



**Berg**  
Mt Martha

Caring for the Balcombe Estuary Reserves

# THE CREEK

Volume 17 No 3, June 2013

## JOIN US TO LAUNCH THE YELLOW ROBIN AUDIO TRAIL

**B**ERG Mt Martha's brand new Yellow Robin Audio Trail will be launched by The Hon Greg Hunt MP on Tuesday, 11 June at 9.45am. As well as being our local Federal MP, Greg is a long-standing member of BERG Mt Martha.



Mt Martha Primary School students will then 'test drive' the trail. 'Wally the Wallaby' will tell them stories about the reserve via a smart phone or internet-enabled tablet, which will read a code cube at each of the station markers along the way, to take them to the audio tour website.

There's an adult version as well, to give visitors a valuable introduction to the reserve's flora and fauna, its history and its traditional owners. Before you come, download a free QR reader from the App store to your smartphone or tablet, so you can read the code cubes.

The Audio Trail has been produced by SEEDS Bushland Restoration & Environmental Education, with funding from Melbourne Water.

Audio Trail stations to whet your appetite include: A time in history, a time past; Butterfly ballet; History on show; Estuaries, nature's filter; Rehabilitating a resource; Connecting your senses; and Burning to bring new life.

Where: Rotunda, Balcombe Estuary, Mirang Ave, Mt Martha  
When: 9.45 Tuesday, 11 June 2013  
RSVP to: info@berg.org.au  
or 0447 160 288

## NEW NAME, NEW LOOK, NEW RULES

**W**e were gratified by the large turnout and the support of members at our Special General Meeting on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> May.

The resolution to change the name of our organisation to Balcombe Estuary Reserves Group Mt Martha Inc. was endorsed by founding President Richard Hawkins and carried unanimously, as was the resolution to adopt the new rules.

We were delighted that Richard came from Benalla for this meeting (see photo).



### A new logo

Graham Hubbard, our Vice President, took the opportunity to introduce BERG Mt Martha's new logo, which heads this edition of The Creek for the first time. While many of us remain fond of the eel that has served as our logo for 15 years, the committee felt that it did not convey to outsiders what BERG Mt Martha does. The new logo incorporates, in stylised form, the creek, the bushland, the boardwalk, and even a waterbird.

Indra Kurzeme then gave a most interesting illustrated talk on the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne. She spoke of the complexity of the planning of the Australian Garden and how, for example, wriggling paths represent the Scribbly Gum. She pointed out how the gardens cater for all age groups – we were particularly taken with the Hortosauraus for children to climb over and under! She also emphasised the various garden beds showing how home gardeners could use Australian plants.

## FIELD NEWS

*Field Officer Liz Barraclough reports*

### Working bees

At the April working-bee we spread mountains of mulch on the revegetation area in the Easement between Balcombe Grammar and Greenfield Way, after the area had been sprayed and weeded by Naturelinks. Many thanks to Peter Markowicz and Anita Faras, young neighbours, who came and helped us and continued beyond the call of duty and later spread the remaining mulch after we'd left.

Balcombe Grammar Year 7 students are helping us replant this area on three Wednesdays over the next two months, as part of their Community Service program. The lovely recent rain will hopefully get this biolinks habitat corridor established this year.

In May, the rain bucketed down, but it didn't even slow the seven BERGers and three new volunteers who turned up.



New volunteers Umesh Kotor and Zoe Boehnke braved the rain at the May working bee Photo Liz Barraclough

Of these three, Umesh Kotor is a Deakin University student who is doing an environmental elective with the Department of Environment and Life Sciences. As part of this, he is

*continued next page*

Thanks to David Morris MP for printing and copying material for our Special General Meeting.

studying the management of our current Coastcare project. Will Smith's work with BERG Mt Martha will help him to gain his Scout Adventurer Badge. Zoe Boehnke, the third new face, is fairly new to Mt Martha and about to join BERG.

We planted 248 coastal plants on the foreshore slope from the northern carpark to Victoria Cres. The whole morning, including morning tea, was a bit of soggy affair ('drowned rat' was heard to describe one wet worker), but we achieved what we set out to do and even had fun doing it.

#### Tuesday Group

Naturelinks has been through spraying grassy weeds throughout the Bunyip and the Tuesday group has been following up with control of flat weeds, Teatree and Sallow Wattle seedlings. Their main focus is the area just north and west of the kindergarten.

#### Friday Group

The Friday Morning Group has been working in the Quarry area, weeding thistles and cutting down dead Blackberry canes. And this has revealed a cache of old tyres, maybe dumped by the Army over 50 years ago, in the low-lying area at the base of the quarry. The more we looked, the more we found – four of us stacked 146 tyres in a pile near Uralla bridge!

It's a damp spot, especially in the winter, and we plan to establish here an ephemeral wetland of sedges and swamp plants as a frog habitat.

On Friday 10th May Gidja Walker, our wonderful local ecologist, talked

to us about the characteristics and management of some sites in the reserve. As always she was informative and inspiring, and imbued us with enthusiasm and added knowledge to continue our restoration.

#### Biodiversity Symposium

The Shire organised an excellent Friends Network Day at Coolart on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> April, which I attended along with six other BERGers. We learnt about native bees from Dr Ken Walker; bryophytes from Dr Pina Milne (our AGM speaker last year); how insects help to conserve orchids, from Rudie Kuitert; bandicoot biology and research, from Sarah Maclagan; nocturnal avifauna on the Peninsula, from Ed McNabb; and microbats from Dr Lindy Lumsden (another past AGM speaker for BERG).

#### Mt Martha Primary School

As part of the school's Environment Month Program, in May Jenny Selby, Jenny Rolleston, John Inchley and I gave a 40 minute presentation to the Grade 5s about indigenous plants – a prelude to a morning of planting in and around the school on 22<sup>nd</sup> May. We supplied a plant for each of the 90 students to put in the ground.

#### A control burn in Maude St

If you've driven along Maude St lately you will have seen the patch near Victoria Cres where the Shire carried out a fire control burn on the 7<sup>th</sup> April. It will be exciting to monitor the regeneration here in spring. Watch this space for more news on this area.

## BIRDWATCHERS AT WORK

*Pam Hearn reports*

On a beautiful, sunny morning, 23<sup>rd</sup> April, David Ap-Thomas and I did our autumn survey of birds in the Balcombe Creek Reserve. David had spotted Crested Terns and Silver Gulls on the beach before I arrived. We then saw Little Pied and Little Black Cormorants decorating the poles on the little jetty, and a group of Chestnut Teal sailed hopefully towards us (I guess people have been feeding them!).

We encountered a lot of people out enjoying the boardwalk, many with dogs, (some still not on leads). This Reserve is very well-used.

Many Brown Thornbills were chittering in the scrub; also flocks of Silvereyes and Red-Browed Finches (at one stage we saw a large group of 18+), which made us very happy! Walking through the Bunyip, we were delighted by Eastern Spinebills flitting around, and heard the constant calls of Spotted Pardalotes. We proceeded to the boardwalk, and heard more of the small birds, saw a Hoary-headed Grebe and Dusky Moorhen on the Creek, and after a great cacophony of bird alarm calls, saw a Brown Goshawk circling overhead.

White-browed Scrub-wrens zipped through dense ground cover, and a very large flock of Galahs flew overhead.

After a pleasant morning's walk, we counted 32 species. Our next survey will be in Winter.



Liz Barraclough and Jock MacMillan wheel yet more tyres out from the old quarry! Photo Sue Betheras



The control burn site on Maude St, taken a few days after the burn. The area was burnt in rows, after the tea trees had been dropped. Photo Angela Kirsner

## MASTER PLAN FOR FERRERO & CITATION RESERVES

Mornington Peninsula Shire has commissioned a Master Plan to guide future management and development of the sporting areas of Citation and Ferrero Reserves, Mt Martha. This plan will have a significant impact on the Reserves.

This article sets out BERG Mt Martha's concerns about the Plan. We encourage you to express your views directly to the Shire as soon as possible.

### What is proposed?

The Ferrero Reserve Users Group has put forward a proposal that includes more lights, intensive parking, the development of a third small oval, improvements to existing change rooms and the development of a large pavilion.

### Why is BERG Mt Martha concerned?

Ferrero Reserve is located in a wildlife corridor that connects the Balcombe Estuary Reserves with the Hopetoun Creek Reserve. Any further development would destroy this biolink completely.

### Why are the Balcombe Estuary Reserves important?

The Balcombe Estuary Reserves, declared in 1987 and covering 44 hectares between Nepean Hwy and the coast, protect the largest intact and unspoilt estuary on the eastern side of Port Philip Bay. They support a diversity of flora species and provide habitat for many native birds and reptiles and a few remaining mammals.

They are also an integral link in a larger habitat corridor for indigenous flora and fauna, which extends through The Briars and beyond, and the reserves along Hopetoun Creek..

### What are BERG Mt Martha's views on the proposed expansion of Ferrero Reserve?

- We support upgrading Seppelt Ave to a (sealed) dual carriageway. This will be safer for traffic, improve erosion control and reduce silting of the creek and estuary.
- We support upgrading drainage throughout the reserves. This would

greatly improve the silting problem in the Creek and Estuary as well as improving the maintenance of the Ferrero ovals.

- We support an approach to increase car parking by formalizing the space around the two ovals.
- We support better utilization and the upgrading of the Citation Reserve facilities (but only into the present open space). The proximity of the two reserves should not only allow for the sharing of facilities, but should reduce need for further expansion of the Ferrero complex.
- We are very concerned that the proposed expansion at Ferrero Reserve will interfere irrevocably with the wildlife corridor connecting the vegetation of Balcombe Creek to Hopetoun Creek.
- We strongly oppose the use of fire tracks in and around the reserve for through traffic as it would disturb and destroy the wildlife corridor.
- We are strongly opposed to encroachment (for parking, other sporting facilities etc) into the Reserve to the east or west of the two ovals, because of the special nature of the Balcombe Reserves, particularly given the ability to place sporting facilities in other locations.
- We were very concerned by the work recently undertaken by stealth to create an overflow car park area for the football grand final series.
- We have strong reservations about the construction of a third oval for the following reasons:
  - The effective width of a habitat corridor is 100m and this would not allow sufficient room for the proposed development.
  - It would involve major works very close to the creek in a low-lying area which is very boggy in winter.
  - The proposed development predisposes the area for future expansion, despite assurances this would not happen.
  - We emphasize that this proposal could be contemplated only if, on the advice of the Conservation Officers of the Natural Systems Team of the Shire, it would *not*

be detrimental to the ecology of the area.

- The presence of a drainage pit in this area suggests that it is part of an existing drainage system.

### What can I do?

Express your views to the Shire as soon as possible, using the feedback form.

As a local resident you may have received a feedback form, or you will find one on the Shire's website [http://www.mornpen.vic.gov.au/W/hats/On/YourSay/Citation and Ferrero Reserves](http://www.mornpen.vic.gov.au/W/hats/On/YourSay/CitationandFerreroReserves)

If you would like further information, our full submission is available on our website [www.berg.org.au/resources/publications](http://www.berg.org.au/resources/publications)

This is an important issue for the future of the Balcombe Estuary Reserves. We encourage you to have your say about the Master Plan.

### ABOUT HABITAT CORRIDORS

Habitat corridors, or biolinks, are corridors of bushland that connect remnants of native vegetation and, in doing so, increase the habitat available for local flora and fauna.

So much of our remaining bushland is fragmented, leaving many native species isolated in islands of bushland. But movement between habitats is essential for sustainable and healthy populations. Habitat corridors allow native fauna to move to new areas when food sources, shelter and breeding sites are scarce, and they help to prevent inbreeding and maintain genetic diversity.

Local Landcare groups and the Devilbend Foundation are spearheading moves to establish biolinks across the Mornington Peninsula, linking significant remnants of vegetation. Their ultimate aim is an effective east-west corridor from near Hastings to the estuary and foreshore at Mt Martha.

Particularly in this context, destruction of the existing biolink between the Balcombe Estuary Reserves and the reserves along Hopetoun Creek would be a most retrograde step.

**DON'T LET IT GO  
DOWN THE DRAIN!**

**D**oes some of your stormwater simply wash down the drain? Why not divert it to your garden!

Melbourne Water and the Mornington Peninsula Shire are offering 500 FREE Downpipe Diverters (valued at \$130 each) to Mt Martha residents. They are initially targeting people in the Hopetoun Creek catchment (LaTrobe Drive and upstream), but this will be extended to others as the program progresses.

The diverters can be fitted to an existing downpipe or a water tank overflow. This not only benefits your garden, it also means less unfiltered stormwater in our waterways and bay.

Enquiries to Jessica or Kimberley, of the Shire's Renewable Resources Team – phone 5950 1278.

Right: BERG's Jenny Selby helps Kimberley Whitehead, from the Shire, demonstrate a downpipe diverter at the March working bee Photo A Kirsner



BERG Mt Martha Working Bees	Other BERG Mt Martha activities	Other Groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Monthly working bee: 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday, between 9 &amp; 12 am. Next are 16<sup>th</sup> June and 21<sup>st</sup> July. Meet at the Rotunda (Mel: 144 K11) or call Liz Barraclough on 0408 388 430 to find the work site.</li> <li>❖ Tuesdays 9.30 to 11.30, meet in the Kinder carpark, Watson Rd. Call Mary Stemp, 5974 3996</li> <li>❖ Friday mornings. Call Sue Betheras, 0408 808 201.</li> <li>❖ Hopetoun Creek Greenfield Reserve Call Hazel Athey, 0419 899 560</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Waterwatch testing: 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday at Augusta St Bridge. Call John Inchley, 5974 1095.</li> <li>❖ BERG Committee meets 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday each month at Mt Martha House, 9.00am. Next are 8<sup>th</sup> June &amp; 13<sup>th</sup> July. All members welcome.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Fairbairn Bushland Reserve Friends Group working bees. Call Judith Whittaker 5974 8174.</li> <li>❖ BirdLife Mornington Peninsula bird-watching 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday. Enquiries Max Burrows 9789 0224, mornington@birdlife.org.au or www.birdlife.org.au/locations/birdlife-mornington-peninsula.</li> <li>❖ SPIFFA (Southern Peninsula Indigenous Flora &amp; Fauna Association) 1<sup>st</sup> Monday, 7.30 pm, at Parks Vic, Hinton St, Rosebud. Enquiries 5988 6529, or www.spiffa.org.</li> </ul>
<p><b>BERG MT MARTHA COMMITTEE</b>                  PRESIDENT JOHN INCHLEY • VICE PRESIDENT GRAHAM HUBBARD • SECRETARY DI LEWIS • TREASURER RICHARD KIRSNER                  FIELD OFFICER LIZ BARRACLOUGH • NEWSLETTER ANGELA KIRSNER • SCHOOLS LIAISON JENNY SELBY                  • ROTARY CLUB LIAISON GEOFF KAYE • PUBLICITY BARBARA THRAVES &amp; ROS CROMPTON • MICHAEL SANDERS                  HOPETOUN CREEK GREENFIELD RESERVE GROUP HAZEL ATHEY • CENTURY DVE HABITAT LINK GROUP TONY O'CONNOR</p>		
<p>Balcombe Estuary Reserves Group Mt Martha Inc. No. A0034645Y ABN 50 224 628 623                  Mail: PO Box 433 Mt Martha 3934 Email: info@berg.org.au Mob: 0447 160 288 Web: www.berg.org.au</p>		

**THE CREEK**

Print Post Approved pp339493/00001  
 If undelivered, please return to:  
 BERG Mt Martha, PO Box 433  
 Mount Martha 3934

**SURFACE  
MAIL**

**POSTAGE  
PAID  
AUSTRALIA**

The CREEK is proudly printed & supported by

