



UnderStories

promoting preserving protecting
& rehabilitating native vegetation

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and memberships to:*

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Vice-President Anne Griffiths
Secretary Mary Jolly
Treasurer Rupert Manners

Committee members

Amanda Cole
De Deegan
Margaret Downie
Warner Wait

Editor

Anna Holan

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COORDINATOR'S REPORT

Welcome to another new look Understories, and thank you to our new editor, Anna Holan for stepping in! In this issue you will find some reports on recent Understorey events as well as discussions about the future of the network. You will also find the annual membership subscription form as well as the growers scheme registration forms. If you are a new member and have joined since January this year you do not have to renew, otherwise please send back your form at your convenience (even if you are paying via EFT).

New receivers are very welcome as we have lots of eager volunteers who want to grow plants. Remember that receiving plants is a very cost effective way of obtaining local provenance native plants for your projects. Please let others know who may be interested about this scheme.

Thank you to all of our growers of last season for doing such a fantastic job and also to everyone who has sent in their feedback forms. This is very valuable for us to improve the scheme, the species we use and how we coordinate it. Any other general feedback is also welcome. Most of the plants grown through the scheme would be handed over and in the ground now.

After the bushfires that devastated the Tasmanian community there was an outpouring of support to help people who were affected recover. The Understorey Network recognized that recovery would be a long term process and set about recruiting volunteers to grow plants for the cause. Fifteen months on, and the seedlings that were propagated specifically for the areas are now grown up and ready to go in the ground.

Recently over 5,000 native plants were ferried to Dunalley and all of the landowners who were affected were invited to come and choose the plants they wanted to help put their properties back together, be it gardens for wildlife, privacy, wind breaks or just some good looking plants.

Thanks to everyone involved.

Oliver Strutt

FROM PRESIDENT

If a week is a long time in politics a month is a very long time in the life of an environmental organisation. On 12th April we met at Oatlands to celebrate 20 years of work within the Tasmanian environment while 12th May saw your committee discussing options for the future of the organisation.

I know that others have written about the Oatlands day but I need to add my thanks and congratulations to all who contributed to its success.

- Mary for suggesting the Lake Dulverton walk and pre-walking it for us.
- Ollie for organising the tree planting and Warner for digging the planting holes while the rest of us walked.
- De for providing and cooking the magnificent food.
- Amanda for making and Ollie for decorating the cake, perhaps you could go into the cake decorating business Ollie!
- Biz and Anna for giving us an insight into the history of the USN and for reminding everyone that the original members saw a need to promote the importance of understorey for many reasons including plant biodiversity, species survival and human enjoyment.
- Everyone else for just being there on what was not a particularly warm day.

But that was the past, what of the future?

In previous newsletters I have alluded to possible difficult times ahead and it is now very clear that the federal government is unlikely to provide any major funding for environmental groups within the foreseeable future. In fact on 12th May the committee agreed that we should plan for there to be no major funding during this term of government. What does that mean for the USN?

Some members may not know that in recent years we have been very successful in obtaining large grants for some important environmental projects. The projects required the employment of a full-time co-ordinator and at times two co-ordinators to manage the work load. While the co-ordinators have primarily concentrated on project delivery they have also been available to support "member" activities such as the Growers Scheme and have been able to provide opportunities for members to attend workshops and seed collecting days arranged as part of larger projects.

Unfortunately, as funded projects are completed in 2015 we will not be able to employ a full time co-ordinator and may not be able to afford a part-time one unless we can generate more income by way of small grants for specific activities or

by increasing membership fees. This is why we need to look to the future of the USN.

A number of options were put forward by different committee members including:

- Reducing costs as much as possible by for example asking Ollie to work part-time from 1st July, which he actually wants to do as he has a new business venture to promote (good luck with that Ollie). We could also give up the lease on the office and work from the nursery and the co-ordinator's home.
- Reducing the size of our operation and make the nursery, with its pool of volunteers the centre of our growing activities.
- Working more closely with volunteer land care groups.
- Investigate joining a larger environmental group, which could mean that the USN would cease to exist as a separate entity but would ensure that the aims of the organisation would continue.

However, in all these discussions we were aware that we had not taken into account the needs and desires of you, our members. I am sure that people have joined the USN for a variety of reasons and therefore want to get different things from the organisation. As a committee we need to know what our members want us to do to meet future needs, how they think those needs could be met and how much they are prepared to contribute by way of time and/or money to achieve those aims.

If any members want to participate in the discussion they could email comments to me at

Joanrhoda.Rodrigues@gmail.com

or post them to the USN post office box.

As usual our meetings are open to members so any interested people can attend the next one on Tuesday 10th June at 5.15 when we will continue our discussions about the future. If you plan to come please let us know beforehand so that we can ensure that we have enough seats. Finally, I want to put in an early plea for as many members as possible to attend the next AGM, provisionally planned for 10.00 on Saturday 27th September as that is the time and place for the organisation to confirm any changes required to ensure that the understorey continues to be an important consideration within the environment.

I look forward to hearing your views on our future.

Joan Rodrigues

PIZZA OVEN GRAND OPENING

Standing like a giant brick beehive surrounded by swirling wood smoke, the Tolosa St nursery pizza oven fired-up Monday, April 28th for the grand opening crowd of about 25 members and friends.

Kicking off the ceremony, *The Nursery Songbirds* led by coordinator Amanda Cole serenaded the BMI crew, Bill, Michael and Ian with an original tune expressing appreciation for another job well done.



Michael, Ian and Bill



Nursery Songbirds

Over several weeks time, our very own 'Honey-Do' crew, labored to create a veritable outdoor pizza parlor, including not only the masterpiece oven but volcanic boulder seating and a hand-crafted pizza peel made from a recycled road sign. Ingenious! Nursery workers Craig, Susan and Anna gifted the BMI crew with stylish caps, complete with 'eyes in the back of their heads'. Like we don't keep them busy enough!



Bon Appetit

Getting the party started, our friends from *Life Without Barriers*, coordinator Sue Telega and helpers Jenny and Lawrence, prepared dough, while members helped themselves to the fixings, designing individual pizzas from a selection of olives, anchovies, salami, veg and cheeses. Adding to the festivities, Jess and the kids, presented Oliver with two scrumptious cakes celebrating a milestone birthday for our USN coordinator. Hip Hip Horray!

Sponsorship funding from the Westpac Foundation covered the cost of materials for this most recent improvement to the nursery facilities.

Jeannie Mooney

OUR 20 YEAR BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS AT OATLANDS

Well what a great day we had on 12th April on the shores of Lake Dulverton at Oatlands. There we celebrated 20 years of passionate and inspiring natural resource management by past and present Coordinators, members and friends of the Understorey Network.



Participants

Bracing temperatures and threatening clouds were no deterrent and invited guests began to arrive at 10am and enjoyed a welcome hot drink and tasty biscuit. At 10.30am 23 members and guests boarded a mini-bus for the 7 km drive to Parattah, a neighbouring small town steeped in history. The old railway station still exhibits remnants of its glory days when it was the main stop between Hobart and Launceston and where passengers and engines alike took on the necessities to get them to the end of their journey. The old tudor-style hotel (now a private residence) still stands near the station and the General Store with its very colourful artwork-covered facade is currently home to a family with nine children, all home-schooled as the town school is no longer operational.

The bus driver cheerfully treated us to a mini-tour of the town before dropping us at a convenient spot to start the 5.5km walk, following the old branch-line railway route back to Oatlands. This was a wonderful opportunity to get to know one another while admiring the community effort which had gone into constructing the walking track, interpreting the many points of historical interest along the way and the wide-ranging efforts to restore natural vegetation along the route.



Anna Povey



Biz Nicholson



Official welcome at Lake Dulverton

2.30pm back at the Lake, we were joined by many more members and friends. There we were privileged to meet Biz Nicholson and to hear her recount the very beginnings of USN. She told us of her vision, inspired by Trees for Life in South Australia and of the first meeting of enthusiasts at her home. Anna Povey, the USN's first coordinator continued the story to tell of her task which was to bring the aspirations of all the participants together and to establish a cohesive organization embracing all their interests. Quite a task but

Anna was just the person to do it. Next Anna and another inspirational past-coordinator, Ruth Mollison, were joined by our current super-hero, Ollie Strutt to perform symbolic plantings on the banks of the Lake, in the vicinity of plantings from the early days of USN. Among Ruth's many achievements was the acquisition, in conjunction with Sustainable Living and Life without Barriers, of the lease of the then-derelict Glenorchy City Council Nursery at Tolosa Park. What an amazing success story that has been. If you haven't visited the Nursery and Community Garden I really commend it to you – you will be amazed!

Meanwhile up at the barbecue shed De Deegan, Susan Friend and Jeannie Mooney had been busily preparing a veritable feast. Copious platters of delicious gourmet kebabs, beef, chicken and vegetable with hearty chunks of bread and, later, fruit, were on offer. Many thanks to De for organizing this very special barbecue fare and to her willing helpers. The piece de resistance was yet to come – the birthday cake, a yummy mud cake baked by Amanda and magnificently decorated by Ollie, with an iced version of the USN logo, *Clematis aristata*. It was another culinary triumph, visually and on the taste buds and was much photographed.



Anna Ruth Mollison and Sophie Strutt performing symbolic planting on the banks of Lake Dulverton in the vicinity of plantings from the early days of USN.

At this point our President, Joan Rodrigues presented Life Membership Certificates to Warner Wait and myself for our contributions to the Network over most of the 20 years of its existence. We were both surprised and delighted to become the first Life Members of such a worthwhile organization.



The day ended with a mini working bee by an energetic few. They just couldn't resist it could they? A trailer load of mulch was spread on the new plantings to improve the aesthetics and their chances of survival.

Thanks to all who had a hand in this memorable Day, to Ollie for all the work put in beforehand to ensure that things went smoothly and with special thanks to Maria Weeding of the Southern Midlands Council who made it possible for us to access the site and its facilities. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could look forward to another 20 years!!

I promised a half page report on the Day – totally impossible. The highlights were just too numerous.

Mary Jolly
USN Secretary

OUR FIRST LIFE MEMBERS

At the 20th birthday celebrations of the Understorey Network, the first Life Memberships were awarded to two of our longest serving members. Warner Wait and Mary Jolly have been involved with the USN for nearly all of those twenty years.

Warner Wait was one of the original members when the Understorey Network was formed in 1994 by a group of like minded individuals, who lived in the north of the state. Warner took over the presidency from the first president, Biz Nicholson, in 1997 and remained as the USN's president for five years.

After the committee applied for funding, Warner was at the significant meeting at the RTBG to appoint the first co-ordinator, Anna Povey. Warner and Anna organised a well attended Forest Forum and he also ran workshops on King and Flinders Island with Alison Moore the USN's second co-ordinator. Warner was in attendance at Agfest in the early years promoting the USN. Warner spent much of his time accompanying the co-ordinators around the state, conducting workshops, working with students in schools propagating native plants and conducting plant identification sessions using his vast knowledge in this area.

Warner has served continuously on the Understorey Committee since 2006, and was vice president in 2011 and president in 2012 and 2013. He is currently serving as an invaluable committee member.

Warner, the Understorey Network certainly has appreciated and continues to appreciate your commitment and dedication to propagating, preserving, protecting and rehabilitating native vegetation. Congratulations on your Life Membership.

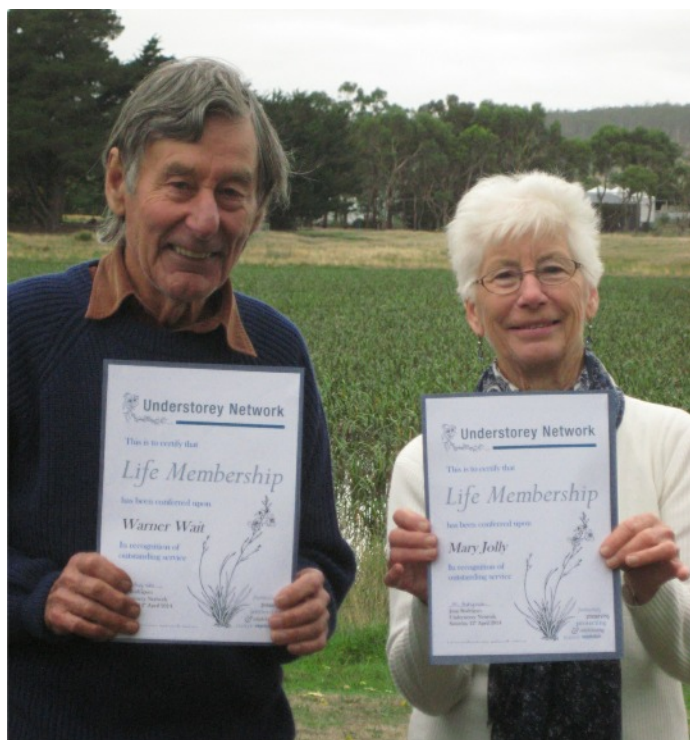
Mary Jolly joined the USN in 1995 and since that time has been a 'grower', growing for personal projects and in recent times growing for specific projects such as for the restoration of habitat for Little Penguins and the Forty Spotted Pardalotes and for bush fire victims.

From 1997 to 2000, Mary worked on the data base (www.understorey-network.org.au) for approximately four hours each week researching, summarising, and collating information gained from the RTBG library and other sources and entering that data into the computer at the RTBG Nursery each Friday morning. Mary was responsible for gathering and entering information for 1200 of the almost 1900 species listed in the data base. During this time Mary also worked at home preparing print-outs for verification by local experts. This was a massive task and for one volunteer to have taken on this work has been a massive commitment and has benefited not only the USN but many, many people who use our data base daily.

Since 2002 to the present Mary has served on the committee. From 2002 to 2010 Mary served as the USN's secretary. In 2013 Mary resumed her position as secretary and is currently serving in that role. As a committee member Mary has been actively involved in many USN events during this time.

Mary, without your massive contribution as a volunteer in many roles, the USN would be the poorer. Congratulations on receiving Life Membership of the organisation.

Amanda Cole



Warner Wait and Mary Jolly receiving Life Membership at Otlands

WINDERMERE BAY FORESHORE RESERVE

The Understorey Network grew plants this past season for the Glenorchy City Council to be used for the Windermere Bay Foreshore Reserve project.

The Glenorchy City Council in collaboration with the Derwent Estuary Program received a grant from the Caring for our Country program, to implement best practice Water Sensitive Urban Design measures for Windermere Bay.

Windermere Bay is the bay, south of Dog's Ear Point, on which the Cadbury's factory is situated. This small bay's water quality was rated as poor by the State of the Derwent Report Card 2012, released by the Derwent Estuary Program. The water quality is affected by urban stormwater. Pollutants, collected by rainwater from rooftops and roads wash into the river. To improve the water quality of Windermere Bay, the stormwater from the nearby Claremont Village shopping centre and the surrounding catchment areas is now being treated through the establishment of a stormwater treatment swale on the Windermere Foreshore.

This has involved the development of a system to treat stormwater as well as enhancing the attractiveness of the foreshore with landscaped wetlands. The system installed consists of a gross pollutant trap (GPT), a sedimentation basin, a vegetated creek to treat the base water flow, a vegetated wetland for the treatment of once-in-three month storm flow events and a vegetated flood plain for detention of larger storm events. The site has been planted with six and a half thousand plants grown by the Understorey Network.

This passive stormwater treatment system treats water as it moves slowly through the wetland. The gross pollutant trap (GPT) which is buried and



Earthworks begin



The sediment basin and leaky wall in the background



The created swale after the mulch has been spread on the slopes



Temporary fencing has been replaced, the plants have grown and a family of ducks has moved in to enjoy the wetlands.

out of sight, collects litter and rubbish such as plastic wrappers, cans and bottles from a 10.5 hectare area before it reaches the wetland. Then sediment basin is used to collect fine particles such as sediment and road dust which will settle in the basin where they can be collected for disposal.

The next part of the passive stormwater treatment involves the leaky wall, built between the sediment basin and the wetland. It filters water passing into the wetland. As water flows through the wetland, which has been planted with water loving plants, the remaining pollutants are removed by natural biological processes such as through the plant roots and by microorganisms living in the soil. It is estimated that stormwater will remain in the wetland system for three days before it flows through a submerged pipe into the Derwent River.

In summary the system is able to treat water before it enters the river by replicating the natural water filtering processes. The plants grown at the USN's Tolosa Street nursery for this project will have a beneficial effect in two ways; making the area look more attractive and removing pollutants that would normally have flowed into the Derwent River.

With thanks to Margaret Downie for her photos & information.

Amanda Cole

Whats happening



Please call the office on 6234 4286 or email oliver@understorey-network.org.au for more information or to RSVP for any of the workshops.

Also check the website for the latest Calendar of Events.

Planting Working Bee (South)

As part of NRM South's North Bruny Biodiversity project we will be planting white gums and understorey species for forty-spotted pardalote habitat

When: Saturday 21st June 10am

Where: North Bruny Island

Understorey Network AGM

Advance notice (more details to follow)

When: Saturday 27th September, 10am

Where: Hobart

Understorey Network Growers Scheme

Please register to either grow or receive plants through this year's scheme

When: Registrations due by 31st August, Depot Days will be in October

Where: Statewide

Understorey Network Committee Meetings

When: 5:15pm – 10th June, 14th July, 11th August

Where: USN office, Level 1, 148 Elizabeth Street Hobart

All members are welcome to come to our regular meetings – please RSVP for catering purposes