

NEW SIGNS!

They have taken a long time, delayed considerably by COVID, but finally our new interpretive signs are in place throughout the reserves.

It's been a collaborative effort by BERGers Liz Barraclough and Angela Kirsner working closely with Clayton Fenech and Hannah Brown of the Shire's Natural Systems Team.

We're delighted with the results: eight new signs, located along the

tracks from the old Campground up to the old Quarry, below Citation Hill, on our birds, fish and other fauna, our plant communities, and a little on the Army's Mt Martha history. There is one more sign still to be finalised, on the Bunurong; this will be located near the rotunda.

Our thanks to the Shire for funding and installing the signs, and for Clayton and Hannah's invaluable input in developing them.

ESO ONE STEP CLOSER

We are delighted to report that BERG Mt Martha's proposal to Council for an Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO) to protect the Balcombe Estuary Reserves has gained Council endorsement. In the next and final step, the proposal will go the Victorian Planning Minister for review and – we hope – approval. We will keep you posted on progress towards this.

After overwhelming support for the proposal in the Shire's community consultation process in May-June last year, and further review within the Shire's team, a motion finally went to Council on Monday 15th August.

BERG committee members Liz Barraclough, Sue Milton and Peter McMahon spoke to the meeting in strong support of the ESO.

One Councillor told Liz how she loves our boardwalk, and uses it to put her baby to sleep. It has just the right number of bumps!

Following robust discussion, including a proposed variation, Councillor David Gill proposed a motion that all of the designated reserves area be included at the highest protection level. This was passed, five votes to four, with support from Councillors McCafferty, Race, O'Connor and Mar. A terrific outcome!



*Above: Woodland flora sign at the start of the Bunyip walk; and Fish sign on the fishing platform.
Below: Shire contractors Rob, Paul and Dan, unloading the first two signs from the truck.*

Photos Angela Kirsner



Thank you!
Mt Martha Community Bank
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CELEBRATING OUR DONORS

It's some years since BERG Mt Martha began a very successful drive for philanthropic funding to restore the bushland below Maude Street from Newton Street to Victoria Crescent.

Finally, the last of the philanthropic funds that supported this restoration and, as it turned out, considerably more invaluable BERG MM work, have been acquitted.

It's a fitting opportunity to recognise once again the wonderful donors that made this all possible.

Our fabulous donors

The Maude Street project was kick-started in 2016 by a \$15,000 grant from the **Sally Oatley Memorial Fund** (a sub-fund of the Australian Communities Foundation) – a grant made possible by two committed but anonymous BERGers.

Shortly afterwards another anonymous donor offered up to \$50,000 in matching funds for on-ground work if BERG MM could raise a similar amount. That donor was subsequently revealed to be **Graham and Judy Hubbard** – Graham being then President of BERG MM.

In Graham's words:

'This project needed to be done if BERG MM was to address the whole of the reserves. It needed a major donation to demonstrate its importance and the scale of the work required. We hoped that the major donation would trigger other donors to contribute, and it had that effect, so the project could be fully funded.'

BERG MM Committee member **Bronwyn Street** announced the challenge donation at the 2016 AGM and handed over a cheque for \$10,000 from herself and husband David (who sadly died in 2020), as the first donation to be matched. Next, the **Helen Macpherson Smith**

Trust provided another \$30,000, which again the Hubbards matched. We were nearly there!

Another \$2000 from Alice Opper, a \$3000 anonymous gift, and our generous and regular donor base readily made up the extra \$5000, to make up the full \$50,000 dollar-for-dollar matched donation.

In 2018 Bronwyn and David Street offered another \$5000 as a 'matching' donation, and by the end of the year, a mail appeal to members had raised another \$9,725. That donation from the Streets in effect brought nearly \$15,000 into BERG MM's coffers for our environmental work.

And since that time, Bronwyn has donated another \$10,000, in two separate gifts. She is, without doubt, a BERG MM treasure!

Not just Maude Street

These philanthropic funds have been spent over a number of years and have been a huge contribution to BERG MM's work.

The Maude Street site was a major area where we'd previously done little work. But the monies have also helped support our Flora and Fauna



Bronwyn Street at the 2016 AGM announcing the \$50,000 challenge donation, and the donation of \$10,000 by herself and husband David, watched by then President and donor of the challenge donation. Graham Hubbard Photo Richard Kirsner

Surveys, as well as signage and on-ground tools and office supplies. And importantly, they have enabled a number of our members to undertake the Peninsula Conservation and Habitat Management Course – the gold standard training for bushland volunteers.

In Bronwyn's words:

'I have always been interested in conservation, and the Maude Street reserve, opposite our house, has been a wonderful project to support.'

David died in 2020, and my ongoing donations are also a way to recognise and remember his great love of the reserves and the huge satisfaction he got from working on the ground with BERG MM.'



Maude Street: A special place

This beautiful, species-rich area contains the only patch in our reserves of the Ecological Vegetation Class, 'Damp Sands Herb Rich Woodland' – woodland with a grassy, heathy or bracken-dominated understorey and a ground layer rich in herbs, grasses, and orchids. The Maude Street site is home to a host of wildflowers and fauna habitat. These photos, taken in August 2022, show a thriving young Manna Gum (above), green Correas (left) and Heath (right) Photos



BERG Mt Martha has been part of the strong local push to make Mt Martha single-use plastic free. It's part of a global trend.

COUNTRIES AGREE TO END PLASTIC POLLUTION

From Nature Briefing, 4 March

The battle against plastic pollution, had a huge boost when leaders of 175 nations agreed on 3rd March to forge a treaty to tackle it, at the UN Environment Assembly in Kenya. A negotiating committee will spend the next two years hammering out the final deal. Crucially, the treaty will be legally binding and will address the full life cycle of plastics. Inger Andersen, executive director of the UN Environment Programme, called the agreement the most significant environmental multilateral deal since the 2015 Paris climate accord.

DROP IN COASTAL PLASTIC POLLUTION

Reported in the Guardian, 9 Jun 2022

The amount of plastic pollution on Australia's coast has decreased by almost 30% on average as a result of work by local governments to reduce litter, according to CSIRO research.

CSIRO surveyed 183 coastal sites for plastic and other litter (eg glass), in 2018-19. Of these sites, 32 had also been surveyed in 2012-13, and data comparison showed an average decline in pollution (mostly plastics) across the sites of 29%.

Coastal sites in NSW had significantly more plastic litter than in other states and territories, and there was also significantly more litter close to urban areas or following stronger onshore wave forcing the previous day.

But overall, researcher Denise Hardesty said the results showed how quickly efforts to raise public awareness of plastic pollution had led to improvements.

CSIRO also interviewed local governments on their strategies and policies to reduce waste. They found that programs that encouraged environmental stewardship or used economic measures (eg container deposit schemes, reliable kerbside collection) had the greatest impact.

Lead researcher Kathryn Willis said 'While plastic pollution is still a global crisis and we still have a long way to go, this research shows that decisions made on the ground, at local management levels, are crucial for the successful reduction of coastal plastic pollution.'

NEW FERNS

Gidja Walker recently forwarded to us the identification of three new ferns she found growing in a boggy, riparian area of our reserves. All are new to our species list. Gidja sent samples to the Royal Botanic Gardens, where they were identified by Daniel Ohlsen, fern authority and Val Stajic, Identification Botanist. 'It certainly sounds like a fascinating spot!', writes Val, who is keen to know the population size of each of the species, and to see them in situ. The pictures here are Gidja's, of the specimens she sent. Your editor has had no opportunity yet to photograph the living ferns – watch this space!

Dennstaedtia davallioides



Val Stajic writes of this: 'the RBG does not hold any collections from the Mornington Peninsula.'

Also known as Lacy Ground-fern, in Victoria it is found in moist rich soils in shaded, humid rainforest gullies, in East Gippsland, Otway Range and at one isolated locality near Marysville. Although uncommon, it can form extensive colonies near streams and in humid gullies.

Christella dentata



Val writes: 'if a natural occurrence, a very interesting find! Even if it is growing at the site as a weed it is still an interesting species to be established. The fact that it is associated with a variety of other native ferns might suggest that it could be naturally occurring at the site. It's a long way west from the known sites near Buchan.'

Also known as Soft Shield-fern, or Binung, it occurs in all mainland states, as well as in Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Taiwan. But in Victoria it is

known in very few sites near Buchan, where it grows on moist, shaded, limestone-derived soils.

Diplazium austral



Val writes: 'the only collection that the Botanic Gardens hold from the Mornington Peninsula is a 1979 collection from Main Creek.'

Also known as Austral Lady-fern, it is found in wetter, deeply shaded, forests, gullies and creek-flats in southern Victoria.

CALL FOR IDEAS PEOPLE

Love Mt Martha and its bushland? Want to be active in your community, and meet like-minded people?

CONSIDER JOINING BERG MT MARTHA'S COMMITTEE!

Use your skills and ideas to help make BERG MM even better in caring for our reserves and protecting our local environment!

We welcome people of all ages, with all sorts of skills and ideas - not just weeding and planting.

Give us a call on 0447 160 288 to talk over what's involved.

We will soon be calling for nominations ahead of the AGM on 22nd October.

ESTUARYWATCH

Bruce Ferres reports

The estuary mouth has been in a state of flux through the winter months. Sometimes a small berm has caused minor flooding in the basin and upstream, often the result of persistent north to north-west winds. In the first week of August these winds built a 'perched' berm so high that the campground jetty was under water for several days, the first time since last year.



The 'perched' berm, 4th August Photo Bruce Ferres

July and August Estuary-Watch measurements were supported by data from our 24-hour monitoring station. Apart from short-term raised turbidity levels reflecting storm water flows with heavy rain, all other recorded factors (dissolved oxygen, salinity, temperature, pH, ammonia) fell within the expected range. Our estuary it seems is currently enjoying a period of stable good health.

Our readings were confirmed by observations made by two student groups. One group, on 22nd July, was supervised by Jacqui Salter, the Shire's Community Environmental Education Coordinator. Then on 26th July Balcombe Grammar VCE students visited the estuary to learn more about the role of BERG MM, estuarine ecology and the challenges faced by waterways in an urbanised environment.

Tackling sediment: the Henley Avenue baffle pit

This is one of many sediment-reducing projects identified in the Shire's Long Term Sediment Reduction Plan. It involves a storm water by-pass baffle pit that directs sediment-laden storm water into a large underground concrete pit. Sediments collect at the bottom and clarified water flows from the top levels back into the regular storm water drain. The pit must be regularly maintained and sediments recovered for disposal.

Tenders have been called for the project and the successful contractor should be known by October. Final approval from Melbourne Water is expected by the end of January 2023, with work to commence in February and take around six weeks.

Melbourne Water has agreed to limited funding of the pit, with the remainder to be provided by the Shire. The total cost of the project, including 10 years of maintenance (removal of captured sediments), is expected to exceed \$500,000.

Water quality monitoring station

South East Water provided the funding to establish our water quality monitoring station on the campground jetty last year and maintain it for 12 months.

In July I met with SE Water's Rebecca Goulding (Environment Technical Lead) and Yang Junghee (Student Data Analyst) to discuss the station's operation and how sharing

of data has contributed to community education.

Yang Junhee has prepared a draft report using the data from the station. Her graphical techniques and style of presentation provide fascinating insights into seasonal variations, further adding to our understanding of baseline environmental factors impacting the health of the estuary. BERG MM input will be incorporated in the final report.

The station's first year of operation ends at the end of August. We are hoping to obtain funding for two more years from Melbourne Water or possibly SE Water. Biosis, who have provided and maintain the monitoring station, are happy to leave it in place until a decision is reached.

DRILLING RIG IN THE BAY

You may have seen a large drilling rig being towed off-shore from Mt Martha during July. Sue Brabender photographed it in mist on 9th July (see below).

It was a Diamond Ocean Onyx drilling rig, which had completed drilling for gas as part of the Otway Offshore Project, southwest of Cape Otway. The rig was then towed over two days to Port Phillip Bay, to remain there for about two weeks before being towed to Western Australia.

See [220707-Beach-Energy-Otway-Offshore-Project-Update-July-2022.pdf](https://www.beachenergy.com.au/220707-Beach-Energy-Otway-Offshore-Project-Update-July-2022.pdf) ([beachenergy.com.au](https://www.beachenergy.com.au))



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FAREWELL ROS

Ros Crompton died on 12th June, aged 76, after almost two months in Intensive Care with a sudden and devastating illness.

Ros and her partner Sue Betheras joined BERG Mt Martha in 2009, soon after moving to Mt Martha. Sue remembers how the two were quickly welcomed by BERG members into the local community. Ros loved living in Mt Martha, with their gorgeous garden, and beach and bushland nearby.



A paint-splattered Ros Crompton hard at work doing up BERG's newly acquired storeroom in the Campground at a working bee in December 2011
Photo Angela Kirsner

Always creative and inventive, Ros served for some years on BERG's vibrant Community Awareness Group (CAG), as well as a brief stint on the Committee. Among her contributions, she designed BERG banners and cards, and ran 'Ambassador Training' – workshops on speaking in public to help BERGers represent BERG to groups in the community.

MURAL REPAIRS

Michael Leeworthy, the artist originally involved in working with four local schools to create the murals at the campground rotunda, has contacted BERG MM and offered to repair the damage that has occurred to the paintings over the years.

As a result of this generous offer, the Shire's graffiti removal team is removing the most recent graffiti, then Michael will touch up and repair the paintings, and they will be re-coated with anti-graffiti coating.

Thanks Michael!



The photos, from December 2014, show Michael with two of the murals and the children he worked with to produce them.

*Photos
Angela Kirsner*

FIELD NEWS

MORE WEEDING, PLANTING AND EATING

Field Officer Liz Barraclough reports

One of our targets over the past couple of months has been to repair the damage to bushland from the BMX tracks and jumps carved out during lockdowns and beyond.

Between the Watson Rd tennis courts and kindergarten, the Shire flattened the tracks and jumps, and the Friday group planted some 350 indigenous tubestock. They also placed logs and branches to minimise run-off and erosion.

The June Sunday group did much the same in the Rabbit Paddock, where more tracks and jumps had been carved out. More planting, more erosion control. And in August, a Sunday group of two plus Tess from Naturelinks pulled a few more tracks apart, this time below Citation Oval, while weeding and planting another 25 plants.

The July Sunday workers were again in the Rabbit Paddock to remove yet more Polygala, plus a bit of planting. There has been a forest of Polygala here, and seedlings need ongoing follow up for years.

The Friday groupers also planted below the Citation Oval sports pavilion, a site being restored under our current Biolinks grant. They weeded around the thriving advanced trees in the lower part of the Rabbit Paddock. They removed remnant Arum Lilies and Vinca at the end of La Trobe Drive, and weeded along the Henley Avenue drainage line.



The Forget-me-nots are showing their heads again along the boardwalk below the ovals, and both the Friday and Sunday groups are continuing to tackle these. Masses of them still! Maybe one day we will eliminate them!

And the Friday lot also spread a mountain of mulch around Mirang Avenue and the entrance to Old Campground carpark. It looks wonderful!

Naturelinks

Naturelinks as always continues its work under our grants. Some of the things they did: chain-sawed pines and pittosporums below Citation Oval, sprayed Blackberry patches and Bridal Creeper, tackled more woody weeds, Blackberry and vines along Maude St and Victoria Crescent, joined in the Polygala onslaught at the top of Rabbit Paddock, weeded and sprayed around recent campground plantings. They hand-weeded a heavy infestation of Tradescantia, aiming to get every possible scrap of this tenacious weed. They also did some careful hand weeding among our gorgeous orchid patches.

Above: Bags full of Tradescantia weeded by the Friday Group along the Henley Ave drainage line in June. Left to right, Jeanette Miller, Marg Knight, Kath Smalley, Bev Favolo, Marion Orchison, Erin Wilson (Naturelinks), Jock McMillan

Below: Forget-me-not warrior Kath Smalley with a mountain of the weed pulled from below the Ferrero ovals in August by the Friday Group. Last year Kath & her brother & sister-in-law Eric & Helen Smalley almost single-handedly cleared the area of Forget-me-nots through lockdowns. With Eric & Helen currently travelling, Kath has led this year's charge!

Photos Liz Barraclough



L-R: Friday group mulching in rain between Mirang Ave & Esplanade; the mulch spread; & entrance to car park planted as well.

Photos Pia Spreen (left), Angela Kirsner (middle & right).



COASTAL NEWS

From Cate Clarke

The Coast Group met only occasionally over winter, with many members fleeing to warmer climes. As always, however, the ever-present weeds have been our focus, notably Polygala and Bridal Creeper, aiming to get to them before they flower and seed.

At the same time, the cooler weather and soaking rains have provided perfect conditions for the annual winter planting.

July 20th saw a small but dedicated group start work on the weed *Carpobrotus edulis*, an indigenous-look-alike also known as Pigface or Hottentot Fig. We needed to be meticulous in removing every skerrick; any broken bits will regrow.

The patch we targeted was in front of the North Beach toilet block. We aim to allow native grasses and ground covers such as Bowers Spinach and Hairy Spinifex to take over. We also planted Coast Bonefruit *Threlkeldia diffusa* and Coast Twin Leaf *Zygophyllum billardierei*.



Weeding *Carpobrotus edulis*, North Beach, 20th July Chris Sordello, Cate Clarke, Ian Matson & Clive Alsop Photo Danielle Suffern

On August 17th, another small but hard-working group worked along the upper areas of South Beach. They planted Dianella, Leucopogon, Goodenia, Wallaby grass, *Senecio minimus*, Poas, and Coast Twin Leaf, weeding as they went. A very productive morning, topped off by an excellent morning tea, giving us the opportunity to discuss the morning's achievements and swap holiday stories.

CARPOBROTUS SPP FRIENDS AND FOES

The weed: *Carpobrotus edulis*, from South Africa, has naturalised widely throughout the world and it hybridises readily with native species. It flowers over summer, from about November to March, with white, pale pink or lemon-yellow flowers. It is highly invasive and competes with naturally occurring vegetation by changing the soil constituents and the dune formation.



Above & below: Two variants of the introduced *Carpobrotus edulis*, or Pigface Photos Angela Kirsner



The local: Its Australian cousin, *Carpobrotus rossii* or Karkalla, is indigenous to Mount Martha and throughout coastal areas of Southern, Eastern and Western Australia.

It has been severely affected by hybridisation with the introduced species. *C. rossii* is most easily identified by a magenta or bright purple flower, but hybrids also often take on this colour, making identification difficult.



The indigenous *Carpobrotus rossii*, or Karkalla Photo Angela Kirsner

PROBUS PLANTS TREES FOR BERG MT MARTHA

From Elaine MacMillan, BERGer and coordinator of the Arthurs Seat Probus Garden Group

A cold and wintery day did not deter members of the Arthurs Seat Probus Garden Group, who gathered on 27th June to plant trees in the upper part of the Rabbit Paddock and see something of BERG MM's work at the same time.

Liz had suggested the site, to continue the Friday Group's work there, near the damaging BMX tracks, and the Probus gardeners planted and guarded Manna gums and Blackwood wattles. Several expressed interest in joining BERG, impressed with what we have already achieved in this area.

Thanks to Liz for setting up the planting day for us.



Above: Tom & Beth Connelly, of the Arthur's Seat Probus Garden Group, planting in the Rabbit Paddock. Below: The trees planted by the group, supplemented by BERG plantings Photos Elaine MacMillan



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Come along to our Bushland Activities	Join us at Waterwatch & EstuaryWatch	Other Local Groups
<p>❖ 2nd Sunday of the month: between 9.30am & noon. Details emailed a few days ahead, or call Liz Barraclough 0408 388 430.</p> <p>❖ Coast Group: fortnightly on Wednesdays, between 9am & noon. Call Suzanne Ryan 0418 387 604. Details emailed a few days ahead.</p> <p>❖ Friday Group: weekly between 9.30am & noon. Call Liz Barraclough 0408 388 430. Details emailed a few days ahead.</p>	<p>First Sunday of each month:</p> <p>❖ Waterwatch testing: meet 9.15am at Uralla Rd bridge. Enquiries to Franc Amendola 0433 626 007.</p> <p>❖ EstuaryWatch testing: meet 9.00am at the Rotunda. Enquiries to Bruce Ferres 0435 389 804.</p>	<p>❖ BirdLife Mornington Peninsula bird-watching 2nd Wednesday and 3rd Sunday. Enquiries to Max Burrows mornington@birdlife.org.au or 0429 947 893, or visit www.birdlife.org.au/locations/birdlif-e-mornington-peninsula.</p> <p>❖ Sunshine Reserve working bee 9.30am, last Sunday of month. Call Pia Spreen 0437 299 847.</p>
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