Workshop

A walk in the Park June 2013

A week in the Park in 1947

Saturday, 3 Aug 730 pm

Porongurup Snow Ball

Porongurup Hall

Sunday 4 August 9 to 12

Wattle Control

Bolganup & Porongurup Rd

(opp Caravan Park). Hand weed polygala and Sydney wattle and spot spray asparagus scandes. Picnic lunch Porongurup Shop Gardens.

Sunday 1st Sept 9 to 12

Twin Creeks Busy Bee

Spray gladiolas

Sunday 8 Sept 930 to 4 pm

Artists and

Aspiring young artists

Creativity, Inspiration, Discovery

Granite Skywalk picnic area

Porongurup National Park

A sense of a better place by Maggie Shanklin

The fragmentation between the Porongurup National Park and the Stirling Range made the acquisition of Twin Creeks a significant purchase in 2004.

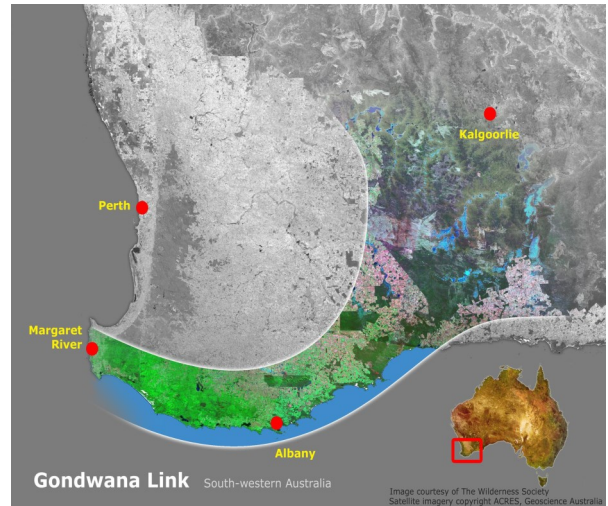
Along with Twin Creeks, corridors are being created and enhanced by Oyster Harbour Catchment Group's Ranges Link Project which is part of the greater Gondwana Link.

Therefore, when several Friends committee members were invited to an information evening hosted by Bush Heritage, we looked forward to the event. Held in the Kalyenup Studio at the Albany Entertainment Centre in May to promote awareness of Bush Heritage and the Gondwana Link as well as raise funds for a FitzStirling environmental centre. David Whitelaw, Executive Manager, Bush Heritage and Keith Bradby, Director, Gondwana Link, outlined the scope of the Gondwana Link project. Renowned plant conservation biologist Stephen Hopper's presentation "**Why biodiversity conservation in the FitzStirling matters**" reminded us that we are the custodians of a particularly significant biodiverse hotspot.

Bush Heritage Ecologist Angela Sanders and Landscape Manager Simon Smale described conservation activities on the Bush Heritage reserves in Gondwana Link.

The evening was informative and gave us the opportunity to reflect on how fortunate we are to live in this special part of the world supported by talented, knowledgeable people committed to preserving our natural heritage.

<http://www.bushheritage.org.au>



<http://www.gondwanalink.org>

Twin Creeks Report by Lucia Quearry

Down at Twin Creeks, Busy Bee activities will be scheduled this winter to include removing some gates and fences then installing some gates and fences! Another task is to form up a crew armed with nippers and handsaws to remove some of the regrowth on southern firebreaks.

Our biggest activity is still in the planning stage. At the last General Meeting we tabled the architect's drafts for renovation of the sheds. We are seeking comments from members, general and/or specific will be useful. A copy of the drawings can be viewed at the Porongurup Shop so folks can have a say as we work towards composing a grant for the renovation.

Our vision for the facility is to provide a venue for meetings, workshops and overnight accommodation space for visiting scientists and students. It will be a home for the Friends where we can store our gear, set up an office, create library and herbarium spaces; a place to allow study groups or individuals to take advantage of the valuable collection of information and photos which Ann Burchell passed on to the Friends. It will be our base.

Bob Debus visits Twin Creeks

The Chair of the National Wildlife Corridors Plan Advisory Group Mr Bob Debus AM visited Twin Creeks on Friday 21st June. Members of Gondwana Link and the Oyster Harbour Catchment Group joined members of Friends of the Porongurup Range for a BBQ Lunch. Mr Debus, in his report to the Hon Tony Burke MP, recommended that Gondwana Link be nominated as a good example of a major corridor in the proposed National Wildlife Corridors Plan. The Ranges Link and Twin Creeks Conservation Reserve are being considered for inclusion in the National Plan.

Mr Debus was greatly interested and impressed by the work that has been achieved by the various groups: land purchase and restoration, regional scale management of feral animals, weeds, fire, research, and conservation planning across a variety of tenures, as well as supporting the advocacy and rebuilding of Indigenous cultural networks.

The visit to Twin Creeks was part of a tour of Gondwana Link which included a visit to Peter Luscombe's Woogenellup conservation property, the Porongurup Weed Control Project, and the Stirling Range National Park.

Friends' President Lorna Long, Kelly O'Neill, Mark Waud, Peter Luscombe, Bob Debus, Leela Smith, and Judy Hunt, listening as Keith Bradby describes the success of the community effort in the Ranges Link and Twin Creeks.



Left to right: Judy O'Neill, Bob Debus, Peter Luscombe, Keith Bradby, Mark Waud, Klaus Braun

Front: Kelly O'Neill, Judy Hunt and Leela Smith

For information about the National Wildlife Corridors Plan:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/wildlife-corridors/publications/pubs/draft-wildlife-corridors-plan.pdf>

ART IN THE PARK & ART IN THE HALL 2013 by Judy O'Neill

Visitors, local, national and international came in their hundreds over the Easter weekend to stroll through the exhibition in the majestic Porongurup National Park as well as spend some time at the Art in the Porongurup Hall Bazaar.

Thanks to our major sponsors: Department of Communities who promote community involvement by recognizing each person matters and sponsoring events in which community members participate and contribute; and, Healthway (*Act Belong Commit*) who promote health in messages, in the environment and in healthy activities participation. Department of Communities and Healthway's mission statements were evident throughout the week with the support of the Friends and the Plantagenet community.

Congratulations to Merveena Reynolds, Kaye Louwen, Ange Willans, and all other volunteers for their creativity in transforming the Porongurup Hall. Works of art and quality crafted products were beautifully displayed to best advantage. It was evident that those who visited enjoyed their experience. As well as shopping for unique items, visitors stopped for light refreshments. Thank you to Susie Luscombe and Fiona Glen for their impressive efforts in organising, cooking and catering. Monday afternoon visitors enjoyed live music performed by Stolen Seeds, local duo Brenton James Kelly and Laura Wilder West.



Top left: Ray Drage, Touch of Grain, Mt Barker

Top right: Ceramic bowl by Barbara McFarlane

Bottom Left: Socks knitted by Susie Luscombe

Bottom right: Ceramic dragon by Lesley Hone

The pictures of the art work and art installations shown in this newsletter were photographed by Trevor Reardon, Mt Barker Community College. Thank you, Trevor, for an impressive photographic record for Art in the Park 2013.

ART IN PARK 2013

Drizzle didn't dampen the enthusiasm of the Art in Dark explorers who viewed the installations by torch light under the guidance of expert leaders. Viewed in this manner the most popular sculpture vote went to 'Forgotten Times' by Darrel Radcliffe of Albany. Sincere thanks to Scott Drummond as well as the Mt Trio family whose efforts helped make the evening a success.

Thanks to Lisa Braun and helpers, the Weed exhibit and Friends of the Porongurup Range display, information and advice were well received.

Without the creativity and efforts by the artists, none of this would have been possible. Many thanks to the artists who committed to producing interesting and thought-provoking art for the benefit of all of us.

Left: Judged Award—'Beach Time' by Jeremy Newman Right: Children's choice 'Cambodian Fantasy' by Tahlia Tyler



Left: People's Choice—First Prize 'Tim the Tool Man' by Lyndsay Horton

Right: Youth Section-First Prize "There was a Redback on the Toilet Seat" by Kieren Tyler

ART IN THE PARK — Creativity, Inspiration and Discovery

Sunday, 8 Sept 2013 from 9.30am-4pm Granite Skywalk picnic area, Porongurup National Park.

The Art in the Park committee, with support from the Department of Communities, invite artists and particularly aspiring young artists, to an exciting FREE day of creativity, inspiration and discovery. This is an opportunity not to be missed for anyone interested in exhibiting in Art in the Park 2014.

Contact Judy O'Neill at judykelly@westnet.com.au or phone 9853 1212 to register your interest.

Wattle control by Lisa Braun

Peter Steward, Bo Janmaat, Jacqui Purvis, Lucia Quearry, Garry Mulder, Noah Mulder, Kyron Mulder, Kelly and Judy O'Neill, Wal Anderson, Bev Stan-Bishop, Sanni ten Hengel, Juliet Albany, Greyson Codner, Kerry Young and Gordon Chester joined me for the May & June weeding sessions. The volunteers worked in the area above Mt Trio Wine in a section of the Park where weeds have not been controlled for 9 years. Outliers of Sydney and Silver wattles were found. The efforts further our aim to search the whole of the Wattle Hill area to eradicate introduced wattles and other invasive weeds. After the May session, Gill Graham hosted our lively group at Mt Trio Wine for wine, a variety of cheese, crackers and fruit. Thank you to Gill for extending warm Mt Trio hospitality to us.



Left: Looking for introduced wattles. **Right:** Following the June weeding session, Gordon Chester, Garry Mulder, Kerri Young, Lucia Quearry, Greyson Coder, Juliet Albany & Sanni ten Hengel enjoyed a well earned meal at Castle Rock BBQ area.

Dieback : a biological bulldozer

Friends' members Lisa & Klaus Braun, Lucia Quearry, David Williamson, Di Drummond, and Maggie Shanklin attended a Dieback Hygiene Green Card Workshop in May hosted by Green Skills and Southcoast Natural Resource Management. The workshop was presented by Katherine Sambrooks, coordinator for the Dieback Working Group, who described NRM hygiene management practices for Phytophthora (*Fy toff thor a*).

In 1959, there were 33 locations in Western Australia infested with dieback and it was believed that jarrah was the only plant affected. Currently, one million acres of public and private lands and over 40% of WA's native flora are affected. Many of the susceptible plants are found in the Southwest Australia eco-region and include jarrah, banksia, the grass tree and many flora in granite communities.

We were encouraged to develop and implement strategies to prevent the spread of dieback in national parks, reserves and bush areas on private properties. Taking precautions by cleaning footwear and vehicles before entering susceptible areas, cleaning tools used during weeding and revegetating to prevent infections, are but a few of the solutions to minimise the spread of dieback.

If you would like to learn more about this deadly disease, an excellent reference manual

Managing Phytophthora Dieback in Bushland: a guide for Landholders and Community Conservation Groups published by the Dieback Working Group www.dwg.org.au.

Additional reference: www.dieback.org.au

A walk in the park by Mike Thorn

On Saturday 15th of June, the weather gods conspired to bring the Porongurup community a perfect day for a walk in the Porongurup National Park. And what a walk it was! I long held a dream to introduce the locals to a virtually unknown part of the Park that is literally in my backyard.

After a hearty breakfast at the Porongurup Shop with much excited chattering and a surprise visit by *Baby Boomer* the darling joey being raised by Kevin and Kathy Collins, it was off to Millinup Estate Wines and Thorn's Mountain Retreats for the start of the walk.

The response and interest in this walk was huge with over 33 people turning up from far away as Bornholm and Albany. Group 1 lead by Mike Thorn went to Elephant Rocks to experience a disappearing act into a granite crack that envelopes you in rock and then on to the newly discovered rock face that bears an uncanny resemblance to an elephant even down to eyes, tusks, trunk and rear end! This was followed by a short climb to the first viewing lookout over the foothills to the full length of the Stirling Range.

Local teacher, Lois Hill, was a wealth of information on how the rock shows the age of the Porongurup to be over 1 billion years and why it was probably 30,000 feet high when formed. Fascinating!

As the first group made its way to the higher Cadet Crag, Peter Thorn lead the second group to amazing Mushroom Rock with its massive overhanging face and then onto Elephant Rocks.

The climb to the summit was challenging through untracked bush until we popped up onto the summit to stand in awe at the panorama before us. To the south, east and west the Porongurup Range shone in its ancient magnificence with the dramatic Twin Peaks standing tall across the huge valley. To the north the crystal clear line of the Stirling Range rose from the plain topped with fluffy cumulus clouds.

I was keen to show the group a local phenomenon I discovered only a few days earlier. After asking for total silence, I let out a blood curdling cooeee and we listened to the echo go all around the valley ending in a return call 5 seconds later! Then we all let out a group cooeee which had some in raptures. More cooeees followed.

Many stayed for the afternoon and waited on the summit as I brought up the intrepid from the first group. Wine, tea and lots of laughs followed after a leisurely walk back down and around the property.

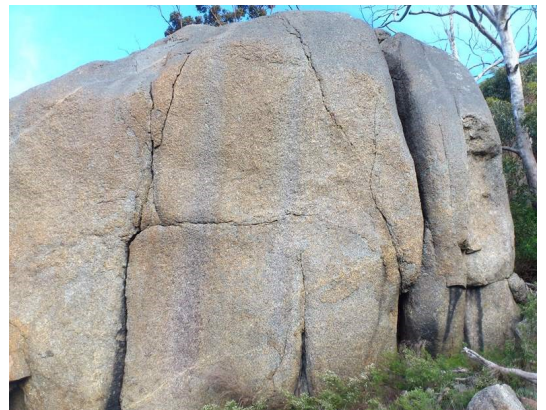
A compliment from Peter Form, an experienced local walker, is praise indeed! He felt it was the best ever local walk he had done. It was a dream come true for me to share this magic place with others.

Top right: Starting a walk on a glorious day

Second down: In between Elephant Rocks

Third down: Elephant Rocks

Bottom right: Mushroom Rock



Local legend left his heart in the Porongurup in 1947

Peter Thorn as told to Maggie Shanklin

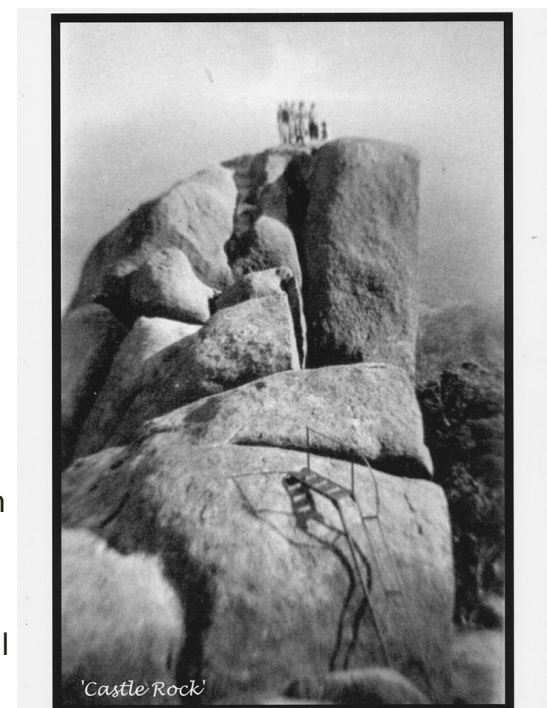
"With my first look at a panorama of the Stirling Range from the hill behind Karribank in 1947, I said to myself, this is the most beautiful place in the world. I knew from that moment that I would live in this part of the world one day" Peter Thorn recollected when I asked him about a photograph taken by Peter of his friend Neil Durstan balancing upside down on the circular rock at Nancy Peak.

I was curious to know what brought three young men to the Porongurup National Park in 1947. Athletically capable, Peter, Neil and George Redhead, all members of the Perth-based YMCA, were keen gymnasts. Yearning for adventure, they planned a week's return trip to the Porongurup Range to test their agility and display their prowess on the iconic granite rocks. After a 14-hour overnight journey from Perth to Mt Barker on the (misnamed) Albany Express they were welcome with a memorable cooked breakfast at the Mt Barker Railway Station diner. Afterward, a charabanc motor coach driven by Stewart Gibbons from Bolganup Road transported the travellers from the station to the Karribank Guest House. Well-established proprietors, the Faulkner family, had been welcoming guests to the Porongurup guest house since the 1920s. The Porongurup was a popular place for holidays for the cream of Perth society—it was like the Raj era of the British travelling to the Himalayas for clean mountain air.

"Our first full day, we climbed Mt Hassell (now called Toll Peak) in the Stirling Range followed by a superb picnic lunch. The remainder of our stay was spent exploring the Porongurup Range.

"At Castle Rock, I recall a flat metal staircase, a rocky walk, and I remember peering down a wide crevice which we had to jump over to reach the main peak. We climbed Devil's Slide which has just enough slope for rubber soled boots to grip and hang. We were fearless: rubber shoes, no gloves, no climbing gear. George & Neil climbed the massive eastern Twin Peak without ropes."

After a memorable, enjoyable and exhilarating first visit to the Porongurup, Peter said he was hooked and travelled to the area many times a year from then on. In fact, every Easter was spent with his friends at Bluff Knoll camping in an area in the valley well below the peak until in the early 1960s the bitumen road was made to the present outlook and the Knoll became too busy. Then they explored the eastern peaks of Ellen Peak and Pyungoorup and later onto the Mt Barrens in the Fitzgerald River National Park until age took over. In 1988, Peter & his late wife Lesley purchased a property in the Porongurup after a discussion about 'a sea change'. It was easy to convert the concept of 'sea' into 'mountain'. Peter claims the only way he will leave this paradise is in a box.



If you have a special memory or experience in the Porongurup Range, we would be delighted to hear from you.