



News from 'The Hill'
November 2017

Friends of Cornish Hill

End of Year Dinner. 6:30 ON WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 6th BYO food and drinks

Wildflower walk with Tanya Loos December 2nd.

Working Bee Sunday November 12th

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THESE EVENTS WILL BE COMING SOON.....

AGM

We were delighted to welcome Helen Greenwood to the Friends Committee. Helen has already been involved with Jan re organising the end of year dinner. Her considerable business experience and ability to take wonderful photos adds greatly to our committee who also includes Steve Millard, Jan Thompson, Margie Thomas and Gael Shannon. Once the formalities were completed we were treated with a presentation from Geoff Park. Geoff has extensive knowledge of all matters environmental but locally he is best known for his Blog **Natural Newstead**.



GUEST SPEAKER – SEAN DOOLEY

Melbourne author, conservationist and birdwatcher Sean Dooley has combined his love of birds with his ability to write comedy and 65 people from the local and wider community enjoyed a hilarious and entertaining afternoon as he told tales about his childhood and embarrassing situations he found himself in when was twitching around Australia. This event was funded by Landcare Australia.



HONOURING JOAN ENDACOTT

Friends have been planning to recognise Joan Endacott who had passed away earlier this year. Joan had played an instrumental role in not only establishing the Friends group but also taking an active part in saving the Hill from sale back in 1993. A simple seat fashioned out of a locally sourced tree will be installed on Joan's favourite spot on the high value area. A Blackwood tree will also be planted in her honour. Those members wishing to come along on Saturday 11th November at 10:30 please let Margie know by email (thomato5324@gmail.com) or phone 53242112.

SCHOOL EVENTS

September was a busy month with both **Hands on learning** and **Getting's Dirty** programs happening on the Hill. **Hands on Learning** program is a new initiative catering for year 9 male students from the Secondary College. Lead by teacher Tania Dunn, we welcomed their assistance and enthusiasm with planting 30 shrubs and 200 grasses, the highlight for them was using the augur machine to dig the holes. They also assisted us with the installation of 2 signs. **Gettin' Dirty** students were also a great help. With the site already prepared, the students powered ahead and had 400 grasses planted in no time. Tidying up along the creek kept them occupied before the lunch break after which they were treated to a fantastic display of raptor birds by Leigh Valley Hawk and Owl. Funding from Landcare Australia has allowed us to expand the experiences of the students immensely and the following week they visited **Mount Rothwell Biodiversity Interpretation Centre**, the largest feral-predator-free ecosystem in Australia. Located just north of the [You Yangs](#), near the town of [Little River](#), the fenced 420-hectare site protects a large number of threatened species including carnivorous marsupials such as the [eastern](#) and [spotted-tail quoll](#), the critically endangered [southern brush-tailed rock wallaby](#), and the mainland's largest population of the now extinct (outside of our fences) [eastern barred bandicoots](#). With rabbits being the only feral pest problem, the boys set about completing a rabbit proof fence. Team work and co-operation was essential for this task and the guys did an amazing job. Just goes to show that the traditional classroom does not suit everyone and great things can be done working with your hands.



Hands on Learning with staff member Tanya



Installing rabbit proof fence



Gettin' Dirty team at Mt Rothwell



Filling the staple guns to secure the fence

More recent success with funding from the State Government enabled us to host another school event this time on October 17th. **All Creatures Great and Small** involved students from Bullarto, Yandoit, Drummond and Daylesford PS as well as the Dharma school. Students were mixed into 5 groups with each group experiencing 5 different rotations. We have always wanted to know what tiny invertebrates, insects, frogs and birds inhabit the creek corridor and what better way to find out than to invite the experts along. **John Caldwell from Bugblitz Trust** presented a 'hands on' session where children were introduced to a variety of spiders including the Mountain Huntsmen spider named "Precious". Spider evolution, morphology, their behaviour and the roles spiders play in the balance of nature were discussed following which the students also explored the local habitat. **Erin Nowak also from Bugblitz Trust** introduced the students to the joys of bird watching. A field guide and binoculars were used to find life-sized bird models of water birds which had been placed on a trail, in a local habitat. **Christina Renowden from Leap into Nature**, discussed with the students the physical features of frogs, their requirements in the habitat, their need for shelter and a regular food supply. She even brought along her 2 frogs. Passionate environmental educator **Nicole Howie** has been working with us for some time now and in her session, she introduced students to the magical world of bird nests, marveling the skill of our beautiful native bird. Guided by **Castlemaine Ceramicist Ann Ferguson**, and by observing photographs of insects common to the area, students made their own insect. Natural materials such as sticks and seeds were used to make body parts and paper clay connected the parts together. **These insects will be on display at our local Community Bank as part of the Rotary Art festival.** Finally, a big heads up to the Victorian Government for their generous funding and also to Hepburn Shire, the Daylesford Community Op Shop and the Daylesford Community Bank for partnering with us to host this event.



The wonder of bird nests



Making your own insect



Talking frogs with Chrissie



Tree sweeping for pollinators

GREEN ARMY ARRIVES



We have been lucky over the past 2 years in being able to access visits from **Green Army** teams. The recent team, ably lead by Katrina completed brush cutting of the gorse high on the Hill. Restrictions on their ability to perform certain tasks meant that we focused on hand eradication of weeds as well. The visit to the Hill completed their work for this round and in February another team will be coming, the focus on this will also be weed eradication.

WORDS IN WINTER – thanks to Gael Shannon

Sunday 6th August did not begin sunny and bright. Nonetheless, our valiant bushwalkers Ian Scott and Ed Butler led 9 people on a guided walk through Cornish/Argus Hill/Smith's Creek. We started in light rain, stepping up to Thomas' Lookout so Ed could explain the mining works that were once below, illustrated by old photos on his (waterproofed) iPad. We trekked around the contour below Grant Street houses, past the pines and Little Cornish Mine to peer into the deep shafts of the Argus Mine, then climbed down to the water race above Smiths Creek. The rain had increased and turned to sleet. When I looked, it was snowing on Wombat Hill. That's when we decided to head back towards the cars. It was a brilliant walk, interesting – and bracing. Thanks Ed and Ian.



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"A small group of thoughtful people could change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." Margaret Mead