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# NEWS



# LETTER

## ISSUE 21 for AUGUST 2003.

If you have any items about the park for inclusion in our next issue please Contact Bill Whitbourn at [gempark@netspace.net.au](mailto:gempark@netspace.net.au) or send them to PO Box 91 Emerald before 24th of the month. View this and the last 10 issues on [our web site!](#)

## EDITORIAL.

Last months editorial provoked a response from one of our community representatives. This rather political response is [included separately](#) for your perusal. Feedback is always welcome but please keep replies as brief as possible.

I would also like to thank Kevin Teasedale and Helen Wakefield for their contributions towards this issue, this is much appreciated. Kevin a FELP member is a lifelong resident of Emerald and has contributed photo's previously, while Helen is a family friend, since my childhood days in Ivanhoe. I discovered at our last meeting that Helen's family were good friends of the Treganowans. Also my apologies again for the delay in the release of this issue.

## THE TEXAN.

The Texan

A Texan lands in Sydney, and is picked up by a taxi. After requesting a tour of the city, he starts into a tirade about the small town airport and how in Texas they have larger runways on their ranches...

They are soon crossing the Sydney Harbor bridge, and the man is further unimpressed - "I have a duck pond bigger than that harbor, and an ornamental bridge to span it that makes this look like a toy".

The Sydney-Newcastle expressway also gets his scorn "Is this a road, or a track?"

So when a kangaroo jumped out in front of the cab, causing the sudden and severe application of the brakes, the driver couldn't help himself - "Stupid grasshoppers!"

## PRUNUS BLOSSOM

Each year we get about a month of the pretty pink blossom and rich scent of the Prunus. Considered a weed species by many, but I always look forward to this display each year. There is a row of these on the second level above the Puffing Billy car park. They are just another of the many and varied floral species that collectively give our park a new face each day of the year. In my youth our street had these the whole length of the nature strip and they similarly gave us a marvelous display to mark the early spring each year.

## DUCKLING SEASON

Tuesday 23rd early morning, I sighted the first batch of the new seasons ducklings. A pair of Wood Ducks and family of 6 or 7 hatchlings were swimming on lake Nobelius (Tribulation.) Although spotted again on following days, these have since gone into hiding. A similar pair that used to tend their young in this area have split up.

The male, Stumpy as we now call him lost a leg due to it being caught up in fishing line. Although he fathered many broods of ducklings, he is now quite a loner on the main lake, shunned by his mate and most of the other "two legged" water birds.

## RUSTIC FENCE

Much activity continues in our park with the addition of a rustic fence along the wall at poolside. The friends have worked hard to avoid the need for a fence here to preserve visitor value in views across the lake and the pool from this popular picnic spot. While others perceive that a fence as well as a hedge is a necessary for safety. From an appearance point of view most of our members seem happy with the choice. A similar rustic style fence has also been erected near the Messmate Shelter to replace the old post and wire. This matches the existing Puffing Billy fence and enhances the appearance of the Messmate area.

## RECOLLECTIONS OF EMERALD by Helen Wakefield.

Emerald in the 1940's was totally different to the thriving community that it is today. As a child my family spent some holidays staying at the Treganowan's house situated opposite the Nobelius Station. The house sat in a large leafy garden that was filled with large Rhododendron and Azaleas and many large English trees. This was a paradise for a child from the city.

Opposite the house there were many acres of potatoes growing in the rich red soil. We would enjoy long walks along the red leafy tracks bordered with bracken fern, as we walked along the tracks many rabbits would scatter as we came into view. If the weather was hot we ran down the hill to the lake for a swim in the fenced off swimming pool adjoining the lake, it was always cold. Every day we walked to the farm high on the hill to fill the billy-cans with fresh milk and cream.

Once a week, the highlight was a trip to Emerald on the Puffing Billy to do the weekly shopping. I can remember waiting nervously on the Nobelius Station, listening to the sound of Puffing Billy letting off steam as he returned from Emerald Lake. My father signalled the driver as the train came into sight, and we would have to slowly run along the platform, as the train slowed down we would have to jump on. I was always worried that I would not make the carriage, but father would miraculously lift us up into the carriage and Puffing Billy would gather steam again for the run into Emerald. Emerald in those days was only a small village with only a few shops. I have many fond memories of my holidays in Emerald.



## FISHING AT EMERALD LAKE by Kevin Teasdale.

As I recall in the 1940s, there was an earthen embankment damming the water of Lake Treganowan. Vehicular access was possible, but to a boy of around 10 years in 1950, it was the pool at the end of the race, below the small bridge over the spillway, that provided the fascination. It contained trout that were easily visible, and a young fisherman could quietly lower the worm bait past their noses. However the wily trout usually did not surrender and lived to intrigue again on the next visit! worm on the end of the tip of the bent pin, into its mouth on some occasions.

In the feeder streams, particularly the one near the old kiosk, there were minnows, ranging up to 6 or 7cms in length. They favoured a small number of the little pools and were easily caught on a bent pin worm fragment. One of the deeper pools once revealed an eel about 25cms in length. We manoeuvred the bent pin, but, as with the trout in the pool below the spillway, to no avail.

Further up the "minnow" stream, I once saw a quite large blue yabby about 9cm head to tail. If there were any Brown trout in the lake they were unknown to me---until early to mid fifties. A couple of young explorers, one of whom was the writer, saw to their great wonderment, two very large trout surfacing-- about a kilogram each. We would have been much less surprised to see a Platypus! It seems that a local identity, Mr. Moss, held the secret, as he is understood to have caught some beauties at that time.

Most trout in the surrounding streams were scarcely "size" (about 25cms), and the largest by far were the ones in the lake. otherwise a fisherman walking back towards the Emerald Diggings Car Park on the picnic ground, was carrying the largest trout that I had previously seen in the area. They would have been 35cm long, but not as heavy as the plump ones seen surfacing at the lake between the dressing sheds and the embankment.

In those days the creeks were said to have been fished out, but it was nearly always possible to catch trout or blackfish. English Perch or redfin were to be caught towards Yellingbo. As for the lake, it always beckoned me to come back another day.



Summer view from poolside picnic area.

## SOIL EROSION

Our thinly grassed slopes are exposed to the beating rain, esp. now that we are getting some. In areas where drainage flows across the grass or where water accumulates, greater run off occurs and the soil with any nutrients is carried away. Many spots are completely bare having been stripped to the clay. Our banks are eroded and tree roots layed bare with some trees at risk. Blocked drains and areas of insufficient drainage cause washouts, severe erosion and damage. While soil collects in the gutters on the high side of paths and roadways, on the low side it washes away from edges. Without support, the path or road edge eventually breaks away. Finally the majority of eroded materials end up in the lake.

Silting of the lake is expensive to clear, repairs to edges, maintenance of gutters and drains consume resources and trip and slip hazards are yet another safety issue.

The best protection against water erosion is good drainage. On the green slopes a healthy dense lawn-grass with minimal damage or depressions is essential. Bank shoring and protection is needed to minimize erosion. Tree trimming allows the mower and light to reach under trees, assisting grass growth. Frequent mowing helps to mulch leaf fall, promoting growth and denser grass cover. Some of these tasks have now been put in place thanks to Brian Foster and his team but the park could still benefit from a review of problem areas and further action.

Bill Whitbourn

## RAINFALL

Rainfall for the Month of August was 73.1mm with a peak of 14.4 on the 14th of the month. This is down from the exceptional 122mm of July but the ground remains damp and there is quite a bit of runoff.

## NEW MEMBERS

We have another new member for our group in Claudia Johnson. Welcome to the Friends Claudia. Another keen gardener, Claudia has already given us a hand in our working bees. Claudia was introduced to the group by our next most recent member Fiona Bridson who became a member through the Emerald Winterfest promotion, thanks Fiona!



## WORKING BEES.

August again we had an extra good month removing and burning Spanish Heath, raking leaves, clearing drains and mulching gardens. A total of 32 working person hours. Thanks to, Peggy Stonehouse, Carl Nagel, Fiona Bridson, Claudia Johnson, Sheila Hampson, and Heather and Bill Whitbourn. Hard to see how we can improve on this, but new members are always welcome.

Some garden beds are being inundated with leaf fall and onion weed so there is work to be done there. The Spanish Heath is mostly removed with some more remote patches remaining, making it a bit difficult to dispose of. Bagging large volumes of tree branch like material is out of the question. Burning it on the spot seems the best option but there may be a safety issue here.

## WORKING BEE DATES - 2hours only.

September. 2003  
Saturday 6th. 9.00am  
Sunday 14th. 9.00am  
Thursday 18th. 1.30pm  
October.  
Saturday 4th. 9.00am  
Sunday 12th. 9.00am  
Thursday 16th. 1.30pm

November.  
Saturday 1st. 9.00am  
Sunday 9th. 9.00am  
Thursday 20th. 1.30pm  
December.  
Annual FELP BBQ  
the date to be announced.

## NEXT MEETING.

The next FELP meeting, is to be held on Saturday 1st of November at 11.15am in the Environment Center after the Working Bee. Please note at our AGM (September 14th) the executive was re-elected with the addition of Leo Stauber as our new Vice President. So the team is now, Bill Whitbourn President, Lee Ferris Secretary, Heather Whitbourn Treasurer and Leo Stauber Vice President. We look forward to another good year of activity with an increasing membership and further projects.