



## Newsletter No 1 – June 2011

### MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW

Thankyou to all the user groups that attended our Management Plan Review meeting back in early February to discuss the direction of the Park over the next five years and outline the goals and improvements that would benefit us all as a collective group over that period of time. It has taken some time to catch up to people and get all the surveys collated but it has been a very productive exercise. Those of you that attended would recall that you were asked to rate each suggested improvement as High, Medium or Low value to you as a ground user and then also rate its value to the wider community. The results of the survey show a distinct difference between what you believe is important to user groups and what you think is important to the wider community which is a good result because it shows that the surveys were filled out with equal consideration for ground users and the wider community without any bias toward one or the other. Several issues made it in to the Top 10 priority lists for both Users & the Community such as – Riverbank Stabilisation; Top Toilet Upgrade; Water Storage & Reuse; Arena seating; Topdressing arenas; Entrance Upgrade; Solar Power options and the Community Noticeboard. All the improvements submitted at the review meeting will be included in the Management Plan but the surveys have given us a good idea of the direction you would like the Park improvements to follow and we will do what we can to get these priority projects up and running or completed.

### ENTRANCE UPGRADE

The Trust has been working on Options and Quotations for the Entrance Upgrade from Park Street. As the land involved belongs to Dungog Shire Council, we have had preliminary meetings with Steve Hitchens from Council who drew up this visual representation for us. Our quotes to do this work are up around the \$9 to \$10,000 dollar mark so we will be chasing some grant money to assist. The Historical Society has also expressed an interest in assisting us with this project as they have been considering options for a memorial to the pioneers of Gresford in Orana Park and we are now discussing options to combine both projects using the existing pillars to be augmented as the memorial to the districts pioneers.



### NAME THAT ROAD!

Another issue that has been discussed at recent Trust meetings is the actual physical address of the Gresford Showgrounds (or rather the lack of one). The short roadway that connects the Showgrounds to Park Street is a public road and is maintained by Dungog Shire Council. The Showground/Park actually begins at the second gateway where the cattle grids are. Our Shire rates notice lists the Showgrounds as 34 Park Street and the NSW Valuer General lists it as 29 Park Street. There are several reasons that a specific physical address of the Showground/Park is needed including Insurance and Public Liability Policies so the Trust is considering approaching Dungog Shire Council with a proposal to give the access road from Park Street an actual name and we would like your feedback on this idea and also some suggestions of possible names. So far some suggested names include Orana Lane, Pioneer Drive & Recreation Avenue.

### MEMORIAL TREE

Many users may not be aware that the Trust undertakes to plant a tree on the Park in memory of Trustees that have passed away whilst they were active as Park Trustees. These memorial trees are planted along the fence between the dairy cattle stalls and the top transpiration area. There are currently 4 trees planted in memory of former Trustees Darcy Bogan, Max Hall, Alec Brown and Bruce Capp. The Trust will be doing some maintenance work on the existing trees shortly and adding two more trees in memory of Jim Dooley who passed away a few years ago and Ted Murrell who passed away earlier this year.

### CUTTING YARDS

The Trust is currently liaising with the Hunter Valley Cutting Club to facilitate the construction of a competition arena for Cutting Club competitions on the site of the derelict sale yards on the North-eastern corner of the grounds. The sport of Cutting requires a sand based surface for the horses to grip in rather than a grassed area such as the main arena. It has been proposed that the new construction will incorporate holding yards that could also be utilised for some of the beef cattle exhibits run during the annual Gresford Show. A lot of the physical labour for this project will be achieved with donated labour and machinery with the Show Society offering to get the ball rolling by dismantling the existing yards.

## **RIVERBANK STABILISATION**

Gresford Landcare Group has submitted an application to Hunter Central Rivers Catchment Management Authority for funding to undertake some revegetation and stabilisation plantings on the small area of the riverbank that is attached to Camping Area of the Park and incorporates the local swimming hole. This is the only river frontage that is actually attached to the Park, (the sliver of land that runs behind the dairy cattle stalls and tapers down towards the Camping area belongs to our next door neighbour). Landcare has also proposed to renovate and stabilise the second access track to the North of the swimming hole that is used by local fishermen to get access to the river. The Park Trust has had the riverbank, camping area and the area behind the Middle Toilets sprayed for catheads and other weeds as part of its annual maintenance activities and also in preparation for the revegetation works.

## **CAMPING LEVELS**

Occupancy rates of the Camping Area at the Park have been at record levels since Christmas with the Easter Weekend being the biggest weekend we have ever had. Unfortunately popularity brings with it the occasional hiccup and the Police were called to the Park on two occasions over Easter to deal with intoxicated and rowdy campers. Fortunately on that occasion the damage was limited to frayed tempers. The Pony Club shed was not so lucky earlier in the year when vandals kicked in the door and ransacked both the canteen and the storage shed. The damage was not as bad as it could have been with candy bars and drinks being the most obvious items that were stolen.

## **PARK BOOKINGS**

19<sup>th</sup> June – Dungog Dressage  
26<sup>th</sup> June - Pony Club  
26<sup>th</sup> June – Private Booking Dining Room kitchen only  
23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> July – Pony Club  
13<sup>th</sup> August - Pony Club  
14<sup>th</sup> August - Dungog Dressage  
19<sup>th</sup> 20<sup>th</sup> 21<sup>st</sup> August – Motor-home Club (Camping area)  
26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> August – Gresford Rodeo

## ***A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY.....***

The earliest records in possession of the Trust include letters dated in late 1922 & early 1923 from the “Gresford Public Park and Improvement League” seeking assistance from various sources to obtain land to be set aside for a Park for Public Recreation at Gresford. The land identified was 21 acres 2 roods & 20 perches & formed part of the original “Clevedon Estate”. Purchase of the land was initiated in the name of Mr John James Jolliffe with a deposit being paid by the “people of Gresford” on or around 16<sup>th</sup> May 1923 to hold the land while they lobbied the Government to purchase the whole parcel for the community. Initially the Government offered moral support only as they had no spare funds available in the Public Land Acquisition budget.

With no money forthcoming from the Government, the initial purchase of land had to officially proceed in 1925 in the name of Mr J.J. Jolliffe and the deeds were issued in his name. An additional 5 acres 0 roods 31 ¼ perches was later resumed by the Department of Lands & purchased from the original Camyr Allyn Estate. In 1926 the Lands Department finally agreed to grant the “Park League” 50% of the purchase price of the Clevedon land in return for the land being “conveyed to the Crown for setting apart for Public Recreation”.

A letter dated the 8<sup>th</sup> April 1925 discusses a meeting invitation from the “League” to members of the PPW? at Lostock to attend a meeting at the Gresford School of Arts on the 18<sup>th</sup> April 1925 with a view to discuss the formation of an Agricultural & Horticultural Association. Follow up letters reveal that the meeting was not well attended and an invitation was extended to members of the PPW to attend a meeting of the Gresford Agricultural Bureau to discuss the formation of the A&H Association. In August 1925 the “League” called a Public Meeting for the 5<sup>th</sup> September 1925 at Mrs Brosies Tea Rooms to discuss forming an A&H Association (Mrs Brosies Tea Rooms were on the corner of Glendonbrook Rd & Church Street where Mr & Mrs Graham Smith now reside). Letters were sent out inviting people to attend the meeting and inform as many others as possible including letters to the schools in the district asking that the “medium of the children be used” to spread the word about the meeting. Apparently they were finally successful as the Gresford Public Park & Improvement League received a letter dated the 7<sup>th</sup> November 1925 from the Gresford & District A,H & P Society asking them under what conditions they could occupy the Park for the purposes of a Show.

Three race days were held on the “Clevedon Course” in 1925 and a fourth in early 1926 to raise money to cover the purchase of the Park. Fundraising Race days were also held by Halton Hall Committee to supplement their building fund and another was held to raise funds for Maitland Hospital. It was about that time also that the League received a letter from Wallarobba Shire Council informing them that any land identified as Public Land must have Public Toilets and tenders were called for the erection of 1 male and 1 female toilet. Tenders were also called for the installation of a concrete cricket pitch in late 1926.