

Nov-Dec 2013

Friends of Edithvale – Seaford Wetlands Inc.



Number 134



Clamorous Reed-Warbler

Wetland Warbler

PRESIDENT'S REPORT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OCTOBER 20TH 2013

Philippa Bailey President FESWI

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FESWI COMMITTEE AND VOLUNTEERS

The FESWI committee has retained a strong commitment to the wetlands over the past year and have met regularly to maintain a protective eye on both Edithvale and Seaford Wetlands. Margaret Hunter has continued her commitment as Secretary and has been very available to host groups visiting the wetlands and the Edithvale Discovery Centre, whether during the day or after hours.

Robin Clarey has continued to produce the Wetland Warbler over the past year and is always ready to gather relevant news and catch photo opportunities to highlight the work of FESWI and community volunteers.

Gwen Meadows continued as Treasurer and was assisted by Auditor Bill Athol to ensure FESWI finances are kept in good order.

Rex Chugg has facilitated the tree planting at Seaford each month, connected with community groups wanting to be involved with the environment, and maintained the revegetation area at Edithvale South.



Twilight at the Discovery Centre

Kate Spillane has coordinated the Discovery Centre roster of volunteers, which has been challenging. The Discovery Centre does not offer the same opportunities for bird watching which were always a draw card for the Bird Hide volunteers.

Matt Mitchell has maintained the FESWI website and kept a close eye on political developments which may concern the wetlands.

Jacqui Sheppard withdrew from the 2012 – 2013 committee due to family commitments.

Sue Telfer has been an active support to the committee during 2013. George Madden has assisted with the constitutional changes to the Incorporated Model Rules.

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FRIENDS OF EDITHVALE - SEAFORD WETLANDS INC.

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9786 1591

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Rex Chugg

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Newsletter Robin Clarey
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Warbler Collator
Cheryl Meier 97724484

Membership Database
Chris Spencer 9786 1591

PRESIDENT'S REPORT CONT.

EVENTS

Pt Cook wetlands visit

In November 2012, a group of 20 wetland enthusiasts enjoyed a day at Pt Cook wetlands. We were driven by bus and participants came from local environment groups, as the event was widely publicised. The trip was funded by the Coast Care DSE grant which FESWI received in 2011.

Dry Walk through Edithvale South

The walk was held in July and attended by FESWI members and some visitors at the Discovery Centre who took the opportunity to join us inside the fence line. All participants were thrilled to see about 45 kangaroos in full flight. We disturbed an enormous fox at rest while exploring through the phragmites. It took off at full flight. Foxes are an ongoing problem in both wetlands because of the risk they pose to nesting birds. Melbourne Water has an annual trapping program in place to reduce fox numbers.

Edithvale wetland walks



Kangaroo trail through the rushes

Over the year 12 different groups have visited Edithvale Wetlands and been shown around the Discovery Centre. Margaret has been a stalwart in organising and attending these visits. A highlight was the twilight dinner held at the Discovery Centre with Chelsea Rotary club. They set up tables by the viewing window and Rotary members and FESWI representatives enjoyed the best view in town, whilst dining. Chelsea Rotary made a substantial donation to FESWI which has been allocated to our Bird hide fund.

Planning Opposition

FESWI had opposed a proposed development at 44 First Avenue, Chelsea Heights, twice over the past decade. The development was rejected both times by Kingston Council. In late 2012 the proposal came up again and this time, Kingston Council decided to refer it to a DPCD planning panel, in spite of vigorous objections from FESWI, Kingston Residents association and local residents. FESWI engaged Nicholas Crogan, a lawyer from the Environmental Defenders Organisation. FESWI spent \$5,000 on the legal defence, but felt it was absolutely essential to protect the last vestige of potential buffer zone at Edithvale South. FESWI members assisted Nick to prepare an excellent brief and we attended the three days of the hearing. Unfortunately development won out and the legal processes are in place for the development to be approved.

60% of the land will be donated to Melbourne Water. FESWI have already met with Melbourne Water to look at future land use and revegetation of the area, which abuts Edithvale South.

Melbourne Water Managing Director

In June, Philippa Bailey and Andrew Silcocks from Birdlife Australia met with Melbourne Water managing Director Shaun Cox and General manager David Ryan. FESWI appreciated the opportunity to introduce the group to Shaun and David and highlight the importance of the urban wetlands in the local environment. In particular we discussed the retention of the Bird Hide at Edithvale.

Minister for the Environment

FESWI met with Ryan Smith, Environment Minister and Carrum MP Donna Bauer in February to coincide with the opening of the viewing platform at Edithvale. The minister was very interested in the history of the wetlands and met an enthusiastic bird watcher who came by with his camera.

Discovery Centre

FESWI have maintained a roster of volunteers twice a month at the Discovery Centre to open to the public on Sunday afternoons. There is always a great response from the community who comment that "they have always wanted to see inside, noticed the

PRESIDENT`S REPORT CONT.

building was open and just had to come and have a look." Numbers average about 60 visitors on an open day.

Seaford

Tree planting has occurred once a month and appreciation of the volunteers who regularly participate in this activity is noted.



Rex, Dawn and Greg at a Seaford planting

Community Activities

The FESWI committee have focused on the 25th Anniversary as the key community event for 2012 – 2013, as we had been very busy in the previous year attending and running several community events.

Walk Brochures

Funding was received from Kingston council to develop brochures outlining walks around Edithvale wetlands. Production of the brochures is in progress.

Bird Hide

FESWI member and local environmentalist Alison Kuiten has been leading a sub-committee which has reviewed the bird hide closure and developed plans for the repair and restoration of the hide. Melbourne Water are supporting FESWI and Bird-life Australia to explore the hide restoration and there has been support and goodwill shown by Melbourne Water to the Bird Hide committee in this regard. Plans are currently being drawn up by a local architect, which will enable engineers to consider repair strategies.

Viewing platform

FESWI were consulted in the construction of the refurbished viewing platform which was opened in February 2013. The platform is a welcome addition for bird watchers, who have been without a place to adequately study the wetlands birds for a year. Visitors to the platform report that while providing access to the wetland birds, it is too far away for close study and photography. All birdwatchers that FESWI have spoken to advocate for the re-opening of the bird hide.

Networks

FESWI attend the ESW Community Liaison Committee on a quarterly basis. The committee gives FESWI an opportunity to voice issues of concern regarding the wetlands and discuss ideas and potential improvements.

FESWI attend the Eastern Treatment Plant committee meetings.

FESWI are members of the Frankston Environmental Friends Network.

Break-in at Duck In

Duck In was broken into and trashed in recent weeks. Police are investigating, and an insurance claim is in progress. Melbourne Water very promptly repaired the fence and asbestos walls, which had been smashed. The committee will hold a clean-up day soon.

The FESWI committee wishes all members another year of peaceful enjoyment of our unique suburban wetlands.



Committee: Back row—Rex, Kate, Philippa and Marg;
Front row— Robin, Matthew, Gwen, Sue and new member, Clare—welcome.

25th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

25 years on—25 years strong

On Sunday 21st October FESWI proudly celebrated its first 25 years of protecting, caring for, educating about and enhancing, our beautiful urban wetlands. It was great to see so many members (many of whom worked so hard in the past to preserve and protect the wetlands) attend the luncheon and the pictorial/spoken exhibition of our achievements.

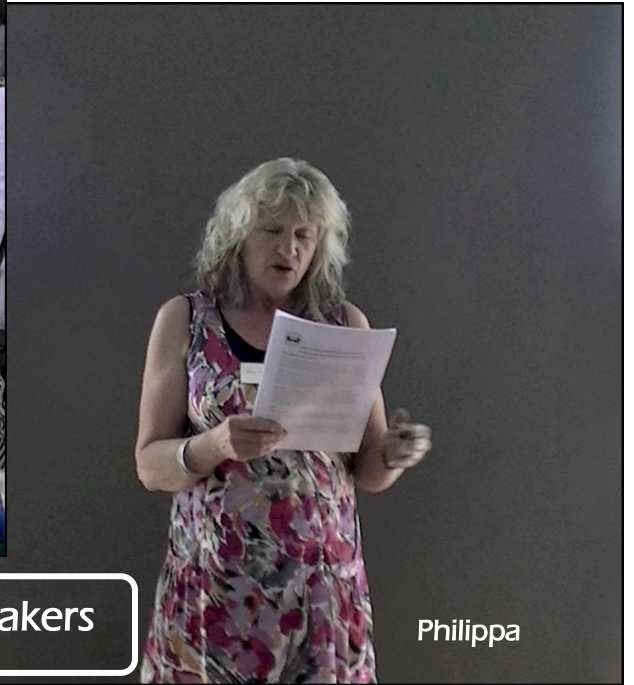


The Party People



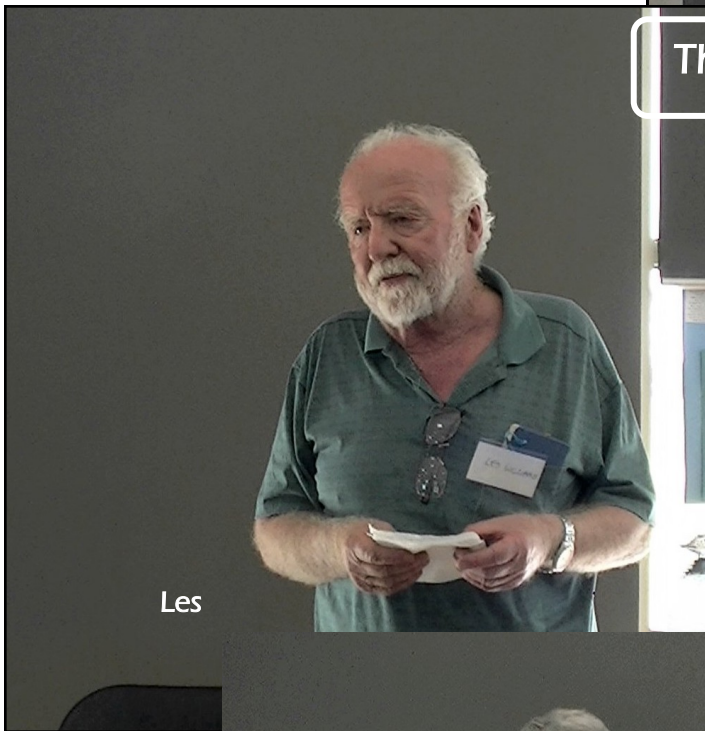
25th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

25 years on—25 years strong

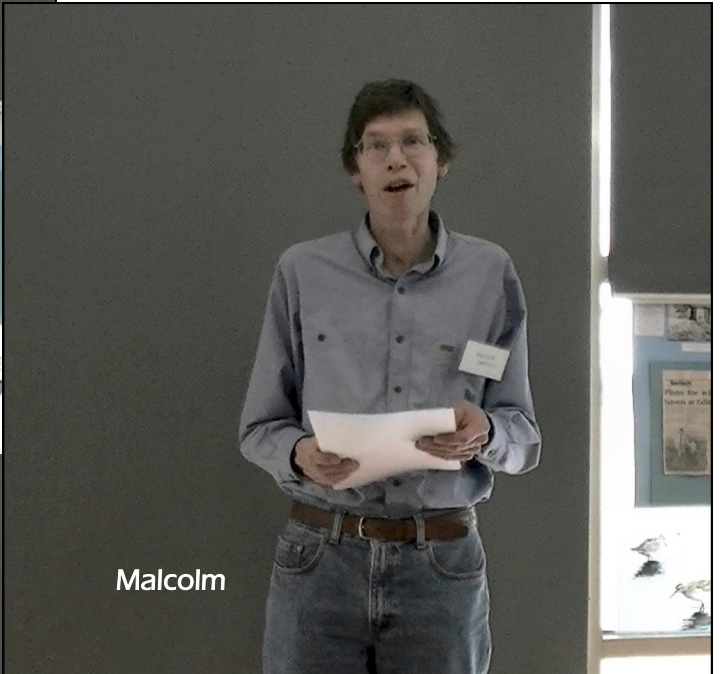


The Speakers

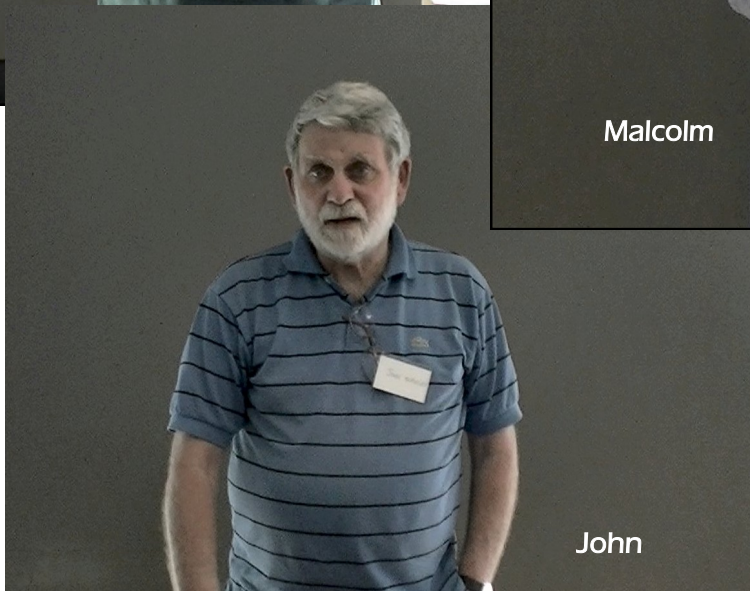
Philippa



Les



Malcolm



John

And Margot, whose photo was lost due to camera glitch.

MALCOLM'S POETIC REPORT AT AGM

Malcolm Shapcott, past president , gave us a great report in poetic form.

One highlight is not nearly enough,
 Being a member was *much* more tough,
 We had many a highlight & many a low,
 A dedicated & enthusiastic group – willing to give it a go!

Seaford – 1990 – saw earthworks being undertaken,
 This was to be the wetlands – in the making!

I joined FESWI in 1991,
 Eager to start & be part of the fun!
 Not long after I became “Keeper of the Purse”,
 I guess my task could have been much worse!

Threats occurred in the wetlands history,
 But how to avert them was not a mystery.
 Facilities & buildings were proposed – instead of *our* goal,
 They were finally prevented – that is – on the whole.

Reaching the ‘island’ required many trips of punting,
 Finally ‘paradise’ emerged - & we broke out the bunting!
 Our efforts were not in vain; we could see our reward,
 The result was fantastic - & I felt like a Lord!

Seaford & Edithvale both saw diverse groups together,
 You know what they say about “Birds of a Feather” –
 The transformation occurred before our very eyes,
 It had taken energy plus dedication & we became very wise,
 Working *with* nature, watching & listening,
 With the wetlands our vision, water muddy or glistening.

“Breakfast with the Birds” was really enjoyed at least twice,
 But as the President the following highlight was *very* nice,

Receiving the Ramsar Certificate – camera, action *and* even lights!

We were finally reaching dizzying heights!



Seaford Wetlands Celebration Days - many good wishes - all well meant,

The weather was mainly perfect – in fact, heaven sent!
 Many activities – the train rides were greatly in demand,
 But I could not have organized it without many a hand.
 Phew! When it was over my legs were really shaking,
 I had not envisaged this – when plans were in the making.

On a ‘working day’ there is nothing like rain – resulting in mud,
 For the elements can always bring reality - & me - down with a thud,
 Tree planning - & planting - was what I really enjoyed,
 But getting stuck in mud twice – well, patience had to be employed.

Our ‘home’-

The old balloon launching building, now called the “Duck Inn”

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MALCOLM'S POETIC REPORT AT AGM CONT.

FESWI leases it from Melbourne Water for a song – what a win!

Large & 'renovated' over time, it could then hold more -
For AGM's, meetings & functions – plus it has an 'open door'!

AGM's brought forth many interesting speakers,
They spoke not only on "feathers & squeakers",
Sean Dooley once delivered his Comedy Festival skit,
With his vast knowledge of 'twitching' he was a fantastic hit!

The bird hide at Edithvale was an absolute 'must',
It was open to the public – whom the birds had to trust,

It was free - & the draw card was environmental education,

Not only for locals & visitors, 'twitchers' & the like -
– but perhaps for the nation??

If only the flora & fauna could talk,
We would hear more from a bird than just a mere squawk,

Do we give them a chance to have their say??
We grew from the past – to this present day,
My thanks go to everyone who had a part to play,
I heard - & *listened* – to what everyone had to say,
Thank you for your efforts - & enjoy the day!



CLEANING UP DUCK IN



Above, Rex cleans a cabinet.

Philippa, Chris Robin and Rex spent a few hours one Saturday cleaning up some of the mess left by half-wits following the recent break-in.



Left, Chris cleans up outside.

INTRUSIVE SEAFORD DEVELOPMENT

Robin Clarey

I don't know how you feel, but from a personal point of view, I'm a little tired of developers from the big end of town, cherry-picking suburbs like our beautiful Seaford (with its space and greenery and bird life; and natural assets), developing the sites they acquire to within inches of their lives, then using the assets of the area as selling points, all the while diminishing those assets.

This is happening in Seaford right now with a proposed development: two double storey units at the rear of the property at 70 Armstrongs Road, Seaford – making three dwellings in total. The development proposal is right on the edge of the wetlands with very little buffer land in between - the property's boundary fence being no more than 20 meters from the wetland proper.

FESWI recently celebrated 25 years of enhancing, protecting and educating others about our rare and precious urban wetland. This includes the planting of 1000's of trees and other plants in the buffer zones around the wetland to shield and protect it from the disturbances of human activity and to preserve its environmental integrity.

This developer, from Southbank, is attempting to undo our work by proposing this insensitive over-development (stark and looming structures – see picture), then use the wetlands as a selling point (to maximise his profits), and all the while diminishing

its (and the local neighbourhood's) amenity.

Frankston Council is currently exhibiting new residential zones that provide for strong protection around the Seaford Wetlands. The applicant's architect has not attempted to comply with these new proposed Council standards. While the new regulations do not yet have legal standing, we say that, if the applicant is genuine about complementing the Wetlands, he should conform with the new standards because they have been developed by Council with help from experts on what is best for the wetlands.

Recently Frankston Council conducted a Residents Meeting between the developer and the objectors. The meeting was well attended and the local residents made it very clear that they do not want this sort of development imposed on their neighbourhood and the wetlands, as does **every** single person to whom I have spoken about this.

Unfortunately, although many people deplore what's happening in our suburbs most won't follow through with action. In an orchestra, there are many violins because a few would not be heard over the rest of the orchestra so they mass them. A few voices can't be heard over big money—it speaks far more loudly.

We need to mass our voices or we will lose everything.

FESWI has been opposing this Proposal. At time of publishing it is still being considered by Council.



NOTHING LIKE A GOOD FEED!



Where We Are

Duck In - Melways map 93 C 7/8. About 100 metres after pedestrian lights near bird hide on Edithvale Rd, turn right down the dirt entrance way to football oval, follow dirt track through reserve. Duck In on left.

Discovery Centre (*Melbourne Water*)- Melways map 93 D 8. On south side of Edithvale Rd, north-east corner of Edithvale Wetlands South.
Open Sunday afternoons (1:00pm – 5:00pm).

Seaford Working Bee Dates

(First Sunday of the month)

2nd March 2014

6th April 2014

4th May 2014

10:00am – 12 noon

Ring Rex (9766 6056)

Committee Meetings held 3rd Tuesday
of each month at Duck In.

Observers welcome.

SPONSORS OF FESWI

Corporate Members

Following is a list of our corporate members. Please give them your support.

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Aspendale Primary School | Seaford Primary School |
| Aspendale Gardens Primary School | Soroptimist International of Brighton |
| Frank and Isobel Baguley's Nursery | St Anne's Primary School |
| Bird Life Australia | St Joseph's School |
| Bonbeach Primary School | St Louis de Montfort's |
| Chelsea Heights Community Centre | Treeplanters Nursery |
| Longbeach RSL | Veitch & Co Pty Ltd |
| Edithvale Primary School | |
| Frankston Primary School | |
| Gales Marine Centre | |
| Instant Garden Nurseries at Gardenworld Keysborough | |
| Good Shepherd Aged Services – Mary Ville Hostel | |
| Audrey Harding | |
| Hasuval Engineering Service Pty Ltd | |
| Tania Ireton | |
| McDonald's Family Restaurant, Chelsea Heights | |
| Melbourne Water, Waterways & Drainage | |
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| Seaford North Primary School | |
| Seaford Park Primary School | |

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Friends of
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Wetlands Inc.

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Time to renew your membership (if not already done). See page 7