



**Berg**  
**Mt Martha**

21 years of Caring for the Balcombe Estuary Reserves

# THE CREEK

Volume 22 No 5, October 2018

## SUE'S BIRDS & BEASTS

Sue Brabender, BERGer and recently retired ranger at The Briars, has been walking our reserves with camera at the ready. She's been searching for evidence of Rakali. Terry Denton is pretty certain he saw one a year or two ago, near the first fishing platform, and Sue is following up on this, and on some 'interesting tracks' she found in the mud in late September. Watch this space!

On 4<sup>th</sup> September, she photographed an Eastern Yellow Robin on the south bank, downstream from the Augusta St Bridge, and found its beautiful little nest on the north bank not far from the same bridge. Then, on 29<sup>th</sup> September, two nests, on opposite sides of the boardwalk not far from the Latrobe Street entry point, both with a Yellow Robin in residence on the eggs.

She also photographed a gorgeous Golden Whistler and reports that she saw a Rufous Whistler a week earlier.



*Sue Brabender's photos of an Eastern Yellow Robin (below), its waiting nest (above), an Eastern Yellow Robin on its nest (below) and a Golden Whistler (right)*



**JOIN US AT BERG MT MARTHA'S  
ANNUAL GENERAL  
MEETING**

**SATURDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER  
Mt Martha House  
Registration 10.15am**

**Come & hear of BERG MM's  
achievements & plans.**

**Nominations for office bearers & committee**

For nomination forms call 0447 160 208  
or go to [www.berg.org.au/bergmm/wp-content/uploads/2018-AGM-Nomination-form.pdf](http://www.berg.org.au/bergmm/wp-content/uploads/2018-AGM-Nomination-form.pdf) & download a form, or call 0447 160 288. Nominations in writing must be with the Secretary by Friday 19<sup>th</sup> October.

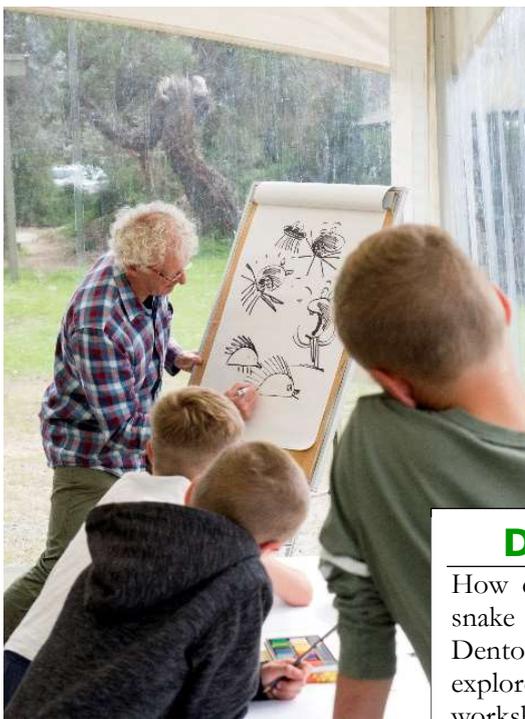
**SAVE THE DATE!**



**BERG MT MARTHA  
TURNS 21 THIS YEAR!**

**WE'RE CELEBRATING ON  
SUNDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER  
Mt Martha House, early evening  
All BERG members welcome!**

More details later



### DRAWING WITH TERRY!

How do you make a frog look excited? A snake anxious? A dog astonished? Terry Denton had 40 kids utterly captivated as they explored such questions in two drawing workshops run by BERG MM at the Old Campground on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> September.

As anyone with primary-aged kids in the family knows, Terry is the famous illustrator of the wildly popular Treehouse books. And he is also, of course, BERG MM's patron.

Each child went home with a wonderful page of drawings – each one with a tiny 'TD' drawing on it as well, as Terry found time to spend with each kid. To be treasured!

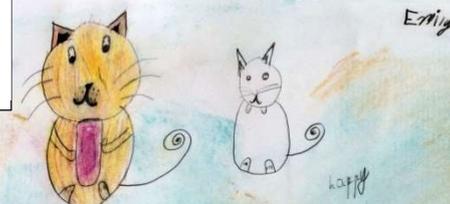
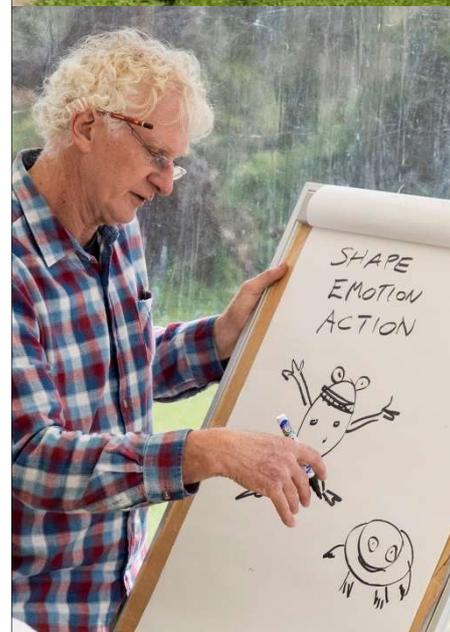
The workshops attracted 26 new family members, with many of these new parents showing lots of interest in the reserves and our work.

The weather gods smiled on us, and lots of people helped on the day: Thanks to Anni Dowd, Debbie & Peter McMahon, Sue Milton, Jenny Selby, Jenny Rolleston, Richard Kirsner, Barry Morris, Ros Crompton, and our ever-present Secretary, Di Lewis.

Thanks also to Scott Crowe of Akarba, who provided and erected the wonderful marquee free of charge.

And thanks to Terry for a fantastic day!

*Photos Angela & Richard Kirsner*



## GREENHOODS

In September, Bronwyn and David Street found a patch of Greenhoods they did not recognise under the Tea Trees in the reserves. Upright and striped, they were different to the nearby Nodding Greenhoods, *Pterostylis nutans*, the ones we see often in the reserves.

Sally McLeod, of Naturelinks, identified them as the Trim Greenhood, *Pterostylis concinna*. They are not recorded in our 2002 flora survey, but Vyv Stryder, also of Naturelinks, says he has seen them before in the reserves.

### And when you keep the rabbits off

Once there were Nodding Greenhoods regularly in the area below the tennis courts and Mt Martha Preschool. But they've not been there for years.

A few months ago, Naturelinks put down a couple of patches of plastic mesh, in an attempt to deter the ubiquitous, munching rabbits. And by July, there was a thriving patch of Nodding Greenhoods extending to the edge of the mesh. Proof positive that our rabbit-proof fencing in this area is a worthwhile endeavour.

*Above right: the patch of Trim Greenhood, Pterostylis concinna, among the Tea Tree by the path through reserves*  
*Below right: Nodding Greenhoods, Pterostylis nutans, defying the rabbits with a little help!*  
 Photos Angela Kirsner



## ESTUARYWATCH

### Bruce Ferres reports

The EstuaryWatch team, Bruce Ferres, Jan Jones, and new recruit Franc Amendola, completed EstuaryWatch observations and recordings on Sunday 26 August.

Unlike earlier in the year the estuary mouth was open the entire month, allowing regular tidal in- and out-flows. In previous months breakthroughs were caused by the volume of water in the estuary, leading to a sudden, direct flow into the bay. During August, however, the strong northerly and westerly winds abated and a more interesting meandering water course resulted, beautifully captured by George Murley's drone image (below).



*Estuary Mouth, August 26, 2018*

The regular tidal movement led to much healthier readings in August for water clarity and dissolved oxygen – the best this year.

This positive news was tempered by concerningly higher-than-usual pH readings at each test site. The pH for distilled or fresh water should be a neutral 7.0; seawater is typically between 7.0 and 8.0, slightly alkaline. Readings below 7.0 indicate increasingly acidic conditions. Estuary test sites have returned slightly acidic readings this year, between 6.0 and 7.0, but in August the average from the three test results was 5.6. The reading at the mouth was also 5.6, but a normal reading of

7.2 from seawater opposite the Yacht Club ruled out the possibility of a fault in the pH meter. Readings from Waterwatch testing at Uralla Bridge and The Briars the same day were just over 7.00 – slightly alkaline. The cause of the acidity in the lower reaches of the estuary remains unknown but we will be keeping an eye on it.

Thanks, once again, to Helen Carroll, who uploads our images and data to the Melbourne Water EstuaryWatch portal.

## WE'RE TIDY

BERG MM is a Finalist in the Keep Victoria Beautiful Tidy Towns awards in the category, 'Community Government Partnerships'. The nomination, by Melissa Burrage, of the Shire, with BERG MM, was for action to reduce sedimentation in the Estuary. Suzanne Ryan attended the announcement of finalists on 17<sup>th</sup> September and collected the certificate presented to BERG MM. The Awards night will be held in Beechworth in October.

## PAT BOAG – A BERG MM TREASURE

By Angela Kirsner

‘Treat the Earth and all that dwell thereon with respect’, the first of the ten ‘Indian Commandments’, is the maxim by which Pat Boag lives. She is passionate about the environment and the future of what she describes as ‘this very special planet’.

It is why she has become one of BERG Mt Martha’s major donors. Pat gives thousands of dollars to BERG MM each year, through a monthly donation plus one-off funding for specific projects. It was she, for example, who funded our plastics campaign.

Pat and her husband John came to Mt Martha some 30 years ago, and she is still in the house they designed and had built, in Village Close on the site of a Balcombe Army Camp officer’s house. It won five awards for energy efficiency

They were at that first meeting in 1997 that founded BERG, roped in by Richard Hawkins to stop tennis courts taking over more bushland.

They became regular Tuesday groupers; Pat remembers digging out onion weed under the boardwalk, and the creation of the Bunyip walk. She was an early folder and deliverer of the newsletter, in the days when it was actually hand-delivered!

Initially reluctant to be named as a major donor to BERG MM, she was persuaded by Dame Elisabeth

Murdoch’s maxim, ‘If you tell people you give, it gives others the idea that they too can give.’

After all, said Pat, ‘That’s what money’s for – to support the planet and everyone on it – and not just the people!’

She is a BERG MM treasure!

## THANKS FOR RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

Bronwyn Street, BERG MM  
Philanthropy Officer, reports

This year’s mail appeal and member donations resulted in almost \$15,000 for BERG Mt Martha’s environmental work. Eighty members and friends donated a total of \$9,725 and, as promised, David and I were delighted to match the first \$5,000, bringing the total to \$14,975. Over a quarter of members (29%) made a meaningful donation over and above their membership.

‘This great result augurs well for the future’, commented President, Graham Hubbard. ‘It means we’re able to progress our habitat restoration in priority areas such as the Bunyip walk, below Mt Martha Preschool, Hilton Court and Citation Hill. We can also go ahead with our flora and fauna surveys, and signage on eels and bats. Some of these things have been happening over recent months.’

BERG Mt Martha warmly thanks all who made possible this impressive result. *The Creek* will keep you informed on these and other projects as they progress.

The appeal for funds has become an important part of BERG MM’s annual plans. We invite a new ‘challenge donor’ to match donations next year – contact Bronwyn Street, on 5974 1663 if you would like to help us in this important way.

## FIELD NEWS

Field Officer Liz Barraclough reports

### Working bees

As ever, we’ve been weeding and planting. At the August **Sunday working bee**, seven BERGers weeded and put in 150 plants along Hopetoun Creek below Balcombe Preschool. And in September, nine BERGers did a magnificent job planting, guarding and staking over 300 trees, shrubs, sedges and grasses, to revegetate the riparian strip on western side of Lower Hopetoun Creek, just above Ferrero ovals.

The **Friday Morning Group** tackled a number of tasks. They planted to increase the diversity of species below Maude St. In the old Quarry they painstakingly dug out Bridal Creeper (still more to go!), as spraying would kill the grasses it was smothering. They filled the gaps with sedges and shrubs, which will also add further to the great bird habitat here. And lastly, they removed Forget-me-nots before they seeded along the creek banks between the Geoff Kaye and Uralla Rd bridges.

For the **Tuesday Group**, removing Rock Rose below Hilton Court was the focus in August, plus planting some over-storey plants. In September they finished guarding and watering the Sunday working-bee planting and removed more of the tenacious Rock Rose.

The **Coastal Group** and Naturelinks also planted in August and September, including lots of grasses around the Dominion Rd and Village beach paths.

### Another grant success

A new Victorian Landcare Grant 2018-19 (Port Phillip & Westernport CMA) of \$13,088 will enable us to restore slopes below the east end of Citation Oval, above the Pistol Club.

### Fauna survey 2018

Ten years down the track from our last fauna survey, Peninsula fauna ecologist Malcolm Legg (who did both our previous surveys – 1998 and 2008) started the 2018 survey in August. The seasonal frog survey is already complete, he will finish fish next month, and he has started on birds. Most pleasingly, he is already



Pat Boag in her garden Photo Angela Kirsner

reporting an increase in woodland birds, and he is impressed with the restoration works and improvement on the northern side of the creek.

#### Coastal vegetation survey

Gidja Walker (local ecologist) will soon be conducting a comprehensive survey of the vegetation and habitat along the coastal strip from Coolangatta Rd to Balcombe Point. She ran a workshop in September at which Suzanne Ryan, Cate Clarke and I learnt of her survey and recording methods, so we can support and complement her work.

#### Shire Coastal Forum

Mornington Peninsula Shire ran a one-day coastal forum on 8<sup>th</sup> September, to inform and get feedback from groups and individuals involved in managing aspects of the coast. Suzanne Ryan and I were there. Speakers included Craig Reucassel, of the ABC's 'War On Waste', Parks Victoria, and speakers on the Hooded Plover and erosion.

#### Of signs and signposts

A few of us met with the Shire recently to plan the update to signage through the reserves. We aim to make sure nobody is lost on their walks, and we are also rethinking all the interpretive signage. Old signs will be gradually replaced over the next couple of years.

#### BERG MM trailer

With Naturelinks now at every working bee and ferrying the necessary tools, BERG MM no longer needs the BERG trailer. It has found a new home with Tony O'Connor, who will refurbish it for use by the Balcombe Moorooduc Landcare Group.

## SCHOOLS

### Bentons Junior College

One hundred and twenty Year 1 students joined a swag of BERG MM volunteers in August for a day of activities: planting, a nature walk, litter collection and survey, birds and fauna of the estuary, and Waterwatch. High winds put an end to the afternoon sessions, so the children didn't get to all the activities, but they had a great time in those they did.

### Balcombe Grammar

Our annual program with Balcombe Grammar students happened again in August. Over three fortnightly sessions, fifty Year 6 students planted along Hopetoun Creek below the kinder, did a litter survey at the Campground, and weeded Forget-me-knots below Ferrero Ovals.

### Padua College

Thirteen hard-working Year 11 students from Padua College spent a September morning planting in the reserves. It was part of a 14-week program organised by the Dolphin Research Institute, looking at the health of the bay, wetlands and waterways, and what local groups do to protect this.

The students planted some 250 grasses, trees and shrubs in the Swamp Paperbark area between Balcombe Creek and the western Ferrero oval, helping with erosion control.

*Thanks for help with these schools activities to BERGers Liz Barraclough, David Street, Barb Thraves, Debbie McMabon, Lorraine Lamb, Jenny Selby, Sue Milton, John Inchley, Peter & Fran Dedrick, Jan Jones, Lorraine Lamb.*

## THANKS TO OUR BUSINESS PARTNERS

- Mt Martha Veterinary Clinic
- Warlimont & Nutt Pty Ltd
- Bendigo Bank Mt Martha
- Mt Martha Village Clinic
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- Terry Bateman Pharmacy
- Bonaccorde
- Bunnings Mornington
- Complete Step
- South Sea Shacks
- Complete Colour
- Rotary Club of Mt Martha
- Akarba party hire

## SCENTED SUNDEW

Scented Sundews, *Drosera* sp, were flowering under Tea Trees in the reserves in September. The sticky hairs on the leaves can catch tiny insects, which the plant then digests with enzymes it secretes.



Photo Angela Kirsner

Below, left: The Padua College students with BERGers Lorraine, Jenny and Debbie Photo Liz Barraclough. Right: Padua students planting Photo Deborah Arrowmith



**BERG Mt Martha welcomes new members**

Rian Sheridan, Janet Coils, Samantha Blair & family; Alison Cooper & family; Michelle & Paul Geddes & family; Jessica Downie & family; Vanessa & Nyah Andersson & family; Suzanne Barrell & Finn Holt; Belinda Barun & family; Simon & Alyssa Cairns & family; Jacqueline Chow & Robert Karwacki; Alison Cooper & family; Bill & Samaro Di Blasio & family; Penny & Tony Eichstadt & family; Sam & Emma Gledhill & family; Rachel & George Hope & family; Victoria & Barnaby Lawrenson & family; Rachael Maddock & Richard Kelso; Justine & Brian McLaughlin & family; Chantal & Amara Pittorino & family; Hazel & Safia Poirier & family; Laura Riley & Pubudu Induruna; Bronwyn & Joshua Rogers & family; Michele & Brad Rowse & family; Kate Schemansky & Anthony Matson; Fiona Stevens & family; Danielle & Damon Stone & family; Jade Webber & Mark Ferris; Katie & Angus Wettenhall & family; Carly & Noah Boundy

**HORSE DUNG FUNGUS**

This aptly named fungus (*Pisolithus* sp.) is growing not far from the Greenhoods and Drosera on previous pages. Its spores develop inside, maturing from the top downwards, with the skin progressively eroding, leaving a brown, dusty looking lump.

*Photo Angela Kirsner*



BERG MM Working Bees	Other BERG MM Activities	Other Groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <b>Sunday working bee:</b> monthly, 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday, between 9am &amp; 12noon. Details emailed a few days ahead, or call Liz Barraclough 0408 388 430.</li> <li>❖ <b>Tuesday working bee:</b> monthly, 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday between 9am &amp; 12 noon, meet at end of Latrobe Dve. Call Jenny Selby 0432 719 288.</li> <li>❖ <b>Coast Group:</b> monthly, 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday, between 8am &amp; 11am, meet in car park by the Yacht Club. Call Suzanne Ryan 0418 387 604.</li> <li>❖ <b>Friday working bee:</b> weekly between 9.30am &amp; 12 noon. Call Liz Barraclough 0408 388 430 or David Street 0418 342 298.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <b>Waterwatch &amp; Estuary Watch testing:</b> monthly, 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday 9.15am, starting at Augusta St Bridge. Call Sue Milton 0407 350 175.</li> <li>❖ <b>BERG Mt Martha Committee</b> meets monthly at Mt Martha House, 9.00am, usually the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday. Next meetings <b>13<sup>th</sup> October &amp; 10<sup>th</sup> November.</b> All members welcome.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <b>BirdLife Mornington Peninsula</b> bird-watching 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday. Enquiries to Max Burrows 9789 0224, mornington@birdlife.org.au or www.birdlife.org.au/locations/birdlif e-mornington-peninsula.</li> <li>❖ <b>SPIFFA</b> 1<sup>st</sup> Monday, 7.30 pm, at Parks Vic, Hinton St, Rosebud. Enquiries 5988 6529, or www.spiffa.org.</li> <li>❖ <b>Sunshine Reserve</b> working bee 9.30am, last Sunday of month. Call Pia Spreen, 5974 1096</li> </ul>
<p><b>BERG MT MARTHA COMMITTEE</b></p> <p>PRESIDENT GRAHAM HUBBARD • VICE PRESIDENT PETER MCMAHON • SECRETARY DIANNE LEWIS • TREASURER JULIE ZAMMIT</p> <p>• FIELD OFFICER LIZ BARRACLOUGH • COAST GROUP SUZANNE RYAN • WATERWATCH SUE MILTON</p> <p>• COMMUNITY AWARENESS BARBARA THRIVES • PHILANTHROPY BRONWYN STREET • NEWSLETTER ANGELA KIRSNER</p>		
<p><b>Balcombe Estuary Reserves Group Mt Martha Inc.</b> No. A0034645Y ABN 50 224 628 623  <b>Mail:</b> PO Box 433 Mt Martha 3934 <b>Email:</b> info@berg.org.au <b>Mob:</b> 0447 160 288 <b>Web:</b> www.berg.org.au</p>		

**THE CREEK**

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