



Friends of Lake Claremont



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Ted's Corner

Alex O'Neil

As this month's featured volunteer I think it's only fitting that I write a little about how I came to be the FOLC's newsletter editor.

Growing up in country Western Australia meant that I had a rather lengthy commute to school. I travelled an hour each way by bus, and as every one of my friends was deposited safely home by my three siblings and I found ourselves last on the bus. Options for entertainment were pretty slim, and so I turned to books.

I've had a fascination with language and story telling since day dot, which only continues to grow.

Finishing high school with excellence awards in English literature and visual arts saw me pursue a degree in Communication & Media Studies at

UWA, with a double major in Communications and English & Cultural studies. Across my time at university I volunteered as a writer and editor for a number of organisations, one of them being FOLC.

A highlight of every month has definitely been reading about all of your activities. Your outings inspire me to lead by example and to be a good steward of the land. My family's property in the wheat belt has instilled in me an appreciation for the land and its native occupants, as well as an understanding of changing climate conditions and the importance of an environmental conscience.

My time as your editor is up this month as I am looking forward to full time employment. I would like to say a huge thank you to everyone – even if I haven't met you directly – the work you are doing is fantastic!

IN BLOOM THIS MONTH

The Thick-leaved Fan-flower (*Scaevola crassifolia*) is a prolific bloomer over several months. It is a spreading shrub that tolerates salt spray and periods of drought. *Scaevola* (Latin for left-handed) was a legendary assassin said to have burnt his right hand away as a show of bravery during the early years of the Roman Republic.

Photo by Geoff Ross.





OUR BIRDS

The Australian Spotted Crake (*Porzana fluminea*) is endemic to Australia, and is found mainly in the South-east and South-west, always near water. I first saw it at our lake a couple of years ago. Perhaps it returned following the planting of native reeds, possibly it was always there, hidden by the now eliminated bullrush. Look for it early or late in the day, feeding on soft mud or in very shallow water near reedbeds. They are somewhat bolder than our other two crake species and, therefore, more likely to be seen.

Photo and text by David Free.

THE MONTHLY BUSY BEE - 9TH NOVEMBER

By Amina Syed

We welcome Amina, a new member who is discovering our group – Ed.

What can you say about weeding? That was the first thought that came to my mind, particularly when you have never been partial to it in the past.

It seemed even more ironic that I should be weeding in the Lake Claremont park, when unwanted foliage freely inhabits my own garden. But I was not the only one who thought so, as I discovered later. I went weeding with the FOLC, a mixed group of the regular volunteers and interested new comers like me. One of them, a kindly gentlemen who lives next to the lake made me smile when he remarked that he came weeding in his "backyard" when he did not help much in his own private garden.

As I stood amongst the volunteers, listening to instructions, I marveled at their commitment to the cause. Most of those present came regularly to the Sunday busy bee at 8 am to weed a *public* park. A morning I had regularly dedicated to sleeping in! I particularly noticed the elderly lady Joan Tockock in the group. I am told that in the history of FOLC, her name clearly stands out. She "minded the gate" to guide late -comers. There was Norma who guided a group on Monday morning, and of course, Heidi whose enthusiasm is catching and the reason I was there.

Heidi taught us names of the three different weeds that we were to confine ourselves to that day. As we began to dirty our hands, we became engrossed in the task. As Vic, who was in our group of newcomers said, it was surprisingly addictive.

► *Story continued on following page.*

White flower Fumitory was this parsley like weed that sprayed itself all over the plant underneath and suffocated it. Obviously a usurper and needed to be pulled off. I could not help make the analogy with the weeding within us of overwhelming habits and crippling traits that threaten to envelop our reason and personality. Weeds suck on the goodness of the land and sap the strength of the desirable and useful plants. How important it is to weed!

The Common Sow Thistle is prickly. It was the easiest to pull out from the very roots. I enjoyed doing that. It was almost therapeutic. So liberating to yank out the very roots and the plowed soil beneath so inviting and vulnerable! The weeds were weak growths in comparison to the solid rich foliage they clung to and grew besides. The annual Veldt grass was not as easy to weed out as the Common Sow Thistle. The grass reminded me of wheat blades but lacked an essential vitality, which claimed them to be imposters. So they were duly yanked out of the soil that held them and bagged.

We became so involved that Heidi had to call out several times to get us to join the others a little further away. She had water for us to drink. It had turned out to be a very warm day. We were then invited to Heidi's house for tea and a cake, which had been prepared and left for us by an absent volunteer that day. This was my first chance to sit with the group and chat. They were very welcoming and seemed to be very comfortable with each other. They made me feel at ease, not that I could hold on to any pretense of formality, when I discovered to my horror that while jumping over a fence, I had ripped the bottom of my tracks. The company had been too polite to comment and my husband had not even *noticed!*



FRIENDS OF LAKE CLAREMONT AGM

Text and photos by Hilary Heptinstall

Our AGM was held on Tuesday October 21 at the home of Heidi and Paul Hardisty. 22 members attended the meeting with 19 apologies.

Members were welcomed with a glass of wine before Nick Cook was elected chairman for the meeting.

The current Management Board of Claire Brittain, Heidi Hardisty, Kevin McAlpine and Nick Cook were re-elected and all were happy to continue to serve. Paul Hardisty thanked the Board for their tremendous efforts this year and his thanks were warmly endorsed by the meeting.

Hard working and highly efficient Claire Brittain gave the financial report. She explained the difference between grants and FOLC funds. Grants are given for a specific purpose, which must be strictly adhered to, while we have control over the use of FOLC funds. We are grateful to pro-bono accountants, Winduss and Associates, who have agreed to continue to prepare financial statements. Our current auditors, Keady Humble Tognini, will continue to audit our financial statements and final grant reports free of charge. We are very fortunate to have the services of these two companies. Claire also informed us that we have taken out insurance with Landcare who provide well-priced insurance specifically tailored for volunteers. Members were happy for the management committee to negotiate future insurance.

Member, Angela Nice, a keen dog walker, asked Andrew Head and Greg Simpson, the Town of Claremont representatives, how long the temporary fencing round the planting would remain in place. Some of the early plantings appear to be very well established and the fences are becoming overgrown. Andrew explained that, although the planting appeared to be well grown, the fencing would remain in place until the ground cover was fully established. This could take up to ten years and is easily damaged by being trodden on by dogs and walkers. It was generally agreed that this was reasonable and that it is a decision to be made by the Town of Claremont rather than FOLC.



Heidi Hardisty

Heidi Hardisty thanked those involved in the monthly newsletter which is published on-line. She explained that our newsletter is edited by journalism students, who are grateful for the experience. She thanked Adnan, our past editor and Alex, our current editor, who will be retiring at the end of this year. She also thanked Annie Falconer who coordinates the content of the newsletter and various members of FOLC who have been regular contributors. Geoff Ross and David Free have provided beautiful photographs, which have led to an excellent production.

Heidi also thanked Soozie and Geoff Ross who have provided morning tea after the monthly working bees.

There have been several awards for FOLC members. Joan Tocock was made a Freeman of the Town of Claremont after being put forward by FOLC.



Joan Toccock

Heidi Hardisty and Joan Toccock will be Faces of Claremont on a special wall, which has been created at the new Town of Claremont Council Chambers. It will contain photographs of 50 people who have helped make Claremont what it is today. They will be special guests at the Opening Ceremony on Saturday November 15.

Soozie Ross was presented with a Life Membership Certificate to thank her for her hard work over many years for Friends of Lake Claremont. Soozie was the person who encouraged many of our current members to become involved in caring for the Lake and she has worked tirelessly to support FOLC.

Guest Speaker, Andrew Head, then spoke of Lake Claremont from his and Claremont Council's point of view. He is delighted with the huge changes that have taken place since the closure of the golf

course. When the golf course was open there were a few walkers round Lake Claremont, who kept a wary eye out for golf balls! Now from early morning to late evening, the path is used by large numbers of walkers (with and without dogs), cyclists, skate boarders, scooters and pram pushers. Everyone appreciates the growth of the bush, which has been established, and it has rapidly become a most attractive area. The establishment of a café has also increased the popularity of the Lake as a walking area.

Andrew is now keen that the grassed area on the East (Davies Road) side of the Lake is utilised. He would like to see Senior Citizens Groups, Yoga Classes, personal training sessions etc being held in that area. It would be free of charge to community groups but commercial enterprises could be charged for its use. He said that, the more the area is utilised, the less likely it is to be built on at any stage in the future. After Andrew responded to questions, the meeting was declared closed and we all enjoyed a delicious supper, cooked by Nick on the barbecue and accompanied by salads and another glass of wine!



Heidi Hardisty presents Soozie Ross with her certificate

Thanks to the Hardisty family for once again acting as hosts and making our AGM a most enjoyable social occasion!

GUIDED BIRD WALK - THURSDAY 30TH OCTOBER

Text by Annie Falconer and photos by Nick Cook and Heidi Hardisty

We are all familiar with David Free's stunning photographs of birds which appear in our monthly newsletter. On 30 October in his role as a member of Birds Australia WA he guided about 30 of us around the lake, stopping frequently for bird watching, for about two and a half hours.

David lent binoculars to those of us who didn't have our own and he also set his scope up each time we stopped so that we could take turns in looking at a spectacular close up of a bird, often on its nest. David was very informative and I learnt a lot on the walk.

While there are 85 recorded species of birds at Lake Claremont, of which 8 are ducks, our group spotted 43 of them that morning from a tiny Willie Wagtail on its cup-shaped nest to a large White-faced Heron wading in the shallows. Much breeding activity was noted including the Coot, Swamphean, Australasian Grebe and Night Heron as well as several duck species.

I loved hearing the cries of "good spotting" from one twitcher to another and the sound of bagpipes from Scotch College in the background was an added bonus. I thoroughly enjoyed the walk and look forward to the next one whenever that may be. Thank you David.



Clockwise from top: Eurasian Coot with Young, Eurasian Coot on Nest, On the Bird Walk



ADOPT A SPOT PROGRESS REPORT

Text by Rose Senior and photos by Jamie Murphy.

Many FOLC members will be aware that earlier in the year a group of members devised an alternative solution to weed control in the newly-planted areas round Lake Claremont: that of encouraging individuals, families or groups of students to take responsibility for removing weeds and rubbish from specific areas. Rather than walking round the lake in a group and removing weeds as they go, or working with others to remove weeds from a designated area at a specific time each week, this approach (aptly named *Adopt a Spot* by Claire Brittain) gives individuals 'ownership' over a particular corner of bushland, encouraging them to think: 'This is my spot, and it's my responsibility to ensure that it remains in tip-top condition.'

The *Adopt a Spot* brochure outlines the key features of the program: the size of plots (normally 5m x 5m), the suggested number of visits (monthly), the task (to ensure that plots are kept weed- and rubbish-free) and basic hand-weeding techniques. Volunteers are issued with T-shirts and hats, together with weed-identification hand-outs. One particular FOLC member has been going round the Lake distributing brochures, while Lesley Osborne and Laurel Horton, both relatively new to the area, have already adopted spots and talk enthusiastically not only about the sense of satisfaction that caring for their plots has given them, but also about the fact that people walking or riding round the lake regularly stop to chat and find out what they're doing. Adopt a Spot seems destined for an exciting future!



Laurel weeding her spot



Laurel on her spot

FACES OF LAKE CLAREMONT

Text and photos by Hilary Heptinstall

The Town of Claremont launched a new and exciting project to commemorate the opening of the new Council Chambers and Administration building on Saturday November 15. The Faces of Claremont, a community art piece featuring the faces of local leaders is now displayed on an external wall of the Town's new building on Stirling Hwy.

It recognises and celebrates people who have made a significant contribution to the Town of Claremont community.

FOLC members, Heidi Hardisty and Joan Tockock, are now 'Faces of Claremont'! This is a very well deserved honour, which reflects the huge contribution that they have made to the restoration of the bush land around Lake Claremont. Joan also volunteered for the education programme at the Claremont Museum for many years. She had to retire at the age of 90 because the Museum could no longer insure her!

As their nominators, Soozie Ross and I were fortunate to be invited to the opening ceremony for the new building.

Claremont Mayor, Jock Barker, Local Government Minister, Tony Simpson and Claremont CEO, Stephen Goode all addressed the audience. Following this, the winners of the Art competition were announced. The paintings were on display on the walls of the Council Chambers.

We were then served lunch and invited to take part in a guided tour of the new building. We were very impressed by the construction and particularly by the South facing external wall, which displays photographs of 'The Faces of Claremont'! As you can see, Joan and Heidi are in distinguished company!



Heidi and Joan pose in front of their photographs!

THE BOBTAIL LIZARD

Text and photo by Soozie Ross

Last month's newsletter featured a bobtail lizard on the front cover so in this edition, we thought we'd tell you something about it. *Tiliqua rugosa* is a short-tailed, slow moving species of blue-tongued skink and is also known as the Bobtail, Blue-tongue, Shingleback or Sleepy Lizard.



You may have started to see them in the vegetated areas around Lake Claremont or even in your garden as spring's warmer temperatures bring out the sleepy lizards although their markings do help to camouflage them while they sit in the shadows or under bushes.

If you do find any please leave them alone and don't let your dog interact with them. Please don't pick them up as bobtails dislike losing contact with solid ground and they can also inflict a powerful bite. If moving them is essential ensure you wash your hands afterwards due to harmful bacteria known to thrive on their bodies.

Bobtails are omnivorous and eat for only 6 months of the year. In the wild they eat a variety of fruits, flowers (especially yellow native flowers), invertebrates, slugs and snails. They will also eat strawberries, eggs and table scraps from garden composts.

They are monogamous and seek out their mate each year. Solitary for most of the year their home range is about a square kilometre depending on food and shelter.

A bobtail's defence is bluff and decoy. The hissing while showing a wide gape and blue tongue is meant to frighten away predators. If this doesn't work the bobtail will curl its body around and present the tail as a decoy. Bobtails need at least 2/3 of its tail to survive as this is where the fat is stored for the hibernation period.

They can suffer trauma from many causes but the most common are dog attack, motor vehicle impact and garden implement injuries. Incredibly, if they survive, Bobtails can live for up to 70 years.

So, let's look after our bobtails and if you have them in your garden the best things to do for them are:

- Leave rocks and low shrubs for shelter
- Make gardens along fences to provide safe walkways
- Watch your pets and feed them indoors
- Minimise or cease use of chemicals especially snail baits
- Allow them to forage for their own food, such as snails, slugs, caterpillars, beetles and fruit
- Do not try to domesticate or feed them yourself.



Spot the bobtail!

TAKE A BOW ALL YOU VOLUNTEERS

We have just finished tallying all the hours worked by volunteers for 2014 from January 1 to now and can report that 980 different volunteers (and many of you worked on many different occasions) contributed a total of 5,800 hours of your time to looking after Lake Claremont and its surrounds.

That is a tremendous and greatly valued effort and one that is much appreciated by the whole community. Thank you so much.

NOTICES DECEMBER 2014 / JANUARY 2015



Norma's Monday morning weeding group

The weeding group will take a break over the Christmas holidays and into autumn. Generally weekly sessions are run from April to November depending on the weather and weed load. Updates will be provided on the website and via emails for FOLC members.

Adopt-a-Spot Official Launch and Sausage Sizzle

Sunday 1st February 4:00 to 6:00 pm Stirling Road Park. Come along for a social afternoon and hear about the FOLC's exciting new Adopt-a-Spot program. Individuals, groups and families can adopt a kitchen sized plot of the park to keep rubbish and weed free all year.

For more info contact Heidi M: 416 614 696

RSVP: folc.wa@gmail.com

2015 WA Wetlands Management Conference

Monday February 2nd - Cockburn Wetlands Education Centre, Bibra Lake. For more info go to Cockburn Wetlands website:

<https://cockburnwetlandscentre.wordpress.com/>

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

We wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and thank you for another fantastic year of support and friendship. See you in 2015.

Calendar

December 2014

Friday December 5th - International Volunteer Day

Monday December 8th – FOLC Board Meeting – 5:30 pm

Sunday December 14th – FOLC Busy Bee & Tea – Hand Weeding 8-10 am

January 2015

Monday January 5th – National Bird Day

Sunday January 11th – FOLC Busy Bee & Tea – Hand Weeding 8-10am

Monday January 26th – Australia Day

February 2015

Sunday February 1st – Adopt-a-Spot Launch and Sausage Sizzle 4-6pm Stirling Road Park

Monday February 2nd – World Wetlands Day Conference- Cockburn Wetlands Education Centre, Bibra Lake

Like us on facebook!

Had a great moment at Lake Claremont? Why not like us on facebook and post your picture and story?

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Friends-of-Lake-Claremont/159586380873009?ref=hl>

The Friends of Lake Claremont Ltd. (FOLC) is a community organization established and run by local residents all of whom are volunteers.

Our mission is to assist in the conservation and enhancement of Lake Claremont, a Conservation Category Wetland and Bush Forever Site

CONTACT

E-mail: folc.wa@gmail.com

Phone: (08) 9384 2820

Fax: (08) 9383 4213

POSTAL ADDRESS

Friends of Lake Claremont Ltd.

P.O. Box 625

Cottesloe WA, 6911

<http://friendsoflakeclaremont.org/>