

BEND OF ISLANDS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION INC. NEWSLETTER

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

BOTANICAL NAME: *Burchardia umbellata*
COMMON NAME: Milkmaids Lilies
FAMILY: Liliaceae (Colchicaceae)

Number **40** October 1997



A small perennial tufting herb of the lily family, up to 30 cm tall by 20 cm wide, with sparse fleshy grass-like leaves, a rigid erect single stem bearing a rounded flower head of conspicuous white flowers from September to December.

Burchardia umbellata is endemic to temperate Australia and the genus *Burchardia* is monotypic, i.e. only one genus is represented in the family.

The one or two basal leaves are grass-like, pale green, V-shaped and up to 20 cm long, encircling the flower stem at the base. The 1-3 stem leaves are similar but smaller.

The flowers are arranged in a round terminal cluster 1-5 cm across, forming a "terminal umbel" i.e. all the short flower stalks arise at the same point and flowers lie at the same level in an umbrella shape. There are 2-10 honey scented flowers in each cluster, spreading star-like flowers consisting of 6 petals fused at the base. In the centre of the flower there are 6 stamens tipped with black anthers, which contrast effectively against the white petals. There is also the pinkish triangular ovary in the centre of the flower which remains on the flower stalk after flowering and after the seeds have been released, as a dried, red, angular, 3 valved capsule.

The plants die down annually in Summer, after flowering has finished, and regenerates from the persistent fibrous rootstock in the ground. The rootstock is a branched fleshy tuber which contains valuable food reserves for the plant.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This is the last Newsletter for the year so it is appropriate to document my appreciation of the efforts and support of those on our BICA committees. It was a busy year with the ongoing sagas of the planning scheme, the Heritage development and the 'normal' activities of our area.

The BICA submission on the Nillumbik planning scheme is a most comprehensive and professional document and we hope that it will achieve the best possible result for the Bend of Islands and, with the other submissions (400 in all), the best results for the Shire as a whole. On the Heritage front we are waiting for the developers to convene a meeting to discuss amendments to the proposal for the Henley course. We have twisted their arm a few times but not hard enough apparently. Another ongoing saga has been trying to establish a satisfactory agreement on clearing under the transmission lines. Discussions continue but there has been no satisfactory solution to the economics versus environment conflict.

Submissions were invited on the proposed subdivision of 200 Skyline Road and should have been with Nillumbik Shire by October 3.

BICA was nominated and shortlisted for the Banksia awards earlier in the year and our local state member, Andre Haermeyer, is nominating us for the National Community Link awards in recognition of ongoing effort and achievement by our community.

At our last general meeting the members voted that BICA should become a member of the Anti Ring Road Organisation (ARRO). Details of this organisation are available and future developments will be advised as they occur. If you wish to support ARRO further by becoming an individual member they can be contacted at PO Box 126, Warrandyte, 3113.

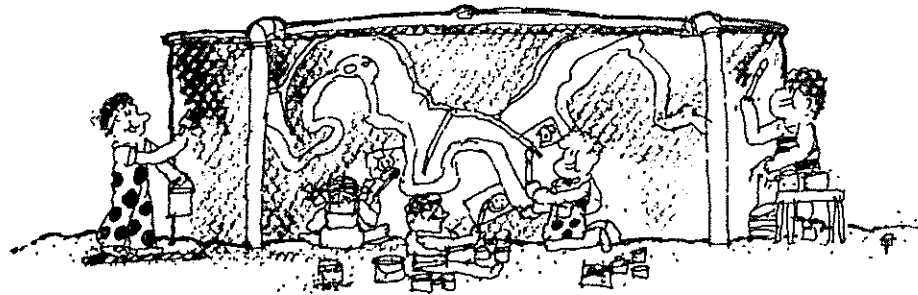
See you at the pub walk and AGM (details of both events are elsewhere in this newsletter.

Alan Bonny

CAFE BENDERS TRASH AND TREASURE

Saturday October 18, 10 am

The next market will be a 'Trash and Treasure'; bring your trash to sell or swap for someone else's treasure. The painting of the water tank will also continue so come prepared for painting and decorating. Syd and Ona will be co-ordinating this task and all are invited to be involved. Materials have been donated generously.



LANDCARE NETWORK TOUR

BICA is a member of the Nillumbik Landcare Network. This is a co-ordinating group for the thirteen Landcare groups within the Shire. It is planned to hold network activity tours to visit the various sites across the Shire. The next tour will start at the Bend of Islands then on to Friends of Pigeon Bank Lane, Friends of Brogil Creek and end at Osborne Peninsula. Join in for all or part of the tour. Bring afternoon tea to share (at Pigeon Bank site) and a few dollars for a sausage sizzle at the end. Tour starts at Oxley Bridge at 12.30 pm on Sunday October 12. Further details from Alan or Carol Bonny on 9712 0648

GREEN WEDGE SEMINAR SERIES.

This series of wildlife seminars sponsored by BICA, FOWSP (Friends of Warrandyte State Park) and Manningham Council continues with the following topics on the first Thursday of the month at 7.30 pm for the remainder of the year.

Andrew Bennett on Wildlife Corridors: Nov 6

Linton Staples on Foxes: Dec 4

The venue is the Warrandyte Community Centre; enquiries to Bill Mallinson on 9840 9338 or 9840 9333

AUSTRALIA'S FIRST NATIVE BEE BULLETIN

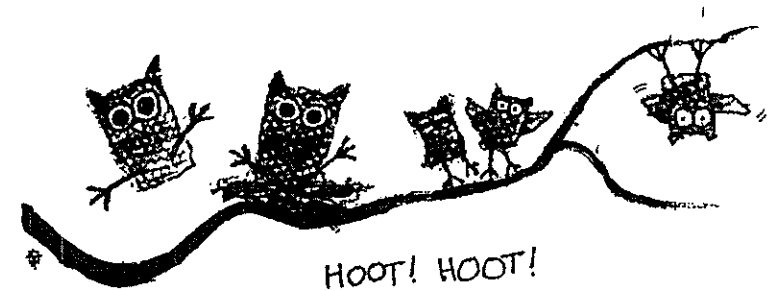
From Steve Craig

Australia has more than 2000 species of native bees which are important pollinators of our unique wildflowers. Australian native bees range from mosquito size up to large, furry bumble-bee look-alikes. Many are solitary and raise their young in tiny burrows in the ground or inside twigs. Others are social, with queens, drones and hundreds of workers in large colonies. Unfortunately until now, no detailed information on these fascinating insects has been available to the general public. To fill this need the Australian Native Bee Research Centre is launching a quarterly bulletin called Aussie Bee and a series of information booklets on native bees. For full details and a free copy of the historic first issue of the bulletin, send a stamped self addressed, business-sized envelop to : The Australian Native bee Research Centre, PO Box 74-G, North Richmond, NSW 2754.

SOURCE: NATURE NEWS ISSUE NO. 5 MAY 1997

AUGUST MEETING: ARROS AND OWLS

The 10th of August saw the general meeting at the Taylor residence. Marcel Cameron addressed the meeting on behalf of ARRO (Anti Ring Road Organisation). After his informative talk a motion from the floor proposing that BICA should join ARRO was unanimously accepted by the meeting. Following the formal part of the day a presentation on powerful owls was given by Steve Craig. Great slides supported a lot of interesting information. Steve would like any reports of powerful owl sightings or calls. Please note the time, place and direction of calls and let Steve know on 9712 0029. Thanks to Steve and to Neil and Jenny for their hospitality.



STOP PRESS!

Bend of Islands eagles are proud parents of two new chicks and, by the look of it, there will be a few more new bender babies out and about! Congratulations!

THE VERY LATEST

Sally and Mark have a new son.

THE VERY, VERY LATEST

John and Meg have a grandson.

FROM THE FIRE BRIGADE: DON'T BE SCAREDBE PREPARED !

Dianne Simmons, Captain

This Summer

All predictions suggest that we are likely to see a very serious fire season this summer.

The Brigade has a range of plans in place to cope with all sorts of incidents that we are likely to face in the area under "normal" circumstances, but we are busy planning for events that are likely to be quite outside our normal experience - in particular, the possibility of an uncontrollable wildfire passing through our area. This means a shift in our planning, from coping with relatively small fires that we are able to put out quickly, to accepting that even with support from our neighbouring brigades, and access to the massive resources of the CFA, we may not be able to control a large bushfire in our area.

Brigade Objectives

The Brigade objectives are simply to see no losses of lives or houses or other assets (including environmental values) in the area, even if an uncontrollable fire passes through the area. We think this can be best achieved by encouraging all residents to plan ahead to stay in their houses during a fire, to make their houses fire safe now, and to organize themselves into mutual support groups to swap information and help each other generally.

What Do We Know?

One of the clear conclusions from the Dandenongs in January this year was that there is very little warning to residents about approaching fires, and areas with self-organizing Community Fireguard groups showed the

best survival of houses. You need to be getting together with your neighbours and working out how you can help each other look after property and swap information now.

The only information system that seems to work at all are "phone trees", where pre-organized groups of people ring each other to pass on information. We would like you to consider getting together with either a road or group of houses, or even just a group of mutually supportive people to look at how you can find out what is going on and share information. Phone trees don't have to be made up of people living near each other - during the Dandenongs fires earlier in the year I made at least a dozen phone calls to a friend in Upwey because I was listening to the CFA radio and could pass on accurate information about what was happening there. You need to make up groups of people who WANT to ring each other.

What Do We Want To Know?

The Brigade would like some feedback about what the community wants from the Brigade. We have a responsibility to take actions that are always as safe as possible for firefighters and the community. But we have long recognized that the long term impacts of fire are social, as well as affecting the plants, animals and assets of locals. So what planning do you want to see in place for the area in the event of a catastrophic fire?

How will you get information about fires ? (Unfortunately, we cant ring you ! When we have a fire or incident, we are flat out doing our bit).

Do you want to be able to come back into the area if you are out when a fire starts a fire ?

What about the kids at Kangaroo Ground Primary School - can we plan NOW what we are going to do with them if there is a fire during the day?

Can you cope with the idea that there may not be a tanker near you ?

Are you self-sufficient, physically and emotionally, or do you need to organize some mutual support ? (I certainly do !)

- Do you want to be evacuated if fire threatens the area ?
- Do you want to stay with your house “no-matter-what” ?
- Do you want bulldozers making firebreaks ?
- Do you not care what happens as long as the fire is controlled ?

THATS LOTS TO THINK ABOUT !

DONT WORRY - THERE IS SOME GOOD NEWS

What Can We Do?

I believe we can all survive the passage of a bushfire in the area. BUT.....EVERYONE needs to do some work to clean up fuel around their own home, close off the spark entry points, get some water storage, get a mop and bucket to put out embers around the house, organize to help your neighbours, set up a phone tree to get up-to-date information if a fire occurs, shift your woodpile, write up a household fire plan, organize to be home on all high risk days, get rid of the burgan, keep your spoutings clean, blah, blah, blah. YOU KNOW THE ROPES BY NOW - we keep saying the same things over and over again ! If you are not sure what you need to do ring one of the Officers, or talk to any fire brigade people at the Saturday market.

All through the season the Brigade will be working at getting the tankers to any fire very quickly with the idea that we CAN put out small fires if we can get there quickly enough, so they dont go on to become bigger. We will get enormous support from neighbouring brigades, and we will be supporting them as quickly as possible too. This puts a lot of pressure on firefighters to hang about in the area when they can, and we are still short of people to make sure we have crews in the area 24 hours a day ,

7 days a week, all through a long season of many months. We have about 20 active, well trained firefighters - thats four crews. Thats enough to crew our two tankers, plus one change-over crew before we start recycling very tired people. So we still need your body if you can help in any way. We specially need people who are home in the area during weekdays.

How The ERS Works

9712 0454 - thats the fire brigade emergency number or ERS (Emergency Reporting System). If you have any sort of emergency - bushfire, car accident, house fire etc, this is the number you should ring. If you ring 000, they will just ring this number to pass on the message, and add another phone call. Our brigade ERS number rings phones in eight local houses, six in the Bend-of Islands area. So someone you know will take your call, and they will set off our pagers and the siren from their phone. You will talk to only one person, but all eight people can be on the line in a ‘conference’ at the same time.

Who answers the ERS ?

Carol and Alan Bonny	Piers Bateman and Jeneke Korteweg
Hilary Jackman and Jeph Neale	Meg and John McCallum
Carol-Ann and Tom Fisher	Julie and John Cain
Sandy Jeffs, Dianne Simmons and Robyn Adams	
Sue and Phil Vaughan	

Don't Forget.....

In the summer period, it is important to report any fire you come across - if it turns out to be a burn-off or it has already been reported, it doesn't matter - remember, you are only talking to one of us !

If you have **any sort of emergency** - don't hesitate to ring our ERS on 9712 0454. If you just need information, please ring someone direct on their private number, not the ERS.

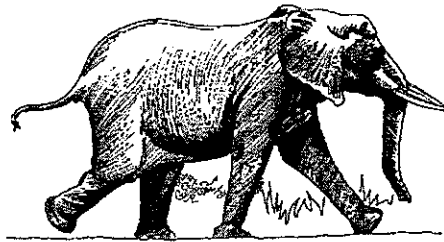
LAKE PERIYAR WILDLIFE RESERVE: A JEWEL IN THE CROWN OF SOUTHERN INDIA

Teri O'Brien and Costanza Maffi

Periyar Palace Lodge, Thekkady, Kerala (INDIA); 0600. The sound of birds in a dawn chorus draws me from yet another night of not-too-deep sleep in yet another unfamiliar bed with a base like a block of concrete, whose mattress has not quite insulated my now aching hip bones from its tender ministrations. This exclusive resort is on an island that can be reached only by boat, a few kilometres from Thekkady where the Kerala Tourist Development Corporation, known everywhere as the KTDC, runs three properties.

The monsoon is three weeks late, the water level behind the weir that holds back the waters of the Lake has dropped sharply, disrupting power generation and supply to Kerala and causing lay-offs in industry dependent on that power in adjacent Tamil Nadu, to whom Kerala's Electricity Board sells some of the power.

The lodge, a former Maharaja's Game Lodge, is surrounded by a clump of trees and shrubs which almost totally screens it from view; we discover later that a deep, dry moat also protects it from unwelcome arrivals. The most efficient head-waiter and general factotum I have met in four years in India, Mr Balakrishnan, had scarcely shown us to our rooms after our very welcome glass of freshly-squeezed orange juice, than a herd of elephants, with three babies in their midst, emerged from the vegetation immediately opposite our rooms. Within minutes, a whole roll of film was shot as they were joined by a herd of Indian Bison, inexplicably with two calves of the local deer, sambar, mixed up in them. They were soon followed by a large mob of black and frolicky wild pigs, with four youngsters so small they disappeared every time they entered the patches of wild millet that



seems to be so attractive to all concerned.

The adult elephants kept a sharp rein on their young, forming the defensive circles with all adults facing outwards and the youngsters inside as I have read about in Africa. While feeding, they forced the young to eat well within that formidable wall, and often directly underneath the bodies of the adults.

The wild millet has flourished on the moist bank between the forested margin and the low water level, and its small tussocks were now in the early stages of flowering. I watched with disbelief as elephants took hold of complete tussocks, ripped them from the ground roots and all, then balanced gracefully on three legs and tapped the soil from the roots

on the knee joint of the raised fourth leg!

The banks are scarred everywhere by the effects of this technique for feeding on grasses, and patches of red soil, often 50 metres by 20, leave me wondering about the extent of bank erosion and consequent siltation the weir is experiencing as a result of the elephants. "Better erosion of banks and siltation caused by elephants than by boat wakes which do the same thing on our lakes in Australia", I think to myself. Two elephants didn't bother with the graceful 3-leg technique; they thumped the tussocks

against their well-planted legs, and then down the hatch went the liberated tussocks.

The bison, magnificent horned animals, coloured a red so dark it is black in the distance, whose adults reach 900 kilograms, feed like cattle everywhere in the world, wrapping their strong tongues around clumps of grass and pulling. This technique overall seems to create less bare ground than that generated by their giant compatriots since at least a proportion of the tussocks breaks off, rather than being wrenched from the ground.

We witnessed one minor confrontation between elephants and bison, a staring match that lasted for 10-15 minutes between the whole herd of

adults on each side, and was resolved by the bison turning their backs and walking off.

The pigs were interested in the wet patches, and fed erratically. Periods of slow chomping were punctuated by sudden short runs, often generated by youngsters, as sub-groups broke off from the herd and rushed over to a different spot. The wet patches were invariably full of sticky black clay, and on later close inspection, the ground was dug up everywhere where they had rooted for underground rhizomes and shoots.

The telephone wires across the lake are home to a pair of pied kingfishers plying their craft with good yields, and large white egrets stalk similar small fish at the lake margins. A Brahminy kite, identical to those who hunt the edges of Fraser Island, hurtles out of the tree in front of me and drops like a stone onto a food item on the bank below. It is immediately pursued by another of its kind, who harasses it in flight and eventually emerges with the unidentifiable spoils. Our silver gulls regularly engage in this behaviour and I once watched a sea-eagle deprive an osprey, which had caught a good-sized fish, of its catch. In this land teeming with food, it strikes me as a little mean.

Above the lake, swifts are hawking, and a small family of a dull grey bird that closely resembles in flight our woodswallows, restlessly come and go from the telephone line. The locals tell me they are called rainbirds and come in the wet season, but they are not in my copy of the Birds of India. The ever alert Mr Balakrishnan has become aware of my presence on the porch and my fabulous morning is soon enriched by a pot of magnificent locally-grown Indian coffee, served British-style in an ornate silver

coffee pot. The bird parade continues, with two species of sunbird, common babblers and Tickell's flowerpeckers jetting among the shrubbery.

Flowerpeckers are major dispensers of the sticky seeds of the mistletoes, a clump of, which adorns an oleander growing in front of the porch. On close inspection this clump turns out to have originated from two seeds, each of which has produced an interlaced mat of parasitic roots, which run up and down the oleander's stem. I noticed that the roots from

plants that have germinated from separate seeds never parasitise their own roots, but they do attack the roots of their neighbour, as well as the stems of the oleander! No honour among thieves in the Plant Kingdom!

A late chorus from koels, India's early morning alarm clock, and the cries of the forest crow, so like the Australian raven, seem to bring the dawn chorus to a crescendo, from which it drops back to the quieter bird-chatter and rarer louder cries that characterise the less populated parts of the continent for most of the day. My sleepy-eyed partner wobbles out momentarily, confirms she is not coming on the morning boat cruise, and vanishes to a further round of well-earned sleep. Anyone on their first trip to India needs all the sleep they can steal for much of this country sleeps only from 0100-0400 before the hustle and bustle erupts again. It is a decision we will both regret.

(more next issue)



IN RETROSPECT- FERN FIELD DAY

from Alan Bonny

This session was hosted and presented by John McCallum on Sunday, August 31. Slides, with a commentary by John, enlightened us on the features and reproductive idiosyncracies of ferns.

We were then treated to a viewing of a number of collections of preserved (pressed) ferns dating from over a hundred years ago. They were examples of the enthusiasm for collecting such things during the Victorian era and some were part of the Great Exhibition of 1881 in Melbourne. The collections were from Australasia, Sikkim and Oceania, the book from Fiji being decorated with watercolours of island life.

The last treat was a close up look at ferns and allied plants using microscopes. The day was rounded off with the usual shared afternoon tea and, for the stayers, a BBQ (indoors because of the rain).

Thanks to John and Meg for their hospitality.

THE BICA DOZEN.

Enclosed with this Newsletter are the tickets for the annual BICA Dozen. This is our only fundraiser so please support it generously. Further tickets are available by contacting Michael Pelling on 9712 0286.



NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

As required by the BICA constitution 21 days notification is hereby given for our AGM. The agenda for the day will be:

12PM BYO BBQ/Lunch

2PM BICA AGM; Annual Reports

Nomination of Life Member

Election of Office Bearers

3PM GUEST SPEAKER: Ken Simpson – Birds

Bring your own chair, coffee mug and afternoon tea to share (as well as lunch). **Sunday November 30. Bradley Residence 750 Henley Road.**

ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENDERS OFFICE UNDER THREAT

From Steve Craig

Under new guidelines issued by the Federal Government recently, Environmental Defenders Offices (EDOs) around Australia, have been instructed that they are no longer permitted to use Federal funds to "defend the environment". Unless alternative funding can be found, this effectively means that the public will no longer be able to obtain legal representation from EDOs before tribunals or courts, even in preliminary matters such as freedom of information appeals. This also means that EDOs will not be able to assist people who are representing themselves to draft their own court documents. Only the NSW EDO has substantial alternative funding. Copies of the Commonwealth guidelines are available on request, contact Peter George, Chair of the Victorian EDO on 9229 2000 for further information.

SOURCE: THE UNDERSTOREY JUNE/JULY 1997

WHAT IS RECYCLING?

John McCallum

Recycling is seen as a way of achieving two outcomes, the reduction in the volume of landfill rubbish and putting off the time when we run out of resources from which to make things.

In the context of things that we tend to throw out, frequently packaging of one kind or another, recycling must surely mean 'using again' or at least facilitating the re-use of something. How many of us actively recycle things? We all feel that we are doing something good when we fill the yellow topped bin but what happens to the stuff we put in it? When we sort out the material that we want to throw away we aren't really recycling anything. It is not until we use things a second time that we 'recycle'.

It is possible to take your own bags to the greengrocer or supermarket but that is about where it stops. There are not many commodities that are sold in bulk as they were several decades ago.

What about buying things that are made from reused or recycled materials? We use paper in increasing amounts despite the 'paperless office' concept that was put about when personal computers started to be widely used in homes and offices. It is possible to purchase paper made from (part or whole) recycled pulp. Some specialist 'fibrepile' type garments for outdoor wear, made from recycled polymers are available but these constitute infrequent purchases by a minority in the community.

Composting is another example of re-using materials and reducing the bulk of landfill. Food scraps are assimilated into the soil and even into the food we eat but care is needed to avoid encouraging vermin. Nevertheless it is possible with a little effort.

What other examples of real recycling can we identify? If you know of any please let us all know.

Meanwhile, in the current climate of uncertainty as to the future of recycling by local government (it now costs to have the materials col-

lected rather than being able to sell them), let us all do what we can to reduce rubbish of any kind. This can start with being selective about the packaging of our purchases although we don't have much control over this. Let's hope that what goes into the yellow topped recycling bins does find its way into products that we can purchase in preference to those made from entirely new materials.



The Nillumbik Shire reminds us that the following things can be placed in the recycling bin.

Glass bottles and jars

Plastic containers coded 1, 2, 3 or R

Aluminium foil containers

Aluminium or steel cans and aerosols (don't flatten or puncture aerosol cans)

Liquid paperboard (juice and milk cartons)

A list of things that you shouldn't put in the recycling bin is in the literature that came with the bin.

Stack paper and cardboard separately from the bins (it is collected by a separate contractor).

Compost bins and 'worm factories' can be purchased from the Council, phone: 9433 3111.

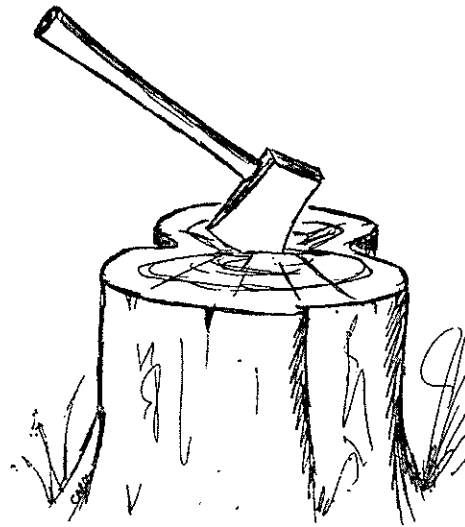


FIREWOOD FACTS

From Steve Craig

Victorians consume in the range of 1.2 to 2.5 million cubic metres (2 to 4.2 million tonne) of firewood annually with a market value of at least \$60 to \$125 million per year. By comparison, total timber production from Victoria's public lands is about 1.9 million cubic metres per year. It is unknown for certain but it is likely that more firewood comes from private land than from public land in Victoria. While this is probably correct, it must be remembered that there is much less forested area on private land than public land in Victoria. About 60% of Victoria is privately owned but less than 5% is currently supporting native vegetation. Most firewood is collected from Red Gum and Box-Ironbark forests and the resulting loss of hollow bearing trees has been listed as a threatening process under the Flora & Fauna Guarantee Act 1988. About 21 species of fauna and 71 species of flora are believed to be currently under threat in the Box-Ironbark forests in Victoria.

SOURCE: READ STURGESS AND ASSOCIATES 1995



WEED ACTION

Phil Vaughan

The angled onion at Oxley Bridge is proving to be a menace to remove but I believe that we are slowing the invasion.

We have been concentrating our efforts on areas where there is significant native vegetation at risk of infestation. By tackling the weeding in this way we are slowing its progression into unaffected areas.

A Save The Bush crew from the National Trust were employed in July to spray the most affected areas with an appropriate herbicide. They have a great deal of knowledge in managing remnant vegetation and recommended this mode of action. They will follow up with hand weeding.

Over the next few months we will be concentration our efforts on revegetating the areas most affected using jute matting to limit next seasons growth. Mulching will occur early next year.

We are gaining support at the working bees with an average of fifteen people turning up; this is great to see. More people are always welcome and shouldn't be put off by the thought of hard work. Think of it as chance for a social chat while doing something useful. We normally work for an hour, have a break for a cuppa and cake, then continue for about another hour. The fact that more people are attending may mean that working bees aren't so bad after all!

Why not come along to the next one? They are held on the third Sunday of the month at Oxley Bridge. Look out for a sign on the tree to confirm and bring your tools, gloves and a mug for arvo tea.

The October 19 working bee has been brought forward to the 12th so as not to class with the Pub Walk (see elsewhere in this issue for details) and on November 1 there will be a Briza burn and a BYO BBQ starting at 1.30 pm.

BOOK-CREATING BENDERS

Barb Whiter

We've always been rather arty and crafty in the Bend of Islands, but books are the flavour of '97 with several citizens turning their talents to words -here's a short review of their books out now for your enjoyment.

Pamela Gurney, our resident long-time patchworker, saw a set of punchneedles and the work they created about five years ago. 'I saw something in it that just fired me up', she told your correspondent. She could see that this craft could be combined with her first love of patchwork to create something original and stunning. With the publication in August this year of her book "Punchneedle Embroidery" by The Five Mile Press (\$25 from Pamela 9712 0408 and bookshops) came the culmination of more than two years of believing that she should be the one to write the Australian book on punchneedle. The only book on the subject she'd been able to find was an early 1980s American book -the delightful thing is that now the publisher of that US book has bought a consignment of Pamela's book to sell to American punchneedlers!

To begin this craft you do need to purchase the special needles (and Pamela can help here too), but from then on all you need to do is to read Pamela's book! The techniques and useful hints, plus a stunning array of projects to give you a head start from a superb craftswoman are all in the book. The book also includes twenty-six original designs photographed in full colour -with only the design on the tea cosy being an old design, adapted by Pamela from a pillowslip. Colour is certainly an area Pamela excels in -her vision and execution are inspiring!

The book has certainly been a catalyst because Pamela now has her own

Dancing Needles kits, is running workshops and is being feted by Madeira, the thread people and taken to craft fairs throughout the country!

For those of you who haven't managed to catch up with our local history author **Mick Woivod** at Cafe Benders on the third Saturday morning of each month, the news is that the corrugations on Catani Boulevard and Gongflers Drive have been caused by increased traffic between Mick and Barb's homes with all those 'final' queries and checks needed to get a manuscript masterpiece into a book masterpiece!

Yes, he's done it again, but this time it's different -it's an historical novel. It's written as if by a young Wurundjeri called Ngayuk in the 1840s and it's called The Last Cry (rrp \$19.95) published by Tarcoola Press; ask at bookshops and tell them it's distributed by Ken Pryse and Associates if they haven't got a copy!

In my far from unbiased opinion, Mick has managed to capture the feelings and concerns of an indigenous people who are totally perplexed by the continuing settlement of white people and their sometimes violent ways into what has been for centuries Wurundjeri hunting land. Mick has also captured the joy Wurundjeri feel in their land -some of the Dreamtime stories as well as tales of the traditional ways, read while staring into this remnant of bushland in which we are privileged to live, evoked in me a spirit for which I have no name.

But if you want pace, action, war, love and friendship, that's all here too -it's a great Australian yarn with a message that infiltrates -let's hope many people hear it.

Contact Mick on 9712 0563 or Barb on 9712 0532.

More over the page!

BOOK REVIEWS CONTINUED

Sally Nihill, as well as producing fourth child, Shannon, on Monday 22 September -congratulations to Mark, Sally, Amy, Jack and Paddy -has also been co-creating with her sister-in-law, Julie Nihill (from Channel 7's Blue Heelers), a fabulous set of children's fairy stories under the umbrella name of StarStuff Magical Stories.

Julie's dozen short stories, all of which Sally has illustrated, began as a way to help her daughters Lucy, and then Bonnie, cope with problems such as being unafraid to ask for help, or feeling there won't be enough, being the tallest in class at school or not liking Mum going to work. Sally said that Julie wrote one especially for Paddy who had a time when he didn't want to go to school.

Each book is handmade and contains one story and one gorgeous illustration; there are plans for a published compendium of all twelve stories. Also available is an audio cassette of the twelve stories which includes songs for some of the stories-great for children to listen to and read along at the same time. Proceeds will be going to the Red Cross High Five fundraising program which Julie was asked to become involved with earlier this year. Books are \$29.95 each and cassettes \$12.95.

Contact Sally 9712 0548 or 1800 672 574 place orders.

INQUIRY INTO PEST PLANTS IN VICTORIA

From Steve Craig

The Public Hearing program for the inquiry into pest plants in Victoria is nearly complete. Seven hearings were held in Regional Victoria and five in Melbourne. Speakers at these hearings included private individuals, environment and conservation groups, Landcare groups, representatives of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment; CFA,

Vic Roads and other Government agencies, educational and research Institutes. The Environment & Natural Resources Parliamentary Committee is expected to report to the Minister for Conservation & Land

WEEDS WAFFLE

From Steve Craig

Victoria's \$12 million weeds initiative, "Waging War on Weeds" was launched by the Minister for Conservation & Land Management, Marie Tehan recently. The program is designed to run over four years and has two main objectives:

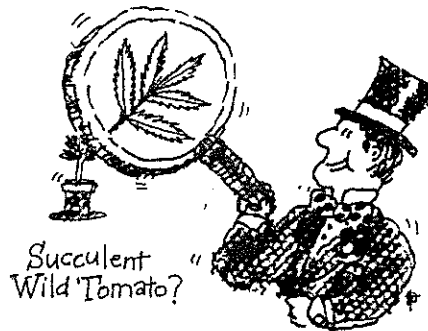
- * to control high priority pest plant infestations: and
- * to develop and implement measures to ensure a permanent reduction in the impacts of pest plants on land in the State.

*

Unfortunately only one of the 5 elements of the program applies to public land and only applies to 14 State Prohibited Weeds that pose immediate, severe threats to natural and agricultural systems in the State. The only one of these weeds reported to occur in the Bend of Islands, is Marijuana. Given the range of environmental weeds that are present on much of the public land in our area and particularly on land owned by Melbourne Water, it is very disappointing that the significant impact these weeds are having on remnant bushland on public land does not appear to be recognised by the State Government.

One of the responsibilities of the Catchment & Land Protection Board is to review the listing of noxious weeds and ensure consistent assessment to eliminate any distinction between environmental and agricultural weeds. However, this task appears to have been put on the "back burner" by the CALP Board pending the outcome of the Pest Plant Inquiry.

SOURCE: THE UNDERSTOREY, MAY 1997



WILLOW CONTROL

Steve Craig

Willows introduced to Australia have become a major pest of our waterways and therefore their control by river management authorities and landowners with stream frontage is now critical. Before any attempt is made to control willows, a number of factors need to be considered including the following:

- do the proposed works conform with approved stream management strategies. Check with appropriate government authorities before starting work.
- the impact of removing willows from the waterway and banks. Removal may increase erosion problems if not carried out correctly.
- replacement of willows with appropriate indigenous species of local provenance.
- weed control and ongoing maintenance.
- exclusion fencing or tree guarding to protect plantings from rabbits, wallabies and grazing stock.

Mechanical removal

Trees less than 0.5 metres tall can usually be pulled out by hand. Ensure that the whole stem is removed. Leaving smaller roots in the ground does not lead to suckering or regrowth (as often happens with Poplar species)

Using large machinery, such as excavators or bulldozers to remove larger trees and root systems is not recommended in most cases. Use of

machinery can result in a numerous broken branches being compressed into the ground particularly in wet areas which will result in numerous new plants regenerating.

Chemical Control

Only use herbicides which are registered for the purpose. A herbicide containing Glyphosate is the best choice. Check the label and registrations before final selection.

Foliar Spray. The best time to treat willows is from December-March at least for foliar spraying. Glyphosate (360g/l) is registered for use as a foliar spray on trees up to 2 metres high at the rate of 1-1.3 L/100L water. Do not use under conditions which will lead to spray drift into water or onto non-target vegetation..

Stem Injection. Glyphosate may also be injected directly into stems by making cuts below the branches around the trunk. Cuts or injection points should be spaced at 13 cm intervals around the circumference with 1-2 mL of undiluted glyphosate (360g/L) injected per cut. Injections should be immediately applied after cuts are made.

Cut stump. The cut stump method is very effective and results in minimal disturbance to the stream zone. Undiluted glyphosate (360g/L) should be applied immediately after cutting. All material cut away should be collected and destroyed to prevent regeneration from cuttings.

Other herbicide treatments such as bark treatment are not registered for use and further testing is required to determine which herbicides and rates will be both effective and safe.

PANTON PUB PERAMBULATION

Yes, your annual opportunity to wander the bucolic byways of Nillumbik with your last effortless climb rewarded at the Panton Hill hostelry.

Enjoy stunning scenery, scintillating conversation and a certain amount of exertion.

Sunday October 19th

Meetingng Point: Fire Station at 2.30pm

(There will be a car pool organised to take us to the start and return those unwilling to drive from Panton Hill)

Distance is around 11 km through hilly country. If you wish to join further into the walk, please ask for a location!

Ring Tony or Robina 9712 0060 to confirm your attendance!

(We are also looking for people to drive rather than walk!)



TRIVIA NIGHT

Bob Millington

This year's Trivia Night once again revealed the depth of knowledge and breadth of invention of your average Bend of Islander. To the question of who wrote 'Monty, My Part in His Downfall' ranged from Monty Python to Barry Dickens, with a majority coming down correctly on the side of Spike Milligan.

table two was sure that mud wrestling was the sport introduced at the

Tokyo Olympics, table five mistook Fu Manchu for the Phantom and stubbornly maintained that Herman Goering went fishing on the eve of his execution instead of swallowing cyanide.

A mutiny broke our over the question of which non-mechanical sport achieves that highest speed. A small but obviously well-organised bunch of hecklers took exception to the chairman's ruling that it was sky diving, insisting that ordinary diving from a board into water probably achieved the same speed. The chairman thought that they had a point but ruled against them to save face.

All were stumped when it came to the most expensive seats at a bull-fight. Most went for a perch above the bull's entrance tunnel. Your well-off Spanish buff realises, however, how hot the ring can be and shells out for a cushion in the shade.

The poser, what does a nictitating woman do to a man, might have opened floodgates of bawdiness but most groups settled for 'nagging'. Tim Ealey had the benefit of a biological training and realised that such a woman is merely a winker. And no one knew the answer to the last question of the evening. A spermologist collects.....trivia!

Oh, about fifty attended the Millington's and we had a smashing night.

CUCKOOS AROUND THE BEND

Frank Pierce

There are some pretty hedonistic humans in the Bend of Islands but there are five species of birds that regularly call this place home and that have made self-interest an art form.

- They fly north every winter to avoid the cold
- They have nothing to do with the tiresome chores of raising off-spring. Why build a nest, sit on eggs, feed and otherwise look after the young when some other bird will do it for you?
- As soon as they hatch, first thing that the nestlings do in life is to throw out all of the other eggs from their host parents nest, just so that they get all of the attention.

The five cuckoos that are regularly found in the Bend of Islands are the pallid, fantail, brush, Horsefield's bronze and shining bronze. For comparison their particulars are listed in the table enclosed in this issue. These birds have many common peculiarities.

- Two forward facing and two backward facing toes compared with passerine birds that have three forward and one backward facing.
- They fly south in spring to breed; the female lays one egg in a nest of the host species, sometimes removing one of the host's eggs at the time.
- Many nests can be parasitised by the one breeding female simultaneously.
- After hatching the nestling has a sensitive hollow in its back; it uses this to thrust all the other eggs or hatchlings from the nest, thus displacing potential competition for food and attention.
- They eat mainly insects and their larvae, particularly hairy caterpillars.
- By adopting begging postures and making juvenile calls the young cuckoo ensures a constant supply of food from the hosts and sometimes from other birds of the host or even different species.
- The adult birds call persistently when breeding, often from the tops of trees or dead branches. They are difficult to observe without first hearing them. Even then they are often not easy to see.
- Their presence at breeding time often causes the host species to make alarm calls and sometimes mobbing of the cuckoo occurs by a group of potential host birds.

The name cuckoo comes from the call of a European species. There has been some misnaming of Australian birds such as the black-faced cuckoo-shrike. They are not related to the cuckoos and do not parasitise other birds.

It is interesting that the host birds are so much smaller that the cuckoo. For example the prospect of a pair of fairy wrens feeding a fantail cuckoo is quite amazing. The cuckoos achieve this by a number of strategies. They have smaller eggs than other birds of their size; the

eggs are often of a similar size to the host's eggs. Secondly they eliminate the hosts offspring, either at egg stage or as nestlings, so that the host is only looking after one offspring rather than several. Thirdly, by persistent begging, they elicit the assistance of other birds in addition to the host parents.

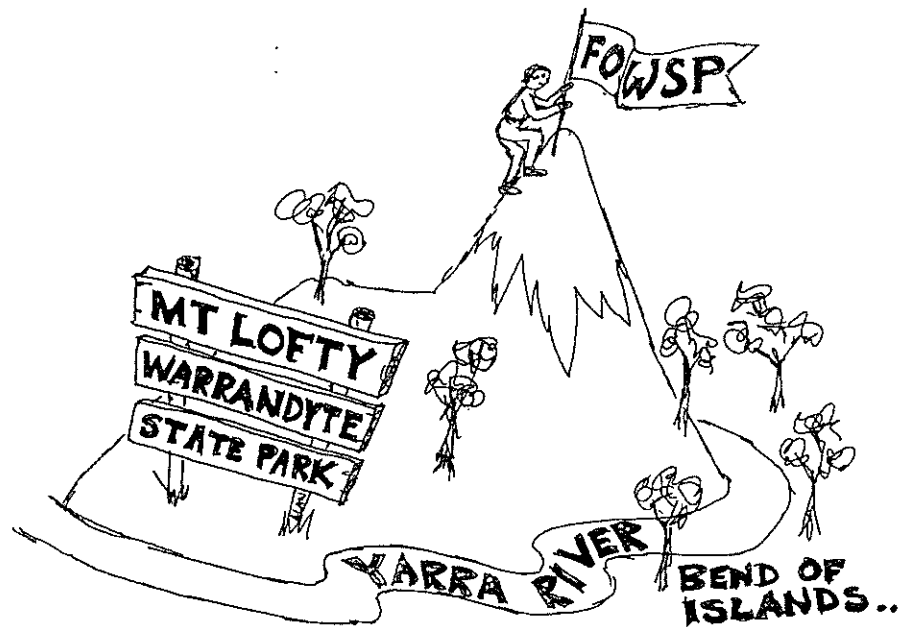
The cuckoo story is a far cry from the normal boy-meets-girl, build a house and have kids model. It is a good example of diversity in nature and perhaps is paralleled by the fact that there are a lot of humans who don't cope with the suburbs and the John and Betty model.

A GATHERING OF THE FOWSP AND BICA CLANS

Mick Woowod

Sunday 7th August last saw a large gathering on Mt Lofty across the river to celebrate the long-awaited handing over of its superb 88 hectares of open space to the people of Warrandyte and ourselves. Among the motley of FOWSPians present ('Friends of the State Park' to those who don't know) were a smattering of local pollies (Sheryl Garbutt, the Hon member for Bundoora this side of the river, and Wendy Smith, the member for the Sylvan hills opposite representing the poor unfortunates on that side, plus of course a scatter of stalwart BICAins among the scores of rugged up FOWSPians who hosted the occasion.

Our group was met on the heights of Lofty by Mike Coupar of Flying Colours fame who drove us direct to the smoke-wreathed water's edge below in his family's 4-wheel drive. Old Barak of the Wurundjeri* would have been proud of the scene; the August air was crisp, with rain in the offing, yet the sun still managing to shine through, the Yarra he'd hunted so long rimmed in marvellous gold from the best show of silver-wattle we'd seen in years. And then there was meat on the fires and the welcome sound of popping champagne corks to invite us in; scarves and colourful hats were the order of the day.



What a day! Eight kilometres of the ELZ'S southern boundary was at last safe from the hovering developer despite the wounds to the land we'd all witnessed up-river to our east as we'd driven in. Mike Coupar, always the quiet one, was soon on his feet waving a bottle of Windy Peak champagne he'd been waiting many a long year to share with the victors of the twenty-year campaign. Then there was Flora Anderson, another of the victorious Fowspians, joyfully telling all of how it had all been accomplished, then Andy Nixon the Chief Ranger with the signage that would tell the world that the land ought now to be considered sacred.

Across the river the Bend of Islands looked magnificent! Who'd have thought that close on fifty homes ringed the opposite shore! Barely hide nor hair of a single one of them to scar the hillside. Then, with rain still threatening yet not daring to ruin the celebration, there was

the obligatory walk along the river. Time for the frail and feeble like us to beat a hasty retreat. Again Mike did the honours to the crest of Old Lofty. Once more secure in our chariot of pollution we performed a victory circuit of its superb ridge-line to see if we pick out our humble abode among the gum trees.

Eventually we found it; not more than a hundred metres away as the crow and the eagle fly, yet in our marvellous flying machine some 28 kilometres distant by road and, as if to drive home to us the frailty of we mere mortals, as we passed through Old Barak's Wonga Park in full flight, the rain and hail pelted down to the accompaniment of a grand display of thunder and lightning

* William Barak, born on the banks of Barngiong (Brushy Creek) opposite 1823, died Coranderrk, 15 August 1903

TWO ART SHOWS

In addition to the recent spate of writing in the area two more manifestations of the creative endeavours of the residents of the Bend of Islands are in the offing.

November sees the annual **Kangaroo Award** for Sculpture at Peter and Mary Burns's place, 'Kangaroo', 644 Henley Road. Everyone is invited to the opening at 3.00 pm on Sunday November 2 and the exhibition remains open until the end of November, 11.00 am to 5.00 pm, 7 days a week or by appointment.

As usual the exhibition will be held outdoors on the tennis court and in the bush and garden surrounding it. For the opening, park at the corner; after that off-road parking is available.

Overlapping the Kangaroo Awards exhibition in both time and space is thesecond solo exhibition from **Jules Burns**. It is being held at 'Kangaroo' Studio, 636 Henley Road. All are invited to the opening on Sunday October 19 at 3.00 pm and the show remains open until the end of November, 11.00 am to 5.00 pm, 7 days a week or by appointment.

BICA MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL/APPLICATION

Current membership expires at the end of 1997

To renew your membership or to become a new member of BICA complete this form and mail it, with your subscription, to Hon. Sec., BICA inc.

c/- PO Kangaroo Ground
Vic., 3097

Application for membership of BICA inc., 1998
Name(s)

Postal Address

Telephone(s)

Ordinary membership (single)	\$10.00
Concession membership (single)	\$6.00
Family membership	\$20.00

FROM THE EDITOR

Thank you to all contributors. Once again you will notice a few familiar names! Thanks are also due to Carol and Syd for the pictures and to Jephrey for help with production. Contributions for the next issue (early 1998) are now being received and can be submitted on disc, typed or manuscript. The newsletter is produced on a Mac but IBM (PC) format is OK. Word files can even be attached to email and sent to me at this address:

mccallum@elthamcoll.edu.au

NOMINATION FOR COMMITTEE

I nominate

for the position of (president, vice-president or committee member) for the 1998 committee

Signed

Seconded

Nominee's endorsement

Please forward to Robyn Duff no later than November 23 at

Hon. Sec., BICA inc.
c/- PO Kangaroo Ground
Vic., 3097



