



Wood ducks at the lake Photo : David Free

David Free took this very interesting photo and says 'This is the first time I have seen wood ducks breeding at our lake. Until three or four years ago, they were absent. This pair has eleven ducklings. They are perhaps two weeks out of the egg, and, although still liable to predation, are past the most vulnerable stage.'

From the Editor, Hilary Heptinstall

Another very successful year for the Friends of Lake Claremont has come to an end and we should like to thank all our members for their great contributions. I should particularly like to thank Nick Cook and the Board members. There are new volunteering opportunities for 2020 and we hope that our members will be able to help (see page 11).

We held a very enjoyable AGM and barbecue in November which was a lovely way to finish the year (see page 2).

I have long admired Mary Yates's map of Lake Claremont which hangs in the FOLC Shed, and I am pleased to say, she has agreed to write about some of the pictures on the map in more detail for our newsletters. Her first contribution is on page 7 and I hope that you all enjoy it as much as I did.

We send all our readers best wishes for Christmas and the New Year and hope to see you all again in February.



FOLC AGM AND BARBECUE. SUNDAY NOVEMBER 17

From : Hilary Heptinstall

Our AGM this year was held outdoors, near the FOLC shed, and there was a very good turnout of members in beautiful weather. We enjoyed drinks and nibbles before the start of the meeting.

All members of the current Board of Management are happy to continue to serve in their positions and were re-elected. A new member, Tony Barr, will join the board.

Membership has remained stable this year. Nick welcomed two new FOLC members : David Hay (son of Norma) who will become our Weeding Coordinator next year and Leeuwijn Beeck, an ex-farmer who is keen to learn more about the lake.

Claire Brittain retired from the FOLC Board of Management this year, after serving for 10 years and obtaining grants worth \$615,000 for the group, allowing us to plant 350,000 seedlings at the Lake. Nick thanked her for her great contribution and presented her with a certificate of Life Membership of Friends of Lake Claremont.

It is an interesting time for FOLC. We have funding for next year's planting which will be our last after 10 years.

Claire Brittain with Zac Hardisty and Nick Cook



We will have the funds to undertake new projects at the lake and members were asked for ideas.

There were many suggestions including the following:-

- Joan Toccock felt there is a need for a place on the West side of the Lake, which can be easily accessed from the path by wheel-chair users and others. Seats should be provided so that the view could be enjoyed.
- Mary Yates's beautiful poster should be displayed in a more prominent position by the TOC.
- Interpretive material about the Aboriginal history of the lake should be displayed.
- The 'scarred tree' which has been part removed could be heritage listed.
- Relationships with other Friends Groups could be established.
- We could do guided walks round the lake as they do at Bold Park.
- We need to build more bird boxes. Perhaps this could be done by Scotch College woodwork students.
- There should be follow up on the fox survey carried out a few years ago.
- There should be a frog survey at the lake.

This should give us all plenty of food for thought and will keep our Board members busy! The business part of the meeting finished at 6.15pm and we enjoyed a delicious barbecue cooked by Geoff Ross with salads made by the members.

Photos on page 3

FOLC AGM AND BARBECUE *(continued)*



Members enjoying the occasion

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE *From : Soozie Ross (Membership Secretary)*

At the AGM, the topic of recruitment of new members was discussed, so I should like to update you on our membership status as it stands today.

We have 106 financial members of Friends of Lake Claremont (if you include all family members there are 172 people). This is a very impressive number and indicates the level of support we have in the community. We always welcome more members because then it is likely they may be able to contribute in different ways. Some are “active” in the park, and some work behind the scenes in more administrative roles. Some help out at events and, overall, we have a very significant contribution from many people, which enables us to be such a vibrant and welcoming community group.

On average each year we gain about 20 new members, but generally they replace those who choose not to renew their membership for a variety of reasons. The most popular time for new memberships is at the time of the planting season, when our work in the park is most visible and members of the public are inspired to join the group.

A new membership system is being created, with assistance from Annabelle Walsh, our webmaster. It will be an automated system, so the Membership Secretary position will involve less time commitment. Membership will no longer be only by calendar year, but will start from the month of joining. Someone joining in July 2019 will be due for renewal in July 2020. This means there will be no need for email notifications to everyone early in the calendar year as has previously happened.

Please bear with us as we introduce the new system. The benefits include the facility for online payments, which has already started. Template notification emails will automatically be generated by the new system as reminders but there will always be a real person to follow up with about memberships.

We are not becoming robots! Ha-ha!

OUR BIRDS

Text and photos : David Free

Little Grassbird, *Megalurus gramineus*

During the bird walk on November 21 (see page 6), we were lucky enough to glimpse a Little Grassbird carrying nesting material. This is a highly secretive bird; its soft peeping call can often be heard during spring but it is silent at other times. Grassbirds are seldom seen, as they spend almost the whole time concealed in dense reed beds. On 23rd November, after quietly waiting an hour at the same spot, I managed to get some photos. Although I feel sure that this species regularly breeds at our lake, this is my first record. Normally two to four eggs are laid. The young hatch after two weeks and leave the nest two weeks later.

Grassbirds mainly feed on insects.



NATIVE BEE SURVEY AT LAKE CLAREMONT *From : Nick Cook*

We were delighted to have native bee scientist, Kit Prendergast, on site at Lake Claremont in November. FOLC have engaged Kit to conduct a survey of the native bee assemblages present in our bush and revegetation sites.

Kit collected a lot of specimens on her first day and commented that the great diversity of vegetation attracted a wide variety of native bee species. [#nativebees](#) [#biodiversity](#)

Kit Prendergast in action



BUSY BEE - SUNDAY NOVEMBER 10

Text : Nick Cook. Photos : Nick Cook and Nicky Armstrong

We had a great turn out of 35 volunteers for our November Busy Bee.

We were very pleased to welcome part of the Scotch College leadership group and staff. A number of House Vice- Captains and the School Vice - Captain joined us to volunteer and discuss ways in which Scotch students could become more involved in volunteering at the wetland.

Scotch students at work



We split into two groups. The Scotch students and staff did a great job of weeding and mulching an area that has been cleared of excess fuel load. The material removed was put through a mulcher (by TOC contractors) and spread behind the fences by the boys.

The rest of the group was led on a weeding session by Norma Hay. 50 bags of weeds were taken in total. Great job!

It has been a terrible year for weeds. This is a valuable contribution to overall weed management.

We finished the session with an awesome morning tea put on by our member, Naeim, and ably assisted by Soozie and Geoff Ross. Thank you all very much !



Members enjoying morning tea at the FOLC Shed

FOLC GUIDED BIRD WALK NOVEMBER 21

Text : Nick Cook Photos : Nicky Armstrong

Following the great success of his recent bird walk for Birdlife Australia, our bird guru, David Free, led a 2 hour guided bird walk around the lake for a group of our members. The weather was perfect, and the birds did not disappoint. Thank you David

Our talented photographer, Nicky Armstrong, attended the walk and took these beautiful photos of a pied stilt and her eggs.



Jenni Banister- Jones, David Free and Owen Ashby



PLANTINGS PROGRESS

From : Nick Cook

Our 2019 plantings are looking great. I went to see how they were coping with the 40 degree heat yesterday afternoon. There was no sign of sign of heat stress.

Our plantings receive nothing but rain from the sky, no supplementary watering is required!



STORIES FROM THE LAKE CLAREMONT AREA

From : Mary Yates

MARIA GRAY: Her 'rags to riches' story

Had it not been for Capt. James Harding, Fremantle's second Harbour Master (in 1952), the following train of events would never have happened.

After two of his wives had died, Capt. Harding (then aged 52) married Sarah Wickliffe (aged 'under 21') an immigrant from Northern Ireland.

Her older sister, Maria Wickliffe, who had preceded them both to Australia, came to Fremantle in 1872, where she married a Fremantle Prison warder, John Gray. John had arrived on the 'Belgravia' on one of the last voyages carrying convicts to Fremantle

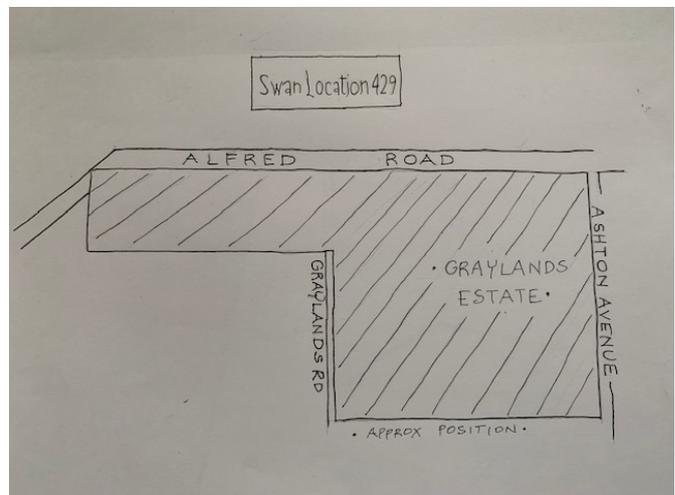
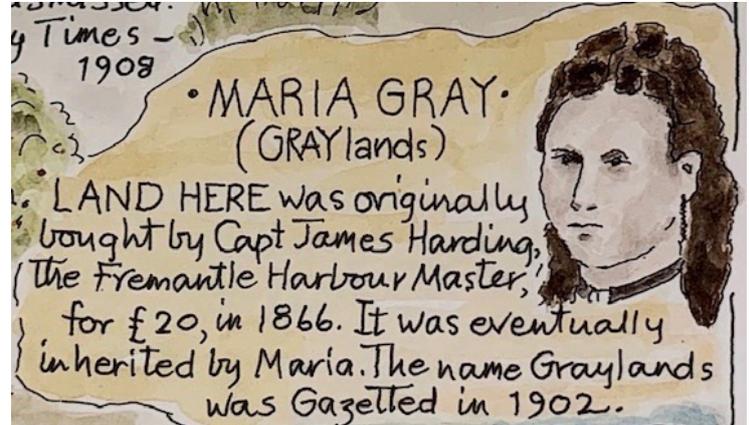
Capt. Harding purchased various cottages in Fremantle, also Swan Location 429 at Butlers Swamp, the latter in 1866. It remained undeveloped bush during his lifetime.

Capt. Harding was tragically drowned with five of his crew, attempting to assist a ship in distress in Gage Roads.

His wife Sarah inherited the cottages and the Butler's Swamp land, but she was in the Fremantle Lunatic Asylum and incompetent of running her own affairs.

Sarah's sister Maria Gray was ordered by the Supreme Court to become Trustee of Sarah's 'Lunatic Estate'. Her husband John Gray was, in time, the purchaser of the Fremantle cottages as well as Butler's Swamp. When John died five years after the purchase, he had fortunately named Maria in his will as sole beneficiary.

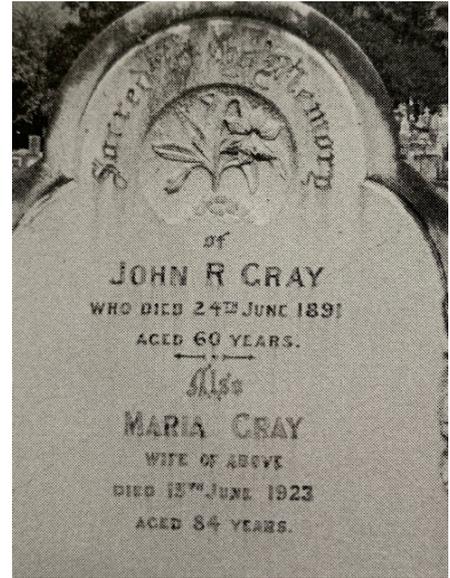
She put the large block of land up for sale in 1896, divided into 88 Lots on what was named 'Graylands Estate' which was between Graylands Road and Ashton Avenue and along Alfred Road. Several blocks were sold for between 11 and 20 pounds in the first few months.



Continued on next page

Maria moved to Davies Road in 1912 to live with her daughter. She died in 1923 aged 84 years and was buried in Karrakatta cemetery. Although her gravestone suggests that John was placed with her, he had been buried in the early, Skinner Street cemetery in Fremantle, which no longer exists.

The name of Graylands came into popular usage at that time, and Graylands Road was Gazetted in 1902. Graylands Asylum, Graylands State School, Graylands Teachers College, and others came into being. However, the Claremont residents did not care for the connection to Graylands Asylum so close to home so the name was dropped, and it became Mt Claremont with Butler's Swamp also changed, to be known as Lake Claremont.



WOODSIDE VOLUNTEERING DAY

From : Nick Cook

In November, we hosted a Volunteering WA corporate day with a team of volunteers from Woodside Energy.

After an introduction to Lake Claremont and its history we began to mulch our 2020 planting site.

The team soon got into action and we had the first section done by morning tea!

We continued mulching till we had a late lunch at 1.00pm.

Feeling very satisfied with our efforts, we took a walk around the wetland to check out some of the bird life and talk about the importance of the revegetation efforts.

This was a great day. Many thanks to Woodside and Volunteering WA!



MOTOR BIKE FROGS AND CITIZEN SCIENCE

From : Heidi Hardisty

Interested in citizen science? A new app will help you record sightings of motorbike frogs at Lake Claremont, your garden and throughout Perth.

The Clean Air and Urban Landscapes (CAUL) Urban Wildlife app (available on Google Play or Apple Store) lets you help to monitor and conserve native wildlife in Australian cities. You can record sightings of motorbike frogs, view all of your previous records, and see a map of where other citizen scientists have recorded frogs in your area.

The following info about motorbike frogs comes from the [CAUL Hub website](#) which has a wealth of info. Check it out!

The Motorbike Frog (*Litoria moorei*)

Distribution: The Motorbike frog occurs only in south-west Western Australia.

Appearance: Motorbike frogs range in colour and pattern from pale brown to bright green with irregular gold, brown or bronze spots and patches. A pale coloured stripe sometimes runs along their back. Their bellies are light dirty brown, sometimes with dark marbling and are coarsely granular (granular in texture). Their groin, arm pits and inner and outer thighs can be black (or smoky) with yellow or white spots.

Their backs are warty or ridged. The eardrum (tympanum) is distinct. Their fingers lack webbing but the toes are almost fully webbed. Toe discs are small and approximately equal in width to the digits.

Size: Adult females are typically 6-8cm and males 5-7cm.

Call: The frog sounds a like a motorbike changing gears, often like: Waaaaaaa-wa-wa. Variations of this call vary with temperature and other conditions that influence their behaviour.



Motorbike frog Photo : Jai Thomas

NOVEMBER NIGHT CHAT

'War on Weeds at Wireless Hill'

Text : Rose Senior Photo: Hilary Heptinstall

For our last Night Chat of the year we were privileged to have a talk by Margaret Matthews, a highly qualified expert on bush regeneration and ecosystems in Western Australia. Margaret's particular focus is on Wireless Hill, a treasure of Banksia Woodland that has survived in suburban Perth but which, alongside Lake Claremont and other areas of remnant bushland, suffers from an infestation of many types of weeds.

Margaret Matthews with Nick Cook



Margaret began her talk by explaining that, when the Wireless Station was installed in 1911 for use during both the First and the Second World Wars, the surrounding bushland was cleared and planted with South African Perennial Veldt Grass to stabilize the soil. This Grass, loving the climate and sandy soil of the Swan Coastal Plain, choked out native plants and created a fire hazard. When the Wireless Station was decommissioned in 1967 the area was neglected, with additional South African weeds such as gladioli, freesias and Lachenalia thriving.

The Friends of Wireless Hill, a committed group who have been hand-weeding twice a month for years, are now elderly and finding their task increasingly hard-going. The chemical alternative, blanket spraying with the grass-specific herbicide, Fusilade, has been carried out by the City of Melville for some time. However, it is now increasingly recognised that Fusilade has damaging side-effects, remaining in the soil for more than three weeks and impeding the germination, emergence, growth and health of banksia seedlings and the further appearance of native species such as orchids. This goes against a key objective of the Friends of Wireless Hill: to help the bushland reach a stage where it will ultimately look after itself. Eventually in 2007, after intense lobbying, the City of Melville agreed to designate certain areas for hand weeding only.

Throughout her talk Margaret answered a variety of questions from FOLC members in a gently spoken, measured way. She concluded by identifying challenges, including how to prevent Wireless Hill Park from being 'loved to death' – with kids wanting to make cubbies or crash through the bush, or adults unwittingly treading on delicate seedlings or even – on one occasion - lying on a bed of orchids in order to photograph a single one! The issue of permanent fencing was also discussed, although our needs at Lake Claremont are somewhat different: to protect nesting birds, while still allowing our walkers to have a bush experience.

Thank you, Margaret, for your presentation and colour-coded maps indicating so clearly where the war on weeds at Wireless Hill Park is being won. The audience very much enjoyed the evening.

VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES – 2020

From : Nick Cook

2019 has been a very productive year for FOLC. We are a very busy LandCare group and our activities extend well beyond planting and bush care. None of this would be possible without the assistance of our members and their valuable contributions of time and skills. Soozie Ross has done a fabulous job as our Membership Secretary over a number of years but she has indicated that it is time to 'pass the baton' over to someone new. We are pleased to advise that Gina Shirley has agreed to take on the role and we look forward to working with her as she manages the transition to our new online membership format. Many thanks to Soozie and Gina.

Our Night Chats program has been very successful. In 2019 the program was Coordinated by Angela Hine and Chloe Davidson. They have done a sensational job of organizing the monthly event and providing us with high quality speakers. Due to increased work commitments Angela is no longer able to assist in her role.

We are seeking someone to take on the role of Coordinator of Night Chats (assisted by Chloe). This is an administrative role which largely entails emails/phone calls to line up speakers, and to collect material for promoting the event (approximately 1 hour per month).

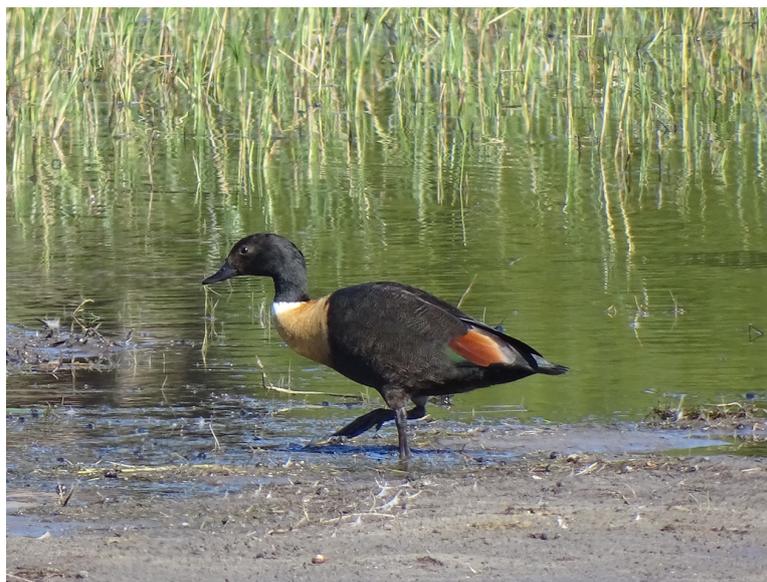
We are also seeking assistance with our 2020 Year 10 Community Service Program. I need volunteers to assist as supervisors on Friday afternoons for approximately 2 hours (1.15-3pm) during school terms. No special skills are required. The group is directed by Nick and volunteers are required to help manage the students as they carry out various activities.

If you are interested in assisting with any of these positions please contact Nick via FOLC gmail or on 0401 376 085.

DATES FOR DECEMBER

Our monthly **Busy Bee** will be held from 8.00am to 10.00am on Sunday December 8. Meet at the FOLC shed.

The **FOLC Board meeting** will be held on Monday December 9.



*Australian Shelduck
Photo : Nicky Armstrong*



natural resource
management program



Had a great moment at Lake Claremont?

Why not like us on facebook and post your picture and story?

Friends of Lake Claremont facebook page

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

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

Website www.friendsoflakeclaremont.org

Newsletter articles and photos from members are most welcome and should be sent to the editor, Hilary Heptinstall - heptins@bigpond.net.au 0411 052 329

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