



COTTESLOE COASTCARE ASSOCIATION

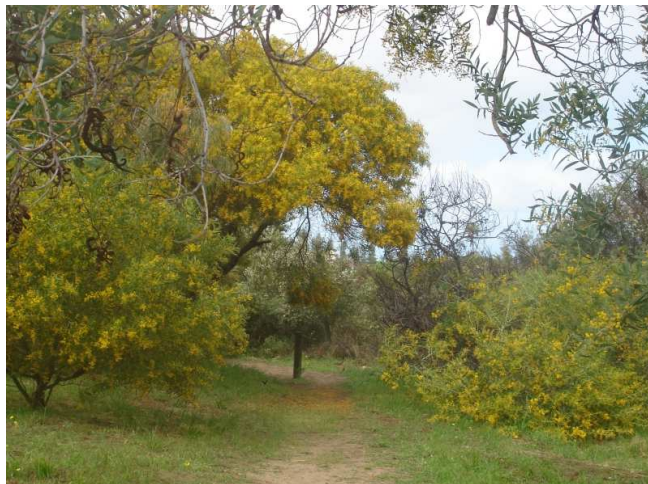
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Summer Newsletter 2006 – 2007

Best wishes for a Happy Christmas from the Cottesloe Coastcare Committee. Sincere thanks to everyone who has assisted Coastcare's work throughout another busy and successful year.

The results of the latest National Heritage Trust/Envirofund grants were announced recently. CCA is delighted to have received \$6,850 for a new 18 month restoration project on the dunes opposite Bryan Way. We will keep our supporters up to date on this project and on all our activities via our website and blog (see addresses at the end of this newsletter).

In this newsletter I would like to share some local natural history which I have found interesting. We chatted to **Jan Walker** and **Mary Edwards**, both local residents who have for many years been passionate about the local natural environment.



Mary Edwards, now living at Sundowner Hostel, and her late husband Eddie are remembered by many locals for their dedicated work at the road reserve next to the Seaview Kindergarten on Broome Street, Cottesloe. There is no official name yet for the area, it is known variously as the '**Cottesloe Native Garden**' and also '**Mary and Eddie Edwards Reserve**'. From 1982 for several years, Mary and a small group of volunteers weeded and planted at the reserve.

The naturalist Robert Powell undertook a plant survey in 1983 and identified 37 local native species. Some non-local species were subsequently planted but very few of these are potential weeds. During 2003 'Greenskills' did weed mapping of the area and a management plan, which has been used by Town of Cottesloe and a group of Cottesloe Coastcarers to guide weed control in the reserve. Despite massive weed infestation there are representatives of 32 local plants extant in October 2006. Sadly only very few specimens of some species remain, so efforts are underway to take cuttings and collect seed so that more plant species will not be lost from Cottesloe forever.

Mary recently said "I love that place and I am so pleased that some people care enough to give volunteer time to control the carnation weed and lupins". Mary used to love to walk along the path among the wattles in Spring and enjoyed listening to the many birds which frequent the reserve.

Sally-Anne Jones had a chat with **Jan Walker** recently, which she now shares with us.

Invite long-time Cottesloe resident Jan Walker over for a coffee and you're in for a treat. Jan shares wonderful stories of the suburb she has lived in for all of her 67 years. There was the time when, as a child, she dashed into the sea in the bathers her Aunt had knitted for her – not only did she think she was bleeding to death when the maroon wool began to run, she also had the embarrassment of discovering the sand-filled crotch had descended to her knees.

And there's her memory of the Birkbeck Dairy's Clydesdales that were taken to the blacksmiths near today's 'Boatshed', to be shod. When the Smithy had finished with them he'd lead them to Railway Parade and give them a slap on the rump to send them trotting off home for a feed.

Jan remembers a time when not only the suburb but also the whole coastal environment was very different. Jan's father, a housepainter called Scotty because of the country of his birth and his accent, hauled home some of the timber flotsam found on the beach, to build his sheds and chook houses. Jan's Mum, Lilian, was a midwife who worked night shifts to buy first a washing machine then a motorized bicycle for Scotty then a fridge. She wasn't just good at nursing people – sometimes an exhausted albatross, washed up on the beach after a storm, would be left with her for some TLC. Jan said her mother would keep the bird segregated from the chooks, feed it on specially bought fish for a week or ten days then, when it had regained its strength, give it to a fisherman who could take it out to sea in his boat before releasing it. (With their wing span they can't take off from the land). Jan also remembers being woken not only by the sounds of roosters crowing in most backyards but also by the haunting cry of the rainbird (sadly no longer heard).



"Brighton Street was owned by the kids," she said. "There were only two cars in it – one owned by the local bookie, Mr. Wilson,

and the other by a Mr. Leece, who had something to do with the printing of The West Australian. We built our own hill trolleys, played skippy, played football and cricket with a kerosene tin can as a backstop and a picket from a fence as a bat, and made cubbies. There were five corner stores on Grant Street between the railway line and the beach and they brought life into the community. People walked to the shops and on the way talked to their neighbours who might have been working in their gardens. You might not have got on with everyone but everyone knew what was happening and kept an eye out for one another. You never had to lock your house. I don't think we even had keys. In summer my parents and the kids slept on the veranda and you'd wake to the sound of the cocks crowing".

"Another pleasant sound was the steam train and you could smell the coal. At 4 am the draught horses would come round pulling the milk wagon. The Birkbeck Dairy on the corner of Balfour and Elizabeth Streets kept Clydesdales, beautiful horses with big woolly feet.

A fishmonger came around with his basket over his arm. A horse and cart delivered ice. You'd put a block of ice on top of the Coolgardie safe."

"Firecrackers, sparklers, sky rockets and Tom Thumbs were all hoarded for Guy Fawkes' Day on November 5 when the whole neighbourhood would gather round a bonfire, eating baked potatoes and yarning. One year the kids made an extra big one because they harvested brush from Allen Park but it threatened an overhead line and the parents insisted on smaller ones after that. Telephones were as scarce as motorcars and until the end of the war everyone feared the telegram boy. We could set their clock by the postman who walked from house to house and blew his whistle if he had something to deliver".

Jan remembers the joint properties on the corner of Broome Street (191 Broome) and Grant Street, (22 Grant St – which sold recently for a reputedly \$5.7 million), were stables for trotting horses. Mr. Laycock, who lived in Lyons Street, was their trainer and he used to take the horses in their spiders down the median strip to the Ocean to exercise them early in the mornings.



The beach dunes were different too – although they posed annual problems for Council when winter storms blew the sand across Marine Parade and up Grant Street as far as Ozone Parade. Many other streets in Cottesloe were similarly affected. Tragically the sand was trucked away to cover the many small rubbish dumps scattered around the suburb. Jan feels we lost much of our fore dunes this way. One dune, loved by Jan and her friends, was down near Vera View. Medium sized *Acacia cyclops* grew there and offered shade to beach goers as well as protection for many smaller plants behind in the swale.

Acacia cyclops seedpods

Jan expressed concern for the dune system along the beachfront. In the past (before brushing) we lost probably hundreds of tons of our dunes inland, and she feels that this fragile area needs more care. She says that it is important to continue to stabilize the dunes or we'll have huge engineering and environmental problems in the future. "We are vulnerable. We should be putting brush, maybe from Peppermint Grove's surplus of peppermint tree prunings, on the dunes in an ongoing maintenance programme, and ideally planting local native flora amongst the brush or we're going to have to learn the hard way".

As told to Sally-Ann Jones

Jan, referring to the sand blowing over Marine Parade and up Grant Street reminded me of a letter I unearthed recently, dated **February 1896**, concerning the area now known as **Grant Marine Park**. Back in 1896 the Acting surveyor General records there was "a total absence of natural scrub", severe erosion problems, sand drifts building up on adjoining properties - "down Mary Street" (present day Hawkstone Street) and against six foot high picket fences". Cottesloe Council removed hundreds of cubic yards of beach sand but more blew in. Then they spread truck loads of seaweed and planted the two and a quarter acres with introduced Marram grass. Fencing was done to prevent the goats and sheep which were kept there, from straying but residents removed the pickets from the fences for firewood, (just as Jan and the kids did for cricket games many years later!)

Cottesloe Coastcare volunteers have worked at Grant Marine Park since 2002 and we have achieved much. Today we have problems with rabbits, weeds and some people still walking on our revegetated areas, but it was even tougher back in 1895!



Grant Marine Park: Picture on left in 2003 showing weed infestation. The same view in 2006 on right with local native plants

Thank you

Thanks to our financial members whose contribution allows us to send out newsletters and pay our insurance and small administration costs. And thanks to members who assist with paper work or hand weeding, seed collecting, planting seedlings or in many other roles.

We are at present looking for a Treasurer – is there anyone who could assist us in this area?

We are also grateful to Town of Cottesloe for their help and support in

our projects and to Christine Lamont the North Metropolitan Coastcare Officer who has assisted us so ably and willingly. We are indebted to National Heritage Trust/Envirofund for funding our new project on the fore dune opposite Bryan Way.

Details about our projects, working bees and other information can be found at:
www.cottesloecoastcare.blogspot.com
 Or on our website:
www.cottesloe.wa.gov.au/?p=300

Good wishes to everyone for a Happy Christmas and a peaceful 2007. We look forward to your continued support next year.