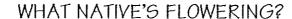
BEND OF ISLANDS GONSERVATION ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

President Alan Bonny 9712 0648 C/- Post Office Kangaroo Ground 3097 - Editor John McCallum 9712 0319

Number 34 August 95



Botanical Name: Pterostylis longifolia

Common Name: Tall Greenhood

Family: Orchidaceae

A widespread orchid occurring in a variety of habitats, in particular our dry and valley sclerophyll forests, with a preference for shady sites. The Tall Greenhood is usually 30 to 50 cm high and is easily recognised through grass tussocks or often close to eucalypt trunks. Non-flowering stems have a cluster of 3 - 6 long stalked leaves, 35 mm long, forming a basal rosette at the bottom of the stem, but which are absent at flowering time. flowering stems have 5 - 8 stem-clasping narrow dark green leaves up to 100 mm long, held erect and extending up to but not among the flowers. There are 3 - 10 flowers widely spaced up the top of the stem. The flowers are small, up to 15 mm long, and are green and white with brown tips. The flower consists of a boat-shaped hood facing downwards at right angles to short concave joined sepals, forming a shallow forked dish on which rests the sensitive tongue. An insect only has to touch the tongue and it will fly up inside the hood, trapping the insect for about half an hour. In that time pollen is certain to have brushed onto the insect, so that when the hood opens again, the insect will fly off to another orchid carrying the pollen with it, thus ensuring cross pollination.

Cric Henry

ONCE UPON A TIME

Recently I was reading through and English magazine and came across an article which I thought would be of interest to us here in conservation city. I know it's from the other side of the world but its message is what we are on about and that's the main thing.

In 1985 an old farmer by the name of Arthur Wallbridge died at the age of 94. He lived and still worked on his 600 acre farm in a remote part of Dorset. This farm had been tended by the Wallbridge family for a hundred years and never known mechanisation, weedicides or artificial fertilisers. Arthur had looked after the place since he was a boy in the last decade of Queen Victoria's reign and still remembered her.

The hedgerows and thickets were unaltered from four centuries of growth an still retained many birds and small animals rare in other parts of Britain. The hay meadows were specially significant. There were still indicators of ancient pasture plants which gloried in names such as Pepper Saxifrage, Corky-fruited Water Dropwort and Adder's Tongue Fern. These were the last vestiges in England. During the Second World War the bulk of English pasture was turned over to intensive farming and of course the dreaded superphosphate. These precious areas were lost forever.

After the old man died, conservationists in Dorset began thinking and planning. They weren't going to let this wonderful area disappear without a fight. They organised themselves into a dedicated group and raised money through grants and donations to buy up the land as an intact parcel. They then decided to turn it into a nature reserve. They retained a cottage and some of the old barns and also had a visitors' centre built.

Nigel and Jill Spring began the Kingscombe Study Centre which was to provide teaching facilities for conservationists. Footpaths were carefully added to provide guided walks operated by Nigel and Jill.

This all reminds me of some of the old country cemeteries Barb and I have explored on our travels. I think it was the one at Port Albert that had a sign saying that the grasses and other flora in that cemetery were protected as they were on the endangered list and represented specimens of the original vegetation.

I wonder how many other cemeteries carry the only sample of the rare old plants? Time is running out, isn't it? was to

Fill.

Rest

Pleces

John Doe

1802-1840

Sheilas article reminds us of what a good job we have done over the last two hundred years or so of wiping out what was here when European humans first permanently settled this country. A particularly 'good' example of almost total destruction of an ecosystem is the alteration of the Red Gum Woodlands that used to extend across the volcanic plains of Western Victoria. Certainly many of the Red Gums remain but the associated ground flora has totally disappeared to pasture and weed species. We have a few clues as to what it must have been like in reserves such as cemeteries as Sheila mentioned and, up until recently, rail reserves.

Up until about ten years ago, the Victorian Railways as they were then known, carried out fire prevention works in trackside reserves by hand, mainly by periodic burning. This was seen as essential, particularly in the days of steam locomotives with the perceived hazard of ignition of railside vegetation by cinders. I can remember as a student in the early 1960s wandering along the line at Springvale where I lived and collecting for study many species of wildflowers native to the sandy soils of that area. However in more recent decades rail reserves have been subject to less labour-intensive clearing by earthmoving equipment. In many areas the only remnants of the local vegetation have now gone forever.

Whether it is a remnant of a particular ecosystem, a population of a species of organism that is under threat of extinction or, as is the case at Kingscombe, a well preserved artefact of past human endeavour, once it is gone it is gone forever. The Bend of Islands remained more or less undisturbed for many years, probably because of poor access (remember Henley Road in the 1970s?) It was a dead end, if there had been a bridge across to Wonga Park the story would probably have been different. Now that this 'forgotten' corner is on the map we have the job of making sure that it is protected.

Editor

When I first borrowed the book Ants of Southern Australia from Deakin University the usually uncommunicative librarian accosted me with the exclamation 'Oh, yuck, who could want a book on ants?' I was somewhat annoyed at this as I happen to like them, but must confess that nobody else had borrowed this copy of the only book on the ants of this region of Australia. This response by the socalled 'educated population' is very different to the positive response whenever I mention ants to people in the ELZ. Residents are often keenly aware of the species they have in their region, although they can not name them, and frequently can give me a history of a particular nest. Such knowledge may not be immediately useful but is worth recording if further study is carried out.

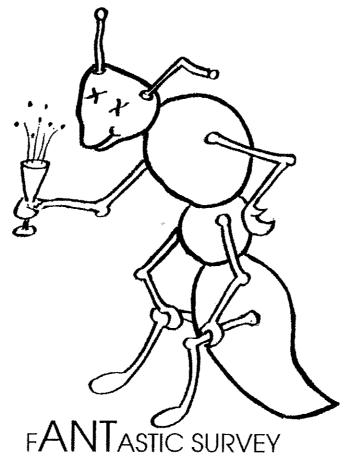
My research is being conducted for a final year biology project as part of Bachelor of Applied Science in Environmental Management. I will be laying traps to collect ants on the Gurney an Krause properties (yes, unfortunately the ants do die!). I will be comparing three sites.

The first is where twelve large pine trees were cleared in 1988. There were very few species of plants growing under the trees at the time so the site was virtually barren when the pines were removed.

The second is a site which never had pines but was cleared of all trees in 1962 and since 1981 has been allowed to regrow.

The third site has not been cleared since at least 1962 (possibly earlier as there are several large trees

there). This is to be used as a 'natural' control site. The two cleared sites have been burnt over the past five years to promote regeneration. All three adjacent sites cover an area of about three hundred metres by sixty metres, have had some plantings to regenerate native trees and shrubs and have had some plants protected against grazing by rabbits and other herbivorous animals.



For five days in late March this year I set the traps, which consist of a small vial the size of a 35 mm film canister filled with 70% alcohol. The ants fall in and are simply and quickly pickled. One or two of the traps seemed to be attacked by Echidnas; I hope that they are not acquiring a taste for pickled ants! I am now in the process of identifying and recording the species of ants and other animals collected. This will show if there is any variation between the sites. The idea is to see if the pine trees have any effect on the fauna of the region and also may give a strong indication of the status of the ecosystem in general. There can be up to one hundred and fifty species of ants per hectare although in this region it would probably be more like seventy five different species. Specialisation to occupy various niches in the environment allows so many species to live in the same overall area. By sampling the ant species we can effectively sample the environment. The diversity of species is not as important as the type of dominant species. Depending on how disturbed the environment is will determine what species of ants dominate If an environment looks lush but the ants are the same as those from a barren site then we may conclude that the vegetation is not suitable for that area as it is not helping the species progress to the climax ecological stage.

The science is fairly new especially in the cooler areas of Australia and the conclusions are therefore not definitive, especially from such a small study area. The results will be ready by October and I will write up something for another BICA Newsletter.

Martin Storey

This is a copy of the submission from BICA o introduce the Commissioners to the ELZ in March 95

BEND OF ISLANDS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

Submission To: THE SHIRE OF NILLUMBIK COMMISSIONERS

Regarding: THE ENVIRONMENTAL LIVING ZONE.

INTRODUCTION

We represent the Bend of Islands Conservation Association which was established in 1968 to deal with issues of conservation in the Bend of Islands area (See attached Map) The Bend of Islands is some 400 hectares of mainly natural bushland adjacent to the Yarra River on the south eastern boundary of the Shire of Nillumbik. There are approximately 125 properties in the area.

The initial group of residents focused on the proposal to develop the Yarra Brae dam which would have inundated much of this bushland. Currently we have some 150 members, representing some 70% of landowners still focusing on this same area which has become the Environmental Living Zone. We deal as well with regional and other associated conservation matters.

As a community group we believe that we bring to the new Shire of Nillumbik something very special in the Environmental Living Zone which, we have as a community, worked over many years to achieve and implement.

We would like to present in very brief form our history, our vision, the current situation as well as our hopes and aspirations for our future in working in a new Shire.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL LIVING ZONE

You may well ask - what is so important about this planning Zone?

This Zone is a direct result of community action. It was born out of a number of events which commenced in the early sixties, including a severe bushfire, irrational clearing of vegetation, the proposed Yarra Brae Dam and so on. In 1968, residents formed the Bend of Islands Conservation Association to deal with these matters. BICA's aims as stated in the constitution are as follows:- to preserve, by all means within its power and to the maximum extent consistent with essential needs including fire precautions, the native fauna and natural beauty of the area.

In late 1974 when the proposal to dam the river was dropped, BICA was galvanised into action to find a way to protect this now recognised environmentally rich and sensitive area, in some ongoing way.

The vision of residential conservation was taken up and developed. In a simplistic way it was argued that the controls required to protect the flora and fauna needed to be at least as strict as those in a national park <u>but</u> people wanted to live in the area - why couldn't the dual aims of preservation of the bush and residential use be brought together! This was the challenge - this was the beginning of much discussion, much research, much use of experts in the fields of planning, of natural resource management, of ecology, of sociology and so on. Issues which were agreed by all to be important in this vision included:-

- The protection of habitat clearing had to be controlled, but fire had to be considered. The planting of species which would out compete or threaten local species would need to be prohibited but a kitchen garden was desirable.
- Effluent had to be controlled because it would produce weed growth and also pollute the river system.
- Domestic pets and livestock posed an enormous threat to native wildlife -They should be prohibited.
- Fences provided a hazard as well as a barrier to native fauna why have them?
- Development needed to be sympathetically contained the impact on the bush should be minimised, not just physically but also aesthetically. Consideration should be given to the nature of the materials, the colour, the location on site, the planting and "landscaping" of the development. All these

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(Continued from page 4)

issues needed to be considered in the light of not just the existing but also the future amenity of the locality.

 Living in a bushland environment would require sensitivity to the surroundings - the scale of the development should be compatible with the natural surroundings.

Wildlife corridors should not be sacrificed to development - compatibility and sensitivity are required - the building envelope needs to be carefully defined and located. Taking this into account Planners took this vision and developed the 1976 Interim Development Order. It wasn't a bad attempt in taking the community's ideas and translating them into "planning language". The current Planning Scheme is a further refinement of this process but what we have now lost are the reasons behind the provisions. It is difficult for a newcomer to glean the vision from reading planning terminology. BICA sees as its role, the communication of that vision. People in the area from time to time do move on but in the main, have been replaced by people who are attracted by that vision and are prepared to share and develop it.

As a community we view the ELZ provisions as a basic minimum requirement and not something that can be watered down because in doing so, the objectives and intent of the Zone will be compromised.

The Association has as its priority the ongoing maintenance of the Environmental Living Zone. This is primarily an educative role and the Association carries this out in a variety of ways - general meetings, guest speakers, field days, newsletters, social events, working bees for roadside management, weed eradication, revegetation, rubbish cleanups, the provision of information kits to welcome new residents and so on.

CURRENT ISSUES

Issues that we are working on currently include:-

• the planning scheme and its enforcement in the Shire of Nillumbik - we have had some initial discussions with the Planning Department.

- the regional strategy plan its importance for the Zone and where this sits in the future.
- our approach to the Minister for Planning's introduction of new planning zones. Please find attached our submission to the Minister.
- · the proposed Heritage Resort development and its impact on the Zone.
- related to planning issues there are a number of factors which other Departments and bodies have raised in reports and recommendations which directly affect us - these include:-
 - 1. the LCC recommendations on the Watsons Creek corridor.
 - 2. the remaining Melbourne Water land yet to be sold in the Zone.
 - 3. the relationship between Melbourne Water Sugarloaf recreation and management plan and our area.
 - 4. the Regional Open Space Plan.

WHAT CAN GO WRONG

We would be most concerned if:

- the Zone was watered down.
- implementation of current provisions were carried out without understanding "the vision"/ aims for the Zone.
- imprudent decisions on land adjacent to ELZ were made. eg.
 - possibly the Heritage Golf Course development related to the bushland section of Henley Farm and current ELZ section.
 - · on the future of Yanakie and Melbourne Water land.
 - on the future development of Melbourne Water land to the North.

(Continued on page 6)

on any future development of recreational facilities at Sugarloaf. We need to ensure the no access to Skyline Road is maintained.

OUR HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS

- We will work to retain the "Zone" as something ongoing and special.
- We hope to have the full support of our new Shire.
- We want to work with the new Shire and its officers in further developing and enhancing the policies so that the zoning can work better can be improved

can be promoted as a model to use

elsewhere

We would like to devote more time to improving the quality of the area:

weeds, indigenous plant propagation

management plans

research

education

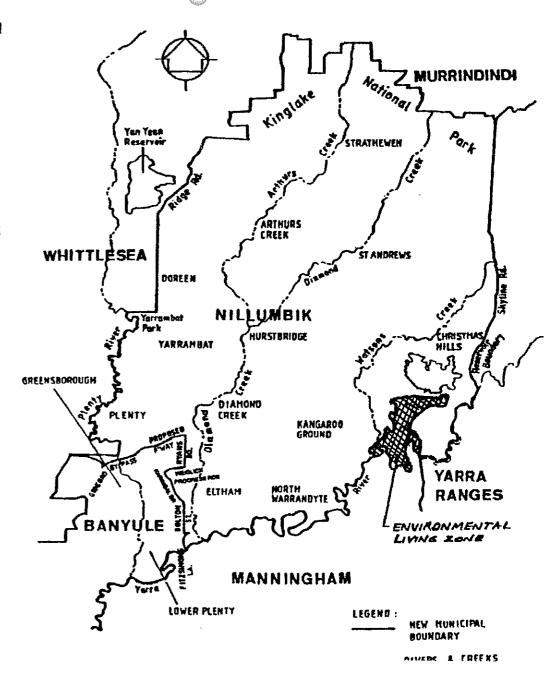
education

publications

 We wish to work towards influencing and assist in improving the environmental qualities of the Shire which have been recognised in its establishment process.

CONCLUSION

We invite you to visit the Bend of Islands, at your convenience, so that we can share with you some insights into what we see as such a special place to live.



WHAT'S BEEN ON WITH WORKING BE S'

There have been two community working bees so far this year, National Cleanup Day in early March and a session of planting and mulching on Skyline Road on 28th April.

Once again Cleanup Day achieved a great deal in and around the Bend of Islands and along Skyline Road towards Christmas Hills. Over nine cubic metres of rubbish was collected and also about 15 bags of recyclable material was gathered. It is alarming to find that there is still rubbish being deliberately dumped in the bush and also that there are still people who throw litter from motor vehicles.

Many thanks to the 16 volunteers who helped on Cleanup Day. We will be seeking community help again in 1996 for the national event and we would really appreciate support from families who have not joined us in the last few years.



Our work in Skyline Road under the high voltage power lines had been to plant out an area from which much of the original vegetation will be removed over a number of years by Eastern Electricity. Our April working bee was a follow-on day from work done last November. We prepared the ground and planted out shrubs and ground cover plants to a plan developed by Cric Henry. The plants and plant guards were purchased with funds provided by Eastern Electricity and organised by Frank Pierce. BICA threw in some dollars and hired a post hole digger for both working bees. We also used some of the mulch left over from the line clearing last spring.

The workers weren't numerous but achieved much. This raises the point, where have all the workers gone?

A few years ago a community working bee would have had dozens of people, male, female, old and young along to help. In recent years the working bees have been supported by only ten or a dozen people, generally the same people. While we still achieve a good deal there is definitely a loss of the widespread community feeling that used to dominate these events and which filtered widely throughout the Bend of Islands community.

Our new community market fills this void in part but again it is largely the same workers who run the market and also show up for the working bees. I acknowledge that many others contribute in other ways such as fire brigade and other local committees but working bees are a very public demonstration that we care for this area in practical ways. Newcomers and visitors can see the evidence of community that cares and works together.

It is the community sense of living here that very much adds to the uniqueness of this place. Living here has considerable responsibilities to our bush and to each other and I implore all residents to please be supportive of community events. I know we all cannot attend each and every community event but there are three or four working bees each year including Clean-up Day. Can we all attend at least one of these per year? This would demonstrate that we are prepared to put our labour into supporting the bushland and the river that we currently have guardianship over but which is beyond our property boundaries.

Our next working be is on Sunday, 27th August commencing at 2 pm and meeting at the Fire Station. I would really enjoy your company when we boil the billy that afternoon.

Peter Gurney

NOTES FROM THE COMMITTEE Worth A Read!

The familiar old rag from Healesville, Mountain Views, has recently expanded its area of interest to include up to date information about events in the Shire of Nillumbik. Over the past few years we have been able to read Mountain Views by courtesy of Syd and Ona who provided the means for distribution of the papers which were transported from Yarra Glen by Joyce and Ernie Harriss. Now the Mountain Views is available regularly from the Kangaroo Ground store, again courtesy of Joyce and Ernie. The box at Syd and Ona's gate no longer operates as a news stand. Thanks to Syd and Ona for their past service and continuing thanks to Joyce and Ernie from us all!

Sealing Henley Road

Further to newspaper reports about the sealing of Henley Road as far as the Fire Station, the situation is that the proposal is being reviewed by the Shire of Nillumbik. As well, BICA has asked that there be community consultation about the road construction and its environmental impact.

Heritage Golf and Country Club Resort (development on billabongs)

This development has been approved by the Minister and is set to go ahead. We are now going to have a major tourist development immediately adjacent to the Bend of Islands! The BICA committee is currently following up the matter of the quality of the water in Brushy Creek. Brushy Creek discharges into the Yarra opposite the Gonflers Peninsula and is polluted to some degree by outfall from the sewage treatment works. The proposed new resort will make further demands on a system that is already performing poorly.

Power Line Clearing

Bend of Islands residents will have noticed the enthusiastic clearing under the transmission lines in the vicinity of the Henley Road - Calwell Road corner. This level of work is now standard in all parts of the state. BICA has negotiated yet another agreement with the authorities, in this case National Electricity, for a minimal clearing regime under high voltage lines within the ELZ. Correspondingly the bush under the lines in the Bend of Islands will not receive the same treatment. Special thanks to Frank Pierce for his continuing work in this difficult and never ending process.

The Phantom strikes again... and again.

The Phantom Sign Stealer has really pulled it off (up?) this time. Not content with the running battle of the paint brushes over the 'no dogs and cats' sign, the PSS has now removed the whole sign. BICA is currently discussing replacement with the Shire of Nillumbik. Also it was disturbing to see the sudden appearance of a driveway on a block owned by Melbourne Water. Unfortunately the person who put the drive in was not the land owner nor was there a permit for the drive. BICA committee have asked the Shire to have the situation rectified. As with line clearing, residents should be on the alert for activities that they suspect might not be authorised. If in doubt check with the appropriate authority. BICA can advise on the correct approach in such situations.

CUT YOUR GAS BILL BY THREE QUARTERS

While having gas bottles to heat my hot water I discovered a simple way to use only on bottle per four months instead of one per month. I turned the gas off, but left the pilot light on because it was difficult to relight. The gas was turned on before I wanted a shower. In summer I could turn the gas on for only five minutes and this provided enough hot water for showers over two or three days. In winter it would need about fifteen to twenty minutes.

I would get out of bed, turn the gas on, go back to bed and wake up, get out of bed again, have a shower and really wake up. This was a bit annoying and I am sure that a timer could be made to fit onto these units. Such would easily be paid for by savings in gas consumption. According to the ABC radio program 'Earth Beat' I could have saved another \$35 by turning off the pilot light! This is almost an entire bottle of gas. Some units have electronic ignition rather than a pilot light but to retrofit them is not practical, but I bet it would be possible with a bit of fencing wire and some old fashioned ingenuity!

Martin Storey

Walks 1 to 64

AREA he areas used by the BICA bird survey group are as ws:

A. "Box-Stringybark" includes area between River and Henley.

B. "Ironbark Forest": North of Henley

C. "Watson's Creek" includes Yanakie

- Recorded in ELZ but not on survey

? - May have been recorded in ELZ

o - Not yet recorded in ELZ

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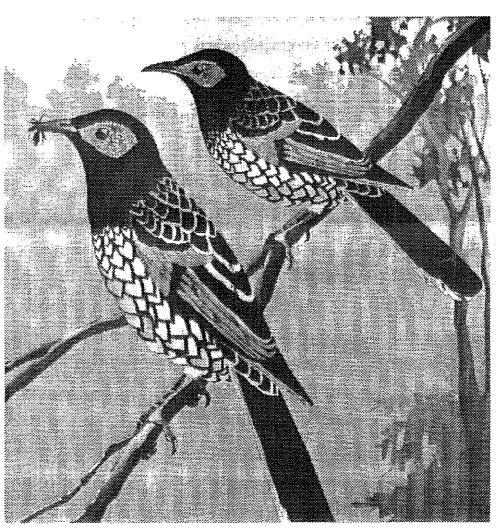
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NATIONAL THREATENED SPECIES LY

The National Threatened Species Day will be held on Thursday 7th September this year. This date is the anniversary of the day the last known Thylacine died. This year the focus is on our own native cats, the quolls. The National Threatened Species Network is promoting this day as part of Biodiversity Week, September 4th - 10th. There will be a minutes silence on the 7th to contemplate the loss of the Tasmanian Tiger and other species.

REGENT HONEYEATER RECOVERY EFFORT



The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources are publicising the plight of and hopes for the Regent Honeyeater with a newsletter to be published twice a year. We will have copies available at the next meeting or you can obtain one from.

Natasha Schedvin
Regent Honeyeater Recovery Coordinator
D C N R.
PO Box 137
Heidelberg, Vic. 3084

We don't have a local recorded sighting of the bird but they have been seen at Warrandyte in recent years. Now is the time they may be around with the Ironbark in blossom. If you see one they would love to know about it and you can contact with a freecall number 1800 621 056 (better tell Frank Pierce about it to!)

FIRE BRIGADE BUSINESS

At the Brigade elections held in April this year, the following were elected to commence duties from 1st July 1995 for two years.

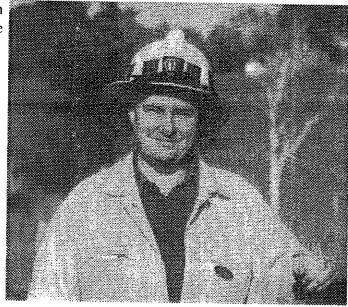
Captain: Dianne Simmons 9730 1761 (Dianne was not the first, there are now three formula captains!)

female captains!)

1st Lieutenant: Jeph Neale 9712 0458 2nd Lieutenant: Chris Carson 9719 7492 3rd Lieutenant: Kevin Heely 9730 1704 4th Lieutenant: John McCallum 9712 0319

Secretary: Robyn Adams 9730 1761

Our Brigade has just received an update of the system used by the public to report fires or other emergencies Our two Fire Reporting Systems (FRS) were replaced on July 26th by one **Emergency Reporting System** (ERS) The ERS will take advantage of improved telecommunications technology and allow more interceptors (phones connected to the system) on exchanges outside the local telephone exchange This is particularly important for us as we have Kangaroo Ground, Panton Hill, Yarra Glen



and St Andrews numbers in our Brigade area. Households connected to the ERS are Bateman, Jackman, McCallum and Pelling as before and, as well, Cain, Fisher, Ponyland and Simmons. The South station is also an interceptor. As on the FRS when the emergency number is dialled all interceptor phones in the households concerned ring with a special tone. All interceptors can listen in and then conduct a conference on the party line to determine action to be taken. Siren and pagers are set off from an interceptor. We retain 9712 0454 as our single emergency number

THE MARKET

Since 'the market' began a year ago, it has become a great social occasion on the morning of the third Saturday of each month. Gradually 'the market' became known as 'the coffee morning' and 'Cafe Benders' has been born in the Bend. You can get the best coffee this side of Lygon Street, served in pre-heated mugs, no froth, but the cakes served with it are a real treat!

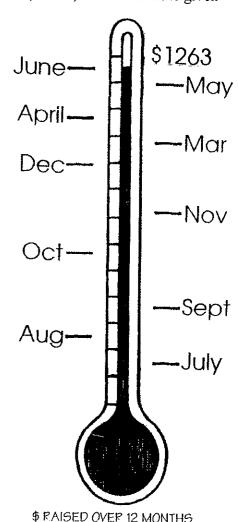
The coffee morning is successful because of the Friends Of The Christmas Hills Fire Brigade. Time, effort, coffee and cake given

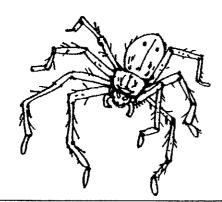
voluntarily by many. On average the Friends make about \$100 per month for the Brigade.

We have had breakfasts, a birthday party, a fantastic Christmas party, trash and treasure and now, trash, treasure and gluhwein! Just the thing to warm everyone up on a chilly winter morning. The coffee morning continues to be a great place to meet other locals, everyone is welcome.

Stalls fluctuate in number from two to six or seven.
Everything sold at the coffee mornings is homemade, hand crafted or home grown by locals. You can get fresh bread, honey, cards, paintings or pizzas (on the right day!). See you there on the next third Saturday sometime from 10.00 am on!

Pamela Gurney





COMING BICA EVENTS:

Sunday, August 13th General meeting, 2pm at The Millingtons 59 Skyline Road. Guest speakers Pat and Mike Coupar on spiders. BICA members will remember Pat and Mike for their fascinating presentation on moths and butterflies some time ago. Don't miss this occasion and remember to bring a chair, a mug and some arvo tea to share.

Sunday, August 27th Working Bee, at the South Fire Station.

Sunday, September 17th Field day, at Sugarloaf Reservoir.

Sunday, October 29th Social event, to be announced.

Sunday, November 26th **Annual General Meeting**, Guest speaker Vernon Steele on Wombats.

Plans have been prepared by Cric for landscaping the surrounds of the Catani Blvd Fire Station. These can be viewed in the Fire Station at any time.

ARE YOU FINANCIAL?		
If there is red tick in the box then according to o you are not! If you have any queries please contatreasurer, Bruce Adam on 9712 0449		ı ∙rds
MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL		
Subscription rates for 1995 are as follows: Single membership \$10 Family membership \$20 Concession membership \$8		
Subscriptions can be mailed to The Treasurer BICA		
C/- Post Office		
Kangaroo Ground		
Vic 3097		
Please find enclosed \$ being for no membership/ renewed membership of BICA	€W	
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