



# **PINKERTON LANDCARE and ENVIRONMENT GROUP Inc**

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## **Pinkerton Landcare & Environment Group *Diary for 2018: January - March***



**Pinkerton Link after fire**

KABV City Pride Award 2003 Winner: City Pride: *Landcare Group*

KABV Sustainability Cities Finalist 2005 Protection of the Environment Award: *Protection of Pinkerton Forest*

KABV / Sustainable Cities Award 2010 Winner *Protection of the Environment: The Sea-eagle has Landed*

KABV / Sustainable Cities Award 2014 Winner *Protection of the Environment: Outdoor classroom on the Werribee River*



## Weeding at Pinkerton Link Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2018



Irene mowing weeds with Simon, Joan and Jaqueline in background

PLEG commenced activities in 2018 in Pinkerton Link on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> January. Frances, Jaqueline, Irene, Joan, Simon & Daryl began the year's activities by cutting and spraying some of the exotic seeding grasses growing on last year's spread mulch. Ground that had been so recently scorched black by the invasive fire was now covered in rampant weed grasses. Non-native grass was seeding on one of the mulch islands, and the stalks needed to be cut before the seeds matured. This was tackled by Irene with her lawn mower, Daryl with a whipper snipper and Simon with spray backpack. Other weeds were matted out by Frances, Joan and Jaqueline. Those weeds remaining will be mowed by Western Water.

Those trees scorched by the fire in November 2017 are now showing green regrowth, illustrating the resilience of Greybox Trees and their resistance to bushfire. Similarly the grasses are now growing green and lush after summer rains.





Simon spraying Couch Grass



Jaqueline, Simon, Frances, Irene & Joan: morning tea at Pinkerton Link

This was followed by a walk in Pinkerton Forest in the hope of collecting rare native grass seed and hopefully look for wildflowers also (especially Plains Joyweed as it is in flower in Pinkerton now). Suitable grass seed however was not available in the forest. There were no many birds as the day was not warm. These included two raptors, an Australian Hobby that called almost incessantly until it was disturbed and a Brown Goshawk. However there were few other birds with the exception of large numbers of Tree Martins that were actively hawking for insects.

While in Pinkerton Forest we checked out the new memorial plaques that replaced the old plaques that had faded over the years.




## Pinkerton Family History

James and Margaret Pinkerton and family left Glasgow, Scotland on 8 July, 1839 sailing from Greenock on the barque "Superb". They arrived at Port Phillip on 4 December, 1839.

In 1840, they settled in the Kellor District on a property called "Chamois Ponds". In 1848 the property was burnt out and the family moved to Werribee River, settling on their new property "Yaloke".

In 1855 Margaret Pinkerton died and was buried in Pinkerton Forest. Between 1857 and 1860, four grandchildren died (aged 9, 8, 2 and 1) and were also buried in the forest. A cairn was erected over the graves in 1931. James and Margaret Pinkerton had 37 grandchildren.

After adverse times W J Clarke ("Big Clarke") acquired the property in 1862 and James Pinkerton retired to Bacchus Marsh where he died in 1869.



**James PINKERTON**  
1789-1869  
Born Glasgow, Scotland 4 October 1789  
Died Bacchus Marsh, Victoria 16 March 1869



**Margaret PINKERTON**  
1794-1855  
Born Glasgow, Scotland 27 August 1794  
Died Werribee, Victoria 18 July 1855



**Mary Harriet ECKEN**  
1823-1900




**Elizabeth PINKERTON**  
1829-1898



**Thomas KISOCK**  
1856-1900



**Elizabeth BOWIE-SYINGTON**  
1836-1916



**William CAMPBELL**  
1822-1909




**Archibald CAMPBELL**  
1817-1872



**Mark Ecken PINKERTON**  
1848-1857




**Samuel Mac KISOCK**  
1859-1860



**John Elder CAMPBELL**  
1858-1860



**Louisa PINKERTON**  
1850-1858



**James PINKERTON CAMPBELL**  
1865-1935



**Archibald James CAMPBELL**  
1865-1935



**Victoria Elizabeth CAMPBELL**  
1865-1935

### Descendants of note

**James Pinkerton Campbell** (son of Margaret and William Campbell) was a founder of Film Australia. He was also the official Australian War photographer in Egypt during World War I.

**Archibald James Campbell** (son of Catherine and Archibald) was well known for his expertise and authoritative publications on Australian birds and flowers, particularly Wattlies. He was instrumental in incorporating the Golden Wattle into the Australian Coat of Arms.

**Elizabeth Victoria (Betha) Campbell** (daughter of Archibald James Campbell) was one of Australia's leading organists who studied organ and conducting at the Royal College of Music in London. She was a strong advocate for vocational gender equality.

\* Buried in the cairn

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## Pinkerton Forest Project





### Indigenous Heritage

For ten of thousands of years before European settlement this area was a place of importance to the local Aboriginal people.

The land on the eastern edge of the Werribee River was the territory of a clan called Kuring-ging-bulluk whose language was Koro-wurung. The name of this clan refers to the red earth of their estate, which was an area between the Werribee River and Koro-wurung Creek.

The people of this clan and others belonged to the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. The Kulin view of the world was that it was created by two main spirits – Bunjil (eagle) and Waa (crow) and lesser ancestral spirits in the Dreamtime.

Evidence of Aboriginal life in Pinkerton Forest can be found on the scared trees used for the creation of shields and containers and one foothold tree for access to food. These trees have been listed on the Victorian Heritage Inventory and are protected by law.

### Pinkerton Forest Project

In 1992, the Melton Shire Council acquired Surbiton Park, a 692-hectare property adjacent to the Melton Recycled Water Plant, for recycling of wastewater and sewage by irrigation on land.

The land was used for farming but also contained Pinkerton Forest, a remnant Grey Box Grassy Woodland, of national environmental significance.

A pioneer grave site and cairn belonging to the Pinkerton family, some of the earliest European settlers in the area, was located on land threatened with water inundation.

As part of the redevelopment of Surbiton Park, a major archaeological excavation was undertaken to relocate the pioneer graves and historic cairn of the Pinkerton family to Pinkerton Forest, a reburial of the bodies and a re-dedication of the cairn.

In 1993, Pinkerton Forest Management Group was created by the Melton Shire Council, from this group Friends of Pinkerton Forest was formed.

The group's first task was to erect a rabbit proof fence around most of the woodland. Two percent of the forest was not fenced and was subject to irrigation.

In 1995, Western Water acquired the land from council when it became the responsible authority for water and wastewater services in the Melton region.

In 2007, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between Western Water and Pinkerton Landcare and Environment Group (PLEG). The MOU is not a legally

binding document, but it represents Western Water's commitment to enhancing biodiversity.

Surbiton Park includes two areas of environmental significance:

- Pinkerton Forest – 35 hectares
- Werribee River Volcanic Gorge – 54 hectares

PLEG continued the process of restoring the woodland reversing the damage that grazing, wood harvesting, weed invasion and ingrabing had caused over 180 years of farming. Self-sown wildflowers, rare native grasses, trees and shrubs have flourished creating conditions where threatened birds such as the White-bellied Sea-Eagle and Diamond Firetail are now breeding.

Members of BirdLife Werribee have undertaken quarterly bird surveys in Pinkerton Forest in association with PLEG for 13 years.

In 2010, Western Water signed an agreement with Melton Shire Council to permanently protect Pinkerton Forest under the Planning and Environment Act 1987.

With State Government and Bird Life Australia funding, Western Water and PLEG are creating a wildlife corridor linking Pinkerton Forest to nearby Mullia Mullia Woodland, known as the Pinkerton Link. This was created from the old sludge paddock. This paddock was full of weeds, due to high nutrient levels in the soil, and is now slowly recovering its natural biodiversity.

### Time capsule

During the reburial process in 1992 the original time capsule was retrieved. A new time capsule was buried and had input from the local community on the undertaking that it was to be retrieved on 8 November 2017.

On 8 November 2017, the 1931 and 1992 time capsules were salvaged at a special community event held in the Pinkerton Forest hosted by Western Water and the City of Melton.

During this event a new 2017 time capsule was interred along with both the original time capsules, with the undertaking that they be removed in 50 years, 8 November 2067.

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Annabelle & Evelyn (January 2018) with Grey Box regrowth after November 2017 fire

### Weeding in Pinkerton Forest 16<sup>th</sup> January

On Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> January Frances and Daryl visited Pinkerton Forest to spray Galenia. (Carpet Weed). There was more Galenia in the Forest than we hoped to see, making a return visit necessary.

We were pleased to see a Koala looking down from a tree overlooking the Pinkerton grave site.

We were looking for native grass seeds (especially *Austrostipa exilis* which grows around the bases of Grey Box trees) but suitable ripe seed was in very short supply.

A large female Brown Goshawk kept circling over the canopy, hopefully seeking a rabbit lunch!





Frances spraying Galenia



Koala at Pinkerton grave precinct

Pinkerton Link: creating a wildlife corridor connecting two remnant Grey Box Woodlands  
 Community Volunteer Action Grant 2015: *Threatened Species Grant to protect Diamond Firetails*



## Weeding in Pinkerton Forest 7<sup>th</sup> February



Frances and Rosemary weeding

Frances, Irene, Rosemary and Daryl visited Pinkerton Forest on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> February where we weeded the mound beside the carpark near the Pinkerton graves. As this is beside the main entrance into Pinkerton Forest it gives visitors their first impression of the Forest, hence the need to keep the site presentable. The Gold-dust Wattles we are establishing here are growing nicely.

We then gathered the tiny berries of the saltbush ground covers that grow in the vicinity; Ruby Saltbush (*Enchylaena tomentosa*) and Berry Saltbush (*Atriplex semibaccata*). These were then scattered over the mound, in the soil disturbed by weed removal. Saltbush berries provide food for birds and ants. Indeed Purple Meat Ants are often seen carrying the berries, presumably to their nests. Perhaps they may be agents of seed dispersal?

Birdlife was understandably quiet due to the hot morning but four raptor species still made their presence known; Black-shouldered Kite, Brown Falcon, Brown Goshawk and two White-bellied Sea-eagles. The sea-eagles are more usually residents of Western Treatment Plant at Werribee, but regularly fly along the Werribee River corridor and are intermittent visitors to the treatment ponds at Surbiton Park and Melton Reservoir. Anecdotal advice suggests they may have nested in Melton Reservoir last year. A single Pink-eared Duck flew over us, possibly en route to the treatment pond.

The sea-eagles graphically illustrate the crucial importance of the Werribee River corridor to birds and other wildlife through the rapidly developing western region. Koalas, kangaroos, wallabies also use this corridor, as well as migratory birds that follow the Great Dividing Range from northern Australia to Victoria, then along the Werribee River to the coast.

**Pinkerton Link: creating a wildlife corridor connecting two remnant Grey Box Woodlands**  
**Community Volunteer Action Grant 2015: Threatened Species Grant to protect Diamond Firetails**





Frances, Rosemary & Irene gathering saltbush berries



Morning tea at Pinkerton Forest





New Grey Box trees in Upper Pinkerton



Frances spraying weeds in fenced enclosure at Pinkerton Flat



## Spreading mulch & sowing seed at Pinkerton Link 25<sup>th</sup> February 2018

On 25<sup>th</sup> February 2018 Frances, Irene, Karen, Frances, Inna, Kevin, Simon and Daryl returned to Pinkerton Link where we continued the process of spreading the truckloads of mulch that had been deposited in 2017, purchased by the Birdlife Australia grant. The process of spreading the mulch had been begun by Western Water staff. PLEG members returned to 'fine tune' the mulch spreading by making sure it was spread wider and more evenly, to an optimum depth of about 10cm.

This was followed by scattering native grass seed (Kangaroo Grass, Wallaby Grass and Speargrass). This was physically achieved by broadcasting handfuls of seed across the mulched area, then raking over the mulch to ensure that the seed was settled into the mulch and not blown away by wind. The seed was scattered over a wide area thanks to the wind, which was surprisingly cold after the warm muggy conditions of the day before. .

After morning tea we surveyed the Link. We were pleased to discover that the Drooping Sheokes planted several years ago, that were burnt by the fire in November 2017, have now begun to re-sprout; like the Grey Box saplings a month previously. Again proving the resilience of the Australian bush in the face of fire.

Kevin even identified a new bird species for the Link- Weebills chattering in the foliage of the 2-3 metre trees, bringing our bird total to 46. Even over the dry summer the tree saplings are showing new foliage growth.



Spreading mulch in Pinkerton Link

Pinkerton Link: creating a wildlife corridor connecting two remnant Grey Box Woodlands  
Community Volunteer Action Grant 2015: *Threatened Species Grant to protect Diamond Firetails*





Broadcasting native grass seed by hand



Morning tea at Pink Link

Pinkerton Link: creating a wildlife corridor connecting two remnant Grey Box Woodlands  
Community Volunteer Action Grant 2015: *Threatened Species Grant to protect Diamond Firetails*





Drooping Sheoke re-sprouting after fire (closeup)



## Weeding at Pinkerton Flat



On Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> March Frances & Daryl sprayed weeds in the rabbit-proof enclosure at Pinkerton Flat. We sprayed Serrated Tussock & Pattersons Curse. We found large numbers of Garden Skinks (*Lampropholis guichenoti*) scurrying through the grass. These small skinks are quite abundant along the river, no doubt forming a valuable component in the food web. They probably provide a valuable food supply for the Sacred Kingfishers that return here each summer to nest. Grasshoppers of various sizes & species (some exceeding the lizards in size) also abounded in the grass. The naturally grown Melicytis are growing prolifically within the enclosure.





Large grasshopper at Pinkerton Flat



On Monday 26<sup>th</sup> March Frances & Daryl mattocked weeds in the north-east corner in Pink Link. We then sprayed Galenia in Pinkerton Forest.

