

Damper Creek Doings

March 2018

MARCH WORKING BEE

Our normal calendar would have our March working bee falling on Sunday 1 April, Easter Sunday.

The committee has decided to postpone the working bee to the following Sunday, 8 April. We also hope the postponement for one week will give additional time for rain in the reserve.

We will meet in Damper Creek behind Golf Avenue .

JOHNSTONE'S BELIEVE IT OR NOT



Did you know that Damper Creek valley was the site of a eucalyptus oil plant? The medicinal properties of eucalyptus oil have been known for some time. Indeed, Australian Aboriginals have used eucalyptus leaf infusions (which contain eucalyptus oil) as a traditional medicine for treating body pains, sinus congestion,

fever and colds.

In many parts of Central Victoria eucalyptus oil was distilled from local gum trees. With much timber in demand for the mining industry for operating steam engines and mine props there was plenty of foliage available for use in the eucalyptus distilleries. In the Damper Creek area, a still was set up by Messrs Loof and Lirpa who were aware of *Bosisto's Eucalyptus* product from Dandenong and, with their experience in the distillation of the prickly pear in the late 1890s, used similar techniques to construct the eucalyptus still on the old site. However eucalyptus oil is extracted from the leaves using steam rather than simply crushing of the leaves. So a furnace and low pressure boiler were needed. This placed a high demand on the limited water supplies of Damper Creek.

The old hand-operated bottling apparatus from the prickly pear plant was also recommissioned. Using bottles and corks manufactured in Bendigo (which at the time was one of the centres of eucalyptus oil production) Lirpa and Loof had little difficulty in producing a widely acclaimed product. Unfortunately the increasing land clearing in the Waverley areas and reduction in eucalyptus trees forced the enterprise to close in the early 1900s.

Notes & References

Baron Ferdinand von Mueller, a Victorian botanist, promoted the qualities of eucalyptus as a disinfectant in "fever districts", and also encouraged Joseph Bosisto, a Melbourne pharmacist, to investigate the commercial potential of the oil. Bosisto started the commercial eucalyptus oil industry in 1852 near Dandenong, when he set up a distillation plant and extracted the essential oil from the cineole chemotype of *Eucalyptus radiata*. This resulted in the cineole chemotype becoming the generic 'oil of eucalyptus', and *Bosisto's Eucalyptus Oil* still survives as a brand.

The *First April* Files of the Waverley Historical Society.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eucalyptus_oil

(Editor's Note: This column from our resident historian should be savoured on 1 April.)

The newsletter of

FRIENDS OF DAMPER CREEK RESERVE INC.

Reg No. A0029531G

www.friendsofdampercreek.org.au

P.O. Box 2063 Mount Waverley 3149

Email: secretary.dampercreek@gmail.com



DOUG'S DELIBERATIONS

Guest Speaker: This month we are privileged to host guest speaker Ian Moodie. Ian is a local Mount Waverley resident and is noted for his superb photography of local plants and wildlife. Ian works as Team Leader for Environment and Education in the City of Whitehorse and ParksWide. You are assured of a photographic feast from this dedicated environmentalist.

Swales in Damper Creek Reserve: Have you noticed earthworks being conducted lately in Damper Creek? The works are in response to a long-running problem in Damper Creek, the erosion of pathways during heavy downpours. The solution is to introduce swales, the creation of depressions that divert heavy runoff and allow for greater absorption of water before it runs over pathways. The swales also direct water into areas where erosion is less likely to be a problem and, once again, can be absorbed to the benefit of the vegetation. Reduced erosion leads to lower silt levels in the creek and reduces the need to dredge the creek. A good example of the work done can be seen on the path from Bengal Crescent to the Alice Street Bridge. You will also see evidence of the considerable work done to intercept water flowing down Bengal Crescent before it flows into the reserve.

There is a cost, however, as swales introduce undulations into the pathways making them a little uncomfortable for walking and for wheelchair access.

Street Trees: The Council undertakes a continual programme of street tree replacement. Trees are regularly removed which are dead, dying or dangerous. I would also add, "poorly formed" (though this term is not part of the Council documentation). Two years ago, proposals for street tree replacement in Essex Road were met with protests from residents and the plans were significantly revised, proof that the Council does listen to residents' opinions.

The next round of tree replacements is in Park Road, Jubilee Street and Lewis Street. The operations in Park Road are particularly significant for Damper Creek Reserve as the road crosses Damper Creek at the Southern end and properties on the East side of Park Road back onto the reserve. The proposal is to remove seven trees in Park Road and plant 18, including a number in locations where there are no trees at present. Many of the new trees will be planted at the southern end of Park Road, enhancing the habit value of the reserve where the street crosses the creek.

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

Doug's Deliberations

The level of Council consultation is extensive. Residents in the affected streets have been notified, community meetings have been held and a survey of affected residents will be held of all affected residents to choose appropriate species. Your editor (as a resident of Park Road) has provided feedback to the Council with two major points. Firstly, that preference be given to indigenous (or, at least, native) species considering that the street is intimately connected with the reserve and secondly, that species selected for the East side of the street can be taller than on the West side due to power line constraints on the West side.

Comprehensive information is available from the Council, including photos of the trees to be removed and maps showing the location of new trees and tree replacements. The major point to be decided is the species to be planted. The options, as currently presented, do not include any indigenous species. If you wish to have your say, you can email your opinion to mail@monash.vic.gov.au for the attention of Lucas Skelton (Manager Horticulture).

Next Working Bee: As a result of our next working bee falling on the Easter weekend, we will re-schedule the (March) working bee for the following Sunday, 8 April.

Doug Scott



Seen in Damper Creek Reserve by our member, Don Bladier - a blue tongue skink. Despite the dry conditions, Don thought it looked well-nourished.

A NEW LOGO FOR FRIENDS OF DAMPER CREEK

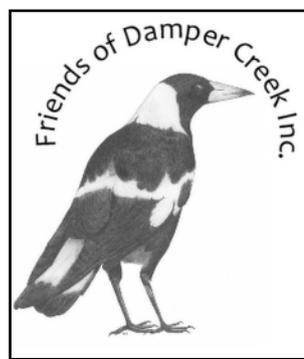
Over the last several months, we have been discussing a new logo for the Friends of Damper Creek and a number of options have been presented. The initial proposal suggested was based on the blue tongue skink installed at the Park Rd playground. This did not find general favour and a number of alternatives have been presented at the last meeting and it is expected that a final decision will be made at the March meeting.

If you cannot attend the next meeting, please vote for your preferred option by emailing the Secretary. Note: The surrounding box is optional.

Have you seen something interesting in Damper Creek Reserve? Plant, animal, bird, fish or fowl? Take a photo and email it to the Secretary for Damper Creek Doings.



OPTION 1



OPTION 2



OPTION 3

For Your Diary

Wednesday, 28 March: Invited speaker and brief general meeting at 7:30 pm at Alvie Hall.

Sunday 8 April: working bee in Damper Creek. Meet in the Damper Creek behind Golf Avenue for our traditional weeding of this area of Damper Creek before it goes through the fence to the golf club.

Wednesday, 25 April (Anzac Day): general meeting at 7:30 pm in Alvie Hall

Damper Creek Doings is printed by Michael Gidley MP, as a community service. Content is the responsibility of The Friends of Damper Creek Reserve Inc.

Damper Creek is part of the Yarra catchment and is financially supported by Melbourne Water and Monash City Council.

Contributions to *Damper Creek Doings* are welcomed by the Editor. Please submit content by email to the secretary: secretary.dampercreek@gmail.com

If you see something in Damper Creek that you think needs attention, please contact Monash Council on their website and leave a message:

www.monash.vic.gov.au/contact/request-a-service