



The Creek

Volume 23 No 4, August 2019

Caring for our local environment

CLEAN GREEN MT MARTHA

There's lots happening on this front! Liz recently brought together a Clean Green Mt Martha committee, with members from BERG MM, Beach Patrol, Boomerang Bags, other interested locals, and Amy Yang, the Shire's Waste Education Officer. It's proving a proactive and dynamic group.

Working to reduce waste and encourage sustainable behaviour in our local community, it is brimful of ideas – for example, upgrade bins for easier recycling, bring 'Responsible Cafes' to Mt Martha (see responsiblecafes.org/), work through the Shire's 'Best Bites' program, water bottle fill stations.... They plan to work with Farmers Markets, sporting clubs, cafes, the Yacht Club, and more. Watch this space!

The group is drawing on the experiences of other waste reduction campaigns. Yarra Shire, for example, in their 'Proudly Plastic Free' initiative, is focussing on six single-use plastic items that represent the most problematic and prolific sources of litter: water bottles, coffee cups and lids, straws, plastic bags, food ware (cups, plates, cutlery), and takeaway containers.

And Sharon Rogers and her talk to BERG MM on 24th August, and the showing of 2040 on 29th August (information on both on this page) are, of course, also part of this campaign.

And a clean, green Council

Meanwhile, the Mornington Shire Council, at its meeting on Tuesday 23rd July, passed a motion that commits to reducing the use of single-use plastic throughout the Shire.



The Climate Reality Project

Community by community, we are demanding action on climate change.

Join us to hear about the impacts, solutions, and how you can help drive action.

Sharon Rogers, BERG MM member, local teacher & Mt Martha resident, trained in Brisbane this year with former US Vice President Al Gore as part of the Climate Reality Project.

Sharon writes: *'While I always knew how urgent the issue was, the Climate Reality training gave me hope on possible solutions ... I quickly realised how small actions play a role in the domino effect that is now cascading around the world, stimulating environmental action and putting the brakes on our climate crisis.'*

-When: Saturday 24 August, 9.45-11.00am

-Where: Mt Martha House (room 64)

-Bookings: [Try Booking www.trybooking.com/BEDEE](http://www.trybooking.com/BEDEE)

-Cost: Free to BERG MM members, gold coin donation for non-members

Morning tea provided



The first goal will be to eliminate single-use plastics in the environments that Council controls.

It is a whole-of-Council commitment, across policy, events, business (tenders, leases, contracts etc) and Council buildings.

The motion was moved by Cr Bev Colomb, and the new Clean Green Mt Martha group dispatched many supportive emails to Councillors in the run-up to the vote.



'Essential viewing for everyone who cares about the future of our planet'

Join BERG MM & Balcombe Grammar to see this important film

Thursday 29th August, 6pm. Tickets \$20

Book at: <https://fan-force.com/screenings/2040-mornington-cinemas/>, select: COUNTRY: Australia; STATE/REGION: Victoria; CINEMA: Mornington Cinemas

THANKS TO OUR BUSINESS PARTNERS

FEATURING MT MARTHA VETERINARY CLINIC



This family-owned, family-run practice has been looking after our pets since 2004. Josh, Camilla & team understand how important pets are in our lives.

And they've just moved into their
Brand New Pet Hospital
6 Langrigg Ave (Mt Martha Village)



The team welcomes you and your pet to their wonderful new state-of-the-art facilities!

- Bendigo Bank Mount Martha
- Bonaccorde
- Akarba party hire
- Bell's Meats
- Bunnings Mornington
- Complete Colour
- Complete Step – Podiatry & Footwear Specialists
- Danckert Real Estate
- Mornington Peninsula Gardening
- Mount Martha Chiropractic & Sports Injury Clinic
- Mount Martha Optical
- Mount Martha Veterinary Clinic
- Mount Martha Village Clinic
- Mount Martha Yacht Club
- Mr Curtis
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- Rotary Club of Mount Martha
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FEATURING PENINSULA TRAVEL

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AND HELP BERG MT MARTHA
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Peninsula Travel believes that travel should benefit everyone!

Book your holiday or business travel with Peninsula Travel, tell them you're a BERG MM member, and

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The more you travel, the bigger the donation. A win for everyone!

Peninsula Travel: 8 Bay Rd, Mt Martha, ph 03 5974 3911

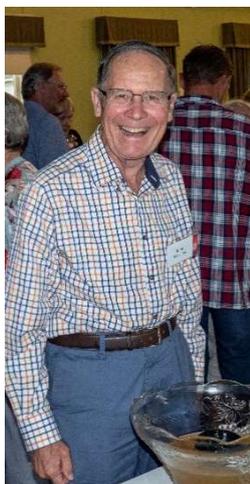
FAREWELL TO TWO LONG-STANDING BERGERS

John Rawlins

John Rawlins, who died on 3rd July, moved to Mt Martha with his wife Roo in 2004, joined BERG Mt Martha, and have been active 'BERGers' ever since. Both have always been there to help at all sorts of things. In particular, John was involved in Waterwatch, sausage sizzling, Environment Week at the Briars, and, as an expert 'birder', he was, behind the telescope on the jetty at Family Days.

He is remembered with great warmth by many BERG Mt Martha members. The photo shows him at BERG MM's 21st Birthday celebration last December, at Mt Martha House.

Photo Richard Kirsner



Joyce Evans OAM

Joyce Evans, who died on 20th April aged 89, was a member of BERG Mt Martha from 2002 until her death. A highly respected professional photographer, Joyce found healing in the Balcombe Estuary Reserves when she retreated to her Mt Martha cottage to recover from serious injuries. She gradually extended her walks along the boardwalk, camera in hand. 'I told myself I could take it one kilometre at a time'.

The result was *Only One Kilometre* (2003), a delightful book of her photographs of the reserves, with commentary from BERGers Mary Stemp and Liz Barraclough.

'The landscape in the reserve is not like those I have already photographed,' Joyce wrote. 'There is no dominating or unique feature; no horizon to define its boundaries, no gentle pastoral curves . . . Here space is layered. Lines of growth and shadow run over and through each other in

spaces that are at once closed and infinite. To walk, sit and breathe in a space like this is good for you.'

Sadly, Joyce died before her OAM 'for services to photography' was announced in the 2019 Queen's Birthday Honours.

CAN YOU HELP?

Could YOU be
BERG MM's new
Membership
Secretary?

–Do it all online – no scrabbling in the dirt!

–Help us to attract & keep members – our support base.

–Join our great team of volunteers!

Interested?

Click the link to the [Role Description](#) and then email member@berg.org.au

We'd love to chat with you.

NOTICE OF MEETING AND CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

**2019 BERG MT MARTHA
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
SATURDAY 19TH OCTOBER
Mt Martha House**

Registration 10.15am, meeting 10.30am

Meeting Agenda

- Welcome and apologies
- Minutes of 2018 AGM
- Committee reports:
President, Graham Hubbard
Treasurer, Julie Zammit
Field Officer, Liz Barraclough
- Election: President, Vice-President,
Treasurer, Secretary, & up to 10 ordinary
committee members.
- Appointment of Auditor

Nominations for office bearers & committee

For nomination forms go to
www.berg.org.au/bergmm/wp-content/uploads/Nomination-form-2019-20.pdf.

Nominations in writing, signed by two
BERG Mt Martha members &
accompanied by the candidate's written
consent, must be with the Secretary by
Friday 11th October

**BERG Mt Martha welcomes new
members**

Andrew Caldecott & family, Trisha
MacLeod, David Bryson & family

ESTUARYWATCH

Bruce Ferres reports

The estuary mouth was intermittently open and closed through June, at least twice was because it was deliberately dug open despite the signs prohibiting this.

It was open for our EstuaryWatch readings on June 23rd, and the estuary was rapidly emptying. The resulting water levels, lower than we've seen for some years, allowed only one reading at the rotunda jetty and oval sites, and even at the normally deeper Augusta bridge site, we measured only just over one metre of water flowing below. Water temperature at all sites was down to a chilly 8 degrees. Dissolved oxygen levels, as expected with colder water, were healthier than in the warmer months.

In July the mouth was open more often than not. This resulted in a regular exchange of salty water from the bay with the consistent freshwater

flows generated by significant rainfall in the estuary catchment during the past few weeks.

Meandering mouth

Interestingly, the estuary mouth on 23rd June was south of the bridge. The drone image clearly shows the southwards meander down the beach to the bay. The usual meander is to the north, as the berm is formed under the influence of southerly and south westerly winds, but this month more dominant northerly breezes at the critical time have caused it to build in the opposite direction. Unusual for this time of year;

my understanding is that it may only happen once every couple of years.



Drone image of the estuary with the green mats of algae, 23rd June 2019. (The photo was taken late afternoon, hence the yellow tinge on some of the algae and some of the tree tops) Image George Murley

ARTISTS OF THE PENINSULA STUDIO TRAIL WILL BE PAINTING AT THE BALCOMBE ESTUARY RESERVES

When: Saturday 31st August, from 10.30, for 2-3 hours



Each artist will paint a 30x30cm canvas, inspired by our creek & bushland, to hang in their October exhibition at Southern Buoy Studios.

The paintings will hang together near the gallery entrance, and

10% of sales will go to BERG Mt Martha!

(The rest of the gallery will display the artists' individual work.)

YOU'RE INVITED!

COME AND WATCH THE ARTISTS AT WORK

at the Reserves, Saturday 31st August – meet at the Rotunda.

COME TO THE EXHIBITION OPENING

Friday 11th October 6.30-8.30, Southern Buoy Studios, 1/19 Carbine Way, Mornington. The exhibition runs till 23rd October.

For more on the Peninsula Studio Trail go to info@peninsulastudiotrail.org.

Thanks to BERGer & artist Anni Dowd for making this happen.

But for EstuaryWatch readings on 28th July, the entrance was pretty much in line with the bridge. Variable onshore winds had meant the berm had not developed in any particular direction, so the estuary waters were moving from bridge to bay more directly than usual.

Not Seagrass, but Algae

In both June and July, the very low water levels again exposed the beds of green vegetation first seen in May. George Murley's drone footage shows the extent of this growth (see photo on previous page. The latest drone video from berm to bowling club is always on our website, at www.dropbox.com/sh/4ckaukd6j58hrd8/AA20m5lfe0xlcsgXKyy197ia?dl=0).

As reported in June, we'd hoped that this green was recovering seagrass (*Zostera* sp) but, although a few strands of seagrass were identified from excellent close-up images by Angela Kirsner, it seems that most of this green growth is marine algae. The plant identification service at the National Herbarium believes that it most likely *Ulva intestinalis*, a close relative of Sea Lettuce, which is commonly found in Port Phillip Bay.

Our July readings suggest that these green algae are having an impact on dissolved oxygen levels. All test sites recorded oxygen saturation at

least twice that considered desirable for healthy estuaries. Algal growth, colder water (an average of just 10 degrees across the test sites) and higher-than-usual freshwater inflow are all likely to have contributed. At the same time, references also describe the positive effects of algae on estuarine environments. More investigation needed here!

By later in July the swathes of algae, which continued to be periodically exposed at low tide, had lost some of the brilliant green colour; they were noticeably much darker with a brownish tinge, so perhaps not doing so well. We will keep monitoring.

The question remains, just why there should be this sudden burst of plant life on top of the deposited sediments. Again, we will continue to try to find answers.

Salt wedge

Also in July, we found a very noticeable salt wedge at the Augusta Street Bridge site. From a reading of only 0.9ppt salt at a depth of 0.5 metres, salinity shot up to 30.1ppt at 1.0 metre and below (seawater, in comparison, is 35.0ppt). This is consistent with a steady inflow of rainwater flowing above the denser more sluggish saltwater below. The rotten egg gas smell usually associated with the creek bottom at August Bridge was not present; further

evidence of the flushing effect of increased freshwater flows at this time of year.

Expanding team

We are delighted to have John Inchley back as part of the Estuary-Watch team, which he had a significant part in setting up. We also welcomed new Estuary-Watchers Trisha and Sophie MacLeod, as well as regulars Bruce Ferres and Franc Amendola. As always, thanks to George Murley (drone images) and Helen Carroll (data uploading.).

WHAT DOES THE ESTUARYWATCH TEAM RECORD EACH MONTH?

- **Estuary mouth:** Open/closed, berm height and width, tidal influence, wind direction & strength, state & flow of seawater.
- **Physical & chemical parameters:** Measured at three places: Rotunda jetty, below Ferrero Ovals, & Augusta Street bridge (Waterwatch monitors two sites upstream from here). We measure dissolved oxygen, water temperature, salinity & electrical conductivity, at 50cm intervals from 10cm below the surface to 10cm from the bottom. Turbidity & pH are measured in samples from the top & bottom of the water column.
- **Significant events:** For example, high or low rainfall, storm surges, estuary entrance opening (natural/artificial). All these can influence the state of water in the estuary.
- **Photos:** The estuary mouth taken from the bridge and from the sand by the mouth. Drone videos by George Murley (of Complete Step, BERG MM Business Partner) from mouth to Augusta St Bridge.
- **Data entry:** On the Melbourne Water database – an ongoing & publicly available record.

FIELD NEWS

Field Officer Liz Barraclough reports

Sunday working-bees

In June we weeded, planted and mulched in the Old Campground, concentrating on the area around the end of Henley Ave, planting fire-neutral plants along the new house fencing here.

The weather looked feral for the July working bee, but intrepid BERGers took the risk and, in fact, it proved a dry, if windy, morning. We worked on the grant site below Watson Road, between the tennis courts and kinder, weeding around plantings to leave Naturelinks a clear run for wider selective spraying. We're delighted to see our dense plantings of Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda*) thriving here.



Close-up of the algae in the estuary, taken 2nd June 2019 close to the seat near the bridge – the quick-sand-like mud precluded wading in any further! Photo Angela Kirsner



Sharon Rogers weeding among the thriving Kangaroo Grass plantings at the July working bee. Photo Angela Kirsner

Friday Morning group

Weeding again! In the old Quarry, in the bushland below Citation Ovals, and below Balcombe Preschool on Hopetoun Creek, where we also mended some fencing.

Tuesday Group was cancelled – its members were all away.

Work on the coast

The Coastal Group worked along north beach in June and July, from the Coolangatta Road track to the north beach carpark. They weeded around existing plantings, planted grasses along paths and behind beach boxes, guarded plantings, and removed the ubiquitous Polygala, both seedlings and larger bushes.

Seven corporate volunteers from Auto Data Processing also spent a day, as part of their community service program, working with Suzanne Ryan and Tamara Keyte (Naturelinks) to plant, guard and water above South Beach. A very successful day!

Flora and fauna surveys

The flora survey of the Balcombe Estuary Reserves, being done by Katherine Smedley (of Practical Ecology) and Gidja Walker, is almost complete. And Mal Legg has submitted a draft of the fauna survey, done over twelve months, for our comment. Both surveys are 10-year follow-ups to earlier surveys.

Gidja is also surveying the coastal reserves – something we’ve not done before – and has finished the southern section up to Dominion Rd.

Feral animal control

Rod Taylor, of Peninsula Feral Management, declared war on our rabbits during June. He has mapped rabbit sites and warrens, and has fumigated 38 warrens and closed 20. The funding from the Shire ran out at this stage, but the BERG MM committee has agreed to fund the further work Rod sees as necessary.

Rod also set cat cages, but with no success. He plans to try bigger cages, and more tempting bait – Kentucky fried chicken!

Upgrading the reserves’ signs

While there’s still lots more work to be done here, there are now handsome new plank signs at the two main entrances to the reserves: one at the Mirang Avenue entry to the Old Campground carpark, and one at the corner of Uralla Road and Nepean Highway.



New sign at the Mirang Avenue entrance to the reserves. Photo Martin Thraves

Balcombe Grammar

Late July saw the first of Balcombe Grammar’s five Community Service sessions, which they do with BERG MM each year. Two groups of 25 Year 6 students planted over 350 grasses, shrubs and trees below Balcombe Preschool on Hopetoun Creek. Naturelinks had previously removed mature Pittosporums here, and the Friday Group had weeded to prepare for the planting.

A big thank you to the BERGers who responded to my last-minute plea for help with the students.

CAN YOU HELP?
BALCOMBE GRAMMAR
COMMUNITY SERVICE
PROGRAM

Activities include mulching, litter collection & audit, & Waterwatch.

Dates: Friday Aug 2, 16, 30, Sept 13,
Times: 11.45-1.00 & 1.45-3.00.

Help would be much appreciated at any of these sessions.

Contact Liz Barraclough
 0408 388 430



Left: June working bee completed! Sue Betheras, Ian Croker, Liz Barraclough, Suzanne Ryan, & Tess (Naturelinks) Photo by a passing BERGer!
 Right: Morning tea at the July working bee, in the tennis shelter: Barbara Thraves, Angela Kirsner, John Stirling, Sharon Rogers, Jackie Hartnell, Ian Croker & Freddy the dog Photos Tess, Naturelinks

EXPLORING WITH THE BALCOMBE PRESCHOOL KIDS

It's three or four years now since Jenny Selby and Lorraine Lamb first took the Balcombe Preschool four-year-olds on an exploratory ramble in Hopetoun Reserve – the bushland that surrounds their kinder.

It's now an annual event. Each year the children learn about BERG Mt Martha's work in providing habitat, food sources and protection for native animals. And it has inspired the Preschool Coordinator, Eliza Dynes, to program lots more regular times for the children in 'their' reserve.

Lorraine Lamb preparing the pre-schoolers for an exploratory walk in June, with Pre-school Coordinator Eliza Dyne watching on. Photo Jenny Selby



BERG MM Working Bees	Other BERG MM Activities	Other Groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Sunday working bee: monthly, 2nd Sunday, between 9am & noon. Details emailed a few days ahead, or call Liz Barraclough 0408 388 430. ❖ Tuesday working bee: monthly, 2nd Tuesday between 9am & 12 noon, meet at end of Latrobe Dve. Call Jenny Selby 0432 719 288. ❖ Coast Group: monthly, 3rd Wednesday, between 9am & noon, location emailed a few days ahead or call Suzanne Ryan 0418 387 604. ❖ Friday working bee: weekly between 9.30am & noon. Call Liz Barraclough 0408 388 430 or David Street 0418 342 298. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Waterwatch & Estuary Watch testing: monthly, 4th Sunday. WW, meet 9.15am at Augusta St bridge: call Sue Milton 0407 350 175. EW meet 9.00am at the Rotunda; call Bruce Ferres 0435 389 804. ❖ BERG Mt Martha Committee meets monthly at Mt Martha House, 9.00am, usually the 2nd Saturday. Next meetings 10th August, 14th September. All members welcome. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 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 Seawinds Community Hub, 11A Allambi Ave, Rosebud West. Enquiries 5988 6529, or www.spiffa.org. ❖ Sunshine Reserve working bee 9.30am, last Sunday of month. Call Pia Spreen, 5974 1096
BERG MT MARTHA PATRON: TERRY DENTON		
COMMITTEE: PRESIDENT GRAHAM HUBBARD • VICE PRESIDENT PETER MCMAHON • SECRETARY DIANNE LEWIS • TREASURER JULIE ZAMMIT • FIELD OFFICER LIZ BARRACLOUGH • COAST GROUP SUZANNE RYAN • WATERWATCH SUE MILTON • ESTUARY WATCH BRUCE FERRES • COMMUNITY AWARENESS BARBARA THRIVES • PHILANTHROPY BRONWYN STREET • NEWSLETTER ANGELA KIRSNER		
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THE CREEK

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