

Friends Of Glenthorne

CARING TO IMPROVE OUR NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS



Friends Of Glenthorne Farm

Membership Drive

The Friends of Glenthorne Inc (FOG) are currently undertaking a membership drive and renewals of memberships by past members of the group and new memberships are being actively encouraged. The Friends have achieved much in the past 10 years, but with our greatest challenges ahead of us, we require as many financial members as possible so that we can show the State Government and others that we have the support of the local community in revegetating and protecting a wonderful local asset, Glenthorne farm. Supporters are asked to

complete a new membership form so that our records can be updated and where possible email addresses are requested. For the convenience of members, payment of the \$5.00 membership (\$10 for families or corporates) or donations can be made electronically into the Friend's bank account, as follows...

Bank:
ANZ

Branch:
Brighton Road, Brighton

B/S/B Number:
015-209

Account Number:
1988-76197

Account Name:
FRIENDS OF
GLENTHORNE INC.

So that payments can be received and memberships recorded, advice of payments should be advised to the Secretary / Treasurer by email to caburns@aapt.net.au or post to Alan Burns, 22 Westall Way Sheidow Park SA 5158. The group thanks all renewing members for their continued interest and support.

Working Bees

Working bees continue to be held at Glenthorne farm on the 3rd Sunday of each month and all members and visitors are welcome to attend. The group meets at the front gate on Major's Road, O'Halloran Hill at 9.45am and we exit the property at 1.00pm. At past working bees we have planted over 4,500 indigenous trees, shrubs, grasses and riparian plants as well as battling the olives and other weeds that invade Glenthorne farm. Those unable to physically work at the monthly working bees are invited and encouraged to attend just to enjoy a morning in such a unique place.

The group would like to thank Mr Peter Smith from the Happy Valley Scout / Venturers group for his attendance at many of the recent working bees. Peter has plenty of enthusiasm for both the natural environment as well as the local youth. Peter has encouraged some of the venturers to attend and assist with the ongoing work at Glenthorne farm.

More recently we have been spraying weeds around the trees and fences and it has been very encouraging to see the growth of many of the trees planted as well as those plants which are naturally returning to the site. We have used brush cutters to slash the thick

introduced grasses which are prevalent along the water way, and this work will assist in minimising the fire risk during the coming summer months. As our negotiations continue with the University of Adelaide, it is hoped that further areas along the water course will be fenced off and the indigenous vegetation encouraged to return.

Dates for the remaining working bees in 2006 are as follows...

Sunday 16th JULY 2006 - 9.45am to 1.00 pm

Sunday 20th AUGUST 2006 - 9.45 am to 1.00 pm

Sunday 17th SEPTEMBER 2006 - 9.45 am to 1.00 pm

Sunday 15th OCTOBER 2006 - 9.45 am to 1.00 pm

Sunday 19th NOVEMBER 2006 - 9.45 am to 1.00 pm

The Christmas event in early December is yet to be decided.

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Glenthorne Farm is currently the responsibility of the University of Adelaide, having purchased the property with a State Government grant of \$7.0 million. A purchase agreement requires the University to develop a Concept Plan that must be approved by the State Government be-

company, Martindale Holdings Pty Ltd, and it is through this company that the day to day running of the property occurs. All visitors are strictly controlled, including the Friends of Glenthorne, who have been revegetating the water course since September 2002. In October 2005, Peter Smytherman (Chairman) and Alan Burns (Secretary / Treasurer) rep-

and insurance cover, but unfortunately no progress has yet been achieved regarding the heritage structures which date back to 1800's. This agreement and concessions to the Friends of Glenthorne are very valuable to the group and the local community and provides a window of opportunity to access the site on a monthly basis to improve the environment for

The State Government & The University of Adelaide: **CONTROL OVER GLENTHORNE FARM**

fore it can be enacted and must conform to a number of State Government conditions. The Concept Plan was due, under the agreement, to be completed and presented by 30th December, 2004, but this deadline was subsequently extended to 30th December, 2005, and is now nearly 6 months in breach of the extended deadline. If the University does not comply with the conditions of the purchase agreement, the State Government has the option of buying the property back for \$1.00.

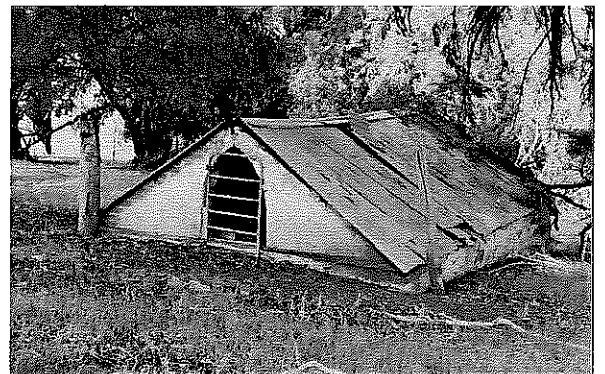
It is understood that the University is waiting on the results of a research tender before any further progress can be made. The tender result was expected to be known by mid 2006 and it appears that all parties are waiting on the outcome of this process before any decisions are made. The future of the University of Adelaide at Glenthorne Farm may depend on this tender outcome.

The University currently controls and operates Glenthorne Farm as a working farm through its agricultural

resented the FOG at a meeting with the University of Adelaide to discuss the activities of the group and our aspirations for the future. To facilitate these activities more formally, a protocol of access has been drawn up by the University and this agreement, called a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), is in the process of being finalised. The MOU formally documents the FOG's conditions of entry and a limited number of rights and responsibilities. These include access to the water course for monthly working bees, from the heritage buildings in the north to the boundary fence in the south, provision of a gate key to be used only in emergencies during working bees and to be returned at the end of each visit, access to a 2 car garage for storage of equipment once our group improves the security and access to toilet facilities, which are our responsibility to keep clean. In addition the University has agreed to oversee the revegetation works and assist develop a Management Plan for the ongoing volunteer work. Responsibilities for our group include control of FOG member actions on site

local wildlife. This achievement has taken many years of persistent effort to achieve. The Memorandum of Understanding establishes a relationship with the University that will enable a long term presence to be ensured at the farm and the continuation of the important revegetation work.

In the event that the University's tender is not successful, we believe that the State Government will become more involved with the farm and that all of the work done to date, both on the ground and in negotiations, will hold the FOG in good stead for future cooperative work with those that control Glenthorne Farm.



Glenthorne Farm: ITS IMPACT ON LOCAL DIVERSITY

It is often easy to lose sight of the significance of the work done by our small working bee group and the lobbying efforts of the committee, but in the past 12 months I have realised that the responsibility of the Friends of Glenthorne to the local environment is enormous. Having spent some time walking through the nearby O'Halloran Hill Recreation Park, and observing the wildlife there, it is clear that the animals and birds which inhabit a maturing revegetated landscape differ markedly to those that inhabit open fields and less vegetated paddocks, even when these two completely different landscapes are just across the road from each other. Birds which can be seen in the revegetated landscape include the Golden Whistler, Rufous Whistler, Superb Fairy Wren, Thornbills, Singing Honeyeater, Mistletoe Bird and White-naped Honeyeater, just to name a few. It is rare to see these birds out of the protection of the vegetation in cleared fields or in suburban back-yards, and few of us realise that these birds exist within walking distance from our southern suburbs homes. It is clear that these birds are willing to re-establish themselves in areas which provide the necessary protection and food for their existence and that the continued revegetation of these areas will dramatically increase the numbers of these birds.

The importance of vegetation corridors between areas of natural and replanted native vegetation was emphasised at a recent meeting which addressed the needs of local birdlife. It was explained that in a family of Superb Fairy (Blue) Wrens, in order to maintain genetic diversity within the group, all newly fledged female wrens are dispelled from the group at the earliest opportunity. These young birds do not have a great flying capacity, and rely on the vegetation corridors to find a new group of wrens to join. Imagine the difficulty of a young female wren, recently discharged from its family group and territory, in finding alternative vegetation when the home territory is surrounded by open fields full of predators waiting to eat anything that moves across it.

Such is the problem facing much of our wildlife in the southern areas, but we have the opportunity to make a difference by working with local groups such as the Friends of Glenthorne Inc., to ensure that as much of our local area as possible is revegetated and linked together by protective corridors such as the Field River. Much of our local diversity is locked up in isolated pockets of natural

"It is expected that the diversity of Glenthorne Farm will increase dramatically in the next few years"

vegetation, and in order to protect these species, these areas must be expanded and linked. At Glenthorne farm we have a natural link from the O'Halloran Hill Recreation Park across Glenthorne to the Field River precinct and to the nearby Happy Valley Reservoir, where many of our natural treasures are residing. Having seen the return of wonderful bird life to the O'Halloran Hill Recreation Park, I am sure that with careful planning of the revegetation work, with experts from the University of Adelaide, that these species and more can be encouraged to return permanently to Glenthorne farm to further protect our unique local diversity. Not only does Glenthorne farm have the possibility of becoming a wonderful woodland again, but its water course and dams provide an area of protection for a multitude of water birds and associated animals and invertebrates, as well as an important wildlife corridor. Wedge-tailed Eagles have again been seen regularly over Glenthorne farm and a number of native ducks have been sighted on the dams. This has encouraged the Friends of Glenthorne working bee members to begin a regular survey of birdlife and already over thirty species have been identified either on site or very nearby. Revegetation work will continue in conjunction with the University of Adelaide and the Urban Forest Biodiversity Program and it is expected that the diversity of Glenthorne farm will increase dramatically in the next few years.

FUNDING FOR ON SITE PROJECTS AND REVEGETATION WORK

The FOG is currently preparing a grant application so that more equipment can be purchased to further the efforts of those who attend working bees. We are looking to secure our third brushcutter, and this unit will include a saw blade attachment which will assist in clearing feral olive trees and other woody weeds. In addition we are looking to also purchase a second back pack sprayer to spray and control smaller weeds and an extension ladder. This ladder will be used to secure nesting boxes to the large gums at Glenthorne farm, for species such as Eastern Rosellas and other birds and animals which require hollows in which to nest.

The group is working on a number of designs for nesting boxes and it is hoped that these can be made to

our specifications by local carpenters at reasonable cost, so that a large number can be obtained and put in place as quickly as possible



to ensure that adequate breeding sites are available for those birds currently residing at Glenthorne farm.

The group is actively working on new ways to improve the natural environment at Glenthorne farm, and it is

hoped that we will obtain the renewed financial support of current as well as new members, so that this work can continue for a

very long time into the future.

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