

MEN OF THE TREES

TWAHAMWE

The official publication of THE MEN OF THE TREES Inc Queensland Branch

Patron: The Prince of Wales
Baker O.B.E.

Founder: The late Dr Richard St Barbe

TWAHAMWE IS SWAHILI FOR ALL TOGETHER OR PULL TOGETHER

TELEPHONE No (07) 3851 0858

PO Box 283 CLAYFIELD QLD 4011

www.menofthetrees.org.au

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ARBOR DAY AWARDS



Several of the Men of the Trees team were delighted to accept an invitation to luncheon last November.

Sarah Bishop of Greening Australia and her committee had organized a gathering of many Queenslanders who care for the environment and who are actively involved in the planting and caring of trees. The celebration was for the presentation of the Arbor Day Awards. It was held at the lovely new convention/accommodation centre 'Riverglen' in its beautiful treed surroundings on Kate Street, Indooroopilly.

Apparently one of our previous Coordinators from Greening Australia and later Habitat Brisbane had been impressed with our work. Laura Simmons had written an article illustrating some of MOTT's achievements in caring for the environment. As a result of her efforts, MOTT was shortlisted as a finalist in the 2009 Awards Ceremony.

Ross McKinnon presided. As usual, his comments were both entertaining and educational. The top three awards went to the Queensland Folk Festival, **Men of the Trees** and SOWN. We came home with a beautifully framed document and smiles on our faces. For more information check our website: www.menofthetrees.org.au.

Despite the devastation following the recent storms, we move forward with great optimism. We have big challenges ahead as we find ways to deal with our environmental footprint.....but we certainly know that the real life experience that comes from working amongst the trees and volunteers is something to cherish and foster.

STORY OF A STORM OR TWO

On the evening of Sunday 16th of November, a uniquely devastating storm hit Brisbane's north-western suburbs. It's hurricane-like core ripped its way over the range just to the north of the TV and radio towers, through The Gap, Keperra, Arana and Ferny Hills, and beyond. It unroofed houses, (in one case removing an entire house), and snapped in two or more, like matchsticks, trees large and small and telegraph poles. It eerily stripped of its leaves any tree, miraculously it would seem, still left standing. News of this unexpected visitation reached media outlets around the world.



Ithaca Creek: clearing the track at the Guide Hut

Four days later in the early hours of Thursday morning 20th November, another storm, slow-moving, and with a particularly weighty load of rain, dawdled over Mt Coot-tha long enough to fill to overflowing the welcoming catchment of Ithaca Creek. This meandering stream, beloved of residents wild and "civilized" of Bardon and Ashgrove, so often just barely flowing, and only a few years ago but an almost entirely dwindled string of waterholes, flexed its muscle. Spectacularly breaking its banks in a manner unseen for over thirty years, the swollen creek swept nearly everything before it - its canopy of trees and shrubs, bridges, children's playgrounds, residents' backyard structures and landscaping which over the dry years had grown complacently closer to the banks, and the banks themselves in expected and unexpected places.

And how did such climatic expressiveness and excessiveness in this corner of our city affect the plantings, older and more recent, of The Men of the Trees?

Initially the aspect was one of heartbreaking loss, necessarily sensed rather than observed, beneath the havoc of unbelievable debris.

Ithaca Creek at Bardon Esplanade is currently largely open and unprotected by its usually healthy mixture of native and exotic shrubbery so essential as a cover for wildlife. Our (admittedly small) plantings in this area received equal treatment with other vegetation, and in part were either broken,

flattened or uprooted. Difficult to accept, for example, our tallest (8 m) Red Cedar there, so celebrated and cosseted, monitored for mowing and moth damage, uprooted and laid low, and the twin Deep Yellowwoods, whose new growth was a surprise at every visit, noticeable by their complete absence. Some large old remnant trees were lost on the creek, and many branches stripped and swept downstream, taking other plants with them. Even as late as three weeks after the flood, a beloved old Brush Box, evidently fatally destabilised, fell across the creek, taking a flourishing Cheese Tree for company. At least one of the venerable, and in that sense irreplaceable Waterhousias has been toppled, and all evidence of its former existence removed.

Further down, cause for relief, our oldest and largest planting on the creek, adjacent to the bowls club, survived - its maturity and density keeping the flying flotsam at bay, even while the floodwaters themselves swept through it, over the two bowling greens, and a metre through the clubhouse.

Our largest current Ithaca Creek planting below the Bardon Guide Hut on Cecil Road was also powerfully inundated. Mature trees, including a large Silky Oak, fell across parts the younger growth, flattening it. The site also received the brunt of large careering debris which pushed over and unearthed many of the saplings and smaller shrubs. Interestingly, we found a log caught in this planting, which had been placed with others to protect the higher Bardon Esplanade planting from mower damage. It had been placed on that site, well upstream, only three days before - a handsome Tallowwood log provided by a Ferny Hills resident (living next door to one of our members) who had lost a favourite tree in "the hurricane."

In this situation, it is usually the youngest (and shortest) plants that do best, those that are not washed away, or don't have the soil too removed from their roots, or are not buried by the movement of silt, merely nodding to the flow, and ducking beneath the logs, shed doors and deckchairs. They have a chance.



Our National Tree Day Site, Arbor Park on Cedar Creek, Ferny Grove

And what about Paten Park at The Gap, site of MOTT's former nursery and HQ ("Twahamwe Cottage"), now the Greening Australia nursery?



Nothing remains of the smaller Natural Regeneration Area at Paten Park
(But what an excellent site preparation for a future forest!)

Fortunately our mini tornado largely missed these structures, only one large tree flattening a corner of the potting shed. But the park itself did not escape. Scene of our oldest plantings of the "Cottage" era, most of them mature and forming a heavy and attractive and wildlife-sustaining canopy, the park also includes tracts of bushland subject to MOTT's monitoring for natural regeneration. Some idea of the extent of damage to the vegetation of Paten Park can be given by reference to the fact that three weeks after the Sunday storm, Council contracted machines were still working in the park to drag and turn to mulch fallen trees, the eventual mulch heap approaching a quarter of an acre square by the height of a low-set house. Many trees of our Cottage plantings on the creek are down, and much of the area has been further damaged by extraction machinery. Of the two bushed areas set aside for natural regeneration, many trees have been lost from the larger area, while the smaller has been razed completely out of existence by the machines. This latter area had been progressing so well as to be considered eligible for future featuring in this our "rag".

Amazingly, the towering Blue Quandong on the creek in the centre of the site, at a spot known as Meditation Point (so named by former Cottage coordinator, Keryn Hyslop), remains untouched.

Some of us well remember the day on which the cry went up across the treeless watercourse from our volunteer scientist Sue Rekdahl, "I 'm planting it now!" The "Timber Trees" sitelet also escaped almost intact, even though the rugged Council-built log bridge leading to it has been torn from its concrete piles, upturned and swept downstream. The "Koala Trees" plot and "Ray's Forest" also remain largely unscathed.

I was examining this section of the park after the storms when I encountered an officer from the Department of Natural Resources doing the same. His job, he said, was to decide whether or not the park waterway (the focus of our plantings) could

officially be regarded as a "creek," and thus attract the regulations attaching to such a definition. The exercise had been prompted by a resident's recent application to make some change near the creek bank. As the Government officer was leaving the site, I called to him with the information that formerly MOTT for its own convenience had dubbed the waterway "Paten Creek." By chance he had caught our streamlet in the midst of evidence of its most expansive moment. "If we decide it's a creek," he called back, "we'll give it your name!"

Moving further north following the trajectory of the storm, we inevitably reach Cedar Creek in Arbor Park - site of MOTT's creek plantings over many years, and the scene of our National Tree Day plantings (1500 plants) in 2008.

On the morning after the storm, Arbor Park was entirely cordoned off by "Danger - Do Not Enter" tape. Throughout the park trees had been felled by the storm, from the topmost stand of Narrow-Leaved Ironbark surrounded by our supplementary plantings of the same species, through various groupings of old trees, to the canopy of the creek bordered by MOTT's extensive work. Large Eucalypts and other trees in the dog park there had also been uprooted, the gate of the enclosure being observed suspended high in upturned branches. Creekside trees were down everywhere over our plantings, and twisted and splintered trunks and branches formed a prostrate lattice upon them.

Yet more damage has been done by the inevitable inroads of extraction and mulching machinery.



Cedar Creek, Ferny Grove Planting.
Many of our plants here have survived, being young and small and able to duck and dodge the mayhem

I have not personally examined the "Pine Rivers" Yingally Street/Cabbage Tree Creek site (featured elsewhere in this edition of Twahamwe). However I have heard from one of the members of our group, that not one, but both of the huge fig trees, forming a majestic feature of the park at that point, are toppled and gone. Unbelievable, but true!

STORY OF A STORM OR TWO (continued)

What then is to be made of all this loss of the fruits of MOTT's labour, and the labour of nature herself over many years? Is there cause for discouragement or regret?

Some sadness is appropriate and inescapable, to be sure - trees and forests become friends and family too, children of ours, if we have planted them. Vital habitat has been reduced. But we all know just how quickly nature can restore herself. The MOTT Saturday Planting Group were out in force after the storms, sawing logs, staking and tying up plants, and replanting. But even though there was as yet no evidence of it, we all knew that the real work was well underway before we had entered the scene.

While feeling for the residents who lost property or landscape in the blow, and while lamenting the

disappearance of some of MOTT's longstanding achievements, it is still impossible not to rejoice in the more forceful expressions of our weather, to celebrate these examples of the exuberance of the natural world, so spectacular and so rare. Nature has rearranged our plantings, that's all.

Some thinning, some displacement, some pruning and reshaping have happened. Some redesign of the profile of our creeks has refreshingly surprised us, and entirely unprecedented conformations of glade, dell and creekside nook have been inaugurated. It will take a little time to flesh them out, of course. But the same summer storms that brought destruction have also brought the rains fuelling exultant restoration. MOTT will continue to assist with this Programme, as usual.

M Goward Dec '08/Jan '09

MEN OF THE TREES SCHEDULE – JANUARY TO APRIL 2009

(Check with Fran (3851 0858) for possible changes)

Activities, depending on availability of water, will include: weeding, planting, mulching, watering, etc.

Except for Gold's Scrub (8:30am) we normally work from 9am -12:30pm.

DATE		LOCATION	CONTACT
Jan	10th	Environmental facility in Rathdowney 10 am Bring morning tea to share – phone from Beaudesert	Richard 5544 1377 Fran 3851 0858
	17 th	Perry Langdon, 227 McLean Rd. S. CAMP MOUNTAIN	Perry -3289 1406
	24th	Behind Trevor's home- corner Mt. Samson and Old Mt. Samson Rd., Closeburn (Samsonvale)	Kerry 3289 9206
	31st	Extension of Bardon Girl Guide Area Coolibah St. ...creek side, Bardon Followed by management meeting at M& M's -1 pm - 82 Bowman Pde. Bardon, Bring lunch to share	Marion/Miriam 3366 1448
Feb	7th	Cedar Creek- behind Police Station Tramway St. Ferry Grove –near Dog Off Leash area	Fran -3851 0858 Marion - 3366 1448 Kerry 3289 9206
	14th 9 am & 10:30ish	Joanne Mitchell, 5 Equestrian Crt HIGHVALE... and Dianne Moschella, 9 Springfield Court, WIGHTS MOUNTAIN.	Gerry-3300 1615 Jo – 32891243 Di-32895569
	21st	Holy Spirit Anglican Church 1036 Moggill Rd Kenmore	Kerry 3289 9206
	28th	Cabbage Tree Creek off Yingally Dr. Ferry Hills (Wightman Reserve near children's playground)	Adam & Sonya 3480 6745 Fran 3851 0858
Mar	7th 9am & 10:30? am	KenMcGuffie,216 SmithsRd WIGHTS MOUNTAIN and Sue Wells, 28 Birralee Close, CLOSEBURN	Gerry 3300 1615 Ken- 0400 452 631 Sue 3289 4303
	14th	Extension of Girl Guide Hut area Coolibah St. Creek side	Marion 3366 1448
	21st	Cedar Creek – Behind Ferry Grove Police Station, Tramway St.	Fran 3851 0858 Kerry 3289 9206
	28th 9am & 10:30 ish	Brett Waters Lot 1, Jennifer Close, YUGAR and Jane Boldock 215 Fogs Rd. MT. SAMSON	Gerry33001615 Brett-3289 3388 Jane-32894796
Apr	4th	Bardon Bowling Green, Bowman Pde., Bardon, Planting & Maintenance	Marion 3366 1448

11th	Easter Weekend	
18th	Cedar Creek –behind police station – Tramway St. Ferny Grove	Kerry-3289 9206 Fran -3851 0858 Marion 33661448
25th	Holiday	



YINGALLY DRIVE BUSHCARE GROUP

Cabbage Tree Creek is a fantastic link between the mountains and the bay. This is a good reason why bi-annually this area and surrounding creek systems are celebrated through the Mountains to Mangroves Festival (M2M). The festival is a fun and inspiring event that instils a positive environmental message to the residents that live in and around these important areas that help link our urban environment together for wildlife and vegetation.

The Yingally Drive Bushcare Group, supported with enthusiasm by the Men of the Trees (MOTT), has planted just over 600 trees in Wightman Reserve over the last 12 months to make progress in protecting and diversifying the vegetation found in the small but integral link between the mountains and the bay. Their continued effort helping to control weeds (clearing on average 700m² a year) during this time is leading to sections of the reserve that are not just being protected for their environmental values, but making the reserve that much more aesthetically pleasing for the many recreational users of the area.

Adam Christison, Bushcare Officer, Moreton Bay Regional Council



The Group at Large displaying Pine Rivers flag

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEW MEMBERS:

ERNIE JENSEN - at the age of 93 has just published his 3rd book on tree identification. He studied trees in 50 of Brisbane's parks in a period of 18 months in order to finish this book. He donated the whole set to MOTT.

JIANDONG SUN - better known as Handsome Hansen, attends plantings and trips as often as possible. Having worked in China with doctors and child carers for a number of years, he is now working on his PhD in order to bring a brighter future to disadvantaged youth.

KIRST(Y) VOLZ – has been working with us for only a couple of months but wasted no time in finding out how we could use her talents. Besides planting with us each Saturday she is doing a little in the way of computer graphics for us and intends to try to find more young people through Facebook.

INSPIRING WORDS FROM - GUESS WHO?

Trees can reduce the heat of a summer's day, quiet a highway's noise, feed the hungry, provide shelter from the wind and warmth in the Winter. You see, the forests are the sanctuaries not only of wildlife, but also of the human spirit. And every tree is a compact between generations.

- *George Bush, 41st U.S. President, from speech in Sioux Falls, SD, 1989.
(Quoted Man of the Trees website)*



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