

Band of Islands Conservation Association

Newsletter No 10 December '84



What Native's Flowering?

Botanical name: Prostanthera lasianthos

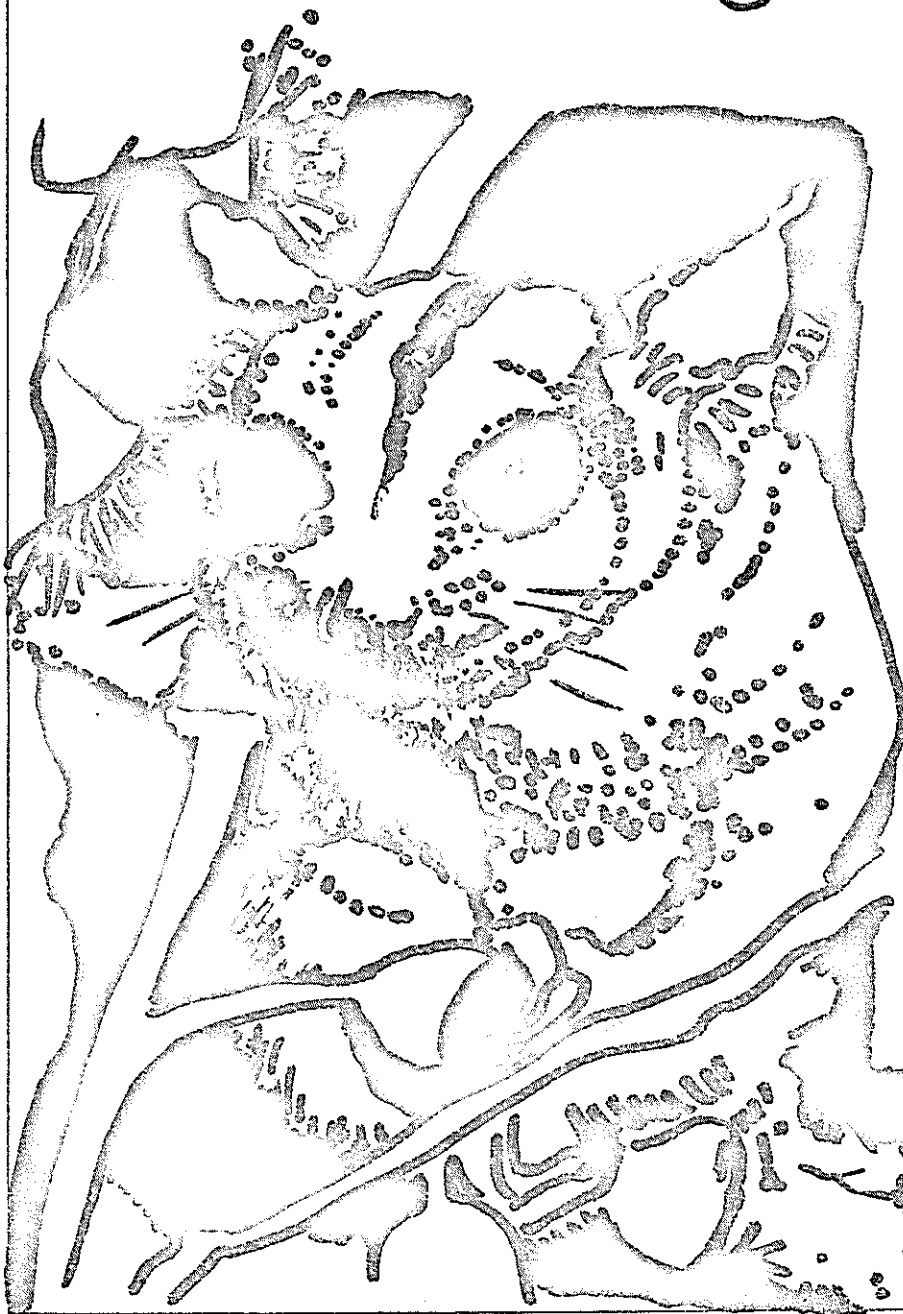
Common name: Victorian Christmas-bush.

Family: Labiatae (The mint family)

Main features:

- Small tree or tall shrub, 2 - 8 metres high, found on sheltered slopes or moist gullies.
- Leaves are opposite, dark green above, paler green beneath, with fine serrated margins. When crushed the leaves have a peppermint and eucalyptus scent.
- Flowers are shallow two lipped bells. - in sprays, white with mauve dots. The flowers occur from Nov.- Jan. and eventually fall to the ground giving the appearance of snow at Christmas, hence its name 'Victorian Christmas-bush'.
- Propagation by cuttings.
- Fast growing , a useful screen plant.

Sugar Gliders



From time to time we see on the ground fluffy, slaty grey tails up to 200 mm (8") long. Some of these tails have white tips, others are grey right to the end. They are often the only evidence that sugar gliders are in the area, and in sufficient numbers to provide a food source for the nocturnal predators such as the powerful owl. Other evidence of their presence is their call, which is difficult to describe (a whistling squeak?) but easy to recognize once heard. Scientists classify sugar gliders (Petaurus breviceps) in a sub-group of possums which includes the Ring-tail possums and three other gliding possums. The two closest related to Petaurus breviceps are the Squirrel Glider and the Yellow Bellied Glider. The gliding possums all have a fold of skin between the side of the body and the limbs. When they leap from a tree the limbs are extended and the gliding membrane provides stability in the air and allows a degree of steering. This method of progress is known as 'volplaning' and sugar gliders can travel up to 50 metres at a time in this way.

Together with the kangaroos and their allies, wombats and the other possum groups, gliders form the large section of marsupials which are primarily herbivorous in habit. Sugar gliders are to some extent mixed feeders for as well as eating Acacia gum, nectar and eucalypt sap, all rich in sugars, they also consume certain insects and their exudates ('lerps'). Use of the gliding membrane can make foraging more efficient when food resources are patchy. Sugar gliders make a nest in a hollow tree trunk, lining it with leaves and several adults may share a nest.

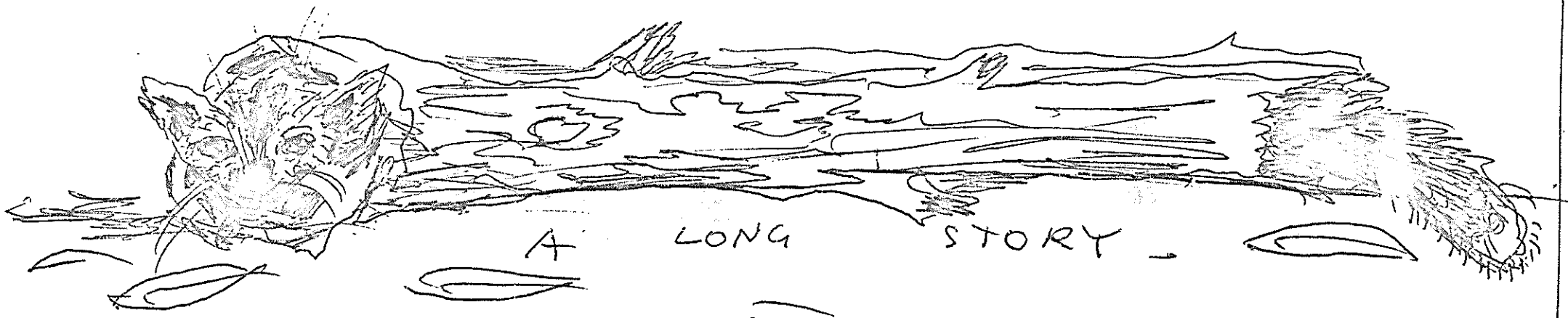
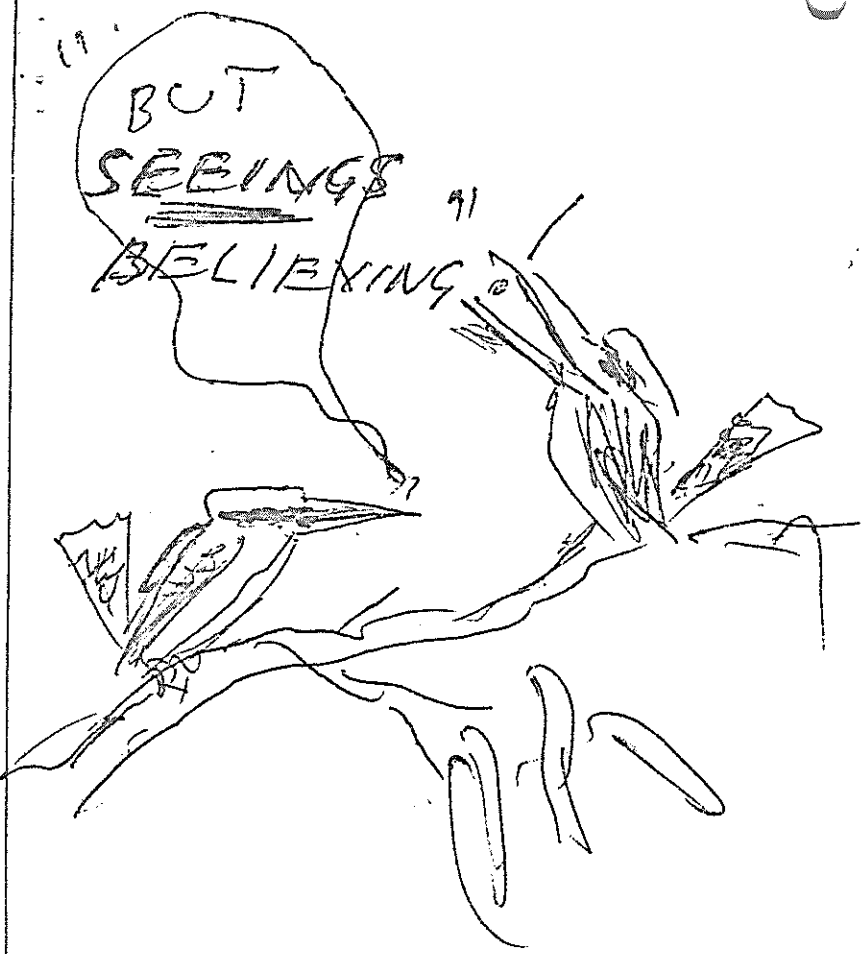
Sugar Gliders cont:

Sugar gliders can be seen easily on a still warm night by walking quietly and waiting in the bush, listening for the sound of their voices or movements. A powerful torch or spotlight will freeze them. They may be attracted to houses with honey pots and a group of about half a dozen frequented the verandah of one local residence for several weeks. Like any kind of animal (or plant for that matter) sugar gliders can only survive if their environment requirements are met. Mature forest is necessary with plenty of standing hollow trunks.

Appropriate plant species which either directly (sap etc) or indirectly (insects etc) provide food are also essential. Population levels of up to at least 10 per hectare are maintained as a balance between resources (food and shelter) and natural predation (owls etc). Efficient exotic predators such as cats upset this balance.

JOHN McCALLUM

BUT
SEEING
BELIEVING



Fire Prevention

Once again it's time to remind you that summer is approaching with it's encūmbrant fire season. Those jobs around your house/property to make both you and your neighbour more secure if there are fires in the area need doing now.

Things to do:

1. Reduce fine dry fuel less than 6mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in) thick in a zone about (20m plus diameter) around your house.
2. Remove stacks of wood or fuel drums from against your house.
3. Sêrvice and test your fire pump and other equipment.

Things to check:

1. Inspect your vents for damage to fly wire.
2. Inspect your roof for openings which burning leaves and bark could enter.
3. No burnable material has found it's way under your house.

4. Ensure shrubs near windows are not too close or too large.
5. Your L.P. gas bottle relief valve is pointing away from your wall.

Remember if you prepare adequately each season you will be safer in your home, than evacuating, provided you patrol your house inside and out for spot fires before and after the fire has passed, seeking refuge inside away from windows (radiant heat) while the fire is passing.

If you need more information please contact a local brigade officer.

Group Officer Jeph Neale.

Lower Yarra Group of Fire Brigades.



The Flower Wasp

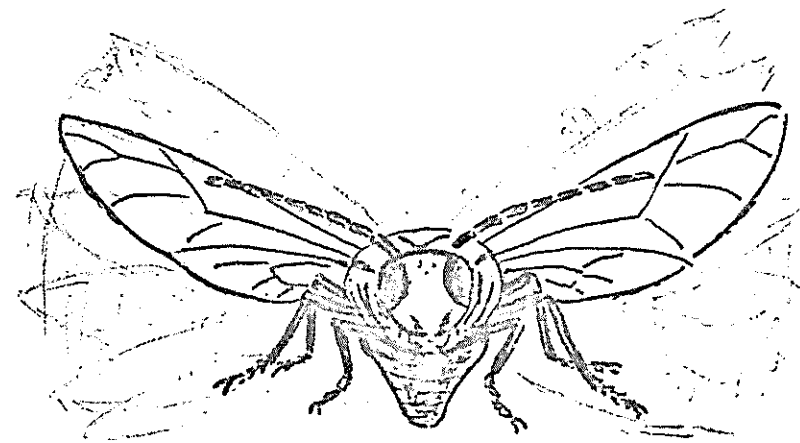
It was a warm evening, the frogs were calling from the pond, and the magpies had come to the feed dish for a bedtime snack. I had just started the dinner, when I heard a loud and unnatural buzzing, it sounded like an alarm. I looked up, and on a rafter, noticed that a spider was wrapping up a flower wasp. At first I thought 'thats nature', but I had meant to take the wasp out during the day, and so felt responsible, and anyway, our house gets over-run by those funny long legged spiders, and so untangled the little insect from the web. The spider scuttled off towards the shadows, probably quite upset at missing its meal.

The Flower Wasp was terrified, its legs, wings and head were completely incased in a strong sticky web, only its abdomen was left wriggling about, excreting its stomach contents in fear. I tried wetting it, to see if it would dissolve the web, it didn't. I couldn't pull it off without seriously injuring the buzzing, frantic little fellow, so I found a needle and began working on his back leg, he buzzed and complained, I was worried that I'd pull off a leg or wing, but then, out wriggled his hind leg. Then I started on the other, till both back legs wriggled freely. Now comes the amazing part. I began to work his head, but as the needle approached, he seemed to pull his head away, buzzing even louder, so I went back to doing his other legs. Then suddenly he stopped struggling and relaxed, stopping his buzzing and keeping his back legs still; while I went about freeing the

rest of his legs. When I came to do his head, he didn't pull away, and soon his head was freed too. I then pulled the web, in one piece over and off his back and wings.

He didn't fly off right away, but sat on my hand, preferring it to some trees and flowers I offered. I took him to the garden and watched him clean and test his legs. Eventually he flew away, I then realized I had been bitten by mosquitoes while freeing him, I decided that a gap between human and flower wasp had been bridged for just one special moment.

Tessa Ruffle.



Garden of Eden

The birds, possums and other little creatures may complain one day that there is not enough of the summer vegetables to go around. One of the restrictive factors affecting the small vegetable gardens in the E.L.Z. is the lack of water, so essential for successful summer crops. Although frugality with water is imposed on most of us, it can be turned into fresh, vitamin rich appetizing abundances. Here are a few ideas:

Optimum utilization of limited resources.

If you have dug a generous amount of compost into your garden beds, the soil will hold more moisture than before and yield more natural nutrients to your plants. To enhance your chances be prepared for both an exceptionally wet period, or the more usual long dry spells, prepare some raised beds, most of us have enough rocks and stones on our 'patch'. Use these for the edges thus;



Put any old sheets of plastic (discarded shopping bags etc) as a lining between the rocks and soil, to prevent the humus from being washed out onto your garden path. Scoop up the good soil from the path and heap it onto your garden bed to increase its depth. The beds should dip to the centre; do not water the plants overhead, just fill the depression in the bed with water as quickly as you can. This way the quantity of water applied can be controlled visually and you will not spread fungus diseases (e.g. powdery mildew) by overhead watering. The water will soak into the root zone of the plants where it is needed. With good

pressure an even more efficient use of water could be applied by trickle irrigation.

The advantages of mulching.

It is not enough to give your plants the right amount of food and water; to conserve these in a moist soil so that the roots can absorb them with little interruption, use organic or inorganic mulches. When the beds were formed, their edges were creating a moisture-holding-mulch already (by rock and plastic) and the heat absorbed by the rock during daytime will also reduce the effect of a chilly night on the plants. There is a substantial tonnage of dry leaves around our homes in the surrounding bush. Partly decomposed leaves and weeds etc spread over the garden bed will:

- (a) reduce evaporation of moisture
- (b) suppress weeds and
- (c) add to the fertility of the beds

and when dug in at the end of the season improve your soil texture too. If you want to grow strawberries however, stretch a sheet of black polythene over the prepared bed, dig in (cover) its edges and pierce small (5 mm) holes along the centre of the sheet (say 100 - 150 mm apart). This allows the moisture to get in, evaporation surface is greatly reduced and the fruit will be prevented from touching the soil and spoiling. As strawberries are shallow rooted and will fruit well for 2 - 3 years, organic mulch may be too troublesome to weed in the long run. By the way, you plant the strawberries through the plastic sheet.

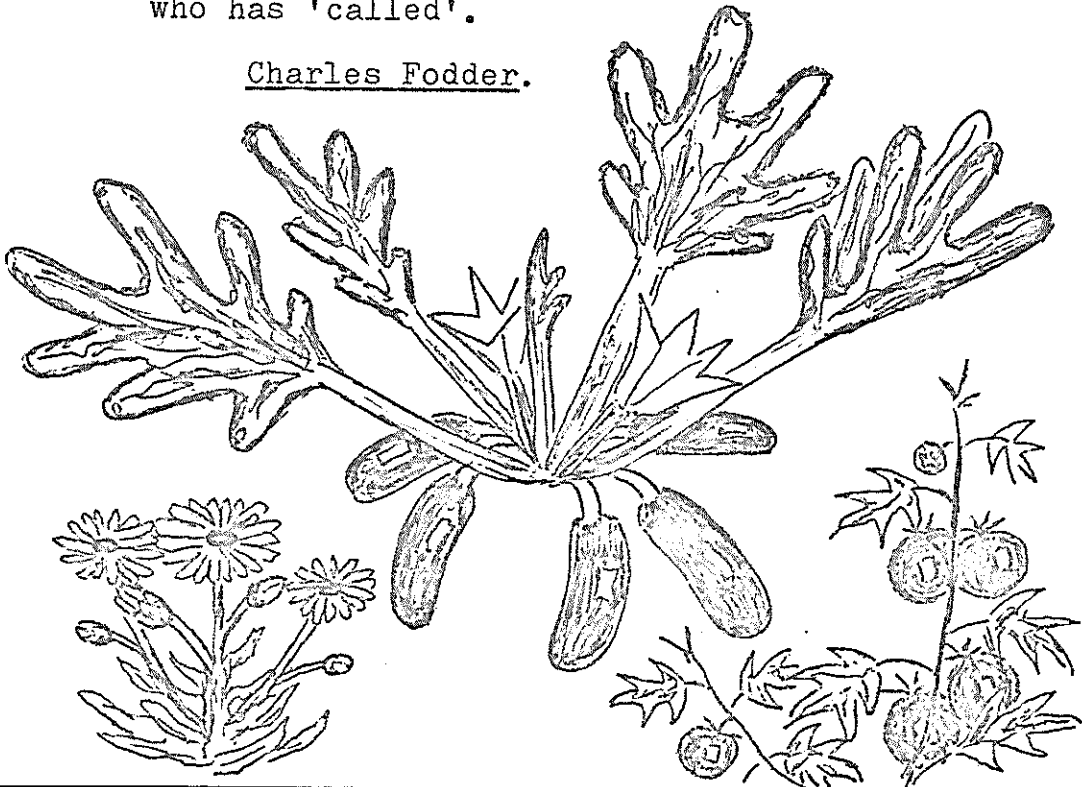
Should you choose sawdust, bark, straw or something similar for mulching, add some nitrogenous fertiliser too, as the decomposing material uses extra nitrogen which it draws from its environment until that process is completed.

Garden of Eden cont:

When giving extra feed to your fruiting tomatoes, capsicums etc (say blood and bone) push aside the mulch, spread the fertiliser around the outer perimeter of the plants root zone, put the mulch back and water it in. Your yield will be greater and your picking season will be extended by doing so.

If we leave damaged or otherwise unwanted fruit and vegies outside the garden fence for the birds, wallabies and other little friends, they may not complain about their disturbed environment after all, and the way the fruit was picked (tooth marks etc.) we can conclude who has 'called'.

Charles Fodder.



MEMO

NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETING
NEXT MEETING DATE IS
SUNDAY 24TH MARCH
AT 2 P.M.
(TO BE CONFIRMED BY A NOTICE).

B.I.C.A. SUBSCRIPTIONS

IF YOU ARE IN ARREARS OR WISH TO JOIN THE BEND OF ISLANDS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION, PLEASE CLIP THE COUPON BELOW & MAIL TO:
MICHAEL PELLING, TREASURER,
P.O. KANGAROO GROUND 3097.

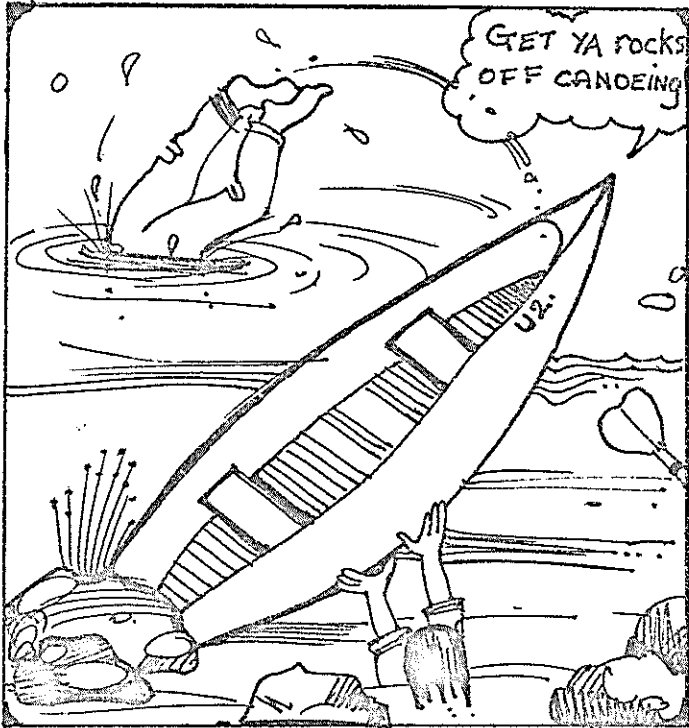
NEW SUBSCRIPTION RATES: \$10 INDIVIDUAL,
\$8 CONCESSION (STUDENT, PENSIONER ETC.)
\$20 FAMILY.



ENCLOSED IS \$ _____
FOR B.I.C.A. SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR THE FOLLOWING PERSONS
(PLEASE INCLUDE ADDRESSES AND PHONE NUMBERS):

IF A RED TICK APPEARS IN THIS SQUARE
YOUR SUBSCRIPTION IS DUE NOW

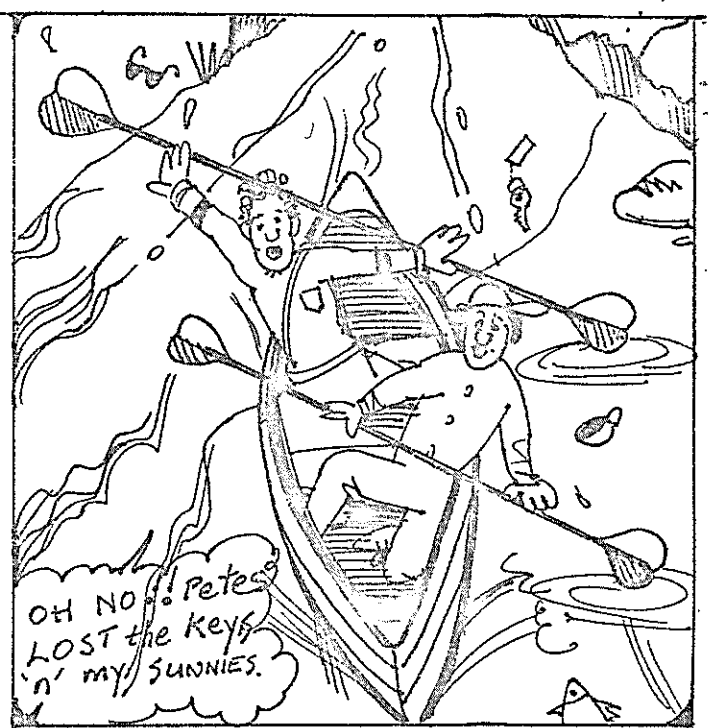




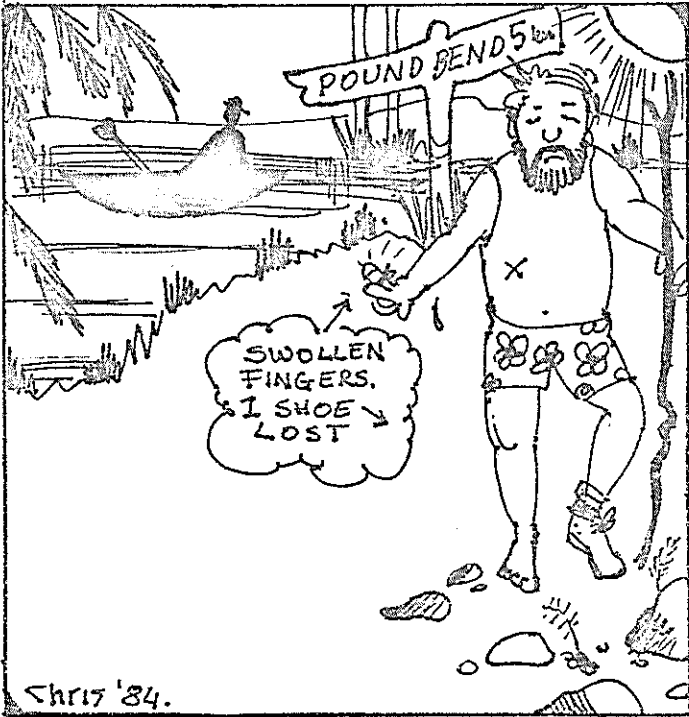
GET YA ROCKS OFF CANOEING



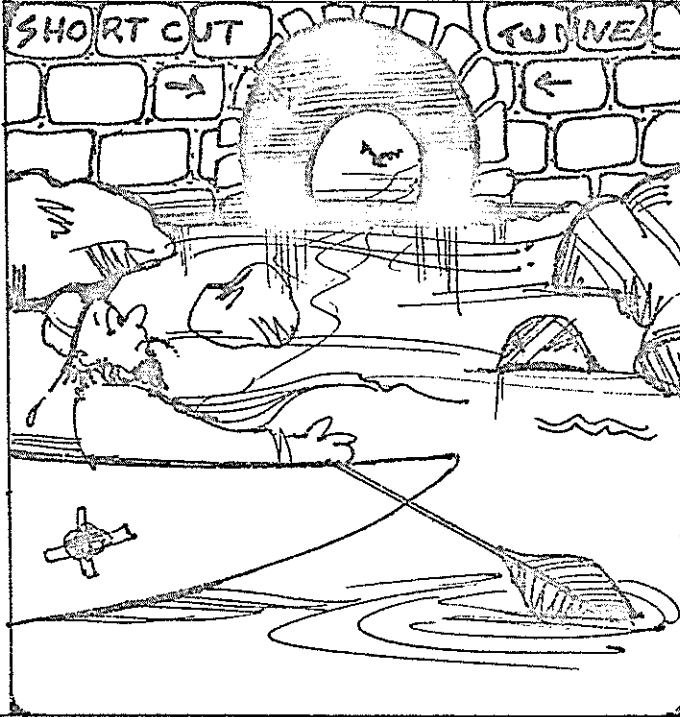
Notin like a few snags on the barbie to finish off... Hey Ross....??



OH NO!! PETER'S LOST THE KEYS 'n' MY SUNNIES.



SWOLLEN FINGERS. I SHOE LOST



SHORT CUT TUNNEL



BEND OF ISLES CREW... BENT ON CANOEING.

Canoeing

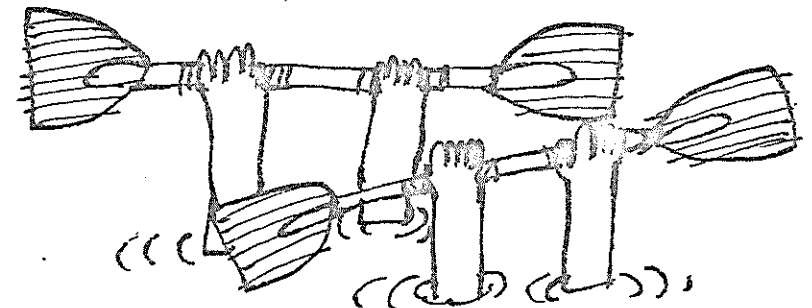
Recently a group of twenty locals and their friends participated in a canoe trip down the Yarra from Gongflers Drive to Pound Bend. On a previous occasion a similar group paddled from Yarra Glen to Gongflers. There can be no better way of enjoying the river scenery than by paddling downstream. The first dozen miles or so were along the meanders of the Yarra Glen flood plain. The water here is smooth and deep, the steep banks lined with wattles, about the only native vegetation remaining after over one hundred years of grazing activities.

Then the river hugs the base of the Skyline Road escarpment until it enters Yering Gorge. The vegetation in Yering is much more diverse with tall river gums and ferns in the rocky outcrops. After a few easily managed rapids and past the Sugar Loaf pumping station its out again into another flood plain, - the Homestead Henly and ahead looms the old disused Henly Road Trestle bridge. Along this stretch, the banks are badly eroded by constant haphazard stock watering. The farmers have foolishly attempted to arrest the erosion by planting numerous willow trees. The nearby billabongs which once provided a habitat for a great variety of water birds have also been largely destroyed by the same farmers and their stock. Its a very degraded stretch of water.

Further down around Mt. Lofty the river improves with rocky cliffs to the north and regrowth Candlebarks opposite. The water here is broken by frequent rapids as is the case right down to Warrandyte. Downstream from Wittons Reserve there is little evidence of man's intrusion visible from a canoe. The hillsides are clothed with box trees, the lower ground with Whoolly Tea Tree, Prostranthera Casuarina, Lomatio and Accacia. Its a beautiful stretch of river alternating with long stretches of smooth water and rather tricky rapids. Hopefully next spring another excursion along the river will eventuate.

Michael Woiwod

Canoeists in
"sinkrow!!!"



Bend of Islands Open Day

In response to a request from the Shire of Healesville, a number of residents went to quite some effort to prepare their properties for this event. As Neil Douglas said, 'You need a fright like this to have a good clean-up'.

It was disappointing that such advertising as there was, wasn't sufficient to attract more visitors but a small number of interested people took advantage of this opportunity to see several aspects of life in the Environment Living Zone.

The Round-the-Bend Conservation Co-Op was represented by Hilary Jackman in her studio/residence with Jeph Neale who talked about fire prevention in the area.

Tom and Carol-Anne Fisher, with the help of Mick Woiwod and Ross Henry prepared a mud brick building display. Dee and Michael Pelling showed their place as an example, living in a particularly sensitive locality with a minimum of impact.

Ted and Marg Elgood opened up their property and showed their breeding sheep as well as spinning and weaving with their own coloured wool.

Neil Douglas was 'at home'. The theme was bush landscaping in which he was helped by Crick Henry. Neil's Gulf Station paintings, his latest, were on public display for the first time.

Thanks to Syd Tunn for the map and to everyone else who supported this community effort.

An Ravorit Bob & Jane

Bob English has been an enthusiastic supporter of the Bend of Isles since the early 1970's. At this time he was one of the hard working group who formulated the Residential Conservation concept which was to be the basis for the Environment Living provisions. Bob's efforts since then have been marked by cheerfulness and lots of background work on whatever issue is at hand. We recognize his significant contribution to this community and thank him for it.

We understand that Bob and Jane hope to retain a stake in the Bend of Islands and certainly hope that they do. We look forward to continuing to see you at the usual gatherings, Bob and Jane and wish you luck in your new home.

Bush Baby arrives

Peter and Garbride are pleased to announce the arrival of their daughter Nicola Johanna at 12.25 on Thursday 29.

Due to the need for a few more environmentalists in the area, she rattled her dags and arrived three weeks ahead of schedule.

We also take the opportunity to thank our friends & neighbours for their gifts and good wishes

How I became a share farmer

Grow your own food. Turn your back on modern technology. Live the pioneering life.

Some years ago all these ideas sounded very appealing to me so I bought a piece of land and joined the 'back to earthers.'

Having built a sturdy hut my next priority was naturally to clear a small area of bush and put down a vegetable patch, I did just that, terraced the garden with bluestone and erected a rabbit proof fence.

I didn't worry too much about the large tree stump lying directly outside the fence as I knew the rabbits wouldn't be able to manage the two-foot jump necessary to get onto the log and into the garden. I hadn't thought about wallabies that could.

Very soon, every time I looked at the garden there was a wallaby feasting up large.

I discovered that we had something in common; a fondness for cabbage, and as they were all my cabbages I decided that I'd have to drive the wallaby off.

As I'd advance on the garden the wallaby would spring lightly over the fence and onto the tree trunk. There he would wait until I neared and then he'd retreat about 10 yards and wait again.

This process would repeat itself until we were well into the bush and I'd feel that he was out of harms way.

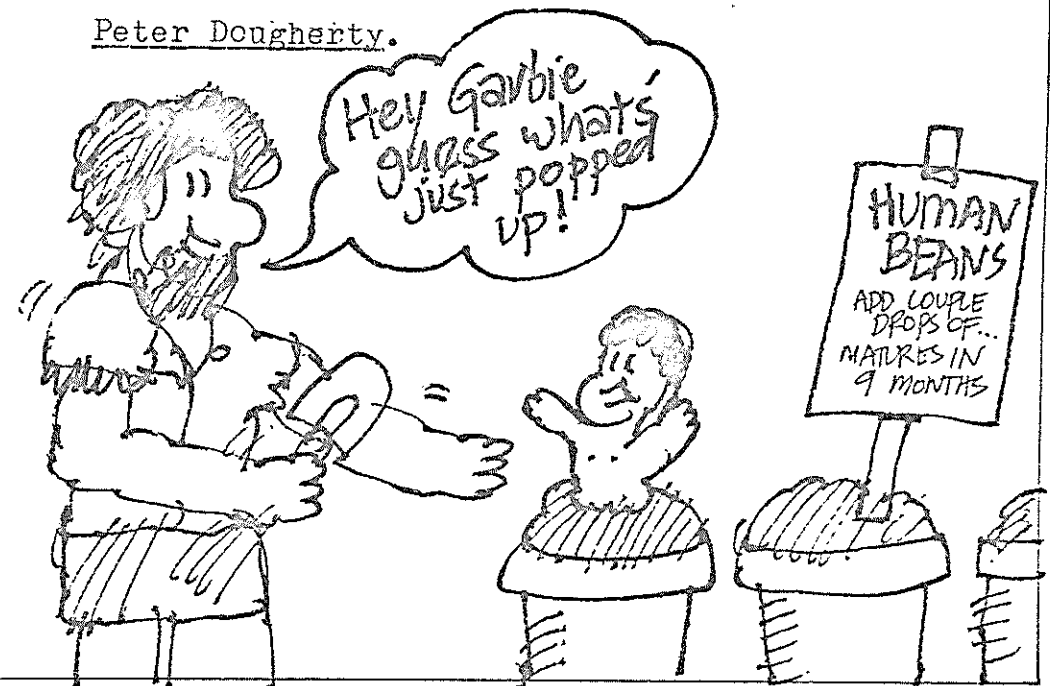
The problem was that as I returned he would simply follow, always keeping his 10 yard safety barrier.

By the time I was back at the hut he'd be sitting outside the garden waiting until the coast was clear again.

After trying for some time to discourage my uninvited guest I gave up and planted more cabbages.

We now have a sharing arrangement. The wallaby eats the top half of each cabbage and I eat the bottom half.

Peter Dougherty.



A TYPICAL PLANT LIST OF LOCAL PLANTS

LARGE TREES

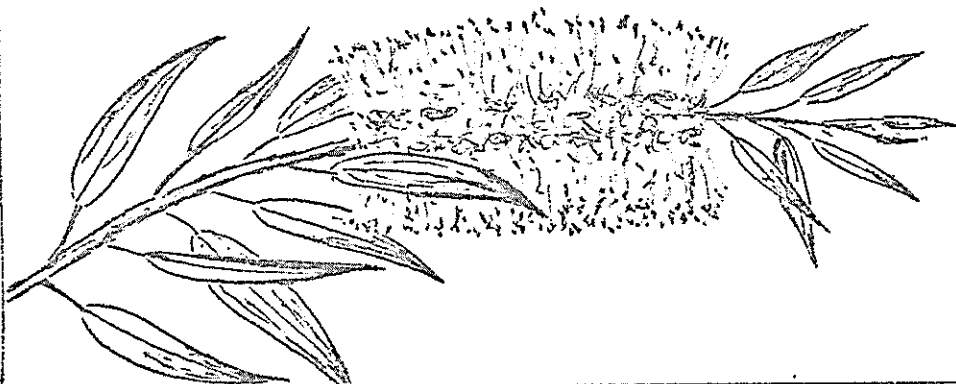
Casuarina littoralis	Black she-oak
Eucalyptus macrorchyncha	Red stringy bark
Eucalyptus obliqua	Messmate
Eucalyptus viminalis	Manna gum
Eucalyptus rubida	Candlebark
Eucalyptus sideroxylon	Red Ironbark
Eucalyptus radiata	Narrow leaf peppermint
Eucalyptus dives	Broad leaf peppermint
Eucalyptus ovata	Swamp gum
Eucalyptus yarraensis	Yarra gum
Eucalyptus camphora	
Eucalyptus goniocalyx	Long leaf box
Eucalyptus erenulata	Buxton gum
Eucalyptus melliadora	Yellow gum
Eucalyptus polyanthemus	Red box

SMALL TREES

Prostanthera Lasianthos	Victorian Christmas bush
Lomatia miricoides	River lomatia
Acacia verticillata	Prickly moses
Acacia melanoxylon	Blackwood
Acacia mearnsii	Black wattle
Acacia dealbata	Silver wattle
Pomaderris aspera	Hazel pomaderris
Acacia pycnantha	Golden wattle

TALL SHRUBS

Grevillea rosmarinifolia	Rosemary grevillia (Hurstbridge form)
Bursaria spinosa	Sweet bursaria
Acacia armata	Hedge wattle
Acacia implexa	Lightwood
Acacia mucronata	Narrow leaf wattle
Acacia aculeatissima	Thin leaf wattle
Acacia stricta	Hop wattle
Daviesia virgata	Narrow leaf bitter pea
Daviesia mimosoides	Bitter pea
Daviesia wyattiana	Long leaf bitter pea
Goodia litifolia	Golden tip
Indigofera australis	Australian indigo
Ricinocarpus pinifolius	Wedding bush
Pomaderris racemosa	Pomaderris
Pomaderris vacinifolia	Round leaf pomaderris
Gunatrix pulchella	Hemp bush
Hymenthera dentata	Tree violet
Leptospermum phyllicoides	Burgan (Kunzea)
Leptospermum lanigerum	Woolly tea tree
Leptospermum obovatum	River tea tree
Leptospermum juniperinum	Prickly tea tree
Callistemon paludosus	River bottle brush
Melaleuca ericifolia	Swamp paperbark
Solanum laciniatum	Kangaroo apple
Goodenia ovata	Hop goodenia
Cassinia aculeata	Common cassinia
Cassinia longifolia	Long leaf cassinia
Cassinia arcuata	Drooping cassinia
Helichrysum dendroidum	Tree helichrysum
Senecio linearifolius	Firewood groundsel
Spyridium parvifolium	Dusty miller



LOW SHRUBS

Acacia genistifolia	Spreading wattle
Acacia acinacea	Gold dust wattle
Gompholobium huegellii	Common wedge pea
Pultenaea gunnii	Golden bush pea
Dillwynia retorta	Small leaf parrot pea
Dillwynia cinerascens	Grey parrot pea
Bossiaea prostrata	Creeping bossiaea
Pimelia pauciflora	Poison rice flower
Pimelia humilis	Common rice flower
Pimelia linifolia	Slender rice flower
Epacris impressa	Common heath
Astroloma humifusum	Cranberry heath
Leucopogon virgatus	Common beard heath
Leucopogon ericoides	Pink beard heath
Acrotriche serrulata	Honey pots
Correa reflexa	Common correa
Acaena anserinifolia	Bidgee widgee
Tetratheca ciliata	Pink bells

CLIMBERS

Hardenbergia violacea	Purple coral pea
Clematis microphylla	Small leaf clematis
Comespera volubile	Love creeper

HERBS

Wahlenbergia gracilentia	Annual bluebell
Wahlenbergia quadrifida	Sprawling bluebell
Wahlenbergia stricta	Tall bluebell
Brunonia australia	Blue pincushion
Stylidium graminifolium	Grass trigger plant
Senecio minimus	Fireweed
Senecio glomeratus	Fireweed
Senecio hispidulus	Fireweed

GROUND COVER

Viola hederacea	Native violet
Dichondra repens	Kidney weed
Poa morossii	Tussock

CREEPERS

Billardiera scandens	Common appia berry
Glycine clandestine	Twining glycine
Kennedia prostrata	Running postman

This is your newsletter.
 Any suitable articles and stories
 welcome.
 Ring or send to Mick Woiwood
 % Kangaroo Ground. P.O. or Ph: 7120563

B.I.C.A. Committee meets 1st
 FRIDAY of each month—
 ALL WELCOME

THANKS:

TO ALL THE CONTRIBUTORS WITH A
 SPECIAL THANKS TO CHRIS AND DEBBIE, FABIAN,
 TESSA & NEIL, AND YOUR ORGANISERS: TOM,
 MICK W., WENDY AND SYD.

