

Narpulungup News

November 2016 Volume 4

Twertup working bee

by Steve Janicke

The working bee organized for the weekend of the 15th to 16th of October drew an impressive team of 20 Friends members, DPaW staff and volunteers. Saturday was cool and not the ideal weather for outside work with a cold gale and late storms making things somewhat difficult. On the bright side, it did keep the flies away.

Nevertheless, everyone approached their tasks with enthusiasm with Ric and Gil ably overseeing the various jobs once again.

Although everything on the list of things to make and do was not completed, much was accomplished. This included; completion of the first toilet block slab and formwork for the second, a number of internal doors being hung and door handles fitted, windows cleaned, the Horrie and Dorrie walk trail redefined and cleared, the path from the top of the old quarry lined with compacted pebbles, areas levelled and compacted and general site tidying. There was discussion about the sort of furnishings that would be appropriate for the rooms. There was also talk of an official opening later in 2017, which would make it almost ten years since the devastating fire that



Above and below: Friends members at work at the recent Twertup working bee. Photographs courtesy Geraldine Janicke

precipitated the Friends into rebuilding in the first place. The solar lighting unit was a most useful bit of technology for the evenings and probably kept some of us up later that we might have done in the past. As we sat around chatting and

looking at photos of the old cottage on the Saturday evening, the phrase, 'new building, old ambience' flashed into my mind and that is something we all wanted to recapture. Thanks to everyone involved for a great effort.

Culham Inlet causeway closed for repairs

The main entrance to the eastern side of the park has been closed for some months now due to structural damage to the Culham Inlet causeway. Department of Parks and Wildlife's Mal Grant said constant rain in the area since December 2015 had resulted in the inlet flooding twice this year after having been dry for many years. The second time it flooded, in August, water undermined the spillway on the discharge side, resulting in the culverts shifting forward and slumping slightly. A crack has subsequently appeared in the tarmac and the decision was made to close the causeway to traffic until it is repaired.

Discussions between DPaW, Main Roads and the Ravensthorpe Shire have resulted in the shire taking the lead in investigating the damage. Construction of bung walls on the inlet and discharge sides of the causeway has recently begun with the view to creating a pond that will be dewatered so that investigations can begin soon. How long it takes to repair the causeway will not be known until the investigations are completed. In the interim the eastern side of the park can still be accessed via Hamersley Drive on South Coast Highway.

Project Dieback IT tools available to public

An initiative to come out of Project Dieback is a suite of IT tools referred to as the Dieback Information Delivery and Management System or DIDMS.

The public mapping program enables you to locate sites on public land where dieback has been positively identified. Occurrences of five species of *Phytophthora* and *Armillaria luteobubalina*, an endemic parasitic fungus that infects the roots of shrubs and trees, are shown. A more comprehensive tool that enables you to work with the data and create maps is available if you register a user account with the DIDMS administrator.

For those unfamiliar with the project, Project Dieback covers the south-west of Australia in rainfall zones receiving between 300 to 400 mm rainfall annually with high (50-80 mm) summer rainfall. This includes the NRM regions of South Coast, South West Conservation Council, Northern Agricultural Region, Avon and Perth. Project Dieback identified 100 Priority Protection Areas across south-west WA, six of which are in the Fitzgerald area. For more information go to www.dieback.net.au

Taking floral art to great heights

The CBH silos in Ravensthorpe have always commanded attention from the western entrance to town but their recent transformation induces you to stop and look and marvel.

The installation is the work of Perth-based, Amsterdam-born artist Amok Island who created the artwork (pictured right) across the three silos over a four week period in September.

Ravensthorpe Progress Association Secretary Christine Rowe said the artist and his assistant used 400 litres of paint and frequently worked from 7am in the morning to 6pm in the evening in very cold conditions.

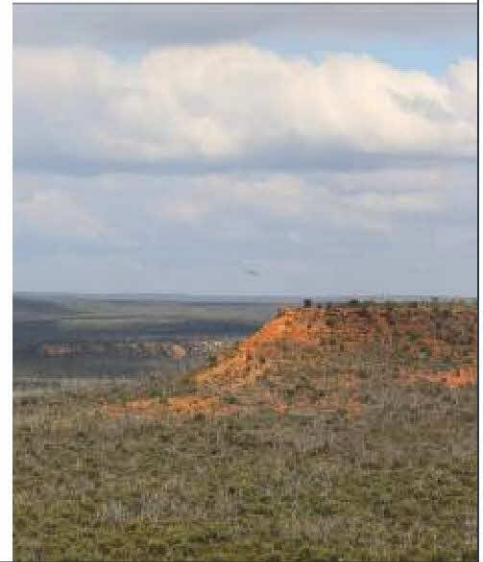
The artwork shows the seasonal maturation of the area's iconic banksias from new spring growth, through flower development, pollination and seed formation. The silos themselves are 28m high and from a ground-level perspective it is hard to believe that the banksia flowers are seven metres tall and the pollinators, a New Holland Honey-eater and two honey possums are each about eight metres in height.

The artwork was funded by CBH and FORM, an arts and cultural organisation based in Perth.



Advance notice: 2017 AGM at Twertup

The 2017 AGM for Friends of the Fitzgerald River National Park will be held at Twertup on the weekend of 11th to 12th March. The date has been chosen to coincide with the full moon which makes a camp out all the more spectacular. If you've not been to Twertup this is a great opportunity to explore the spongolite quarry and enjoy the views from Horrie and Dorrie. Most significantly of all though, see Twertup restored to its former glory nine years after being gutted by bushfire in January 2008, thanks to the tireless efforts of a dedicated band of Friends members led by Gil Craig. Further details of the AGM weekend will be available in the next edition of the newsletter, the Friends website at www.fitzgeraldfriends.org.au and on Facebook.



National Individual Landcare award goes to Gairdner local

Gairdner farmer Rhonda Williams won the 2016 Australian Government Individual Landcarer Award at the National Landcare Awards in Melbourne in September this year. She was one of 69 finalists and one of six Western Australians to win awards in their respective categories.

Quoting from the official website: "Since 1976, Rhonda and her husband Ross have managed a profitable and sustainable farming enterprise. From the beginning, they made sure that Landcare was a part of their system rather than an afterthought. Being an educator, Rhonda sees Landcare and sustainable agriculture as being key to long term profitability and [they] have hosted 20 field days and 30 trials on their farms."

About winning the award, Rhonda said: "It's been a privilege to work right across the South Coast – looking after the land and the coast - and to be involved with partnerships—individuals and groups - that are looking for solutions and achieving great environmental outcomes.

I've loved working from the grass roots level as a farmer, and on a local committee level with the Friends of Wellstead Estuary+, and FBG. I have

also loved being involved with planning and maintenance through local government and on a more regional level with the South Coast Management Group and being on the Board of South Coast NRM. This is what NRM is all about: establishing resilient communities: in the environment, in towns and across regions".



Just a bit of bush

The following article by botanist Libby Sandiford is adapted from the presentation she gave at a field day in September 2016, held by Bush Heritage to celebrate ten years of restoration at their properties near Boxwood Hill.

What started out as some volunteer work four years ago on a Bush Heritage property has ended up as botanical survey work on three Bush Heritage properties over subsequent years as well as some survey work on some of Bill and Jane Thompson's adjacent Yarroweyah property – all within the Fitz-Stirling Gondwana Link. I sometimes think of them as “just a bit of bush” as they don't appear to be much more than some bush left over: but what bush they have turned out to be. These three properties: Monjebup South, Monjebup North and Monjebup Creek, now known as Red Moort Reserve following our discoveries of extensive stands of *Eucalyptus vesiculosa* (a local endemic), are, at their furthest extremities, only 13 km apart and a little over

3000 ha in total size, even less in terms of remnant bushland. Whilst the properties have some similarities in terms of flora and vegetation they are all distinctive in one way or another despite sharing similar geological origins - underlain by Archean granites, overlaid by weathered duricrust or in parts by Eocene Pallinup siltstones –“spongolite”. So starting with Monjebup South and southern sections of Yarroweyah, findings included:

- A highly dissected landform with two creeks, many granite exposures and a few spongolite exposures.
- 570 native species in approximately 1200 ha.
- 15 conservation species including the largest known population of *Gastrolobium humile* (a threatened species).
- Second record of *Kunzea newbeyi*, named after botanist Ken Newbey who found it in the lower Pallinup valley, and a species not on anyone's radar as at that time there was only one collection in the Perth Herbarium and, inexplicably, not a conservation species then.

- One quarter of species occurring at or beyond their known range limits – two thirds of these characteristic of drier regions. i.e. distributed to the north, north-east, north-west or east. This was not that surprising given the properties are located near the boundaries of two biogeographic regions – “Mallee” to the north and “Esperance Plains” to the east but this confirmation highlights the importance of the area as a potential refuge for some species in terms of climate change.
- Vegetation equally diverse with 17 units including a myriad of mallee units, a wide array of granite units including shrublands and Sheoak woodlands, and areas of Yate woodland along the creek. Very broadly, there appeared a correlation between life form and landscape with tree-dominated vegetation occurring along or adjacent to creek lines, mallee units on lower to upper slopes and heaths shrub lands or mallee heath on broad crests.

In 2015 I was asked to survey what was then called Monjebup Creek, referred to as Bob's Bush by locals and now as Red Moort Reserve. I naively thought it would be much of the same as



Monjebup South; after all at its nearest point it is only three kilometres away. Findings included:

- Landscape less subdued with Monjebup Creek cutting diagonally across the property with minor tributaries, a low diagonal band of spongolite slopes and breakaways and very little exposed granites.
- 438 native species. Surprisingly just over one quarter were not found on Monjebup South/Yarrowayah, with many of these characteristic of drier habitats.
- Seven conservation species including two not found on Monjebup South/Yarrowayah. A few patches of *K. newbeyi* and an extensive stand of *E. vesiculosa* (Red Moort) and moderate numbers of another local endemic *E. melanophitra*.
- Similar vegetation diversity with 17 units described but differences in extent and type.
- Few and small patches of granite units.
- Areas of York Gum (quite large for the area and near the south-eastern limit of its occurrence). For Bush Heritage this is a nice bit of symmetry as York Gum on its Eurardy property (145 km north of Geraldton) is near the north-western limit of its range and

York Gum on its Charles Darwin property (355 km north-east of Perth) is near its inland limits (albeit different subspecies).

- A few small perched swamps.
- Bands of *E. latens* mallee along the creek banks.
- Much of the mallee present

“...I recorded 45 percent of species known in the Fitz in [remnants totalling] less than one percent of the area.”

was dominated by *Melaleuca* understorey with species at or near their south-western range limits: *M. torquata*, *M. pauperiflora* and *M. cucullata* with vegetation having a “Ravi” [Ravensthorpe] feel.

- Most notable: extensive areas of mallets and moorts associated with spongolite slopes. These are single trunked eucalypts that are killed by fire. The stands

usually consisted of only one—*E. platypus*, *E. astringens*, *E. melanophitra* or *E. vesiculosa* – Red Moort.

- Often these stands have no understorey species, occurring over litter or bare ground, so a bit like a disordered plantation.

For me an unusual feature of these mallet/moort units was their spatial distribution. Walking across a slope with no apparent difference in soil type or land-form you’d go from stands of *E. vesiculosa* to *E. platypus*, back to *E. vesiculosa* to *E. astringens* etc - big patches, small patches. All made more confusing by another interesting feature – the stem size of each patch. Some patches were very dense with one centimetre stem diameters, some were three to four centimetres, others had seven centimetre diameters and occasionally there were smaller patches of widely spaced large “old” plants.

The reasons for these patterns are not clear to me but may involve both fire and differences in site nutrition. Any suggestions welcome.

After walking through this vegetation your head begins to spin - it’s a bit like walking through a dotted perspective picture and difficult to focus.

Continued overleaf



Gastrolobium humile. Photograph courtesy Libby Sandiford



Eucalyptus vesiculosa. Photograph courtesy Libby Sandiford

Bush Heritage celebrates ten years of revegetation at Monjebup

Around 130 people turned out on a balmy spring day on 29th September at Bush Heritage Australia's Monjebup Reserve to help celebrate the successful completion of 400 hectares of biodiversity restoration there over the past three years. Bush Heritage's Landscape Manager Simon Smale (pictured right) provided an overview of the organisation's program and activities across the landscape between Stirling Range and Fitzgerald River National Parks. Simon emphasized Bush Heritage's appreciation of the support it enjoys from so many in the local community, noting that its conservation program couldn't operate without it. The day was very much about thanking all supporters and associates, he said, including neighbours, traditional owners, private conservation owners, professional collaborators including the Fitzgerald Biosphere Group, Greening Australia and associates from the universities, the three Shires across which Bush Heritage's South Coast reserves extend, contractors and consultants, and the supporters, donors and philanthropists who like what Bush Heritage does and provide it the wherewithal to keep doing it.



Bill Thompson (facing front) and Bush Heritage visitors at a revegetation site at Yarroweyah Falls.

Just a bit of bush continued from page 5

So Red Moort Reserve is less diverse in mallee units compared with Monjebup South/ Yarroweyah and common species are more typical of heavier soils and or drier country eg *E. calycogona*, *E. flocktoniae*, *Melaleuca pauperiflora*, *M. troquata*, *M. undulata*.

This year I am undertaking a survey of the remnant vegetation on Monjebup North; a property between the two - a work in progress. Findings so far:

- To date over 400 native species have been identified.
- Approximately 50 of these are not found on either of the other properties- unexpected on my part given the efforts on the

two adjacent properties.

- At least six conservation species, one of which is not recorded on the other properties.
- In terms of vegetation the most notable feature is extensive stands of *K. newbeyi* occurring on skeletal spongolite soils on broad crests, either as a shrubland or in Mallee.

Summary of three properties

There were more than 760 native species in less than 3000 ha. A very high diversity which along with change overs in species over short distances is typical of south west Western Australia. It makes you wonder what have we lost elsewhere in

our "clearing sea".

To put the diversity on the three properties into some perspective:

For Western Australians: I recorded 45 percent of species known in the Fitz (Fitzgerald River National Park) in less than one percent of the area.

For the Victorians amongst you – this is just a bit more than all of the species in Wilsons Promontory (which is 17 times the size).

So for "just a bit of bush" I find the properties pretty amazing. I don't think Bush Heritage quite realized what they were acquiring when they purchased these properties but I think they have hit the jackpot!

Friends apply for grant to monitor dibblers

As has been previously reported, Friends are now the community representative group on the Dibbler Recovery Team. To fulfil our threefold functions of fieldwork assistance, community awareness raising and fund raising we have applied for a State NRM Community Action Grant for just over \$5,000 to monitor dibbler numbers at a previously established monitoring site near the Moir Track - Hamersley Drive intersection. If successful there will be the opportunity for a small rotating

team of three to four people to assist zoologist Andrew Chapman over four successive days in both May and October 2017.

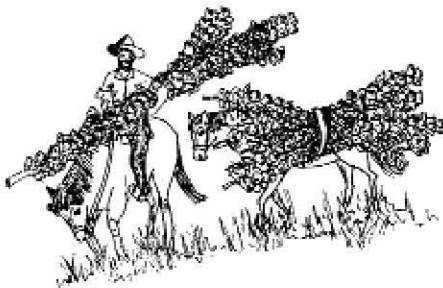
The proposal involves camping out at Hamersley Inlet, which is always a nice thing to do, and driving to the site daily to avoid wet weather and river crossing access difficulties on Moir Track. Andrew says he is quietly confident of a successful application as we are dealing with an endangered mammal in an iconic national park and have

the support of Tjaltjraak Native Title Aboriginal Corporation and an indication of their involvement.

Tjaltjraak is the correct spelling and pronunciation of 'Tallerack', sometimes known as blue mallee; a very significant plant to traditional owners.

The dibbler has a very strong association with the Fitzgerald River National Park as it is now the only mainland site in Australia where natural (as opposed to translocated) dibblers occur.

Unique to the Fitz **Hakea victoria**



Possibly the most recognisable and iconic plant species in the park, the Royal Hakea *Hakea victoria* is endemic to the South Coast of WA. Found only in the Fitzgerald Biosphere and east of the park towards Esperance, the Royal Hakea grows up to three metres high and has tough leathery leaves with serrated margins.

Explorer and botanist James Drummond found and named *Hakea victoria* near West Mount Barren in 1847. The story goes that he was eager to show the plant to his subscribers so "tied up sixteen of the bract-bearing tops into two bundles ... and slung them at one each side of my old grey pony Cabbine. The load .. a most awkward one to get through the bushes, and he never since I got him carried anything so unwillingly. One specimen fourteen feet high I carried in my hand all the way to Cape Riche". Unfortunately for Drummond, the brilliant colours had faded by the time he got there.

Nonetheless, his account, published in April 1847 in the British newspaper, *The Inquirer*,



stated "To this most splendid vegetable production which I have ever seen, in wild or cultivated state, I have given the name of our gracious Queen, **Hakea Victoria**. It will soon be in cultivation in every garden of note in Europe, and in many other countries." [Illustration courtesy Nadine Brown]

Friends Secretary ... we're saving your seat for you.

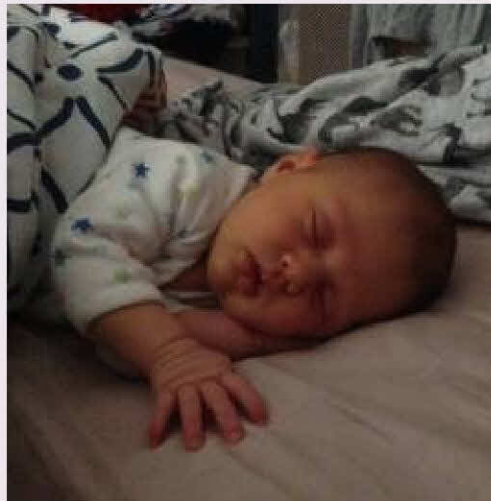
The Friends Committee is still in need of a secretary and we urge members to consider taking on this extremely important role. The Friends Committee will support and mentor anyone who is interested in doing it and your contribution would be highly valued. If you are interested please let us know. For further information please contact Rosemary Jasper on 0428 123 400 or email her at rosemary.jasper@bigpond.com.



The Friends of Fitzgerald River National Park Committee meeting for the first time in many years at Twertup. Clockwise from left: Steve Janicke, Rosemary Jasper, Andrew Chapman, Gil Craig, Leonie McMahon, Louise Lodge (vacant chair soon to be taken by our new secretary?). Photograph courtesy Geraldine Janicke. (Bernard De Bunnetat and Liz Utting were unable to make the meeting, Liz being just a tad preoccupied (see below).

Narpulungup News

is the newsletter of the Friends of the Fitzgerald River National Park. It is produced quarterly (every February, May, August and November). For further information contact Leonie McMahon. Phone: 98366021 Email: southernedits@iinet.net.au



Welcome to baby Kenza

Congratulations to our Treasurer, Liz Utting, and her family on the safe arrival of Kenza Laurina Juarez Utting on Sunday 2nd October. Kenza is Liz and her partner Eduardo's second daughter: little sister to Alondra Valentina, better known to us as Vale.

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