



Friends of Ferguson Park



Newsletter No. 124 – January 2019

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Park Working Bees
First Sunday of
month 10am, Main
Gate, Hallett Road
Stonyfell

Park Working Bee
Dates 2019

6 January
3 February
3 March
7 April
5 May
2 June
7 July
4 August
1 September
6 October
3 November
1 December

Working Bees Update

September 2018 – Motion detecting cameras previously placed in Park were collected up for return to DEW. Gerhard, who had been downloading images, reported that there were many people and a few foxes caught on camera, but nothing else.

There was some germination of the direct seeding within the builder's track and it was hoped that, with recent rain, seedlings would continue to thrive.

Several members expressed their concern over the gradual encroachment of St Peters Girls' into the Park, which the school uses for various activities.

It was noted that Bill's spraying of Soursob in trial plots (undertaken in 2017) appears to have been effective.

Weed control on the day included hand digging of Cape Tulip and other bulb weeds in the 'Triangle'.

October 2018 – Several members went for a walk through the Park to admire the diversity of Spring flowers, including a good display of Spider Orchids and Sun Orchids. More weeding of Cape Tulip in the 'Triangle'. It had finished flowering, but seed heads were picked.

November 2018 – Those attending went for a walk through the whole Park right up one side and down the other, to look at progress (or otherwise) in various areas. Also, some weeding was done in the Triangle at the Hallett Road gates. Members were informed that a group of St Peter's Year 10 and 11 students would be undertaking a project in a marked out area pulling and weighing the weeds in that area.

December 2018 – Watering and collection of grass seed. Afterwards, the members adjourned to enjoy a Christmas lunch at the meeting spot in the Park.

January 2019 – Sarita reported that she has received a newsletter from Stonyfell Quarry that includes plans to build a new pug mill this year. It is hoped that this will lead to less silt and better water quality in the Stonyfell Creek.

Wendy, Martin and Geoffrey reported on their recent session with Year 10 and Year 11 students from St Peters Girls'. An area was staked out and weeded (mainly *Pentstemon*). It is planned to repeat this exercise within the trial plot.

Colin reported that he sprayed for *Pittosporum* Bug before Christmas.

Too dry for much weed spraying at the moment, however cutting and swabbing of young Ash in the creek was undertaken. Doug watered seedlings.

The stakes which marked where direct seeding was carried out along the builder's track were removed and stockpiled for another attempt at revegetation later this year. Very little of the direct seeding undertaken in July and August 2018 managed to germinate and/or survive the dry winter/spring conditions.

Annual General Meeting

The 2019 Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Ferguson Park will be held on Sunday 3 March 2019 (after the working bee) at Doug and Judy's house.

**9 Rothesay Avenue
Hazelwood Park 5066**

Please arrive at 12.30 pm with a plate of food to share, and a chair.

History of Ferguson Conservation Park

The following article appeared in the Bunside Historical Society Inc's newsletter (Vol. 19 No. 4, December 1999) and was written by Ken Preiss, who established the Friends of Ferguson Park in 1981 and was a lifelong conservationist. It is interesting to note that not much has changed –rubbish dumping, vandalism, fencing, firebreaks, appropriate signage, inappropriate Park use by people have been management issues for a very long time. Not to mention the weeds!

Ferguson Conservation Park lies just east of Hallett Road and preserves an important remnant of the original vegetation of the eastern Adelaide Plains. It is managed by National Parks & Wildlife South Australia, and a Friends' group assist in maintaining its natural state by regular working bees and an ongoing revegetation project.

Miss Alice Effie Ferguson

Before reviewing significant events affecting the Park over the past fifty years some particulars of Miss Ferguson, for whom the Park is named, are appropriate.

Jessie Ferguson (nee Melrose), widow of Dr Hugh Ferguson (1832-1837) of Glenelg, bought *Chiverton*, now St Peter's Collegiate Girls' School, in 1896. She lived there with her unmarried brother Alexander Melrose and daughter Alice Effie until her death in 1939.

By 1910 The South Australian Company created ten blocks in a subdivision of Section 319, Hundred of Adelaide, now known as Erindale. They offered further land in the Section for sale in the boom times of the early 1920's, including some allotments along Hallett Road. Jessie Ferguson, wishing to maintain her outlook from *Chiverton*, bought some of this land opposite her western entrance.

Chiverton, including the land on Hallett Road, eventually passed to her daughter who gave the Hallett Road land to the Burnside Council. It is now known as the Effie Ferguson Reserve and is managed as a children's playground.

Shortly after Miss Ferguson's death in 1949 the Advertiser of 9 July carried this item:

A National Trust to look after places of beauty and interest given or bequeathed to the State or public authorities may be established in SA as a result of a wish by the late Miss Alice Effie Ferguson, who died at the age of 81, a few days after her gift of some 20 acres of Erindale as a pleasure resort. So impressed was Sir Henry Newland, her medical advisor, by her strong views that an organisation of this kind should be created that he himself is prepared to give public support to any movement with this object as its goal.

Ferguson Conservation Park

Section 289, together with other adjoining Sections, was originally purchased in 1839. Important from a conservation aspect was the acquisition of two parcels of land on this Section by Simpson Newland in 1879 and 1882. These make up the 8 hectares now known as Ferguson Conservation Park.

This land remained in the Newland family until 1926 when it was sold to Alexander Melrose who died in 1944. After his death his niece, Miss Ferguson, bought the land from the estate in 1947. A few days before his death on 29 June 1949 she added a codicil to her will bequeathing the land to the Crown "for the benefit of the public in perpetuity".

In the hands of the Newland family and Melrose the land had been managed to retain its natural values. Sir Henry Simpson Newland wrote in 1957:

My father cherished its bird life. When the late Mr Alick Melrose acquired the property he continued to bestow the same care on it and planted many native Australian trees and shrubs.

1949: The Park was placed under the administration of the South Australian Government Tourist Bureau as a

National Pleasure Resort. In the same year St Peter's Collegiate Girls' School (SPCGS) purchased *Chiverton* adjoining the Park.

1949-50: The Tourist Bureau provided a temporary entrance, a barbed wire fence was erected around a small dam in the south-western part of the Park, trees and shrubs were mutilated, and mistletoe and dead wood were cut and burnt, together with olive, cotton bush and other weeds.

1950-51: The Tourist Bureau attended to cleaning up and prepared plans for an entrance gate with pillars of Horsnell Gully freestone.

1951-52: The Botanic Gardens donated thirty native trees that were planted by the Tourist Bureau. In spite of wire guards some trees were vandalised. A firebreak was cleared along northern boundary.

1953-54: The old field gate was replaced with a wrought iron gate hung on stone pillars, one of which carried an inscribed plaque.

1954-55: Toilets were built, stone wings added to the gateway, and the dam removed.

1955: A report on the Park prepared by K. Preiss outlined its natural values, reported on vandalism, and proposed portion of the Park be fenced off to protect vegetation. Distributed to interested parties the report produced some press publicity and highlighted problems but did not lead to any direct action.

1956-57: Plumbing was completed in the new toilets, and a cistern was stolen. Trees and shrubs again vandalised.

SPCGS given permission to lay concrete stormwater pipe into what is now known as Ferguson Creek.

1957: Several letters to the press in July expressed concern about 'clearing' in the Park. Sir Henry Simpson Newland replied that he was satisfied with the pruning of trees, removal of dead wood and introduced undergrowth, and that burning of piles of plant material was not detrimental to the Park.

1957-58: A fence of concrete posts and galvanised wire was erected on the northern boundary of the Park between the Park and SPCGS. Materials were supplied by the college and labour by the Tourist Bureau. One of these posts still remains in the northwest corner of the Park.

1958-59: Toilets painted inside and out and entrance doors fitted and firebreaks cleared.

1959-60: Gates fitted to toilets, and are locked at night to prevent vandalism.

1960-61: Toilets again painted inside and out.

1962-63: The old post and netting fence along Hallett Road frontage was replaced with tubular steel posts and chain mesh netting.

1964-65: Stonyfell Creek was graded, the channel straightened and scrub growth removed. Olives were trimmed and Cape Tulip sprayed.

1965-66: Firebreaks cleared and Stonyfell Creek graded.

1966-67: Noxious weeds and unwanted growth were removed and firebreaks cleared and maintained. Name signs were erected at the Hallett and Stonyfell Road entrances. The bracket from the Hallett Road sign was used in 1992 to hang the Friends' Ten-Year sign.

1967-68: A post-and-rail fence was erected at the south-eastern corner. Firebreaks cleared and noxious weed control carried out.

1970: A fire in December damaged about twenty trees and destroyed about 28m² of grass.

1971: Signs prohibiting horse riding and rubbish dumping were erected to replace those installed some 10 years earlier and since removed.

1972: The National Parks and Wildlife Act of 1972 consolidated the control of many different government reserves and parks under the control of one body. Ferguson Recreation Park was scheduled as a Recreation Park.

1972 & 1973: The Park was under increasing pressure from horses, cycles, min-bikes and rubbish dumping. K. Preiss suggested that a fence, at least on the southern boundary, would alleviate the problem.

1973: SPCGS wished to remove fence on its eastern boundary in connection with proposed extension to the sports ground. This was not done, but excavations close to the boundary later caused the fence to partially collapse. Battering back with large boulders in 1989-90 rectified the problem.

Concerned with the 'Recreation' status of the Park K. Preiss submitted a report in November to the Nature Conservation Society of South Australia (NCSSA) proposing it be rescheduled a Conservation Park. this was adopted by the NCSSA and forwarded to the National Park Advisory Council who recommended to the Minister that, pending further investigation, the Park be managed as a Conservation Park.

(To be continued in the next newsletter.)



Wasp on Wallaby Grass in Ferguson Conservation Park – photo taken by Fred di Stasio.