

Newsletter 224 December 2013

Description

Dear Friends

Summer is well and truly with us. It is very dry and so far all the rain fronts have passed us by. 2013 has been a very busy and productive year for our group with members giving generously of their time to the many projects.

It has been pleasing to see the park being used increasingly for recreational activities including cycling, walking, picnicking, birdwatching and educational visits. The Mo-Vember Mo-ride made good use of the park for the cycling, horse riding and walking events. The incredible amount of ~\$20.000 was raised for Menâ??s Health and depression. This was an incredible effort from a small community. Pictured is Matt, our postmaster who was the driver of the event and was supported by a great committee.

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Matt and Emma have also been very supportive of the Friends group through publicising and taking orders for our calendars through the Post Office. The December gathering was a time to reflect upon the year's activities and put forward plans for 2014. In the pleasant setting of the picnic spot at Chiltern Valley No 2 Dam twenty Friends and rangers, Brian, John and Kris, gathered to socialise and enjoy a delicious shared tea. It was a meeting without work!

One of the highlights was the antics of three Yellow-footed Antechinus playing around the big tree adjacent to the hide. Nicely captured by Neville.



Birds around the picnic area included a Yellow Robin, Shrike-tit, Fairy Wrens and Fuscous Honeyeaters. Around the walking track Phillip recorded Black-faced Cuckoo-shrikes, Restless Flycatcher, Whistling Kite and an unidentified raptor. At dusk at the entrance the Dollar-birds were very noisy.

Active friends

Helen took aim at the thistle population near the hide and has amassed several huge piles for disposal. She said it made her feel good!

School Visit

On November 29th Joseph and Eileen hosted a group of year 7 students from Rutherglen High School and assisted them with an introduction to the park through its history and the role of the Friends group.

This visit may lead to ongoing visits in 2014 where Friends members will offer their skills/knowledge to the students through selected activities in mid-week. If you would like to contribute please let me know.



Around the park

December is the time when most of the park flora takes a summer holiday and prepares for the new year's display. The Golden Everlastings will live up to their name and provide colour for the summer and shed their seed. However not all is dull, there is yellow Cassinia and yellow Scaly Buttons to be found.



The delicate Bluebells seem to enjoy the summer and if you are lucky you may see some Pink Hyacinth Orchids. Most of the eucalypts have finished flowering but the mistletoes are full of ripe, brown-yellow fruits which will attract birds. Late flowering Blakely's Red Gum is flowering well, providing pollen and insect life, but seems to lack nectar for honeyeaters. The Cherry Ballarts showing off their red fruits which will feed the birds.

Bartley's Block and the park dams will provide the best bird spots and early mornings, take breakfast!, and late afternoons with tea, will be most productive and enjoyable. Repellant may be useful in the late afternoon.

Some birds are still breeding. A Fuscous Honeyeater was putting the final touches to her second nest on November 15th close to a dam.



Late report

A Black Honeyeater was reported at Valley No 1 Dam. Several reports have come in from various spots in the north-east so be on the lookout and please report any sightings.

A trip to the Brittle Gum area of the Pilot section of the park along Old Coach Road east is worthwhile if you have plenty of time. There you will find an understorey of dense bracken, little streams and beautifully tall white-trunked gums, quite a different environment.



Rainfall

November 2.8 mm over 2 days. Year to date: 555.8 mm. Hopefully this pattern will change soon.

I wish you all a safe and joyous Festive Season and may the New Year bring you all you hope for.

Thankyou to everyone who has supported Friends in any way it has been much appreciated. Eileen

Next Meeting: Saturday February 1st

Meet at Chiltern Post Office at 9.00AM. or go to directly to the hide at Chiltern Valley No 2. Byo lunch, drink,binocs, chair etc. The activity will be decided closer to the day. Contact in the field : Eileen 0407

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Calendar sales: The 2014 calendar is the sixth of our productions. We have had a great response to the 2014 issue. Thankyou to all who have supported this fund raising project. Special thanks to Neville for the design and presentation of yet another beautiful representation of what our park has to offer. There are just 12 left to sell so if you wish to have one be quick!

Apology

We apologise for the lateness of the calendar delivery. Circumstances beyond our control were the cause.

[Friends Calendars are Available Now!](#)

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