



Newsletter

Number 55, Summer 2014



AFTER THE FIRE

The CFS pagers beeped an alarm at 4.14 on the morning of the 4th of February.

Initially reported as a grass fire approximately located at 60 Longwood Road, crews soon found it was in fact a roaring blaze in the heart of the best bush in the Linear Park.

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AFTER THE FIRE, *continued*

Some three hectares have been burnt out. The footpath from Keroma Drive down to the Woorabinda Lake now runs for a good part of its length through scorched and blackened scrub.

The fire has officially been described as “suspicious” but without any definite cause. The most likely explanation seems to be stupidity or carelessness by whoever was using the druggies’ camp in the scrub. (This “camp” was first reported by Friends to the police and the Adelaide Hills Council in November last year, emphasising the bushfire risk, but no action was taken).

Some large trees have been felled because they were deemed unsafe after the fire. Others have collapsed or dropped large branches of their own accord. Some of those left standing may never recover.

The Friends have set up a sub-committee to monitor and manage the recovery process. Initially it will largely be a watch-and-wait process for perhaps three months. Photo monitoring points have already been established.

In the early stages, certain weeds may have to be tolerated to help prevent erosion.

The bush will recover, though it will take years.

NEW PATRON

Professor Chris Daniels, Presiding member of the Adelaide and Mt Lofty NRM Board, has accepted our invitation to become our new Patron.

Anita Aspinall, who has been our Patron since the inception of the Friends Group, has decided it is time to step down. We express our heartfelt thanks to Anita for the work she has done for the Park.

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS

The proposal in 1989 was to rezone the land from “Rural Fringe” to “Country Living”.

It caused an uproar.

To the local residents, it would have meant the loss of the only significant open space in Stirling. Petitions were circulated, councillors were lobbied, letters written to the press. A protest meeting held on September 30 that year was packed.

Coffey, Cartwright, Kuchel. Fisher and Fleming, Ragless, Richardson and Wright . . . The attendance list for that meeting contains the names of many who are still supporters of what is now the Stirling Linear Park.

This year the Friends of the Park are planning to mark the 25th anniversary of that successful campaign with a number of special events.

As part of the celebrations, the Friends have already joined the Stirling Rotary Club’s annual photographic competition, to run two additional categories: Biodiversity and People in the Park. It was a condition of entry that photographs for these two sections had to have been taken in the

SLP. The park categories attracted 30 entries. A selection of these, and some additional photographs of the park, will be on display throughout March at the Aldgate Café as part of the Adelaide Fringe.

Planning is well under way for *Art of Nature – Works at Woorabinda*. Artists will be invited to work in the open air in the park (weather permitting) over two days, August 16 and 17, with the resulting artworks on display in the Environment Centre on August 23 and 24. The event will be hosted by the Friends, under the umbrella of South Australia’s Living Artists (SALA) festival.

It is hoped that the Young Field Naturalists will take part with their own art in the landscape event in the park on one of those days.

Also on the drawing board are plans to improve the interpretive vegetation signage in the park, a possible event to mark NAIDOC week, and a Big Picnic to coincide with the annual meeting of the Friends.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO THE AGM, 22ND NOVEMBER 2013

Welcome and sincere thanks to all of you who have taken the time to come this evening. A special welcome to councillors John Kemp and Linda Green, who are here tonight.

The Stirling Linear Park as you know, is owned by the Adelaide Hills Council. The Friends every year invite the mayor and all the councillors to the AGM. This year we arranged the AGM for a Friday, to avoid clashing with council meetings, but then we heard, somewhat belatedly, that the council was planning to launch its new website this evening.

That's unfortunate, but we console ourselves with the thought that while their website is big and probably expensive, ours is still prettier, and *we* have birdsongs.

Over the past few years, relations between the Friends and the council have been often strained and sometimes downright confrontational.

I am glad to say that that has improved markedly over the past year or so. I think the appointment of Andrew Aitken as the council's new CEO has had a lot to do with that. And a number of councillors, including the Mayor, Bill Spragg, and in particular our local councillors, Simon Jones and John Kemp, have continued to be very supportive. For which many thanks, it is much appreciated.

You may have noticed the plastic boxes the council has placed at every entrance to the park. These contain survey forms seeking the views of park users on what should happen to these buildings and related facilities such as toilets. If you have not yet filled in one of these forms, I would urge you to do so. The closing date is the 29th of this month.

Overall, 2012 - 2013 has been a good year, and a relatively busy one, and for once we have been able to put most of our energy into the park, not politics.

In January I took over as chair of the Friends' committee, replacing Philip Hicks who had been trying to step down from that role for at least the past two years. Given that he is now the treasurer, and is still heavily involved in our working bees and revegetation plans, he's probably working for

the park as much as he ever has, but we certainly owe him a debt of gratitude for soldiering on as chair for six often stressful and quite unpleasant years. Thanks, Philip.

We had two new members join the committee at the AGM last year, Janet Pedler and Nita Clifton. Nita resigned from the committee in February, but I am glad to see that Janet, with her wealth of experience and expert knowledge, is still on board.

Nita had enthusiastically taken on the role of secretary. When she resigned, Lorri and David Ragless – as usual – stepped in and added secretarial duties to all their other activities.

Over the past year the Friends have put in an estimated 1,800 volunteer hours into the park. I suspect that may well be an underestimate – we are not lawyers who minute every second they spend on a phone call or writing a letter, or doing a bit of private weeding here and there.

As usual, winter weather knocked out or severely curtailed a couple of our regular monthly working bees on Sundays, but in addition we have again had a number of Thursday working bees organised by Jane. She hopes to get these going again after a winter break.

We have continued to attract substantial grant funding and made significant co-contributions in cash and kind to tackle some of the most serious infestations.

What have we achieved with all these hours and effort? The most important thing is what you won't see if you walk through Hender, Madurta, Woorabinda or Stirling Park. The watsonia, the gorse, the broom, the longifolia, the blue periwinkle, the blackberries etc are gradually losing the fight to take over the park.

Of course it is an endless battle. We have recently had to start targeting arum lilies in Madurta. If you want to know why, look at the state of the creek running along the road down from Norton Summit to the top of Magill Road, or ask David Ragless to show you his photographs from WA.

Danny Rorschach and his professional buschcare team, who have done great work in the

park this year, recently alerted us to a new threat, *Gunnera tinctoria* from South America. If you don't know it, it looks like the rhubarb from hell. It grows to two metres in height, shades out all smaller native plants, and produces a quarter of a million seeds a year. We got rid of it in the park years ago but apparently it is becoming a menace in the Upper Sturt region, so it may be back.

With Janet's help we held a hazards identification workshop for those who take part in our working bees, to ensure that we are complying fully with all the occ health and safety rules, as well as common sense for our own safety.

In addition to our monthly committee meetings, we have set up a single email address for the Friends. This is now the initial point of contact for anyone wanting to contact the Friends, and it also allows the committee to vote by email on an issue without the need for a formal meeting. So we can make decisions quite quickly if we need to.

We have been able to do some selective revegetation. Jane's group have planted 150 blackwoods, and Philip and Anne have put a similar number of natives, mainly hakeas, in Madurta, to give just two examples.

In November last year Philip and Bob both put a lot of time and effort into helping a paid council consultant draw up a long-term vegetation plan for the park. We understand that it has been completed, and a ten-year budget has been drawn up, but we are still waiting to see when it will be implemented.

We have provided a bench for weary walkers on the track leading up to the Branch Road entrance, and with the help of Councillor Simon Jones we were instrumental in having an even classier seat installed further down the same track, donated by the Stirling Business Association.

We have continued to send out occasional newsletters. The website has been kept up to date and, sorry Mayor, it really *is* much prettier than yours. We have had a two-week exhibit in the Stirling Library and the ongoing display in the Organic Market. We took part again in the Autumn Garden Festival. We updated the Friends' park leaflet and had an article published

in the Heysen Trail magazine. We continued to respond to letters and articles in the local press.

And of course we continue to liaise, both formally and informally, with the council, with the council's Stirling Linear Park Advisory Group, with the NRM, with the Green Web, with specialised bushcare contractors and with those who use the park for research or training purposes.

At the moment there are a number of matters still pending. I have already mentioned the vegetation plan. Let's hope that gets the formal go-ahead in the near future.

There are still no official fire tracks in the park, although everyone has agreed where they should be and what needs to be done.

We don't know whether a new advisory group is going to be appointed or whether it will simply lapse.

In conjunction with the Advisory Group, we have been pushing for the name of the park to be changed to the Stirling Bushland Park, but that is clearly not a priority for the council at the moment.

2014 will be the park's 25th anniversary. The first meeting to oppose the sub-division of what was then the Branch Rd Reserve (now Stirling Park) was 30th September 1989. Perhaps next year would be an appropriate time to change the name.

We are still discussing a number of possible special events to mark the anniversary year, including perhaps a smoking ceremony on the lake in conjunction with NAIDOC week.

One event that is definitely going ahead is a photographic competition on the theme of biodiversity in Stirling Linear Park. We are organising this in conjunction with the Stirling Rotary photo competition in February, and we have already arranged that the best of the park photos will then go on display in the Aldgate Café for a month after the competition.

If you want more details on this I suggest you talk to Lorri over a snag after the meeting.

Any Questions?

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION AND EXHIBITION

As mentioned elsewhere in this Newsletter, the Rotary Club of Stirling have held a photographic competition which included two categories supported by the Friends of Stirling Linear Park: *Our Beautiful Biodiversity* and *People in the Park*. All entries in the competition are being displayed at the Coventry Library in Stirling until March 2nd.

The Friends group is arranging a Fringe event, using photographs entered in the photographic competition and additional shots, mostly enlarged to A3 size. This display will be mounted in the Aldgate Café from March 1st to March 31st, with an official opening by our Patron, Anita Aspinall, on March 8th. Make sure you visit the Aldgate Café during March to see these wonderful images.

In association with the photographic competition, the Rotary Club of Stirling has organised a raffle.

The Friends are helping Rotary by selling raffle tickets. The prizes are great, and the tickets are only \$2 each, or \$20 for a book of ten tickets.

The prizes are:

1. Sensational weekend for two in a deluxe spa suite at the beautiful Novotel Barossa Valley Resort with breakfast for 2 (2 days) and dinner for 2 (1 night) in Harry's Restaurant (\$858)
2. Home Package: Cleland Nursery, Stirling: \$100 voucher, Karl Chehade Dry Cleaning, Stirling: \$100 voucher and a basket of goodies from Bunnings, Mount Barker valued at \$50. Total value: \$250

3. Dick Smith, Mount Barker: voucher valued at \$200

4. Pamper package: Vital Harmony, Stirling: Massage valued at \$80 and Bridgewater Pharmacy, a ladies gift basket valued at \$40; total value of \$120

5. Enigma Hair Design, Stirling: Haircuts for the family (2 adults and 2 children) valued at \$100

6. Chemmart Pharmacy, Stirling gift basket valued at \$100

7. For the little ones: Magic Circle, Stirling: A basket of toys valued at approximately \$50 and Matilda Bookshop, Stirling: A \$30 book voucher. Total value of \$80

8. Voucher from Grace and Grand, Aldgate (\$50)

9. Online voucher from The Organic Market and Cafe, Stirling (\$50)

10. Tea lights from the Australia Post Shop, Stirling (\$20)

3000 tickets at \$2.00 each. Total prize value \$1828. Drawn at 7.00pm on Monday 14th April 2014, at the Stirling Hotel.

Rotary support local and international projects, and you can see more information about their projects at: <http://www.stirlingrotary.org.au/>

If you would like to purchase tickets, please contact Kath Bowman on 8370 9177 or email: kjbowman@internode.on.net before the end of March.

COMMITTEE 2014

Kath Bowman Public Officer, Membership, Website 8370 9177

Merilyn Browne Newsletter 8339 6839

Brian Donaghy Chairman 8339 2033

Marilyn Forward Displays 8339 3162

Philip Hicks Treasurer, Past Chair 8339 3156

Bob James Deputy Chair, Working Bee Coordination 8339 1903

Janet Pedler Volunteer Support

David Ragless Past Chair, History 8339 1038

Lorri Ragless Minute Secretary, Publicity 8339 1038

Web site: <http://users.esc.net.au/~slp/>

Sunday Working bee calendar for 2014 – 9 am to 11 am		
Date	Location	Meeting Place
February 16	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
March 16	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
April 13 *	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
May 18	Madurta	Madurta Avenue
June 15	Stirling Park	Branch Road
July 20	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
August 17	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
September 21	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
October 19	Madurta	Madurta Avenue
November 16	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive
December 21	Stirling Park	Branch Road
Thursday Working bees 2014 – 9 am to 11 am		
Date	Location	Meeting Place
Second Thursday in each month	Woorabinda	Woorabinda Drive

You are invited to join our working bees at any time. Wear sensible protective clothing, boots and gloves. The Park has a variety of terrain, and can be wet underfoot. Gloves are provided for people using herbicide (swabbing the stumps of woody weeds).

To receive reminder notices for the working bees, or to find out more about them, send an email to bobjames@chariot.net.au. If you are interested in the Thursday working bees, call Jane Schoettgen on 8339 7245.

Disclaimer: views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily the views of the editor, the committee or the general membership of the Friends of Stirling Linear Park. Contributors to this issue: Brian Donaghy, Kath Bowman, Merilyn Browne.

Friends of Stirling Linear Park Membership application/renewal

I/we would like to join/renew membership of the Friends of Stirling Linear Park Inc.
(Strike out words not applicable)

Membership fee for both individuals and family: 1 year, \$10.00, 5 years, \$40.00

\$.....membership fee is enclosed.

\$.....donation is included. (Donations of \$2.00 or more are tax-deductible. A separate receipt will be issued.)

Name.....

Address.....

.....**Phone**.....

Email address for sending Newsletter.....

Please return to: Kathy Bowman, Friends of Stirling Linear Park Inc., 2 Bogaduck Road, Aldgate 5154