



NEWSLETTER

March, 2009

Edition No 28

FFDC Inc. PO Box 5044, Heathwood Vic

<http://ffdc.friends.melbournewater.com.au/>

FIRST FRIENDS OF DANDENONG CREEK Inc. no A0039273V

TANJENONG TALES

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President's Report

Welcome to the 28th edition of Tanjenong Tales.

Clean-up Australia Day

We had an excellent turn out of 16 members and volunteers on Sunday 1 March for our annual clean-up of the creek. In all there were 23 bags of rubbish collected along with other assorted items dumped near the creek (see picture below). Our thanks go to Frank Sullivan for his meticulous organisation of the annual event and to the other committee members who assisted to make it a great success.

Plan for planting large indigenous trees adjacent to the creek

The FFDC Committee has finalised a plan, with the support of Melbourne Water and Maroondah Council, to plant indigenous trees and shrubs adjacent to the creek starting in the area next to Scott's Reserve in Heathmont .

The main objective of the plan is to provide shade to cool the water, particularly in summer months, to promote a healthier environment for aquatic life. If there is sufficient rainfall in the coming months we hope to start planting sometime between June and September this year. We will keep you updated on this plan over the coming months.

Charlie Miller— President



FFDC Committee members with the loot on Clean-up day 1 March 2009

A ‘Seachange’ or a ‘Creek Change’

(by Joan and Graeme Ennis)

Why is the Dandenong Creek and its idyllic surroundings so important for one retired couple who recently moved to Wantirna? Read on to find out!

Twenty years ago we left the hustle and bustle of city life and headed north for a sea change, but last year we decided to return to Melbourne to be closer to our family. It was not easy to give up our peaceful lifestyle on the NSW coast to return to the city, but we hoped to find a quiet location near a park.

Thanks to the internet, we found a house for sale in Wantirna close to the Ringwood Golf Course and the Dandenong Creek. This was just the kind of environment we wanted for our twilight years. So we exchanged our glorious ocean view, garden kangaroos and wallabies, for a very different but nevertheless interesting lifestyle.

Now we wake to birdsong in the morning, cycle or walk along the 10 km walking track beside the Creek, delight in the native birds which visit our garden or fly overhead during the day, and sometimes feed the possums of an evening. We take our grandchildren to watch the resident ducks, fish for carp in the Creek, or play soccer in the adjacent reserve. A short car trip takes us to the Dandenong Ranges with its Mountain Ash forests and giant tree ferns.

Living near the Ringwood Golf Course and the Dandenong Creek is not very different from living in the country. The walking/bike track beside the Creek enables nature lovers to easily visit wetlands, remnant forest and even a bird hide during their stroll. Birdwatchers can seek out many birds including the resident Tawny Frog Mouths roosting in a dead tree close to Eastlink. The track passes beneath all the roads so riders can enjoy the scenery without worrying about dodging traffic or inhaling nasty fumes. Those interested in fitness can ride long distances from Bayswater to Jells Park or link up with other bike tracks around Melbourne.

Survival of the Dandenong Creek is largely dependent upon the volunteers who belong to the ‘First Friends of Dandenong Creek’. It is their dedication, along with assistance from local councils and environmental agencies, which has been instrumental in the rehabilitation of the Creek and recreational areas. Despite our advancing years we help where we can. Age is no barrier so maybe you also could lend a hand to ensure survival of the Dandenong Creek and its surroundings.



Creek Scene in the FFDC area near Manson’s Reserve

Frogs

(by Melanie Komisarczyk)

Have you ever heard a crik- crik – crik after or during rain in your garden or surrounding areas? It may have been a Common Eastern Froglet, one 35 species found in Victoria. There are two frog families, the ground frogs (*Myobatrachidae*) and the tree frogs (*Hylidae*). Ground frogs are the most common frogs in Melbourne and are found under leaf litter, logs and other debris or near water bodies. They all have tadpoles that develop in water and these water bodies may vary from large bodies of water to damp leaf litter. Tree frogs are distinguishable by discs on their finger and toe tips.

Frogs found in the FFDC area of Dandenong Creek

Surveys conducted by volunteers for “Melbourne Water Frog Census” have found six species in the FFDC area.

Crinia signifera - Eastern (common) Froglet—Small ground dwelling frog and is one of the most common species found in Victoria.

Habitat: Under logs and debris.

Call: Crik-Crik –crick, similar to crickets. Can be heard all year round, during and after rain.

Limnodynastes dumerili - Eastern Banjo Frog (Pobblebonk Frog) - Ground dwelling, known as a marsh frog and common and widespread.

Habitat: near dams and large ponds. Can be found burrowed in gardens.

Call: loud “bonk”, heard particularly after rain and at night.

Litoria peroni - Peron's Tree Frog

Habitat: Found in trees near permanent bodies of water under bark and in hollows.

Call: drawn out ‘cra-ah –ah –ah –ah ahhk’.

Litoria ewingii - Southern Brown (Ewing's) Tree Frog—Common medium sized frog.

Habitat: Cool moist places under debris, often responsible for tadpoles in backyard swimming pools.

Call: Males produce a loud ‘creee – creee – creeee – creee’ often around still bodies of water.

Limnodynastes tasmaniensis - Spotted Marsh Frog—One of the most common frogs in eastern Australia.

Habitat: small ponds or flooded grasslands, frogs shelter under debris.

Call: Short sharp ‘click’.

Litoria verreauxi ver - Whistling (Verreaux's) Tree Frog—Patchy distribution around Melbourne.

Habitat: Around still water.

Call: Males produce a rapid ‘reet – reet-reet’

Want to help or check out what type of frogs are in your area?

To hear frog calls and to identify the specie of frog go to www.frogs.org.au or alternatively participate in the frog census program, where you can record frog calls and be involved in frog mapping. Visit www.melbournewater.com.au/frogs or contact us. Frog mapping helps to identify the movement and distribution of frogs in Melbourne and can help in the preservation of habitat in those areas.

Local frogs can be attracted to your garden by creating habitats similar to theirs. Create a frog friendly garden by choosing indigenous vegetation, and even create a pond.



Eastern Froglet



Pobblebonk Frog



Peron's Tree Frog

**Memoirs of the Dandenong Creek and Surrounds—Part 3 by Barry Robinson—
FFDC Vice President and Life Member**

We all loved meeting down at the creek and showing off our latest finds or to swap for eggs that you did not have. When hunting for eggs you never took all of them from the nest (usually only 1 or 2). We always took someone small and light, so that they could climb the thin trees or branches that we larger kids may have broken. In my case my younger sister Lorraine was the best climber. We always took care not to disturb the nests otherwise the birds may abandon the eggs. In a lot of cases the birds would use the same nest each year with a little bit of remodelling to suit each new year.

As kids we were always looking for ways to make some pocket money, to buy things that we wanted but our parents could not afford. We grew up on our 13 acres that had a lot of blackberries growing on it. This was one of our pocket money enterprises. As soon as we got home from school on Friday's we would pick blackberries until it was too dark to see ripe ones from green ones. From first light on the following mornings we would keep picking blackberries until lunch time. After lunch we would sort out the best blackberries into small punnets about 6 inches square and the overripe ones into larger punnets for jam making.

Up early on Sunday mornings we would set up our selling stall in front of our place with signs made up with prices on both sides of the road facing both ways. We would then wait for our customers to come and buy our produce . Thus making some pocket money for our work. We also used to set up a stall for selling mushrooms or flowers when in season. These activities kept us in pocket money for most of the year.

When summer came most of the time was spent down the creek in the billabongs in our favorite swimming holes after they were cleared of any snags to make them safe. At one stage we had some ferrets that we used to catch rabbits at the weekend. The rabbits tasted lovely as a Sunday roast dinner. Each year the cows that we had would calve, that meant that it was our job to feed the calves once they had been weaned from their mothers. The calves used to get 50% skim milk and 50% full cream milk. After milking about half the milk would be boiled in a large enamel dish on a wood stove. The dish was covered with paper to stop any soot or other nasties falling in. After the milk came to the boil it was allowed to cool slowly so that the cream would rise to the top. The cream was used for cooking or smothering on bread and jam.

(More of my memoirs in Part 4 in the next edition of Tanjenong Tales.)

Dates to mark on your calendar

Saturday 25 April 2009—Annual Sausage Sizzle Fund Raiser at Bunnings in Bayswater. We need members to help out on the day so please contact Barry Robinson on 98011628 if you can spare 2 hours on the day.

Sunday 2nd August 2009 —National Tree Day Watch for details on the website.

For more up to date information on the events above you can check details on our website: <http://ffdc.friends.melbournewater.com.au/>

Next edition of the newsletter is in July, please email me your ideas for articles or stories of interest by the end of June at : charlie.miller@optusnet.com.au

FFDC Committee for 2008-2009

President: Charlie Miller
Vice-President: Barry Robinson
Secretary: Vivien Holyoake
Treasurer: Frank Sullivan

General Committee:
Heidi Victoria MP
Barbara Richards
Melanie Komisarczyk
Bill Jones
Tanya Haynes-Ford
Vicky Pearse
(1 vacancy)

Committee meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday of each month (Feb to Dec) starting at 7:30pm in the Ringwood room at the Ringwood Library. All members are most welcome to at-