

NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2008

NUMBER 15

Editor: Peter Bird



President: Chris Kaczan **Secretary:** Joe Haslam **Treasurer:** Lynda Yates

Committee: Peter Barnes, Peter Bird, Jennifer Gardner, Grant Joseph, Peter Lang, Helen Pryor, Stephen Wait

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New members are welcome. Contact Jennifer Gardner, Manager Waite Conservation Reserve (see above)

President's Page

Sometimes I get a blank look from people when I talk about the Waite Conservation Reserve. For many people in the suburbs of Adelaide the Waite Reserve is hidden in the foothills. Often it isn't until I describe it as: "that bit on the south side of the freeway extending from about the tollgate almost to Devils Elbow", that people recognize the area I'm talking about. However as many people know, a better way to see the reserve is not by speeding car from the freeway but by foot along the many walking trails. The very best way of course is to join the Friends group where we get to explore the many hidden corners of the reserve as we continue our bushcare work.

There was a good rollup of members and volunteers for the combined Christmas function at Urrbrae House on 3 December. This was an occasion to thank people and to highlight some of the achievements of the Friends group. Fortnightly working bees starting from the autumn break in the season and continuing through into late spring resulted in the planting of many hundreds of seedlings. These were grown from seed collected in the reserve and propagated by the Friends. Stephen Wait and Grant Joseph are thanked for their great job in planning and supervising the working bees.

In spring Peter Bird led a very interesting early morning bird walk for members. In addition he is also thanked for editing the twice-yearly newsletter.

The Friends group donated \$1000 towards a re-vegetation plan for the reserve. The plan complements an earlier report by Grant Joseph and will provide a long-term framework for our re-vegetation efforts. We also purchased a new table and bench seats in Koala Gully. Thanks to Andy Baker and Peter Barnes for installing them in difficult circumstances.

I am indebted to a very efficient committee which welcomed Helen Pryor as a new member. Thanks in particular to the secretary Joe Haslam and the treasurer Lynda Yates. Peter Lang's botanical expertise is much appreciated as is Jennifer Gardner's continued help and advice.

Things to look forward to this year include a talk by Colin Harris who will tell us about the environmental history of the Adelaide foothills. You are most welcome to attend this and the fortnightly working bees. Details of both are included inside.

Regards

Chris Kaczan

NEW DISPLAY BOARD

A recent funding application to the Adelaide & Mt Lofty Ranges Natural Resources Management Board was successful and we have purchased an 8 panel (1800 x 2200 mm) display system and are developing the posters to go on it. The total cost is \$2,200 of which the Friends will contribute 25%. Thank you to Joe for preparing the application.

We hope to exhibit the display in local libraries, Council chambers and other venues to increase community awareness for the reserve and to promote the Friends.

By reaching a wider audience we hope to increase our membership and thereby increase the amount of work we can do to rehabilitate the reserve.

We are hoping it might be ready by the AGM on 21 May for you all to see.

Helen Pryor

THE WAITE RESERVE IN 1905

“Whoever rehabilitates these hills will not need any other monument”
Thomas Gill 1905

During my summer holiday I came across a very interesting book: “The History and Topography of Glen Osmond” written in 1905 by Thomas Gill.

It started me thinking about how much progress has been made in restoring the hills face zone in the hundred years since he wrote these words. I have included a few excerpts which caught my imagination. What do you think?

“The hill to the west of Glen Osmond Road is generally known as Hardy’s Hill or the Quarry Hill ... Many hundreds of buildings in the city have been constructed of Glen Osmond stone taken from this and other quarries nearby... These were formally covered with Sheoak.” p.11.

“The hills bordering Glen Osmond on the east were originally clothed with stately trees, principally *Eucalyptus rostrata* [now *E. camaldulensis* – Red Gum], affording shelter to numerous shrubs, including the native lilac [*Hardenbergia violacea*] but now they are bare and almost treeless.” p.3

“In the second gully (to the west of Glen Osmond Road) snugly ensconced by the south western brow of (Hardy) Hill is ... one of the few picturesque spots near Adelaide where the original gum trees have been allowed to remain. On the hill slopes three varieties of eucalypts are to be found *Eucalyptus odorata* [presumably mistaken for Grey Box *E. microcarpa*], (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) Red Gum, and (*Eucalyptus leucoxylon*) Blue Gum. The wattle (*Acacia pycnantha*) which luxuriated on the Western slope disappeared some thirty years ago. The native cherry (*Exocarpos cupressiformis*) has also habitat on the slopes near the summit of the hill. p11.

A hundred years later we are fortunate that these plants can still be seen in the reserve. If you would like to find out more don’t miss the talk by Colin Harris about the environmental history of the foothills at our AGM on 21 May.

Helen Pryor



Friends of Waite Conservation Reserve

cordially invite you to an illustrated
presentation by

Colin Harris

An Environmental History of Adelaide's South Eastern foothills

following a short AGM

Colin has lived in the foothills of Adelaide for most of his life and spent many hours as a child roaming widely indulging a passion for natural history. He studied geography and history and taught at Adelaide University.

His interests led him to work for Department of Environment and Conservation. He is a former director of Biodiversity Conservation and a recipient of the Public Service Medal for his contributions to the environment.

His illustrated talk will take us on a fascinating journey from before European settlement up to the present day. Colin has put together a presentation that both entertains and explains how our local foothills have changed over this period of time.

Urrbrae House

University of Adelaide, Waite Campus
(Enter from Fullarton Road, just S of Cross
Road or Gate 3, Waite Road, Urrbrae)

7.30 pm

Wednesday 21 May 2008

Free Admission
Supper provided

All welcome
Enquiries: Chris 8338 4443

WCR WEB PAGE

Have you visited the web page lately? It is a mine of information about the reserve.

You can trawl through detailed plant & animal lists, look up previous newsletters, confirm working bee details, download membership forms or check the photo gallery.

See www.waite.adelaide.edu.au/reserve/



Native Buttercup *Ranunculus lappaceus*
Photo: Jennifer Gardner



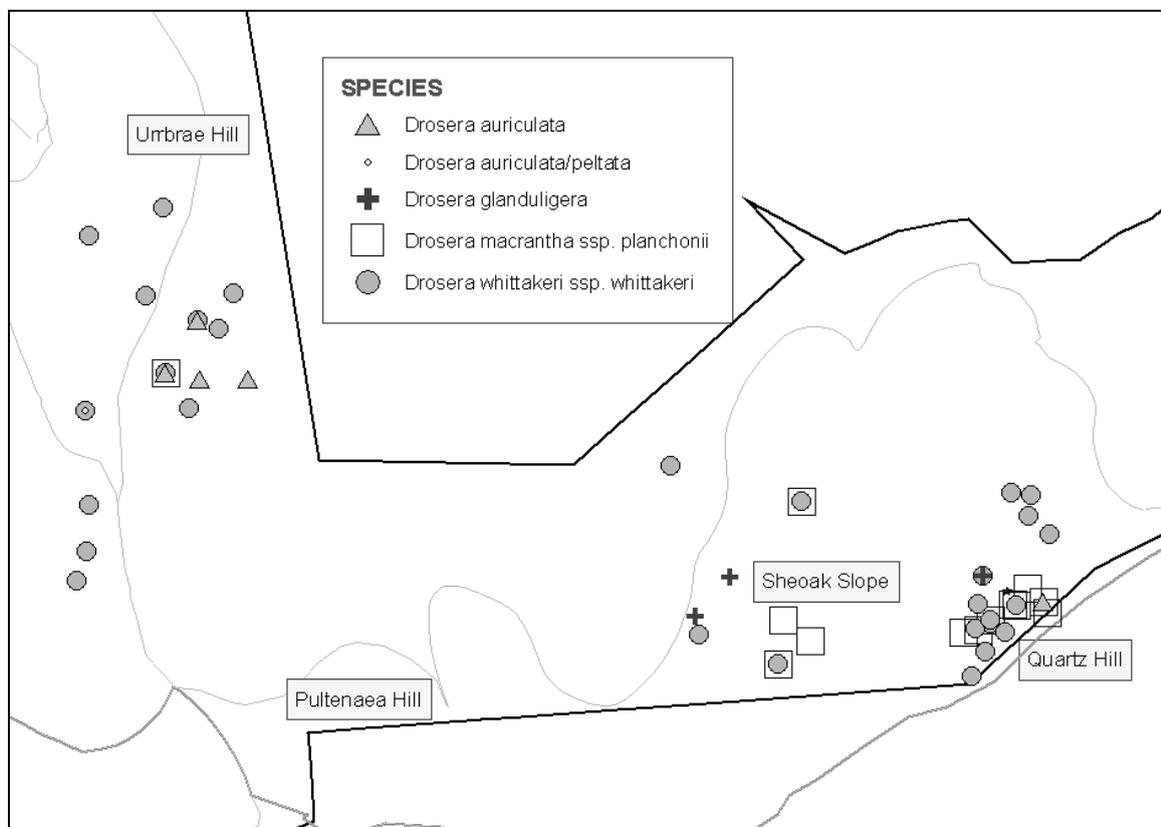
Sweet Bursaria *Bursaria spinosa*
Photo: Jennifer Gardner

BOTANICA

Sundews

Sundews are named for the glistening exudation borne on their stalked glandular hairs which gives them the appearance of being covered in fine droplets of dew. The stickiness of the exudation enables it to trap insects, often with the help of the hairs that bend inwards and 'close in' around the prey, and the enzymes it contains dissolve and break down the trapped insects releasing nutrients for the plant to absorb.

Four Sundew species are definitely known to occur in the Waite Conservation Reserve, and there is a possible fifth species that requires confirmation.



Recorded locations of Drosera species within the Waite Conservation Reserve.

***Drosera whittakeri* ssp. *whittakeri* (Whittaker's Sundew, Scented Sundew)**

This is the most abundant, widespread and conspicuous of the *Drosera* species in the Reserve, recognisable by the rosette of short, strap-like leaves that sit flat on the ground. During the summer months the plant dies back to the globular tubers hidden deep below the surface. In structure and behaviour these are very similar to the tubers of the terrestrial orchids. The leaves begin to re-emerge after substantial autumn rains and the beautiful delicate flowers with crisp pure white petals can appear as early as May. Flowering continues through winter and early spring.

***Drosera macrantha* ssp. *planchonii* (Climbing Sundew)**

This is the next most commonly encountered species in the reserve and is immediately recognisable by its climbing or scrambling habit, the thin wiry stems usually relying on

other plants for support. The leaves are highly modified structures: little circular plunger-like cups ringed by glandular hairs and facing downwards on the ends of thin stalks – if it was scaled up you'd be convinced it came from Mars!

***Drosera auriculata* (Tall Sundew)**

Tall Sundew can be confused with the preceding species as its leaves are also held out from the stem on thin stalks. However the main stem is straight and always erect and self-supporting, the leaves are shield-shaped (with their top corners extended as tapering 'ears' or auricles) and the flowers are consistently pale pink rather than white. It appears to be quite rare in the Reserve with only a few plants known from the upper east-facing slope of Urrbrae Ridge and on Quartz Hill.

***Drosera peltata* (Pale Sundew)**

Pale sundew was reported for the Reserve on an early list but there have been no confirmed sightings, at least over the last 15 years. It is generally more common than the previous species and it is quite plausible that it occurs here. Non-flowering plants found last year northwest of Cherry-tree junction on Urrbrae Ridge may be this species. Although generally a shorter plant, it is often difficult to separate from *D. auriculata*, but when flowers are present it can be readily distinguished by its white (rather than pink) flowers and a hairy (rather than smooth) calyx.

***Drosera glanduligera* (Scarlet Sundew)**

This is an annual rosette species with a fibrous root system rather than the underground tubers that enable the other four species to survive through the summer. It is a distinctive sundew with orange-red flowers. You have to be especially observant to spot this species in the Reserve. It is a tiny plant, usually 1-3 cm tall and has so far only been recorded on Sheoak Slope and Quartz Hill. Look out for it around hill-slope seepages in patches of bare ground.

Species	flower colour	habit	leaf shape	tuber
<i>Drosera auriculata</i>	pink	erect	shield	Y
<i>Drosera glanduligera</i>	orange/brick-red	rosette	spoon	N
<i>Drosera macrantha</i> ssp. <i>planchonii</i>	white	climbing	plunger	Y
<i>Drosera peltata</i>	white	erect	shield	Y
<i>Drosera whittakeri</i> ssp. <i>whittakeri</i>	white	rosette	strap	Y

Peter Lang



Climbing Sundew *Drosera macrantha*
Photo: Jennifer Gardner