



Berg
Mt Martha

Caring for the Balcombe Estuary Reserves

THE CREEK

Volume 20 No 2, April 2016

FAMILY DAY AT THE ESTUARY 2016



The Old Campground was teeming with young families on Sunday 28th February – about 500-600 people, we reckon, double the 2014 numbers. It was a fabulous day!

Everywhere there were kids doing things inspired by the creek and bushland – getting damp with waterbugs, bird watching from the jetty (the Spoonbills obliged us by turning up), making landscapes with sand and sticks and cones, creating critters from clay, or from cones and nuts, using gum leaves to print mini-books, potting up some plants...

And there were other great drawcards. Lots of kids had splendidly painted faces. There were long queues for drawing workshops with Terry Denton (of *The 65-Storey Treehouse*). Kids surrounded The Connies, with their yarns and swap cards. And lots more!

Aims achieved!

Our primary aim was to increase awareness and understanding of the value of our reserves, their indigenous flora and fauna, the creek and its water quality. This is difficult to measure, but the level of engagement would suggest we were very much on the right track.

We also wanted to increase awareness of BERG Mt Martha, and to boost our membership and our bank of active volunteers. We were delighted to sign up 19 new Family members, 8 of whom ticked various 'happy to volunteer' boxes.

Thanks to ...

Local organisations:

Bendigo Bank for \$1,000 and loan of marquees. **Bonaccorde** for lots of publicity – billboards and more. **Mornington Peninsula Shire** for \$1200 and Shire publications for our 'show bags'. **Bunnings Mornington** for 150 'show bags', loan of tables and marquees. **Melbourne Water** for Lego Smart City, Estuary Watch stand, and sponsoring 'The Connies'. **Balcombe Grammar** for loan of marquees and PA system. **Rotary** for loan of marquees.

For the activities:

Face painters Di Dyson & Helen Hughes; Leonie Kingsbury from Dromana potters; Terry Denton – drawing workshops; Anni Dowd – Making Mini Books; Judi Singleton – Paint your World; Jenny Mann, from Bunnings – Bush Craft and Plant Propagation; Tony O'Connor – Landscape Modelling; Gidja Walker

Burrow in the Bush; Jenny Harrison – Rising Moon Tai Chi; Susan Clark from BirdLife Mornington Peninsula – bird watching; John Inchley – Waterwatch. And, of course, the many other volunteers who contributed on the day.

And those who made it all happen!

Hundreds of CAG hours went into making the day happen – particular thanks to Barbara and Martin Thraves and Di Lewis for the bulk of this.

See next page for more photos

JUST ONCE IN 2016?

*From Graham Hubbard,
BERG Mt Martha President*

I have a dream – that all our members who are physically able will contribute to just one BERG Mt Martha event in 2016.

Among our almost 500 members we currently have 85 active volunteers. If we could boost this to, say, 200 – if 200 members contributed to just one event – one working bee, one Schools program, one Waterwatch, one CAG function, one sausage sizzle, one morning-tea baking, one Weedbusters, one grant writing, one letter-boxing – we would add hundreds of hours of contribution to our efforts.

(We understand some members are unable to contribute – all the more reason for the rest of us to share the work a little more.)

And if you did contribute to just one event, you might find how enjoyable it is! You might even want to do a bit more! But I'm asking if you could contribute just once, to show your active support for BERG MM's many activities to benefit our bushland reserves, our creek, our estuary, our birdlife and our community of Mt Martha.

Can you help by being an Active Volunteer – just once – this year?



Family Day at the Estuary, clockwise spiral from top left: Making mini-books with Anni Dowd; a mini-book; Cr Bev Colomb opens the event; Landscape modelling; face painting with Di Dyson; Terry Denton's workshop; Tai Chi; Roving MC David Keystone with a young admirer; Waterwatch; Bush Craft with Jenny Mann; Bird watching; Critters from Clay; a Connie with an audience; Terry Denton again.

Photos Richard Kirsner, Verity Mapp

THE SHIRE NURSERY

Sue Betheras reports

The Shire Nursery specialises in supplying indigenous plants propagated from locally sourced seed and cuttings for Shire works, community group projects and retail sale. All BERG MM's plants come from there, and the Nursery is an invaluable source of plants for local gardens.

On 24th February about 40 people from Friends Groups and Landcare Groups on the Mornington Peninsula gathered at the Nursery for a meeting and morning tea, with a tour of the propagation and seed storage facilities. Jock Macmillan and I were there from BERG Mt Martha.

It was an excellent opportunity for volunteers around the Peninsula to talk together and meet members of the Natural Systems Team, Shire Nursery staff and Shire Councillors.

There was lively discussion about ways to strengthen the connections between the Nursery and groups doing revegetation work, and many of us expressed strong interest in more training and knowledge-sharing opportunities for volunteers.

Propagating workshops

As a result, the Shire Nursery is offering four workshops for volunteers on the specialist art of collecting seed and propagating indigenous plants. All will be at The Briars on Thursdays, 10am-12pm:

April 28th: *Managing a Seed Bank – seed cleaning, storage, labelling.*

July 28th: *Propagation of Indigenous Plants by Cuttings – selecting cutting material, suitable growing media, cutting techniques.*

September 29th: *General Propagation Tips and Techniques – tubing up, pricking out, seed sowing techniques and treatments.*

December 1st: *Seed Collection from Indigenous Plants.*

Please contact Liz or Sue via info@berg.org.au if you would like to attend any of these workshops (places are limited).

FIELD NEWS

Field Officer Liz Barraclough reports

Sunday working-bees

In February we mulched and weeded along the revegetation strip and among the Swamp Melaleuca on the western side of Hopetoun Creek. The plants we put in last spring had, somewhat to our surprise, survived this prolonged and hot dry period.

We had a good turn up and enjoyed a delicious morning-tea, thanks to Treena Whitford – even a choice of chocolate or orange cake – or both!



Mulch movers (above) at the February working bee, and (below) removing Polygala at the March working bee Photos Angela Kirsner



In March we removed woody weeds – vast quantities of Polygala and Pittosporum – at the top of the area dubbed ‘the Rabbit Paddock’, at the end of the path from Village Close. It is part of our ‘in kind’ contribution to work under our grant from the Port Phillip & Westernport Catchment Management Authority, to restore the Grassy Woodland vegetation in this area. There are already a number of Eucalypts providing an overstorey, and we were delighted to uncover patches of *Gabnia*.

It is an exciting project, as our reserves contain little Grassy Woodland (the other major area is on the slopes below the Citation Ovals). With the dense infestations of weeds removed, and some

planting to supplement natural regeneration, the site’s habitat value will, over time, increase greatly, though we will need more grant funding for follow-up, maintenance and monitoring over years. The site adjoins our Melbourne Water grant site down the hill, which covers the riparian section of Swamp Scrub on lower reaches of Hopetoun Creek above Ferrero ovals.

(The PPWCMA Grant has also covered the cost of two editions of *The Creek*.)

And thanks to Cate Clarke for the March morning-tea with an extra touch – gingerbread Easter bunnies!



These bunnies are not from the Rabbit Paddock...

Friday Morning Group

Back in action after summer, the group has been weeding, particularly around planted grasses and sedges, in the once Tradescantia-infested patch on the north bank in the area we have dubbed ‘The Jaw’ (the creek does a sharp bend here, look at its shape on a map!). Naturelinks will follow up with selective light spraying. The aim is to leave space for natural regeneration.

Grants/Projects

We have received our regular Memorandum of Understanding grant from the Shire, \$3000 this year. This is for ongoing and selected works not covered by other grants. We have identified a number of sites for this year: around Mirang Ave, the bird hide, the Uralla Road stormwater pipe and the Greenfield Way Easement, with some funds reserved for miscellaneous works.

The Green Army will be with us again this year. The Shire has applied for and gained more teams and BERG MM will be able to engage two of these, one coastal and one wetland/riparian group, between July 2016 and June 2017.

Clean Up Australia Day

As always, there was lots of rubbish, but we had a disappointing turn-up – only 20 adults and 8 children from the whole of Mt Martha. BERG MM coordinated the event with the Mt Martha Yacht and Lifesaving clubs. Many thanks to Rob Debenham, Commodore of the Yacht Club, who set up and supervised registration and directed proceedings all morning.

The Birdrock Ave Group (under Di Lewis’s leadership) again put us to shame, with 23 volunteers from just their small area.



Above: Liz with Greg Hunt MP and three of her grandsons Sachin, Nikhil & Kirin Jhamb Photo courtesy Greg Hunt’s office. Below: Our pile of rubbish Photo Liz Barraclough



TUESDAY GROUP

Jenny Selby reports

In February we attacked the woody weeds at the entrance to the newly reconstructed tennis courts on Watson Road. In an excellent morning’s work, we removed huge quantities of Polygala and Pittosporum, to give some breathing space to the indigenous understorey. It has vastly improved the entrance to the courts.

In March there was more woody weeding and ‘frilling’ of larger weed trees on the lower Bunyip track. We also attacked re-emerging weed grasses and blackberry.

SCHOOLS ENVIRONMENT WEEK

From Jenny Selby

Waterbugs, AKA macro-invertebrates, once again held children's attention at this year's Mornington Peninsula Schools Environment Week, held in early March at The Briars.

John Inchley, Sue Milton and I, from the BERG MM Waterwatch team, ran Wetland Health sessions over the four days of the program, for students from primary schools across the Mornington Peninsula.

There was both enthusiasm and dampness as the students identified the various macroinvertebrates in samples of creek water, and learnt how these small bugs are potent indicators of the health of a waterway.

THANKS!
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**BERG Mt Martha
welcomes new members**

Rob Debenham & family; Spencer & Maria Biggart; Elliot Brooks & family; Jasmine Charles & family; Bruce & Bev Ferres; Naomi Grant & family; Sarah Hanna & family; Kirsty Hardt & family; Geoffrey & Jocelyn Kidd; Jolanta, Stefan & Georgia Kulzer; Peter Lynch & family; Nick Papas & family; Louise Petersen & family; Glen Thraves & family; Kaye Waghorne & family; Jessica Watson & family; Jenny & Chris Wood; Julie Zammit & family

BERG Mt M Working Bees	Other BERG Mt M Activities	Other Groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Sunday working bee: monthly, 3rd Sunday, between 9am & 12noon. Next are 17th April and 15th March. Details emailed a few days ahead, or call Liz Barraclough, 0408 388 430. ❖ Tuesday working bee: monthly, 2nd Tuesday, between 9.00 & 12 noon, meet at the end of Latrobe Dve. Call Jenny Selby 0432 719 288. ❖ Friday working bee: weekly between 9.30 and 12 noon. Call Sue Betheras on 0408 808 201. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Waterwatch testing: 4th Sunday at Augusta St Bridge. Call John Inchley, 5974 1095. ❖ BERG Mt Martha Committee meets monthly at Mt Martha House, 9.00am. Next are Saturday 16th April and Saturday 14th May. All members welcome. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Fairbairn Bushland Reserve Friends Group next working bee 10am to 2pm, Sunday 18th October. Meet at the notice board near the playground. Call Judith Whittaker 5974 8174 or John Stoker 5977 1397. ❖ BirdLife Mornington Peninsula bird-watching 2nd Wednesday and 3rd Sunday. Enquiries to Max Burrows 9789 0224, mornington@birdlife.org.au or www.birdlife.org.au/locations/birdlife-mornington-peninsula. ❖ SPIFFA 1st Monday, 7.30 pm, at Parks Vic, Hinton St, Rosebud. Enquiries 5988 6529, or www.spiffa.org. ❖ Sunshine Reserve working bee 9.30am, last Thursday of month. Call Pia Spreen, 5974 1096
<p>BERG MT MARTHA COMMITTEE</p> <p>PRESIDENT GRAHAM HUBBARD • VICE PRESIDENT JOHN INCHLEY • SECRETARY DI LEWIS • TREASURER RICHARD KIRSNER FIELD OFFICER LIZ BARRACLOUGH • NEWSLETTER ANGELA KIRSNER • ROTARY CLUB LIAISON JOHN TREVILLIAN COMMUNITY AWARENESS BARBARA THRAVES • SCHOOLS LIAISON JENNY SELBY • BRONWYN STREET</p>		
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If undelivered, please return to:
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Mount Martha 3934

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