

## 2015 Annual General Meeting

**Tuesday 24 November, 7pm for 7.30pm**  
**CERES Lower Merri Room, Roberts St East Brunswick**  
**Below the Merri Table & Bar - enter through the mosaic gate in Roberts St**

*Wurundjeri Elder, Uncle Dave Wandin, will tell us about Wurundjeri cultural practices, their use of plants and management of the land.*

### Agenda

1. President's Report – David Redfearn
2. Election of the 2016 Committee  
(Nominations invited – see below)
3. Election of six Friends' Representatives to MCMC
4. End of year celebrations
5. Drinks and nibbles provided.

### All members are invited to attend the AGM

Help celebrate another successful year by joining us for refreshments at 7pm before the AGM at 7.30pm. Hear Wurundjeri Elder, Uncle Dave Wandin, tell us about Wurundjeri cultural practices, their use of plants and management of the land, have your say in running the Friends group, and party afterwards.

### How about joining the FoMC Committee?

All committee positions become vacant at the AGM and it's always good to have some new people. A role on the Committee would suit someone who would like to do more in the group but perhaps isn't able to attend activities. Currently the Committee holds 5 meetings a year of about 2 hours, in even months before the AGM.

If you're interested in becoming a Committee member in the future, you can see what we do by attending meetings and receiving Agendas. Or you could become a Substitute Representative to Merri Creek Management Committee (MCMC) in preparation to becoming a full Representative.

If you are even slightly interested in any of the above roles, please contact Ray Radford by email: [merriecreek@bigpond.com](mailto:merriecreek@bigpond.com) or by phone: 0422 989 166. Also contact Ray for a Nomination Form, or download it from our website under *Membership*. The forms must be received before 20th November, although nominations for any vacancy will also be welcome at the AGM. It is absolutely okay to nominate yourself and leave it open to be seconded. An election will only be held if there are more nominations than vacancies.

### Check Your Membership

Please note that only financial members as at Tuesday 17th November can vote at the AGM or nominate for positions. Unfortunately, we are unable to approve memberships at the AGM.



*Wurundjeri dancers at the Merri Magical Morning in Merri Park Northcote on 22 February 2015.*

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# Secretary's Report: Friends Activities 2015

## 2015 Friends Committee:

President: David Redfearn  
 Vice-President: Ann McGregor  
 Secretary: Ray Radford  
 Treasurer: Nicole Lowe  
 Membership Sec: Monica Williamson  
 Committee members: Nick Williams, Yasmin Kelsall.

Also on the Committee were these representatives of Sub-Committees:

Regeneration Group: Nicole Lowe  
 Litter Group: Paul Prentice  
 Streamteam: Irene Baker  
 Newsletter: Dean Lombard.

The Committee met bi-monthly until 30 September, which is the limit of this report.

## Friends Representation on MCMC:

There was no change with our representatives on the Merri Creek Management Committee, with Ann McGregor, as President, Allie Dawe, as Treasurer, Nicole Lowe as Vice President, and Committee members, Pascale Pitot, Nick Williams and Ann Sanson. Our representatives remain the most consistent members at MCMC meetings, with some also attending Sub-Committee meetings.

All of our Substitute Representatives, David Redfearn, Yasmin Kelsall, Louise Wright, Suzi Shaw and Rebecca Mayo made a contribution.

## Regeneration Group Activities:

Our **maintenance** activities had 86 people attending these events:

Handweeding at the Friends' site near Strettle Wetland on 12/10/14 & 12/4 (when we trimmed the poas); and at the *Sumner Loving* events in Merri Park Northcote on 15/11/14, 14/3 and 2/5. A hardy crew always saw a big mob of kangaroos on our Woody Weed Removals at Bababi Marning on 23/11/14, 29/3, 19/4 (in the hail), 12/7 (the wettest day for 25 years), and 13/9.

256 people attended these **planting** events: at Lorne St Fawcner on Mother's Day 10/5; at Northcote Gorge on 17/5, at Moreland's World Environment Day near the Edgars Creek confluence (with other local groups) on 31/5; at Ngarridjarrang on 13/6; at McBryde St Fawcner on Monday 22/6 (students only); at Merri Park Wetland Northcote on 18/7; at Strettle Wetland Thornbury on 2/8; at Robinson Reserve Preston on 9/8; at the Koonda Lat bridge Northcote on 16/8; and at Jukes Rd Fawcner on 13/9 (at (with 78 people).

We planted a total of 9380 plants, which more than doubled the 4653 we planted in 2014. In addition, these events also often involved tree-guarding, litter clean-ups and handweeding.

We also assisted with plantings, at the Wurundjeri's Sunbury Rings site on 27/6, and Yarra's National Tree Day on 26/7.

Thanks again to the MCMC Parkland Management Team for supporting most of the plantings and also supplying

barbecues later. Thanks also to the Darebin Bush Crew for resourcing our expanding site near Strettle Wetland, Thornbury.

*Coordinator: Nicole Lowe.*

## Litter Clean-ups:

23 people cleaned up lots of litter monthly, except January: at Merlynston Creek Nth Coburg on 5/10/14; at Edwardes Lake Reservoir on 2/11/14; at Walker St East, Northcote on 7/12/14; at Bell St Coburg on 1/2/15; at Moomba Park Fawcner on 8/3; near Rushall Station Nth Fitzroy on 5/4; at Ngarridjarrang, Reservoir on 3/5; at Moreland's World Environment Day, Murray Rd Coburg on 31/5; at Clara St East Brunswick on 7/6; at Keady St North Coburg on 5/7; at Strettle Wetland Thornbury on 2/8; and at Rushwood Drive Craigieburn on 6/9.

*Coordinator: Paul Prentice.*

## Merri Birdwatch

There were 165 registrations by people on our quarterly bird surveys at ten sites along the Merri and at Edwardes Lake. Unfortunately, two surveys in September were cancelled due to leaders being unavailable. Thanks again to our volunteer survey leaders, and to Trevor Blake who compiled the results. We have recorded 135 species since surveys began in 2008.

*Coordinator: Ann McGregor.*

## Streamteam:

Monthly Waterwatch tests were done on Merri Ck at St Georges Rd and on Edgars Ck Waterfall. A total of 77 people attended at the Merri Creek site and 15 at the Edgars Creek site. The regular monitors were frequently joined by enthusiastic passers-by of all ages. An additional test session was performed in June at the Friends of Edgars Creek *Walk and Talk*, where the waterbugs and chemical tests were very popular. Also a scout group attended the August session on Merri Creek. The variations in the water quality and macroinvertebrate abundance that we see are linked to seasonal temperature and water level changes.

*Coordinator: Irene Baker*

## Walks Talks and Tours:

This section had a really big year with a grand total of 361 people attending these events: 26 people learnt lots at our two Habitat Gardening Workshops on 25/10/14 and 18/5; 11 people wandered to our *Wild Discovery Walk* at Bababi Marning on 26/10/14; 40 people hopped along to our *Sumner Loving Evening with Frogs* at Merri Park Wetland Northcote; 130 people appeared at the *Merri Magical Morning* in Merri Park on 22/2, 7 pilgrims joined Bruce McGregor's *Holy Sites Tour* on 26/3; 97 people had a 'wild' time at our *Family Nature Day* at Bababi Marning on 24/5; 16 people attended the *Need for Seed* information session on 15/6; and 34 people flocked to Peter Marriott's talk, *The Beautiful World of Moths* on 16/9. We also conducted some private tours of Merri Park Northcote for particular interest groups.

## Newsletter:

Dean Lombard continues to do great layouts and produce high-quality *Merri Growler* newsletters. This year, 8-page newsletters were printed and sent in February, May, August, and November. *Layout: Dean Lombard.*

## Campaigns:

We continued pressing for the best environmental outcome from the Urban Growth Boundary expansion; and contributing to the campaign on the Brunswick Terminal Station. Unfortunately we failed to get the escarpment land alongside Merri Creek at Beavers Rd Northcote into public ownership.

## Other Activities and News:

FoMC no longer has an office, since moving out of Brunswick Town Hall after 14 years. A number of our members helped organise the exhibition, *Merri Creek: from wasteland to parklands*, now showing at libraries around the catchment.

Grants were received from: Communities For Nature (plus a fourth year of their two four-year grants), Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria, Bendigo Bank Clifton Hill, and Moreland City Council (for MECCARG).

12 people helped with surveys of Golden Sun Moths in late 2014; and 21 for Yam Daisies on 2/5. We again only held one stall - at the Sydney Rd Street Party on 1/3.

Des and Ruth Shiel continued recording oral histories of Merri Creek prior to 1970 and edited excerpts of their interviews have appeared in the newsletter.

Altogether, about 1000 people attended around 60 events involving FoMC, and this doesn't include any of our sub-groups.

Thanks again to Monica Williamson for looking after the memberships; to our web master, Simon D'Alfonso; to Ruth Shiel for updating our only sign near Roseneath St Clifton Hill; to Julie Mason for welcoming new members; and to Suzi Shaw for managing our Facebook page.

**Ray Radford** Secretary 2015





# Birds along the Merri in early spring

*Forty people enjoyed the sunshine and lots of vocal, springtime bird activity during seven surveys on 6 September, and seven observers came to the Bababi Marning survey on 13 September. Surveys at two of our regular sites (Coburg Lake and Galada Tamboore) were cancelled because leaders were not available.*

The East Coburg birders reported that Collared Sparrowhawks have returned to their nest up high in a pine next to the creek near Fyffe St, Thornbury. A pair of Magpies was building a nest in a Eucalypt adjacent to the survey meeting point in Kirkdale St Park, East Brunswick. Another large stick nest was noted on the opposite side of the creek, but the surveyors could not get a clear view of the occupants – either Little Ravens or Currawongs. Magpies were also nesting at Edwardes Lake, and two active Raven nests were noted at Bababi Djinanang. A Pipit that allowed a close approach at Bababi Marning (see photo) was likely to have a nest on the ground nearby. A Red Wattlebird was seen at a nest in a Eucalypt across the Creek from CERES in the East Brunswick survey.

A Golden Whistler recorded at Bababi Djinanang had been present for several months. Courting pairs of Horsfield's Bronze-Cuckoos and Pipits were also observed. A Black-shouldered Kite was recorded at Bababi Djinanang during the survey; one was seen at Edwardes Lake a few days later (10 September).

One of the birders on the way to Galgi Ngarrk saw a Brown Falcon coming out of the Ford factory in Broadmeadows (*not a current model?*). Another three were recorded at Galgi Ngarrk, as well as a Nankeen Kestrel and a nesting Australian Hobby. There was also a large flock of Straw-necked Ibis with a few White Ibis in the grasslands.

Several Pallid Cuckoos were feeding on hairy caterpillars on grasses at Bababi Marning.

A total of 74 bird species was seen across the eight sites surveyed in September. The Magpie and Little Raven were recorded at all eight sites. The Common Starling was the most numerous species with 190 individuals recorded, but this was mainly due to 145 being recorded at Galgi Ngarrk. The Rainbow Lorikeet (157) and Red Wattlebird (134) were also numerous. The sites with the most diversity were Edwardes Lake and Blyth St - Moreland Rd (with 31 species each), and Bababi Djinanang (30 species). Galgi Ngarrk had the most individual birds, an estimate of 317, though this included the Starlings. Blyth St - Moreland Rd (263 recorded), Egans Reserve, Coburg (256 recorded) and Edwardes Lake, Reservoir (249 recorded) also had high numbers.

**Ann McGregor** BirdWatch Coordinator



*Australasian Pipit at Bababi Marning. Photo by Keith Patford.*

## Fourth Merri Birdwatch survey for 2015

Bird surveys will be held from 8.45–10.30am at ten sites along Merri Creek as listed below. Beginners welcome, BYO binoculars if possible, but no dogs please, as they reduce the number and variety of birds to be seen. The contact for all Birdwatch events is Ann McGregor 0429 386 102.

*Free leaflets on Merri Birds (normally \$2) are available for all participants*

### **Surveys at the following nine sites are on 8 November**

- Bababi Djinanang (Jukes Rd Grasslands), Fawkner:** Meet on the Merri Path at the end of Jukes Road, Fawkner (Melway 18 A2).
- Egan Reserve – Harding Street – Strettle Reserve – Normanby Avenue:** Meet at the bluestone steps at the end of The Grove, East Coburg (Melway 30 A3).
- Coburg Lake Reserve:** Meet near the car park, Lake Grove, Coburg (Melway 17 H10).
- Edwardes Lake:** Meet at the playground adjacent to Griffiths Street, Reservoir (Melway 18 E5).
- CERES – Moreland Road:** Meet at the seats on the Merri Path at rear of CERES, East Brunswick (Melway 30 B7).
- Merri Park and Phillips Reserve:** Meet at the end of Victoria Street, East Brunswick, at the BBQ shelter (Melway 30 B8).
- Hall Reserve – Yarra Bend Park:** Meet at the Rotunda, Hall Reserve, Clifton Hill (Melway 2D D1).
- Galgi Ngarrk (Craigieburn Grasslands):** Meet at O'Herns Road gate off Hume Highway, Somerton (Melway 180 E6).
- Galada Tamboore:** Meet at the end of Hatty Court, Campbellfield (Melway 7 K6).

### **The survey at Bababi Marning (Cooper St Grasslands) is on 15 November**

Meet near the Istrian Club, Cooper Street, Campbellfield (Melway 180 K10).

# The rise, fall and rise of Oakover Hall

*This is part 2 of the article "Pioneers of the Merri Creek" that appeared in the August newsletter.*

**A**BRAMHAM Booth bought Oakover Hall from Thomas Goodwin in 1863. Booth's wealth had been founded upon the two properties he had developed in the then vast unoccupied lands of Northern Victoria.

Booth and his friend Edward Argyle arrived in Port Phillip in 1840, and immediately established a successful butchering business in Flinders Street. Abraham was one of 12 children whose family had a small holding in the village of Pentrich in socially depressed Derbyshire. But the Booths were strong Methodists, god-fearing and hard-working, with aspirations to better their station in life. Abraham worked as a farm labourer in Derbyshire, but his ambition in the Colony was to acquire land, *"the squatting business"*, as he termed it.

In 1843, he and Argyle claimed the 112,000 acre Duck Swamp property near what is now Kerang. Later, in 1853, he left Duck Swamp and with partners John and Lucy Holloway from Staffordshire took up the adjoining property Tragowell of 120,320 acres. Prosperity was hard wrung from these properties as they faced down all the natural vicissitudes of pioneer life. But Booth and his friends were canny businessmen and knowledgeable farmers. They specialised in the massive Durham Shorthorn cattle, their meat became renowned in regional markets, and the gold discoveries of 1851 assured a steady demand for their stock.

So successful had his land ventures been that in 1863, the same year that he purchased Oakover Hall, he acquired 65,000 acres of pastoral runs on the Murrumbidgee River near Wagga. Yet he had known personal tragedy in his pioneering days. His first wife, Edward Argyle's sister Martha, and son died from childbirth complications at Richmond in 1854. He seemed to exhibit a liking for the females of his partners' families for in 1856 he married Hannah, the 21 year old daughter of John and Lucy Holloway at Tragowell.

In 1862, with their fortunes made, the Holloways and the Booths returned to England, intent to live out their days amidst the green and peaceful fields of the Mother Country. George, the eldest Holloway son, was left in charge at Tragowell. But Lucy Holloway missed her children too much.

On return in 1863, they forsook the pioneering life for good. The Holloways retired to Birch Cottage, an eight acre property in Coburg, while just across the Merri Creek in Preston Abraham settled his family at Oakover Hall, from where he directed his squatting interests. The Booths had three children when they arrived at Oakover: in another ten years they were to add eight more!

During the 1880s and 1890s, one of the Booth daughters kept a diary of their lives at Oakover (held at State Library Victoria). They are earnest and factual records of their world. There are none of the social fripperies common among the Melbourne gentry of those days - no dances, no balls, no parties. Abraham was said to have had "an active distaste for the sport of horse-racing," a favourite preoccupation of the social elite.

Nor would Abraham have any truck with land speculation, despite being offered exorbitant sums for parts of Oakover during the land boom of the 1880s. The Booths had deep involvement with the Methodist church, and Abraham worshipped at the Wesleyan Church in Coburg. The diaries record clergymen coming for tennis and croquet in the gardens. Country cousins, the Argyles and the Holloways, regularly visited. The family seems to have been in a constant state of movement - picnics at Studley Park and Deep Creek, visits to friends at Brighton, day trips down the Bay to Geelong. It was nothing to drive at night to hear the Archbishop preach at the Town Hall. Sunday School picnics were held annually in the grounds at Oakover. Abraham ("Papa") was up and down by train to Wagga.

There is little in the diaries about farming at Oakover. References are made to pigs, chooks and "shearing the garden lambs," and to an ongoing contretemps with a neighbour about roaming cattle. There was a large orchard: daughter Lucy made 22lbs. of plum and 7lbs. of mulberry jam! Pigs were boiled down for lard and pork pies made.

The rise of Abraham Booth from farm labourer to the squire of Oakover Hall in a little over 20 years had been remarkable. His sons were educated at Wesley College and his daughters at Methodist Ladies College. His eldest son, John, graduated from Melbourne University in science and engineering, and later was on the University's council and a member of the Royal Society of Victoria. Sons Edward and William took out medical degrees.

In his late years, Abraham was said to have lived at Oakover in "patriarchal ease surrounded with every reasonable comfort," content to be among his *"comfortable looking cows,"* as the Melbourne Herald of 1897 put it. He died in 1902 and was buried in the Coburg Cemetery.

**Continued on next page**



Abraham Booth, who bought Oakover Hall in 1863.



*The speakers and some significant others at Brunswick Library on 6 October for the launch of the exhibition: Merri Creek from wasteland to parklands. Left to right: Wurundjeri Elders, Auntie Georgina Nicholson and Uncle Dave Wandin; Luisa Macmillan, Manager, Merri Creek Management Committee; David Redfearn, President, Friends of Merri Creek; Rebecca Mayo, Exhibition Working Group member; Shane Maloney, author – who opened the exhibition; Ann McGregor, President, Merri Creek Management Committee; Greg Bain, Acting General Manager Waterways and Land, Melbourne Water; Glenyys Romanes, Exhibition Working Group member; and Cr Meghan Hopper, Mayor, Moreland City Council.*

**Merri Creek exhibition flows on:** The fantastic *Merri Creek: from wasteland to parklands* opened at Brunswick Library on 6 October and remained on display for the month. Friends of Merri Creek life members, Ann and Bruce McGregor, gave an outstanding presentation in conjunction with the exhibition on 15 October: it celebrates community achievements since 1975 in transforming the Creek from a weed-smothered drain to the much-loved centrepiece of a bushland corridor.

For November, the exhibition moves to the Coburg Library, corner Victoria and Louisa Streets, then it goes to Richmond Library, 415 Church Street. After that, it will move around the Merri catchment at venues to be announced.

**Beavers Rd damned:** Despite our best efforts, the owners of 177 Beavers Rd Northcote decided not to transfer the escarpment land alongside Merri Creek into public ownership. This is most disappointing, as they have shown no ability to properly manage the land in the past. However, the owners of the property on the corner of Merri Creek and Beavers Rd are keen to revegetate their section of the land. Let's hope that they do, and that the other owners also lift their game. It is up to all of us to ensure that Darebin Council makes this happen.

**Reps to planning group:** On request, FoMC nominated representatives Ann McGregor and Nick Williams to the Melbourne Strategic Assessment Environment Stakeholder Group. Ann and Nick are extremely well qualified to help the group to mitigate the impacts of the Victorian Government's urban development program for Melbourne on matters of national environmental significance.

**FoMC logo on the move:** The next time you see our events trailer, you'll immediately notice the big new stickers of the FoMC logo on both sides. These were done with the compliments of Marlin Signs, so a huge public thank you to them, and to Rob Burnett of Friends of Edgars Creek for arranging it. If you want quality signage of any sort, quickly and at low cost, contact Marlin Signs at [www.marlinsigns.com.au](http://www.marlinsigns.com.au) or 9723 7900.

## The rise, fall and rise of Oakover Hall

The Booths left Oakover Hall in 1909 and moved to "Ambergate" in Wallace Avenue Toorak, where Hannah died in 1911. During the next 30 years the property was leased to various tenants; dairy farmer Edgar Sands ran his cows there during the 1920s-30s.

1927 saw the first major subdivision of the estate, when 14 house sites went on sale. Then in 1938 the Booths finally withdrew from Oakover, 75 years after Abraham had arrived there. "Preston's greatest subdivision" was announced, and 160 house sites were auctioned, including the three-quarter-acre property of Oakover Hall which could be purchased for £100 and 30/- weekly.

By the mid-forties the glory days of Oakover Hall were well and truly over: the building had become decrepit and hemmed in by encroaching development, while the early fifties saw the gracious old building being made into flats. Builder Keith Miller bought the Hall in 1963 and by 1974 five flats had been developed.

In recent years the house has been carefully and lovingly restored to its former glory; but the charm of Oakover was never just about the

building, its integration into its 19<sup>th</sup> century landscape provided its allure. Then, like a sentinel, it sat high and wide above the limpid stream that was the Merri Creek, with its sweeping views across the tree-studded grasslands of the Creek valley.

Today, we may mourn the passing of this idyllic landscape. But if we allow our imagination to dream wide, we can still enjoy Oakover Hall for what it is, a great Merri Creek survivor.

Des Shiel

## Help plan our 2016 planting activities

Wednesday 2 December, 6.30pm  
MCMC office, 2 Lee St  
East Brunswick

All FoMC members are welcome to help plan our planting and maintenance activities for 2016. Pizza and wine supplied.





# The path to awareness

*Perched above Port Phillip Bay, and surrounded by the Brisbane, Great Dividing and Dandenong Ranges, Melbourne is blessed with a wide fan of waterways; and the pivotal north-south one, flanked by the Werribee, Maribyrnong and Moonee Ponds on the west, and the Darebin, Yarra and Dandenong/Patterson on the east, is our “very stony” Merri Merri.*

**M**OST are accompanied by paths that enable people to reach their source of income, school, shops, sport or socialising; to enjoy relaxed or strenuous exercise, or to refresh their souls with the beauty of the water, the flora, and if they're lucky, some fauna. A wonderful variety of bridges and several sets of stony steps help them on their way; outdoor artworks or historic relics add interest to their trip.

The Merri's grandest rockwalk is just upstream of Keady St North Coburg, while its twenty-odd crossings range from the modest ones below High St Northcote to the arched Merri Creek Coordinating Committee commemoration, the stately Harding St suspended structure, and the sturdy bluestone, ex-Newlands Rd, by the Coburg Lake. Yet another reason to be grateful for waterways...

The Earth Heron, the Labyrinth, the Concrete Spiral, the antique crane, the “rolled-up concrete carpet”; the striking bronze statue above the Coburg Lake, the Moomba Park Fawcner stone spheres, Indigenous-themed murals at Galada Tamboore and the Merri Parade Northcote rail bridge, adorn the scene, as do a number of pieces at CERES, of which the big goanna is my favourite.

Meanwhile we have Dights Mill, the Hall Reserve's Depression-era bluestone shed, the World War II ammunition tunnel beneath the Oldis Gardens; the mysterious bit of bluestone wall by Merri Parade, the remains of the quarry's flying-fox at Kirkdale St Park, and the original, very basic Cooper St bridge to remind us of earlier, simpler, perhaps harsher times.

Going back infinitely further, to an essential part of why we are caring for the creek, is the Indigenous heritage of deep love of country and sustainable living: thus we are honoured to have the cultivation of the murnong (Yam Daisy, like a small parsnip) and other traditional plants near Murray Rd, and the annual celebration of it in conjunction with the land's true owners; their joining us in the ancient practice of grasslands-reviving ecological burns; the ACES retirement home near CERES, and the sacred Garden at the confluence with the Yarra, thankfully saved from being destroyed by an ill-conceived railway line.

Officially opened by PM Bob Hawke in October 1985, the Trail now runs about 20 km. from Dights Falls on the Yarra to the Ring Road's path, with only a short link to Galada Tamboore to go. Access for personal transport, especially

wheelchairs and prams, has been or will be enhanced by the “Koonda Lat” bridge in North Fitzroy, and easy ramps on either side of the duplicated rail viaduct in Clifton Hill, a bonus from that vital public transport improvement: these are just a couple of the many ongoing path upgrades.

It was amusing, though, to come across a letter (7/1/2008) from Infrastructure referring to the rather steep steps to the Coulson Reserve, but noting that a ramp would “not be implemented due to engineering issues”: as it is now to go ahead, they must have meant financial issues! Keeping us waiting for years, as with the Darebin-Yarra connection, at last proceeding, and the Clarke St Abbotsford bridge that would bypass the precipitous Gipps St staircases...

But returning to the environmental aspect, path users would surely appreciate the vegetation, as authentic as our planting and weeding can make it; and the tributaries, lakes, wetlands and reserves which add to the diversity and delight. Associated with the Merri, perhaps more than with any other waterway, are the precious remnant native grasslands: less dramatic than gorges, escarpments, dense forests, but possessing an austere beauty and a wildlife array of their own.

And in addition to the ecological spectacle there's the geological, the igneous rocks rearing up in cliffs, fractured into hexagons (“tessellated pavement” beside Connolly Ave Coburg), or jumbled in the creek bed for the water to thrash its way through: the greatest, noisiest lot being between Bakers Rd and Keady St. We are so privileged to have had those mighty eruptions and millennia of erosion to create such awe-inspiring scenes and their soothing music.

**Paul Prentice**

*Prime Minister and MP for Wills, Bob Hawke, and President of the Merri Creek Coordinating Committee, Ray O'Halloran, at Coburg Lake for the Merri Creek Festival in 1988, to celebrate the \$1 million Bicentennial works program along Merri Creek.*



## Dick's Witticisms

**More witty one-liners from FoMC Life Member, Dick Harcourt:**

Scientists have reduced the number of calamities we can blame on God.

Television: a medium. So called because it's neither rare nor well done.

# Friends of Edgars Creek Focus



*I would like to thank the wonderful volunteers who have continued to generously support our revegetation and community engagement agenda.*

SEPTEMBER saw our last planting event of the year (yes, late by some standards, though a high pressure fire pump and a furphy tank have enabled us to get sufficient root set on our later plantings over the years so we will stick with it!). We set a planting record for Friends of Edgars Creek (FoEC), 1260 tube stock found their way into the bridge escarpment area in a single day's planting – though admittedly plenty of hours went into getting holes in the ground before the planting day. An effort of

this magnitude can only come with the efforts of our volunteers. And speaking of records, our August planting numbers were just a little bit insane – we had two separate community groups join the planting event and our sign in book stopped at number 104! If only we had had more plants to get in the ground that day...

I was recently asked why I'm involved with FoEC. My response bumbled around love of the natural environment, and growing up on a farm close to the Campaspe and Murray Rivers. But my main reason is because it has helped me build resilience against the challenges that come with living in our fast-paced, digitalised, electronic, social media obsessed society. It is so humbling that so many wonderful people come together and share this passion, and it brings a sense of shared purpose, community and connection. Connection and Humility – a couple of powerful tools in the resilience toolbox! Keep up the great work everyone, especially as we head into the not so glamorous end of the calendar – maintenance and weeding!

*"See ya on the creek!"*

**David Pavone** President, Friends of Edgars Creek



*The scene of Friends of Edgars Creek's greatest ever planting numbers! The group looks forward to seeing the embankment flourishing in the months and years ahead.*

## Befriend our Facebook page



Join around 1000 others and 'like' our wonderful Facebook page at: [www.facebook.com/FriendsofMerriCreek](http://www.facebook.com/FriendsofMerriCreek) then click on 'Like' to get automatic updates to group activities and news.

### Post & win

Win a free bird book for the best post to our Facebook page each month.

### And we're on Instagram too

Smartphone users with the Instagram app can share photos with #merricreek #merricreektrail hashtags at Instagram @friendsofmerricreek

## Shining a light on Lacewings

**Presentation by Ken Harris**

Wednesday 24 February 2016, 7.30pm

*CERES Lower Merri Room,  
Roberts St East Brunswick*

Active naturalist Ken Harris is close to completing a book on the Lacewings of Victoria that shows 111 species of Neuroptera in 14 families.

The photo (right) shows the Owl-Fly *Megacmonotus magnus*, which Ken took at Ned's Corner in 2011, the first time the species had been found in Victoria. Please book with Ray by 17 February 2016: [merricreek@bigpond.com](mailto:merricreek@bigpond.com)





# NOVEMBER

**All November: Exhibition: Merri Creek: from wasteland to parkland**  
Coburg Library, corner Victoria and Louisa Streets, Coburg.  
This exhibition documents the history of community action to transform Merri Creek. After November it will move around the Merri catchment at venues to be announced.

**Sunday 1: Litter Clean Up- North Coburg**

Merlynston Creek confluence North Coburg, 10am-12noon. Melway 17 H9. Phone Paul 9489 5062.

**Sunday 1: Streamteam Water Quality Testing**

Upstream of St Georges Rd bridge, enter from Miller St, Nth Fitzroy, 2-3.30pm. Melway 30 C10. Phone: 9354 9885.

**Saturday 7: Sumner Loving Weed Workshop**

Merri Park Wetland, Northcote, Sumner Ave near Traill St, 1.30-4pm. Melway 30 C8, follow the flags. Help restore this fantastic almost natural wetland area in the heart of the suburbs, while you learn about local weeds. Funded by Communities for Nature and supported by the City of Darebin.

**Saturday 7: MECCARG\* Preparation for Murnong Gathering**

Meet at Connolly Ave Coburg, south of Murray Rd bridge, 1-3pm. Melway 18 A11. Wear sturdy footwear and gloves. Contact: Melissa 0417 255 873.

**Saturday 7: The Great Forest National Park Concert**

Brunswick Town Hall, 6pm. FoMC supports this concert to promote greater awareness about The Great Forest National Park. The Facebook event is: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1650248535222536/>

**Sunday 8: Fourth Bird Survey for 2015**

9 sites along the Merri. Details on page 3.

**Saturday 14: MECCARG\* Murnong Gathering**

Don't miss this unique cultural event. Meet near the footbridge on the Merri Creek trail between Murray Rd and Bell St Coburg, 11am-3pm. Melway 18 A11. Funded by the City of Moreland. Contact: Melissa 0417 255 873.

**Sunday 15: Fourth Bird Survey at Bababi Marning**

See page 3 for details.

**Sunday 15: Last of 5 Woody Weed Whacking at Bababi Marning**

Help to rid these native grasslands of woody weeds. Light refreshments provided. Meet at gate opposite 111 Metrolink Circuit Campbellfield, 10am-12.30pm. Melway 180 J12. Phone Ray 0422 989 166.

**Sunday 15: Friends of Edgars Creek Site Maintenance**

Meet at the Silurian Cliff site – access via Ronald St and head north past the bridge, 1-3pm Melway 18 A8. Maintenance at the Silurian Cliff site. Phone David on 0428 130 268.

**Tuesday 24: Friends of Merri Creek Annual General Meeting**

CERES Lower Merri Room, Roberts St East Brunswick. See front page for details.

**Late November: Threatened Species Monitoring Day (To Be Confirmed)**

Craigieburn Grassland (Galgi Ngarrk) Wollert, 10am-2.30 pm. If you are interested in monitoring two of Merri Creek's special threatened plants on a weekday, please register at [admin@mcmc.org.au](mailto:admin@mcmc.org.au) by 13/11/15. Lunch provided.

**STOP PRESS:** After their presentation for the Merri Creek exhibition at Brunswick Library, Ann & Bruce McGregor were surprised to receive Best Friends Awards from Ray Radford, in his role as the Convenor of the Victorian Environment Friends Network. The Awards are for outstanding dedication as a Friend of Merri Creek.



# EVENTS

# DECEMBER

**Early December: Golden Sun Moth Survey**

If you're willing to be on call to do a survey on a weekday at short notice, please register at [admin@mcmc.org.au](mailto:admin@mcmc.org.au) by 13/11/15. Funded by Communities for Nature.

**Wednesday 2: Help plan our 2016 planting activities**

MCMC office, 2 Lee St East Brunswick, 7pm, with pizza and wine supplied. All FoMC members are welcome to help plan our planting and maintenance activities for 2016. Phone Ray 0422 989 166.

**Saturday 5: MECCARG\* End of Year Celebration**

Meet at Connolly Ave Coburg, south of Murray Rd bridge, for our end of year celebration. 1-3pm. Melway 18 A11. Contact: Melissa 0417 255 873.

**Sunday 6: Litter Clean Up – Northcote**

Walker St East, Northcote, 10am-12noon. Melway 30 F12. Phone Paul 9489 5062.

**Sunday 6: Streamteam Water Quality Testing**

Upstream of St Georges Rd bridge, enter from Miller St, Nth Fitzroy, 2-3.30pm. Melway 30 C10. Phone: 9354 9885.

## JANUARY 2016

**Early January: Kangaroo Grass Seed Harvest**

Please register at: [admin@mcmc.org.au](mailto:admin@mcmc.org.au) by 18/12/15 and we will let you know the details. Funded by Communities for Nature. (Please note that this activity may involve rigorous exercise in high temperatures and may not be suitable for people with a medical condition.)

**Sunday 3: Streamteam Water Quality Testing**

Upstream of St Georges Rd bridge, enter from Miller St, Nth Fitzroy, 2-3.30pm. Melway 30 C10. Phone: 9354 9885.

## FEBRUARY 2016

**All February: Exhibition: Merri Creek: wasteland to parklands**

Richmond Library, 415 Church St Richmond. Don't miss this exhibition which documents the history of community action to transform Merri Creek.

**Saturday 6: MECCARG\* Site Maintenance**

Meet at Connolly Ave Coburg, south of Murray Rd bridge, 1-3pm. Melway 18 A11. Wear sturdy footwear and gloves. Contact: Melissa 0417 255 873.

**Sunday 7: Litter Clean Up – Nth Fitzroy**

Downstream from Rushall Station, 10am-12noon. Melway 30 D12. Phone Paul 9489 5062.

**Sunday 7: Streamteam Water Quality Testing**

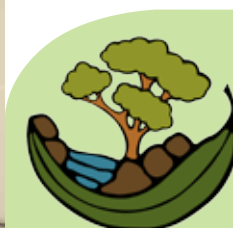
Upstream of St Georges Rd bridge, enter from Miller St, North Fitzroy, 2-3.30pm. Melway 30 C10. Phone: 9354 9885.

**Wednesday 24: Talk – Shining a light on Lacewings with Ken Harris**

CERES Lower Merri Room, Roberts St East Brunswick, 7.30pm. Please book with Ray by 17/2/16 at [merricreek@bigpond.com](mailto:merricreek@bigpond.com) or 0422 989 166.

If no contact details given above, phone Ray or Monica at MCMC on 9380 8199.

\*MECCARG = Merri & Edgars Creek Confluence Area Restoration Group



### Friends of Merri Creek Inc.

ASSOC. NO. A00246451

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Members' contributions are most welcome; please send to [admin@mcmc.org.au](mailto:admin@mcmc.org.au) by Friday 11 December, 2015