



Friends of Chiltern Mt-Pilot National Park Inc.

Newsletter No. 356 July – August 2026

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Please send all newsletter correspondence to President, Tanya Thompson

FIELD DAYS

July 4th - Olives at Mt Ochertyre

Tony Murnane

11 of us gathered with much enthusiasm in front of the post office as it was a pleasant morning and there were faces we hadn't seen for a while. We were introduced to Ryan, one of the new Rangers, and welcomed back Scott (Senior Ranger) who had been on leave for a period. We also welcomed Alice, Mick's niece, visiting from NZ.

Upon arrival at Ochertyre, we had the usual H&S talk and then headed off to search for olives and other exotics – non-native intruders. The theory was that we would go along the external boundaries in a line until all the ground was covered. Of course it didn't take long until we had crossovers and lost sight of one another. The olives seem thickest along the boundaries where the birds fly in, land in a suitable tree and then deposit the seed under that tree. The heaviest infestations seem to be on the northern and eastern sides, within 50 - 100 metres of those boundaries. There are of course exceptions, in particular some large olives which were higher up the hill, but these had been dealt with in the past and show little sign of regrowth.

There were several box thorns and hawthorns removed, and one large blackberry located and tagged for future treatment.

We gathered back at the cars for debriefing and enjoyed a sumptuous morning tea provided by John Hawker. We estimated that we removed more than a thousand olives. Well done Friends.

*August 2nd - *Cryptandra amara*; *Caper spurge*; nest boxes*

Liz Maertin

12 willing members met at the post office on a cool winter morning. We broke into two groups: one headed to Riley's Rd, the other to check nest boxes.

The *Cryptandra amara* (Bitter *Cryptandra*) are only found in one small site off Riley's Rd, in the Chiltern section of the Park. Many years ago, a small area was fenced off by Parks to protect the plants as they were suffering from grazing pressure by native animals such as

wallabies. Friends assisted with that fencing project and since then have placed guards around plants which are outside the fenced area.

Neville Bartlett wrote a piece about the Cryptandra in the August 2019 newsletter, and I am gratefully using one of his excellent photos, thank you Neville!
[Newsletter 286 Aug 2019](#)

In 2025, a dry year, a few of us went to the site, removed guards from dead plants and placed them around new ones which were relatively few in number.



Cryptandra: Neville Bartlett

This year the contrast was striking! The abundance of plants (all in flower) and their spread up the gully and out to each side was wonderful to see. It is neither possible nor necessary to place guards around them all, but we removed/placed about 30 guards.



We found many wildflowers near the site including Bitter Pea, Early Nancy, Mountain Grevillea, Dwarf Greenhood, Tall Sundew, and Ploughshare Wattle. Thanks to John Hawker for his assistance with identification of many of these.

Thanks also to Neil Blair who identified a flower we weren't familiar with, the Common Woodrush - *Luzula meridionalis* (photo right).

We moved on to Bartley's Block and were joined by the nest box group. They checked 8 boxes and found 2 Krefft's Gliders in one box; 5 Tuan nests, and 2 Glider nests.



Common Woodrush

At Bartley's we removed as many Caper Spurge as we could find among the flourishing Capeweed! Compared with April when we were last at Bartley's the number of Caper Spurge was much reduced.

Thanks to everyone for their assistance on the day; to Mick for his reconnaissance of the Cryptandra site before the day, and to Richard for bringing extra guards and stakes.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: 5 SEPTEMBER

Liz Maertin

Our 'AGM event' will be held at the usual venue (Chiltern Senior Citizens' Hall) and include:

- 4pm afternoon walk
- 6pm dinner
- 7pm guest speaker
- 8pm AGM

This year we are thrilled to have Bruce Quin join us as guest speaker and presenter. We look forward to welcoming Bruce, and his brother Darren. The Quin brothers have a long association with the Friends' group and the Park through their research into nest boxes.

Bruce will be speaking about the:

"Turquoise Parrots and a Long-term Nest Box Monitoring Project".

COMMITTEE MEETING

Tanya Thompson

Work has begun on the new signs for White Box walk. The existing signs are over ten years old, and some are no longer legible. This has been a long-term goal, and we are keen to undertake and complete this project.

All governance standards are being met, and we thank Liz Maertin for all her work in this area.

All members are encouraged to bring along their ideas for future activities and let us know how they would like to be involved.

RANGERS REPORT

Scott Cunningham: Senior Ranger, Beechworth

There have been a lot of changes at Beechworth over the past few months and I apologise for the lack of reports!

With Brian's retirement Beechworth now has a new Team Leader; Jim Craven. Jim has worked with Parks Victoria at Whitfield, Mansfield and most recently the Bright work centre. He brings a wealth of varied experience and an enthusiasm to be out and be seen in the park.

It is likely you will see a lot more of Parks Victoria as our restructure has been finalised and we have three new ranger staff: Amy, Hannah and Ryan. Ryan came along to the July Friends

Field day and helped to remove numerous olives, he was so impressed with all the volunteers that he will be taking over from myself as the first point of contact. Amy has moved across from Forest Fire Management after 5 seasons as a project fire fighter whilst Hannah has moved back to Victoria after managing the remote Calperun Station in South Australia. All new staff have been busy with campsite improvements along Reedy Creek, clearing trees off tracks and learning about the challenges of this area.

With so many new staff our focus over the next few months will be on training, planning and increasing contact with our local communities. The corresponding increased presence on weekends will hopefully allow us to better manage some of the recent in off-road trail bike damage around Chiltern and keeping an eye on firewood collection.

CALENDARS 2027

Neville Bartlett

Friends are putting together a 2027 calendar and expect to have it printed and ready for purchase early in November this year. We invite anyone who has suitable images of the Park, flora, birds or other creatures for inclusion to email Neville Bartlett.

E: neville@nrbartlett.com.au.

A panel will select the images to be included. Apart from membership and donations, the calendar is the group's major source of funding, and your support is much appreciated.

The deadline for submissions is Friday, 18th September.

Any questions, contact Neville via email or phone 0412 399 239 or

Liz E: secretary@friendsofchiltern.org.au

WARNING RE H5 BIRD FLU

If you spot a sick or dead bird: 🦅 Avoid touching it 📷 Record what you see from a safe distance 📞 Report it to the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline: 1800 675 888.

Early reporting helps authorities track outbreaks and respond more quickly to protect wildlife.

CHILTERN RAINFALL- MICK WEBSTER

Period	Rainfall mm	Mean mm	Comparison last year mm
June 2026	138	74	73
Year to 30 June 2026	457		224
July 2026	67	76	96
Year to 31 July 2026	524		320
Average annual rainfall	693	-	-

A very wet start to winter: June was particularly notable, with **138 mm—the wettest June** recorded at Chiltern since 1991.

MEMBERSHIP PAYMENT FOR 2026-2027 NOW DUE.

Thank you to everyone who has paid their 2026-27 membership.

The cost is \$20/year for an individual/couple/family. Please see attached form. Any questions don't hesitate to contact Liz E: secretary@friendsofchiltern.org.au or M: 0423 406 858

NEXT FIELD DAY: SATURDAY 5TH SEPTEMBER + AGM

As we did last year, instead of a morning activity we will have a guided afternoon walk.

This year Bruce and Darren Quin will be leading the walk to look at Turquoise Parrot nest boxes. **We will meet at Chiltern Post Office at 4pm.**

More information will be sent via email over the next few weeks.

If you are interested in attending but do not have email, you can contact Liz for more information on 0423 406 858.

REMAINING FIELD DAY DATES FOR 2026:

Saturday 5th September (walk 4pm), Sunday 4th October, Saturday 7th November, and our end of year gathering on Sunday 6th December 2026.

NB: For even months, the field day is held on the first Sunday of the month and for odd months, it is held on the first Saturday of the month.

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