



# Friends of Ferguson Park



Newsletter No. 136 – January 2023

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

Park Working Bee  
Dates 2023

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

## Working Bees Update

November 2022 – January 2023

**November** – Geoffrey reported that an indigenous name has been proposed for Ferguson – Narnu Wirra (means "Forest of native pines that once covered this area"). This name has been proposed by the Kurna Warra Pintyanthi team at the University of Adelaide.

Bill raised the issue of the group's communication policy with NPWS which needs updating. This has come about because NPWS staff recently whipper-snipped track edges (thereby widening the tracks) and damaged some of the plantings on edges of the recently re-surfaced track. Sally has requested an on-site meeting between FFCP and NPWS to discuss this issue.

**December** – discussion of draft "consultation agreement" between FFCP and NPWS. Those present agreed that NPWS should give notice to FFCP of all work in the Park other than bridge repairs, signage, fallen trees and boundary fence maintenance. After the meeting, Martin and Wendy checked the Park for Pentaschistis and dead-headed Ixia in the upper Park.

**January** – The group has been successful in gaining a Volunteer Support Grant for further track upgrade work. This grant is worth \$4,940 + GST and the offer has been accepted by Geoffrey and sent to Friends of Parks Inc. Bill has contracted a trail contractor and the work will be done in autumn (2023).

Sally and Jane to do a litter collection and keep an eye on lawn clippings.

Communications Agreement – Geoffrey has incorporated suggested amendments from members and has forwarded the draft document to NPWS. Awaiting a response. Critical issue is that NPWS provide prior notice of all work other than certain stated exceptions. Volunteer Safety Procedure (activity registration) document was sent to NPWS last July. Flynn Balshaw (0448730085) is our current Ranger.

Too hot for much work today. Neil removed Rice Millet with his adze at various location.

## Friends of Ferguson Conservation Park marks 40 years

**On 9<sup>th</sup> August 2022 the Friends of Ferguson Conservation Park marked their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.**

Ferguson Conservation Park is an 8-hectare reserve located on the eastern foothills at Stonyfell some 6 kilometres from the centre of Adelaide. Since 1982 a Friends group has cared for the Park. The area supports an interesting plant association, transitional between that of the Adelaide Plains and of the Mount Lofty Ranges.

Alice Effie Ferguson of *Chiverton*, Stonyfell, inherited the land from her uncle, Alexander Melrose, and gifted the property to the people of South Australia in June 1949. From the 1880s the land had been managed by its previous owners to maintain the plant and bird life. It is believed never to have been extensively grazed, except perhaps for intermitted cattle grazing in the early 1900s. Originally managed by the SA Tourist Bureau as a

National Pleasure Resort, the reserve came under the control of the National Parks & Wildlife Service in 1972 and was scheduled as a Recreation Park. Through lobbying by local resident Ken Preiss it was re-dedicated as a Conservation Park in 1977, thereby recognising its unique flora and associated bird life.

The predominant plant association is South Australian Blue Gum open forest/woodland with scattered River Red Gums along Stonyfell Creek. The eastern limit of the Grey Box occurs in the Park with only three trees present. Other trees include the Golden Wattle, Drooping Sheoak and Native Pine, the last two forming groves in places. Shrub species such as *Goodenia amplexans*, *Acacia acinacea*, *A. paradoxa*, *Bursaria spinosa* and *Dodonaea viscosa* are common in the understorey. In all some 280 species have been recorded of which about 60% are indigenous. Seventeen species of native grasses and 23 species of orchids have been recorded. Around 40 species of birds occur of which the most apparent are Noisy Miners, Magpies, Lorikeets, Rosellas,



Wattlebirds, Magpie-larks and Kookaburras. The calls of the Boobook Owl and Tawny Frogmouth are frequently heard at night. Bearded Dragons, Shinglebacks and small geckos and skinks are common. The Brushtail Possum and Echidnas occur and Koalas are becoming more frequent visitors as they move around the foothills.

*New FFCP sign to mark the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, August 1992; (L-R) Ranger John Sorrell; Past-President Ken Preiss; Dene Cordes, Community Liaison; President Agnes Jackson*

On 9 August 1982 a Friends Group was formed, the first such group officially formed, preceded only by the Friends of Fort Glanville and the National Parks Foundation which had both been formed earlier in their own right. The group was founded with 16 members and today the number of dedicated members remains about the same. The group's

first Convenor, later President, was Ken Preiss. Early activities included the removal of Olive, Pine, Ash and Pin-cushion Hakea trees – many thousands of them - and the collection of seed from the Park to raise seedlings for revegetation projects. Control of path erosion, construction of a footbridge on Ferguson Creek, the marking out of a self-guide walking trail and preparation of a brochure were other achievements in the 1980s.

*Students from St Peter's Girls' School preparing grass for direct seeding, World Environment Day, June 2008*

The group has worked closely with our neighbour, St Peter's Girls' School, assisting with the preparation of a teaching kit in 1986 and sponsoring a successful competition within the school for a Friends logo that is still in use. Plantings on World Environment Day became an annual event and between 1986 and 2002 some 4000 seedlings were planted with over 1200 students participating.

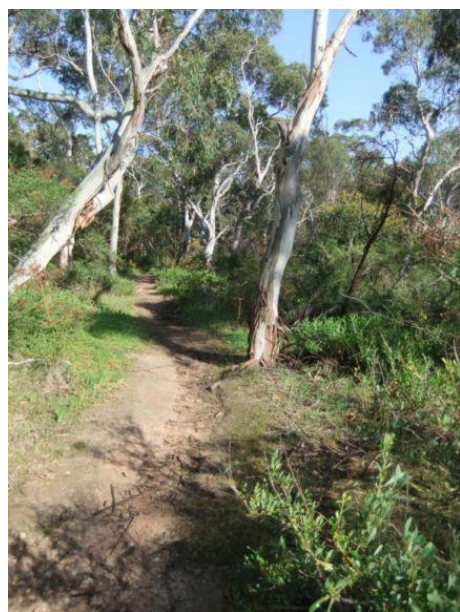
These activities, as well as the ubiquitous weeding and litter collection, continue to occupy much of the Friends' time. Several major projects have been undertaken over the past 15 years, notably the rehabilitation of a badly



degraded area along the Stonyfell Road boundary and erosion control along the length of Stonyfell Creek, projects funded through Natural Heritage Trust and Natural Resources Management grants, respectively.

*Our largest project has been to restore part of the habitat of Stonyfell Creek. This section started in February 2013*

A Biodiversity Plan was prepared in 2002 (funded by a Friends of Parks Community Grant) and this has guided on-ground works in protecting vulnerable species and sections of the Park that are in the best natural condition. Weed control has targeted specific species and this regulated approach has yielded good outcomes. Our biggest challenge remains bulb species such as Sparaxis, Sour Sob and Cape Tulip.



The success of the group has been due to its dedicated membership, the friendships developed and a productive relationship with our 'Contact Rangers' over the decades. Many rangers have put in time well beyond what any group would expect given their demanding jobs. Some issues facing an urban park are beyond the resources and scope of volunteers, namely bike riders, dogs off leads and vandalism, and we have looked to DEW staff for leadership in these areas.

Members have taken on responsibilities for a range of areas of interest and our activities are recorded in our quarterly newsletter and are discussed at lunches held a few times each year.

The group is proud of its achievements and the recognition it has received locally from the Burnside City Council and members of the community.

FFCP are proud to uphold the philosophy that saw the established the Friends of Parks movement. Environmental citizenship is even more critical today than it was in 1982 when the scheme was launched.

*Geoffrey Bishop, President & Douglas Nicholas, Immediate Past President*

### Our 40<sup>th</sup> Celebration

2022 marked the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Friends of Ferguson Conservation Park, the first nature-based Friends of Parks SA group. A gathering to mark this occasion and to recognise our members' commitment and contributions to the Park was held on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> November at The Chapel Lawns, St Peters' Girls' School. The weather was kind to us, considering that the previous day was so wet and cold and we did not have to resort to 'Plan B' to be indoors.

Some 40 people attended the event, including past and present members of FFCP, Departmental representatives and 13 SPGS students, members of the Environment Club. The programme included:

- An Acknowledgement of Country – Nathara Perera, Environment Club Captain, SPGS
- Welcome and remarks regarding the group's 40<sup>th</sup> – Geoffrey Bishop
- Celebration formalities – presentation of certificates and volunteer year badges by Mike Williams, Director, NP&W
- Presentation of certificates of appreciation by Doug Nicholas, Past President, FFCP
- Cutting of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary cake by Margaret Preiss, foundation member, followed by afternoon tea and visits to the park
- Recipients of DEW certificates and year badges

It was not the place to deliver a comprehensive history of the group. Instead, I made special mention of two important figures in the story of Ferguson Park, namely Alice Effie Ferguson of *Chiverton*, Stonyfell, by whose bequest the property became a nature reserve in 1949, and Ken Preiss who was instrumental in the park becoming a Conservation Park in June 1977. He and Margaret hosted the founding meeting of FFCP at their home on 9<sup>th</sup> August 1982.

The range of projects undertaken by FFCP over the past 40 years was mentioned and the involvement of students from SPGS over a period of 37 years was recognised.

It was also announced that just the week prior to the celebration, the Chair of Kurna Warra Karrpanthi at the University of Adelaide, Zoey Bonney, communicated to the group that they were proposing the use of 'Narnu Wirra' as an Indigenous name for the park. The name in the Kurna language refers to the forest of native pines that covered this area. We will explore with DEW the process of adopting this co-naming in coming months.

All in all, it was a good celebration of our group, its members and associates. Our thanks to St Peter's Girls' School for hosting us and to Fiona, Liam and Paul for organising the event.

**Friends of Parks awards were distributed to the following people** - Membership year categories (actual number of years are in brackets)

10 years	20 years	25 years	30 years	40 years
Neil Crisp (15) Fred DiSasio (10) Wendy and Martin Percy (15) James Swanson (16) Sarah Telfer (10)	Colin Harris (19) Elaine Smyth (19)	Doug & Judi Nicholas (26)	Gerhard Weber (29)	Geoffrey Bishop (40) Margaret Preiss (40+)



**Recipients of FFCP Certificates of Appreciation** – DEW give badges for 10, 20, 30, 35 and 40 years of involvement. FFCP's leaders decided to recognise the contribution of the following members who have been members for less than 10 years and others who have made significant contributions to the group.

- Bill and Helen Bainger
- Margaret Black (past secretary)
- Sarita Chadwick
- Hugh Chadwick
- Cyndy Fleming
- Jane Wilson
- Sally Wilson
- Dr Mark Ellis, City of Burnside Biodiversity Nursery
- Environment Club, St Peter's Girls' School
- Anna Stefopoulos, St Peter's Girls' School
- Amy Anderson (past ranger)
- Allira Taylor-Wilkins (past ranger)

### A rare find

While doing planting at our July 2022 gathering, the digging did more than create a hole for a plant, it disturbed a centipede (as shown in the picture below left), approximately 7cm long. It wasn't annoyed at being disturbed and stayed long enough for a photograph and then disappeared into the leaf litter. This is the first time I've found a centipede in the park. I sent the image to Gerhard and he sent one he took in about 1993, and it seems to be the same species.



The image on the right is Gerhard's photograph from some time ago. As he indicated, centipedes are very difficult to name from just a photograph. Even James Smith's book on Adelaide fauna is very scant on details of centipedes found in the region. Centipedes are carnivorous and feed mainly on small insects, spiders and other invertebrates. They live in soil, under logs and rocks. They can inflict a painful stab from venomous claws located under the head. The long final pair of legs (tail end) is used for grasping prey.

*Geoffrey Bishop*

### End-of-Year event

Our usual end of year luncheon has been held over until the first Sunday in February 2023 and will also be our AGM. This event is to be held at Sarah and Andrew Telfer's house. Details to be emailed to all members prior to the date.