

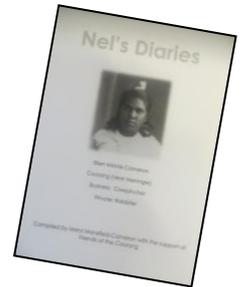


# FRIENDS OF THE COORONG

## NEWSLETTER, WINTER 2019



**Tree planting  
at Parnka Point,  
Sunday July 28**



### Release of *Nel's Diaries*

April saw the release of *Nel's Diaries*. Compiled by Meryl Mansfield-Cameron with the support of the FOC, this book is a fascinating insight into Nel's life.

From the Foreword by Meryl:

"Ellen Minnie (Nel) is the 12<sup>th</sup> of 13 children born 22.6.1910 to Alf Cameron Snr. and his wife Jessie. Aunty Nel, educated at the little church (refurbished by Alf Stratton in 2010) on Seven Mile Road, spent her whole life on the Coorong or *Pandalappi* as it was called in the old times.

Nel was a strong, single, hardworking lady, loved and respected by all, with a twinkle in her eye which nobody forgot. Nel and her siblings divided their time dairy farming, rabbiting and fishing between their home *Trunkeena*, which Alf Snr. purchased from Lloyd Hall in 1900 and *The Needles* which was leased to him by the Aboriginal Friend Association in 1904. He called the Needles *Milerouan*, his tribal name derived from his clan (tribe) the Milmeindjeri. Alf Snr. was a gun shearer and founding member of the Australian Workers' Union which is why his children learned to work as dad was away shearing.

Thank you, Aunty Nel, for leaving us your diaries, enabling us to step back in time and to share your day to day life on the Coorong from 1945 to 1963."

The book is written as in the diaries with minor amendments to assist the reader. It is available for \$12 at the National Parks office at Noonameena or the Coorong District Council Office in Meningie. Publication was funded with financial assistance from the SA Murray-Darling Basin Natural Resource Management Volunteer Small Grant Program.

Contact Joanne on 08 85751200 or via email - [joanne.flavel@sa.gov.au](mailto:joanne.flavel@sa.gov.au) (Mondays to Wednesdays) if you would like a copy posted (add \$8 for postage)

National Tree Day started in 1996 and has grown into Australia's largest community tree-planting and nature care event. It's a call to action for all Australians to get their hands dirty and give back to the community. Over 25 million trees have been planted by more than four million people and this number continues to grow with the help of dedicated volunteers around the country.

Why get involved?

- to connect with your community and nature
- to inspire your community to make a positive change
- to inform your community about environmental issues and encourage them to take part in future conservation of your local area
- to educate and foster the next generation.

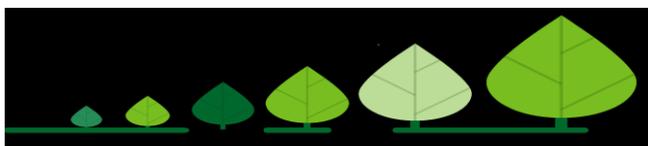
On Sunday, July 28 Friends of the Coorong (FOC) will be planting trees at Parnka Point. This is 25kms south of Meningie, off the Princes Highway. Meet at the picnic area of Parnka Point at 10am for registration. BYO picnic lunch to enjoy together afterwards.

This will be part of a three year project led by the Our Coorong | Our Coast Team to provide habitat and food for the critically endangered Orange-bellied parrot.

Revegetation will take place in a 0.33ha site and a 0.68ha site. We will begin with the strategic planting of primarily *Melaleuca halmaturorum*. All plants and equipment will be provided - BYO gloves.

A wheelchair accessible walking trail will also be established around the larger planting area.

RSVP to Joanne via email - [joanne.flavel@sa.gov.au](mailto:joanne.flavel@sa.gov.au) or 08 85751200 (Mondays to Wednesdays). You can also Volunteer at this site via - <https://treeday.planetark.org/site/10022177>



## The Needles Ration Station

*The Needles* (or *Millarouan*) was purchased in 1876 by the Aborigines Friends Association as an outstation of Point McLeay (Raukkan) Mission. Construction of a house and outbuildings began in the following year under the supervision of George Taplin, then Superintendent of Point McLeay.

*The Needles* is of State and Regional heritage significance for its construction by William McHughes, its original use as a mission outstation and its later representation of early Aboriginal farming enterprises.

William McHughes was a highly skilled, Aboriginal stone mason, later involved in the building of the church at Point McLeay and the chapel at East Wellington. The outstation was the only building at that time built by aboriginal hands.

As well as being a source of revenue and employment from cattle and sheep raising, the mission outstation was operated as a ration station for the relief of those needy Aboriginal people who preferred to remain in their tribal area rather than visit Point McLeay. It also included a school for their children and church services were held there.

More detail of its later uses and its association with the Cameron family is available on the heritage report prepared for the Register of State Heritage items. The property, previously leased from the Aboriginal Lands Trust by Peter Mansfield is now leased by his cousin Elizabeth Tongeri, great granddaughter of Alfred Cameron Senior.

A future program to undertake restoration work would be welcome, pending funding opportunities.

(Register of State Heritage Items, ref. 6727-12749)



*Photo taken during a FOC walk in 2012*

**A FOC sub committee was formed at our AGM comprising Beryl Greig, Andrew Dawes, Peter Doolette and Geoff Gallasch to identify heritage sites in the Coorong area.**

**A reminder, if you know of any historic sites – large or small – please let one of those people know.**

## Restoring a healthy Coorong

Restoring a healthy Coorong is critical for the environment, traditional owners, local communities, the SA Tourism Industry and the overall health of the Murray-Darling Basin.

The Healthy Coorong, Healthy Basin project is a \$70 million commitment announced by the Australian and South Australian Governments in December, 2018. It is in recognition of the Coorong South Lagoon's declining condition and the Ramsar-listed wetland's importance to the health of the Murray-Darling Basin and the Basin Plan's success.

It is working to improve the ecology, knowledge and management of the Coorong through on-ground works, scientific trials and investigations, better water management tools, investigating infrastructure options and partnering with First Peoples and communities.

Our Coorong Our Coast is a \$3.3 million project funded by the Australian Government's Regional Land Partnerships initiative of the National Landcare Program and the South East Natural Resources Management Board. This project will help improve the ecological character of the Coorong and enhance habitat for threatened species along the Limestone Coast through works such as pest and weed control, developing site plans to protect migratory shorebirds, revegetation and monitoring. The Restoration of the Coorong project is expected to be completed by mid-2023.

Work is also underway to update the Coorong, Lakes Alexandrina and Albert Ramsar Management Plan to guide how the entire wetland site is managed and identify further knowledge gaps for research.

The Basin Plan sets the amount of water that can be taken from the Murray-Darling Basin each year, while leaving enough for the environment. Delivering the Basin Plan will have many benefits for the Coorong, including flushing salt from the system and providing environmental flows. The Coorong's health is important to the entire Murray-Darling Basin and gives an indication of the plan's success.

For further information go to

<https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/coorong>

*Dear Optimist, Pessimist and Realist,  
While you guys were busy arguing  
about the glass of water, I drank it!  
Sincerely,  
The Opportunist*





## Clean Up Australia Day

(by Peter Doolette)

A small but high quality group of dedicated Friends braved near perfect weather on Sunday, 3 March to clean up the ocean beach near Parnka.

National Parks Cultural Rangers Tim and Matt were on hand to ferry the group over in a tinnie, and two of the members stayed on the mainland side to clean up around the boat launching area.

We also managed to rope in a couple of tourists, Shari and Danny from Albury who had just pulled up. The couple were on their way from Kingston to the Riverland (and eventually WA) and wanted to participate in Clean Up Australia Day so looked on Facebook for an activity on their route. The drawcard for them was a free trip over to the ocean beach and they were happy to pitch in.

As usual many bags of rubbish were collected, but we had to leave some larger items behind (an old rusted car rim and tyre and a large sheet of corrugated iron) actually, the beach area at Parnka was relatively clean compared to the more popular Tea Tree and Forty Two Mile Crossings (mainly because there is far less visitor traffic), but it was still worth cleaning up. The area is now a lot cleaner than it was.

The walk back to the Coorong, lugging rubbish bags over our shoulders like Santa sacks, was slower going than the trip over and Tim waiting with the boat was a welcome sight.

After loading the rubbish on to a Park's ute, Beryl and Steve fired up the barbie and the group had a delicious lunch of Coorong mullet (kindly donated by Garry Hera-Singh), snags and salad. Shari and Danny were pretty impressed with the mullet.

Tim Hartman Snr, who planned his arrival perfectly in time for lunch, gave the group a run-down of some of the activities planned to celebrate Coorong National Park being selected the Department of Environment and Water's Park of the Month for March, 2019.

Danny, Shari, Lisa, David, Chris, Beryl, Steve and Jo – the volunteers at Parnka (photo by Peter)



## The disaster zone turned wildlife haven



On the 26<sup>th</sup> of April 1986, a catastrophic nuclear accident occurred at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant due to a combination of reactor design flaws and breaches of safety protocol during a planned safety test. Due to the significant amounts of radiation dumped during the fall-out, the area's population was evacuated and a 2,160 square kilometre exclusion zone was established around the periphery of the power plant.

Whilst barely any humans have returned to the site since the accident, a study using remote cameras in the Polesie State Radioecological Reserve has found that animal populations have not only returned to the area, but may have even expanded in the absence of humans. The results of the 2014 study were published this year in the journal *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*, with researchers finding a number of species including grey wolves, raccoon dogs, Eurasian boars and red foxes were thriving in the environment.

James Beasley, one of the study's researchers from the University of Georgia, said that whilst it was unclear the effects of radiation on those species, it appeared that the absence of human civilisation was having more of an impact on animal populations.

"I would argue that for many of those species the effects of radiation, even if they're there, probably aren't enough to suppress populations to the point where they can't sustain themselves," Beasley told National Geographic.

"Humans have been removed from the system and this greatly overshadows any of those potential radiation effects."

Rubbish collected from Parnka



## New Walking Trail



Under the guidance of our President and local Sustainability Officer, Sam Blight, the students from Wilderness School have marked out a new walking trail from Lake Mike to the Coorong lagoon.

Trail marker posts have been placed in strategic locations and rocks and branches collected to identify the trail direction.

They also worked on developing a walking trail fact sheet with information pertinent to prospective walkers which will be available via the Friends of the Coorong website.

Lake Mike, near Sheeprug Well, is the proposed location for the Friends of the Coorong walkers hut along the Nukan Kungan hike.

This new walk is approximately 500ms long and will enhance the existing hike.

## Donation received for Cantara Homestead

We gratefully acknowledge a recent donation from Dr John Crompton.

Dr Crompton is a member of the Friends of the Coorong and visited Cantara with his family during April.

He donated \$1000 with his preference that the money goes towards the continued restoration of Cantara Homestead.

A suggestion has been received to restore and highlight the large old wooden front door and its façade, but we would welcome any further suggestions.

## Unplug 'n Drop



Unplug n' Drop is a new initiative to provide convenient recycling hubs in SA, making it free and easy for people to recycle all electronic and electrical goods that plug into a power point, use a charger or are powered by a battery.

This successful electronic and electrical recycling operation is an initiative of Minda and so also provides services to people living with disability through sustainable employment, and enriches their lives through greater community participation and contribution.

Larger Bunnings stores, community centres and appliance stores are some of the places that host an Unplug 'n' Drop bin. For more details of their locations, go to:

<https://www.electronicrecyclingaustralia.com.au/unplug-n-drop/where/>

The Adelaide Hills Region Waste Management Authority at 527 Brinkley Road, Murray Bridge accepts all electronic goods. They are open Monday to Friday from 8.00 am to 4.00 pm and Saturday and Sunday from 10.00 am to 3.00 pm.



## Orange-bellied parrot surveys

The critically endangered orange-bellied parrot is a small grass parrot distinguished by the orange patch on its belly. It is a migratory bird which breeds in Tasmania during the summer before travelling to the mainland coast in autumn. Winters are spent feeding in the coastal saltmarsh from Melbourne to the Coorong.

Volunteers can provide a significant contribution to the success of this bird's recovery plan by taking part in surveys to monitor their numbers and habitat. This year's surveys are planned for July 27-28 and September 14-15.

Any reports of any neophema parrots in coastal or near coastal areas are appreciated at any time. Please supply details on date, observer, location, species and number of birds, being as precise as you can.

**If you can help with the surveys anywhere in the Orange-bellied parrot's range on either of the planned weekends, please ring Bob Green on 0407 649909.**

## Micro-Plastics in our Oceans

The Australian Micro-plastics Assessment Program (AUSMAP) is a nation-wide citizen science initiative, surveying Australian beaches for micro-plastic pollution.

Using the data collected by their network of citizen scientists and researchers, AUSMAP is creating vivid maps of micro-plastic pollution hotspots around Australia. This will enable communities and government to implement behaviour change, regulate industry, and develop better waste management systems solutions to stop them ending up in our oceans and in our food chains.

If you are interested in creating a micro plastic monitoring group at a beach near you or involving secondary students in citizen science, go to <https://www.ausmap.org/contact>

Natasha Dawson, NRSE Environmental Education Coordinator, Upper South East recently arranged a training day for teachers and community groups at Kingston. She can be contacted on 0427 015 531.



*Sifting sand for plastics*

## What are nurdles?

Nurdles are the raw material for almost every plastic product on Earth and are tiny pellets of plastic that can be melted down and formed into new shapes.

Studies on marine pollution suggest that nurdles may be one of the leading constituents of marine debris and can take thousands of years to break down. They are manufactured in high volume annually. Transportation of the nurdles inevitably leads to spills eventually reaching the ocean, causing damage as they can carry harmful chemicals and choke small animals which mistake them as food.

*This handful pictured was found by a local Beachport resident on a beach in Canunda NP.*



## Bunbury Conservation Reserve

Bunbury CR was proclaimed in 1993 to conserve remnant vegetation and is located 35kms south of Tintinara, 39kms east of Salt Creek and 40kms west of Keith.

The Reserve consists mainly of white sand dunes with native vegetation, several large salt pans and samphire flats. The wetland areas are fringed by open heath and a low woodland of pink gum, swamp paper barks and coastal mallee.

The common wombat, silky mouse, little pygmy possum, short-beaked echidna and western grey kangaroo are amongst the mammals living in this reserve.

A total of 87 species of birds have been recorded in the bush habitats, including the mallee fowl, blue-winged and elegant parrots, painted button-quail and southern emu-wren.

Access to the eastern boundary is via the unsealed Bunbury-Tintinara road and to the south-western corner via a 4WD track, depending on seasonal conditions. Tracks around the boundary of the park are designated as being for 4WD vehicles only.

Originally, the Duck Island natural watercourse began south of Gum Lagoon CP and collected surface water in situ as it travelled north-westward to Bunbury CR. It generally flowed for a period of 2-3 months between 3-5 years out of every 10. Part of the Upper South East Drainage System now runs through the reserve.

Trevor and Christine Holdsworth's property bounds Bunbury CR and they have invited Friends of the Coorong for a spring time visit.

## Things to think about . . .



- What if my dog only brings back the ball because he thinks I like throwing it?
- If poison is past its expiry date, is it more poisonous or is it no longer poisonous?
- Do twins ever realise that one of them is unplanned?
- Why is the letter w called double u? Shouldn't it be called double v?
- If you rip a hole in a net, there are actually fewer holes in it than there were before.

## Local photographers are winners

The Department for Environment and Water recently held a photographic competition in conjunction with the National Parks' *Park of the Month* promotion.

The Coorong National Park was the Park of the Month for March and the competition was held to gain photographs for promotional use for the park. Several local photographic enthusiasts took part in the *Capture the Coorong* competition with some success. The three categories were Visitor Experience, Wildlife Image and Landscape Image.



*Winner of the Landscape Image section was Kirsty Ridley from Meningie.*

## Essence of Heritage photo and video competition

The Department for Environment and Water is holding a photo and video competition to promote and celebrate the 2300 State Heritage places and 17 State Heritage Areas in South Australia.

There are four categories to enter. Two are for school students – the first being photos of State Heritage Places and the second being videos of State Heritage Places.

Categories three and four are 'Destination Heritage' – entries relating to your favourite State Heritage Place, and are open to anyone to enter – with a photo and video component.

For more information and the terms and conditions, go to:

<https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/heritage/heritage-photo-competitions>

Entries close on Sunday, September 29, 2019.

## Gift Ideas

Gift certificates - \$10

Call of the Coorong DVD - \$10

Books:

Nel's Diaries (collated by Meryl Mansfield-Cameron) \$12

A Diverse Land - A History of the Lower Murray, Lakes & Coorong (by Rob Linn) \$15

Tales of the Coorong \$8, More Tales of the Coorong \$10, Tales of the Lakes & Coorong \$12, Anniversary packs of all 3 Tales books \$25 (all collated by Leta Padman)

Murder, Mishap and Misfortune – a select history of the Coorong \$20, The Coorong Gazetteer \$25, A Cartographical History of the Coorong \$25 (all by Peter Doolette)

Sale - 25% off Clothing

Polo shirts were \$26, **now \$19.50**

T shirts were \$14, **now \$10.50**

Windcheaters were \$30, **now \$22.50**

All are printed with our logo – various sizes and colours available. Current stocks only.

**Contact Joanne (85751200 - Mondays to Wednesdays or [joanne.flavel@sa.gov.au](mailto:joanne.flavel@sa.gov.au)) if you wish to purchase any of our merchandise.**

## Dates for your diary



Saturday 27 – Sunday 28 July – Orange-bellied parrot survey

Sunday 28 July – National Tree Day planting at Parnka Point, from 10am

Saturday 14 – Sunday 15 September – Orange-bellied parrot survey

September/October – Malleefowl surveys

Spring – visit to Bunbury Conservation Reserve



**Remember to check out the Friends of the Coorong's Facebook page and feel free to share your thoughts, experiences and photos.**