

BEND OF ISLANDS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION INC. NEWSLETTER

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

WHAT LOCAL NATIVE'S FLOWERING?

Number **43** September 1998

Inc. No. A11100A

by Cric Henry

BOTANICAL NAME: *Hardenbergia violacea*

COMMON NAME: Purple Coral Pea, False Sarsparilla

FAMILY: Fabaceae

Flowering Period: Late Winter and Spring

Hardenbergia violacea is a trailing creeper or twining climber, found creeping along the ground, cascading down embankments, entwined around slender tree trunks and the branches and stems of surrounding plants. A medium to light creeper or climber having a moderately vigorous growth rate. The local indigenous species is not to be confused with the cultivar - *Hardenbergia violacea* 'Happy Wanderer', which is more rampant and a more vigorous climber and can completely smother and damage the plants on which it is climbing. The cultivars are more readily available at nurseries as the flowers are more prominent and a popular plant to purchase. The introduction of these species into our area can lead to cross fertilisation with the local form and the production of hybrids. Hybridization can completely alter the parental form and upset the ecological balance of the natural environment.

The tough stems are woody and the flowering branches wiry. The flowers are pea shaped and numerous, borne in long loose dense clusters. Each flower is about 10 mm across and a deep purple colour with a prominent green mark at the centre of the flower. The brightly coloured flowers attract insects and the birds that feed on them. The leaves are dark green, leathery and solitary, either egg-shaped or lance-shaped, heavily veined and up to 100 mm long. The sprays of flowers are at the leaf axils and are longer than the sparse leaves.

Hardenbergia violacea grows on dry, stony ground and well drained, heavy clay soils. Prefers an open, sunny position and tolerates dry, shady conditions.

The seed pod is flat and about 35 mm. long. Propagation is either from the seed (previously soaked in warm water for 24 hours, to soften the hard seed coat), or from semi-hardwood cuttings.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

from Alan Bonny

Spring is in the air, or so the birds are telling us. White-faced herons are chasing each other up and down the river, calling mournfully as they go, the grey shrike-thrush is spending lot of time at the Land Rover wing mirror and the fore-play of a pair of sulphur-crested cockatoos was an adults-only sight!

I recently spent some time shuffling through old issues of the BICA Newsletters Issue 1 was produced in March 1979 so perhaps a 20th anniversary edition might be appropriate next year. Our journal is a good read as it follows the progress of the ELZ and its residents.

There are articles on issues that are still relevant today, blended with reports on activities and past Benders long gone as well as others still active. If you have old issues please check and see if you have Number 15. It is the one missing from the set that I am putting together.

I don't know what the distribution was back in '79 but today the BICA Newsletter is produced three times a year with almost 170 copies mailed out. To keep them up to date on issues that concern the Bend of Islands all property owners and residents in the area receive a copy of the Newsletter. As well as the Newsletter, BICA members also receive updates and information via the BICA News sheet. This is issued as required between Newsletters. Read these carefully; questions may be asked!

On the activities front, negotiations are still in progress with Powernet to achieve a management plan (again) for the vegetation under the high tension power lines through the area.

By the time you read this we will have had a on-site visit to the Heritage/ Henley Farm property. The developers will show us the actual limits of the proposed amended golf course so that we can appreciate impact (or lack of impact?) on the surrounding properties in the Bend of Islands.



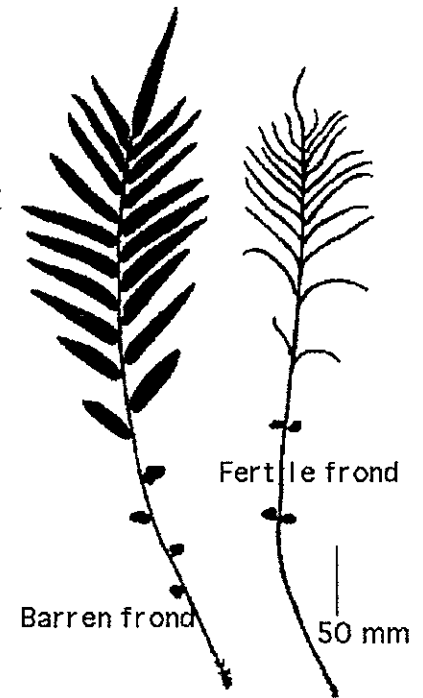
A LOCAL FERN by John McCallum

Soft water fern (*Blechnum minus*) is another in the same genus as was featured in the last edition. Again the plant springs from a tufted rather than creeping rhizome (underground stem) and has distinctive fertile fronds. The outer, barren fronds never bear spores.

The fronds are pinnate (only once divided) and can be up to a metre long; in this area they are more usually 300 to 500 mm and about 100 mm wide. Each pinna (leaflet) on the sterile frond is about 150mm by 15 mm, light green in color and oblong to lanceolate in shape. The margins of the pinnae are finely toothed and have conspicuously forked veins.

Fertile fronds are about the same size but have pinnae that are only 3 to 4 mm wide, the undersurface being covered with bundles of sporocases.

Soft water fern is found in riparian forest and wetland scrub. In the Bend of Islands it can be found along the banks some of the permanent streams.



Don't forget to check out the FireBrigade's web site
on
<http://www.vicnet.net.au/~chfb/welcome.html>

By now we will have had the first gathering of Streamwatch data. This is an ongoing monitoring project and if you would like to join this water monitoring group, Contact Carol or Alan on 9712 0648

AUGUST GENERAL MEETING

By Steve Craig

Alan Reid, one of Australia's best known naturalists, was the guest speaker at the August BICA general meeting held at the home of Janet Mattiske and Frank Pierce.

Alan spoke with great enthusiasm about the Timelines Australia Project which aims to recover natural event information held in diaries, library files and notebooks, analyse them and seek patterns of environmental change such as local seasonal cycles, succession sequences, population declines and the onset of catastrophes.

Timelines also aims to encourage the establishment of ongoing event monitoring programs and databases for a number of bio-regions across Australia to assist members of the community with environmental management and planning.

Alan provides "what to look for" information on forthcoming natural events every Wednesday afternoon on ABC Victorian Regional Radio, taken from the *Timelines* database.

Timelines News edited by Alan, presents an extensive summary of the major predicted events with illustrations of significant plants and animals. If you would like to be sent each sheet published the cost is \$15.00. Make cheques payable to the Gould League and send to: *Timelines News* Gould League, Genoa Street, Moorabin 3189.

A Timelines Australia database presented on CD Rom is also available now from the Gould League for \$34.95.

It is designed to help you record your own observations which can then be e-mailed or sent on disc to a central Gould League database.

BICA is considering establishing a local *Timelines* committee so that we can learn more about our local seasons while contributing to the national database. If you would like to register your interest give me a call on 9712 0029.

To get you started with recording your own observations here are some clues as to what you can expect over the next few months.

True Spring (4th week of August to 1st week of November)

The weather is becoming more stable and days warmer as the return of the Sacred Kingfisher signals the onset of True Spring.

Rain water tanks are overflowing and fungi are in profusion as Platypus are laying eggs in their burrows deep within the river bank.

Young Wedge-tailed Eagles are ready to leave the nest as Rufous Fantails return from New Guinea to join other Summer migrants. Bush birds are very active as the next generation becomes independent.

This is the wildflower season and the normally sparse Box-Ironbark Woodlands are transformed with the colourful displays of Milkmaids, Pink Bells, Common Correa, Bundled Guinea Flower, Purple Coral-pea, Love Creeper, Clematis, Blue Pincushions, Chocolate Lily, Grass Trigger Plant, Austral Bears Ears and Small Grass Trees.

Many of our orchids also reach their peak now including Wax-lips, Green Comb Spider Orchid, Pink Fingers, Tall and Nodding Greenhoods and Leopard Orchid.

Mole crickets call on warm nights and Powerful Owl young fledge.

SEPTEMBER 13. FIELD DAY WITH DR BETH GOTT

THE TOPIC WILL BE, OF COURSE, THE ABORIGINAL USE OF PLANTS.
COME FOR A WANDER THROUGH THE BUSH TO LEARN THE SIGNIFICANCE OF OUR REGIONAL PLANTS TO THE ORIGINAL INHABITANTS. BRING THE USUAL MUG AND A PLATE OF AFTERNOON TEA TO SHARE WITH BILLY TEA
MEET AT THE TOP CORNER OF CATANI AND HENLEY AT 2.00 PM TO CAR POOL

NEXT EVENTS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

NOVEMBER 29
2.00PM
VENUE TO BE ANNOUNCED

HOW WILLOWS CAME TO THE YARRA

by Mick Woiwod

Some older residents might remember their School Readers of the 1930s with stories like 'The Hobyas', 'How Mussels Came to the Creek' and 'How a Chinaman Discovered Roast Pork'. Today these tales appear simplistic in that the mussels were said to have been dropped by a sea-gull harassed by a hawk and the roast pork invented when an unfortunate Chinaman (as we knew them then) inadvertently burnt his house to the ground with its piglets inside. Anyhow, (as Hoges used once to declare), I'll tell ya a yarn I can vouch for, titled: 'How Willows Came to the Yarra'.

It's rather a sad tale, beginning as all good stories ought, a long time ago, around 1845 to be more precise, when a young lad named Isaac Watts Coghlan* climbed a tall manna gum on the banks of the Yarra near present day Yarra Glen intent on a 'native bear' (koala) he'd spotted in a topmost bough. Now, young Isaac was the step-son of what used to be called in those far-off days 'a government man' sent out, as they say, from his country for his country's good: in 1837, he'd been one of eighteen assigned servants overlanded by the Ryries from the Shoalhaven River to set up a station on the Yarra. On their way up-river that year he'd had the good fortune to stumble upon a creek which the local blacks knew as Broonshasulk. The Ryries promptly renamed it the Watt's River' in his honour.

Anyhow, as I was saying back there, young Isaac climbed into this manna gum intent on his 'bear' only to calamitously crash to the ground breaking his neck on bough on the way down.

They buried him with much weeping on a nearby knoll south of the river midway between today's Chateau Yering and Yarra Glen. Anyway, it so happened that about this time a sailing ship arrived in Port Phillip from London which had stopped-over at St Helena on the voyage out, the captain taking time-off to row ashore to visit Napoleon's grave. Now on the great man's grave there grew a willow planted by his countrymen to demonstrate their sadness at his passing. As a memento of his visit the captain snatched a cutting and, upon arrival in Port Phillip, successfully grew it into a tree.

Years later (according to the 'Vagabond' a travelling journalist of the day) a fellow named Campbell, carrying as a riding crop a switch from this tree, rode

by young Isaac's grave just as his family was placing in position a headstone they'd ordered from England. It bore the inscription:

'To the memory of George Isaac Watts who departed this life 14 March 1845'.

Half in sympathy and half in curiosity, the rider dismounted near the sad little group and, when the tablet was finally in position, thrust the willow branch into the earth beside it.

James Dawson, who set up on the Yarra opposite the Bend of Islands in 1840, wrote of a photograph of the tree taken by a Mr Weller in 1867 and how it had by then a spread of some 60 feet. It continued to thrive on the grave until the late 1960s with the lad's grave marker by then ingrown in its trunk and finally fell to progress when a bulldozer working on a redesign of the present Melba Highway demolished it with a swipe of its blade before any of the concerned residents of Yarra Glen had had opportunity to rescue its tablet.

'Well!' you might say 'What has all this got to do with the willows in the Yarra?' Well, if you'll give me a moment more 'I'll tell ya! A week or so ago I was working through some of James Dawson's papers in the State Library when I spotted an item. It was an article written by Dawson for the Camperdown Chronicle of the 1880s declaring that the willows in the Yarra had originally been located there by a fellow by the name of Scott who'd planted them in Thompsons Gully on the old Selby property 'from cuttings he'd gathered from the 'Napoleon Willow' of Yarra Glen', Thompson's Gully being the gully alongside today's Stonehouse at Warrandyte.

A recent article in the Friends of the Warrandyte State Park Newsletter (April 1998) headed 'Willow works on the Island' refers to these near Thompson's Gully as 'Basket (or Crack) willows, and goes on to describe how currently the Waterways and Drainage Division of Melbourne Water were targeting them because their obstruction of the free flow to the river around the Island.

As the true descendants of the tree the French planted on Napoleon's grave, and not the more common 'weeping variety' that grows on the banks of river around the Bend of Island, it would appear that perhaps the French got it all wrong. Surely they'd intended to plant a 'Weeping Willow' on their hero's grave, or was it that they were perhaps having one last 'crack' at the old enemy,

England, by planting the much more invasive variety in the hope that it might succeed where their own efforts had failed so dismally.

George Isaac Watts Coghlan, born Isaac Coghlan (August 1834) was the son of Edward Coghlan and Jane Haynes. His father, too, had died tragically by the Yarra, accidentally drowned in its waters above the falls on 19 April 1841 whilst strolling home one night with a Mr Dole. It appears the two had been strolling on the wharf after a session together at a nearby watering hole when the father had vanished, his companion continuing on in the belief he'd decided to return home by another route. His body was recovered from the Yarra several days later after his wife had reported him missing. Isaac's mother later married Edward Coghlan and, although baptised Isaac, the son seems to have been better known in the Yarra Glen district as George.

The introduction of the weeping variety can probably be laid at the door of the Acclimatisation Society who by the mid-1860s had these on both sides of the Yarra opposite the Botanic Gardens interspersed with New Zealand Flax; also a further 233 lining each side of an avenue between Princes Bridge and Domain Rd.

HORSES ON THE ROAD

John McCallum

Whether you think that it is a good thing or not there are legally owned horses in the ELZ. This means that they will be ridden along the roads and there are horses on the roads at various times including the evening peak periods.

Drivers of motor vehicles have an obligation to drive in a fashion that is not threatening to the horses or their riders. At dusk the headlights of a car can confuse a horse and you need to be aware of this.

Recently an incident occurred when a horse being ridden at dusk was frightened by traffic. The car driver continued to try to pass the horse and as a result the animal became even more alarmed and difficult to control. In such a case it is best to remain stationary until the animal and its rider are clear. At other times it pays to slow down and give the horse room on its side of the road.

If you are involved in an accident with a horse and rider the normal actions that need to be carried out at a motor vehicle accident should be taken.

It is probably not a good idea for horse owners to be out at dusk but motorists should be ready for anything! This includes native animals, pedestrians, other

traffic, fallen trees as well as horse riders. Remember, you must be driving in such a fashion (appropriate speed, level of alertness) as to be able to avoid running into any stationary object on the road.

HELP FOR THE EMOTIONALLY CHALLENGED

from Sheila Dixon

BORED AND LONELY? WANT TO MEET INTERESTING AND VIBRANT PEOPLE? DISCOVER YOUR HIDDEN TALENTS AT A COMMUNITY COLLEGE COURSE PICK YOUR CLASS FROM THE FOLLOWING SELECTION.

Self Improvement
Creative suffering
Overcoming your peace of mind
You and you birthmark
Guilt without sex
The Primal Shrug
Moulding your child's behaviour through guilt and fear
Whine your way to attention

Health and Fitness
Creative tooth decay
Exorcism and acne
The joys of hypochondria
High fibre sex
Suicide and your health
Skate your way to regularity
Understanding your nudity
Optional body functions

Craft
How to draw genitalia
Gifts or the senile
Bonsai your pet
Self actualisation through macrame

Business and Careers
Money can make you rich
Packaging your child
How to profit from your body
Tax shelters for the indigent
The underachievers guide to very small business opportunities

Home Economics
How to convert your family room into a garage
Cultivate viruses in your fridge
Sinus drainage at home
Basic kitchen taxidermy
1001 uses for a vacuum cleaner
The repair and maintenance of your virginity
How to convert a wheelchair into dune buggy
Christianity and the art of TV maintenance
Yachting your way to the bottom of the harbour

WILD DOGS

by Arthur Howard

Wild dogs are causing great concern for the graziers in East Gippsland's high country. In the 1970s similar headlines appeared in the press, only the dingo was the culprit. The Victorian Government provides 'doggers' to seek and destroy wild dogs by snaring, baiting and shooting. Methods have changed and the destruction of our wildlife from poisoning and the hideous cruelty of the steel jawed trap has ceased. The dingo is believed to have originated in Southern Asia. Our northern shores were frequently visited by the Asian seafarers for thousands of years. They carried the dingo with them on their voyages because of their acutely tuned sensory system. It was a navigational aid to detect and give warnings of storms and the proximity of land. In an emergency the dingo was also utilised as food and, in rescue operations at sea, as a shark decoy. Their ability to survive on meagre rations and its skill as a scavenger all served to ensure its existence and survival in the new land.

The arrival of white man had a devastating effect on the Australian ecosystem of the 1770s. The fox, rabbit, dog and various species of birds and plants together with the agricultural introduction of sheep, cattle and grain crops have changed the face of the land as well as the lives of all of the creatures dwelling on it, the dingo as much as any. As a competitor for the pasture the sheep displaced a number of native graziers. One of the replacement sources of food for dingoes was lambs which were easy game. They fell victim to dingoes both as food and as killing practice. The graziers became enraged by this natural disaster of the dingoes ravaging their flocks of sheep. If the colony was to survive something had to be done about the dingo. The Port Phillip District settlers held a meeting and they agreed to pay five shillings bounty on all dingo scalps. Though this was a good sum of money in those early days, the destruction of the dingo was much too slow for the settlers. They stated poisoning sheep carcasses which was much more effective and less expensive in time and money than shooting. The fact that many aborigines died from eating the poisoned sheep carcasses was quite incidental to the graziers.

Rather than eliminate dingoes these practices served only to break up the hierarchical social system of these animals. Alpha animals, who had first choice of food, were killed and lesser members of the group had a better chance of survival. Worse still, it opened up the way for farm dogs to inter-

breed with the dingoes and permeate the pure gene pool. This created hybrid dogs, larger, and more formidable stock killers that pure dingoes had ever been. I doubt if there are any pure dingoes left in the Victorian high country. Instead there are the free living domestic dogs and dingo hybrids.

There are untold numbers of wild dogs in the high country and there is no biological reason that this trend will not continue. The DCE believe that they are at last making a more than significant impact, judging by the number of poison baits taken and dogs snared.



VICTORIA'S BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY

By Steve Craig

Victoria's Biodiversity Strategy was officially launched in December 1997 and has been endorsed by the Victorian Government. This is a landmark strategy for the conservation of biodiversity in the State and represents a national benchmark for biodiversity conservation and management.

The Strategy forms a key step in the Flora and Fauna Guarantee program. It shows how to achieve the FFG Act's objectives of conserving native species, communities and gene pools, preventing threats and encouraging community involvement.

Biodiversity, or biological diversity, is the variety of all living life-forms including plants, animals and micro-organisms, the genes they all contain and the ecosystems of which they form a part. Biodiversity encompasses a range of living things and ecosystems, which are constantly evolving and adapting to environmental changes.

Victoria's biodiversity is characterised by a complexity of 3140 native species of vascular plants, 900 lichens, 750 mosses and liverworts, 111 mammals, 477 birds, 46 freshwater and 600 marine fish, 133 reptiles, 33 amphibians, and an untold number of invertebrates, fungi and algae occurring within hundreds of ecological communities.

There is a need for a framework which can both simplify this complexity and connect us more directly to the biodiversity assets and challenges within our own neighbourhoods and working environments. Biogeographic regions (bioregions) capture the patterns of ecological characteristics in the landscape or seascape, providing a natural framework for recognising and responding to biodiversity values. A bioregion is an area covering similar environmental features and ecological characteristics. In Victoria, 21 terrestrial and five marine bioregions have been identified. The ELZ is located within the Highlands-Southern Fall Bioregion.

The goals for biodiversity management are to ensure that within Victoria:

- there is reversal, across the entire landscape, of the long-term decline in the extent and quality of native vegetation, leading to a net gain, with the first target being no net loss by the year 2001.
- the ecological processes and the biodiversity dependent upon terrestrial, freshwater and marine environments are maintained and, where necessary, restored.
- the present diversity of species and ecological communities and their viability is maintained or improved across each bioregion.
- there is no further preventable decline in the viability of any rare species and in the extent and quality of threatened ecological communities.

Want to know more about Victoria's Biodiversity Strategy? Copies are available from the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Offices at:

Flora and Fauna Program

4/250 Victoria Parade East Melbourne 3002

Phone: (03) 9412 4175

Outdoors Information Centre

8 Nicholson St East Melbourne 3002

Phone: (03) 9637 8080

DNRE

30 Prospect St Box Hill 3128

Phone: (03) 9296 4400

A PUGGLE FOR CHRISTMAS

by Frank Pierce and Janet Mattiske

How it started

A few days prior to Christmas 1996 we found a small black furry thing snuggled between two trees in the garden bed at the edge of the paving outside the back door. We were delighted to find it was a baby echidna.

It was about 150 mm long, did not have any spines and appeared to be quite inactive. We were concerned about its vulnerability and made a shelter for it when heavy rain started.

The books we had on hand contained only scant details of baby echidnas and their life cycle. We decided to let nature take its course for the time being. This approach, not to interfere, was easier said than done.

It did not appear to be capable of feeding itself and we thought it may have been abandoned for some reason.

Some months earlier there had been more than the usual echidna scrapings in the garden but we hadn't taken much notice. On further investigation we found a burrow in the near vertical bank at the edge of the transpiration bed about a metre below where the baby was found.

We obtained a more detailed book from the library and found that at this stage of development the mother usually leaves the baby in the burrow, for 5 to 10 days at a time, after blocking the entrance. We were anxiously watching and waiting for the mother to return.

Our Christmas lunch was interrupted, at about 3 pm, with the return of mother who quickly ushered baby back into the burrow.

During the next few months we saw the mother coming and going and a couple of times the baby let itself out so we could, to some extent, follow its development.

About Echidnas

• The echidna, *Tachyglossus aculeatus*, is a monotreme (as is the platypus). It is an egg laying mammal, and the following are some of the interesting features of this fascinating species.

• Like the platypus, it has sensory receptors in the snout which assist in locating ants by detecting the weak electric field generated by their movement. •••

- These are used in combination with smell, touch, sight, hearing and a very sticky tongue
- The main diet consists of ants and termites so they are well placed in Australia with 3000 species of ants and 350 species of termites. The larvae of moths and beetles are also eaten
- They are solitary, with a home range of about 50 Ha. This range is shared with others without territorial defence. The only interaction with others is at mating time when there can be 'trains' of up to a dozen males following a single female. The female's selection criteria are unknown. Apparently there is no lasting bond after mating.
- They are usually active during the day except in very hot climates when they are active at night. In colder climates they hibernate in winter.
- They do not sweat or pant and consequently are vulnerable to heat stress. They are however tolerant to cold.
- Their response to danger is totally defensive, utilising their spines by rolling into a ball, retreating to a log or hollow, or simply burying themselves in the ground
- They have a low body temperature of 33°C. Their metabolic rate is 33% of that of a dog or cat but they live three times as long.
- They have a specialised skeleton with exceptionally strong shoulders and forearms, making them excellent diggers and climbers
- Their closest relative is the worm eating Long-beaked Echidna (*Zaglossus sp*) of New Guinea
- Having survived for at least 125 million years, since the time of the dinosaurs, they are a very successful species, virtually a living fossil

Life Cycle

The life cycle of the echidna is summarised as follows;-

- mating about July (the only contact for otherwise solitary animals)
- gestation 21 to 28 days
- egg layed in pouch, incubation for 10 days
- baby leaves pouch as spineless 'puggle' in December
- mother leaves puggle in burrow for 5 to 10 days at a time, blocking entrance before leaving

- baby leaves burrow in August with spines developed for protection
- females probably only mate every second year; the age for sexual maturity is unknown

Further Progress

Our baby was out of the burrow in March with substantial spines. We watched it accompany its mother on several occasions for short distances but assumed that it was always ushered back to the safety of the burrow. Then one evening we observed it with mother near the bird pond where she seemed to have her regular bath. Mother wandered off into the bush and the puggle found itself a nice soft burrowing spot where it disappeared, covering itself with a shallow blanket of soil. Next day we left on our holiday.

Throughout the rest of the year we saw a quite small echidna wandering around the house on several occasions. We assume this was the growing baby. As this will be the second year since the baby was born we will be keeping an eye out for a repeat performance.

REFERENCES:

COMPLETE BOOK OF AUSTRALIAN MAMMALS - THE AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM
ECHIDNAS OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW GUINEA - MICHAEL AUGEE AND BRETT GOODEN

LANDCARE

by Phillip Vaughan

A few people talked to me at the last general meeting about weed hot spots they felt needed some attention. This is a great start but surely, there must be more trouble spots you can think of. Come on; put your thinking caps on! Give me a call after hours on 9730 1148 to discuss your ideas.

Steve Craig has suggested targeting areas further along Watsons Creek towards the Yarra. He has spotted Angled Onion, Blackberries, Tutsan and Watsonia to tackle.

Norm Linton-Smith reckons we should don our ropes and tackle the Boneseed on the steep banks of the Yarra. I believe this area was tackled a number of years ago, with good success, but we haven't been back since.

Bluebell Creeper (*Sollya heterophylla*) is progressing at an alarming rate along Catani Blvd and Gongflers Dr. This must be kept under control otherwise we will lose the battle.

Currently, these areas are not out of control and can be managed with one or two working bees per site, planned for during the year. Our plan is to start mapping the weed trouble spots in and around the Bend of Islands. We will then classify the areas to ensure we manage them appropriately. Also, we will map any plants that we suspect may become a weed threat in the future, and monitor their advance, if any.

With assistance from you and the Flora and Fauna Subcommittee we will produce a comprehensive weed management plan for the Bend of Islands.

WANDERING WEEDS

by Carol Bonny

Our Landcare workers have great concern over the growing invasion of a threatening non-indigenous plant species in the area. There is a large outbreak of Bluebell Climber (*Sollya heterophylla*) in the Catani Boulevard - Gongflers Drive area and a smaller one along Henley Road.

The BICA Newsletter for July 1989 (Number 20) contains an article about Bluebell Climber and warns of the ease with which it spreads through the bush. If you have this plant around your house or are not sure and would like to have it identified, someone from the Landcare group would be happy to advise you. If you would like to have it eradicated from your property they could probably give you some help.

Sollya is easily removed by hand and should be disposed of by sealing it in a plastic bag and placing it in the garbage.

Suitable replacement species include
Small-leaved Clematis (*Clematis micophylla*)
Purple Coral-Pea (*Hardenbergia violacea*)
Apple Berry (*Billardiera scandens*)

For more information contact me on 9712 0648



Sollya heterophylla
(Bluebell Climber)

IT'S AS EASY AS AMG. from Steve Craig

For all you "Wildlife Atlasers" out there, included with this newsletter is a map of the ELZ with instructions on how to calculate an Australian Map Grid reference (AMG). The AMG reference must be included with all records submitted to the Victorian Wildlife Atlas. The same numbered grid lines appear as a faint dotted red line on the relevant pages of the Melway maps covering this area. If you need further assistance or would like to become a wildlife atlaser, give me a call on 9712 0029.

PUB WALK!

Yes it's that time again! The annual BICA Pubwalk will be held in October, starting from a venue near you. Meet at the Catani Boulevard fire station to organise car pooling. More details from Robina and Tony Summers or watch for the sign at the bridge.

GANGLAND IN THE TREES OF OZ

by Mick Woiwod

I've often wondered how this particular species of parrot secured its beatnik name! On 3 July last, though, we had little need to gaze upwards since thick on the driveway below their overarching feed tree, a Long Leaf Box, (*Eucalyptus gonicalyx**) lay the products of their labours – thousands of wrecked gum-nuts and nipped-off leaves. Out came the binoculars and, with difficulty, we finally spotted them. Three days later they still merrily crunched away.

Each discarded gum-nut bore the beak-mark of one or other of these elusive birds' search for nourishment. They appeared determined to continue their foray until their last demolished gum-nut fell to the ground. As mysteriously as they'd come they vanished, only to reappear on two further occasions a week later to down the tree's remaining nuts.

It seemed an ideal opportunity to carry out a small experiment. Sweeping up the products of their labour from the driveway, Marg and I filled two plastic garbage-bins with leaves, another one-and-a-half of gum-nuts – the leaves, when dry, weighing 10 kg., the gum-nuts, 23 kg.

Considering the difficulty we'd had spotting these secretive vagrants, the thought struck that perhaps they're more common in the Bend of Islands than is commonly believed, particularly so, since the waste products of their feeding habit would not be likely to be noted on deeply littered terrain. If so, their contribution to the region's ground-litter could be considerable at, say, 33 kg to each and every long-leafed feed tree frequented – but then, 'what else could one expect', Marg wryly observed, 'from a gang led by red-necked males'.‡ This bird, incidentally, appears not to be listed on the latest ELZ Bird recorder to hand.

* SHOULDN'T WE PERHAPS BE USING THE LOCAL INDIGENOUS TERM FOR THIS TREE, NAMELY 'BUNDY', IN PREFERENCE TO THE MUNDANE TERM 'LONG-LEAF BOX'.

P.S. SINCE WRITING, GANG-GANGS HAVE RETURNED TO THE SAME TREE ON THREE SEPARATE OCCASIONS. ON THEIR LAST VISIT (14 AUGUST), THEY NUMBERED EIGHT BIRDS. WHY THIS SPECIFIC ASSOCIATION WITH LONG-LEAF BOX? IS THERE A BIRDO OUT THERE ABLE TO FILL US IN FURTHER?

HEATING YOUR HOME: SOME MORE THOUGHTS

By Peter Gurney

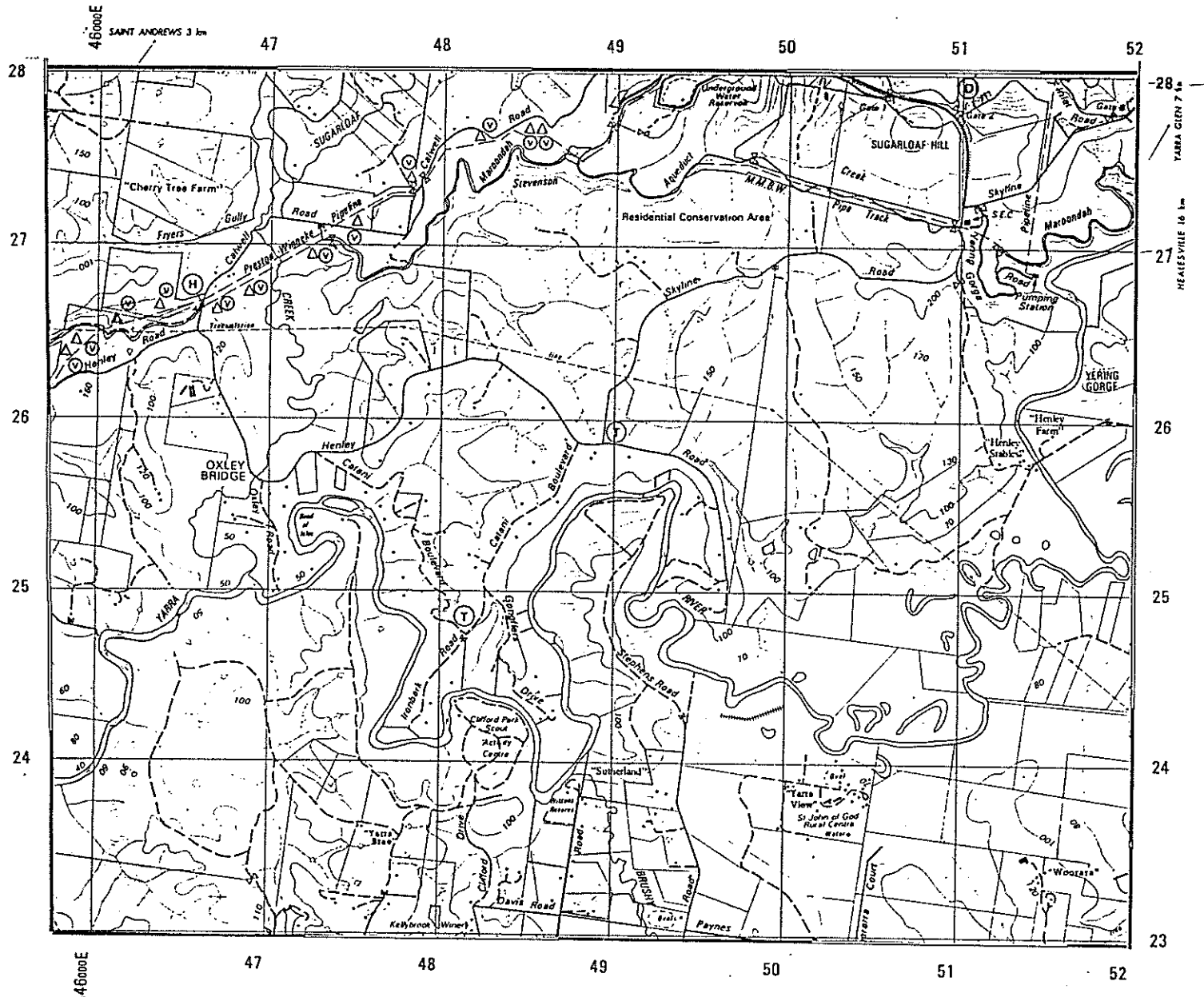
The article in the last BICA Newsletter (Number 42, June 1998) by Steve Craig reminded me of the thought that we put into the question of home heating when we extensively renovated our home back in 1990. We found that the best solution for us consisted of combining functions of our appliances. In winter our main source of heating is our slow combustion cooker and as well as cooking our food from about May until September each year it also heats our hotwater and warms the house. We also use the stove as a clothes dryer by having a clothes horse in the living area of the house at night time. The temperature inside the kitchen and living area sits at between 15C and 20C, which is really quite comfortable. The stove uses a good bit of wood but we supplement what we buy with what we can gather around the suburbs as people tidy their gardens or remove trees or branches in danger of falling on their homes. The stove burns all through the night after being stoked up and then damped down. Our dual system hot water service uses electricity in the warmer months and we also have an LPG stove for cooking from October through to April. Our electricity bills are much lower during the cooler months and we only use a couple of bottles of LPG over the year.

Our large windows have roller shutters fitted which are marvellous at keeping warmth in during the cooler months. We close them each evening and our living area becomes very snug indeed.. The shutters also have a dual role. In summer they keep the heat out during the day time and they protect our large east facing windows in the event of a bushfire. We also excluded from the roof design clerestoreys and skylights which allow natural light into some areas but also let heat out.

If you are planning to build or renovate there are ways which you can combine various functions to achieve a satisfactory practical outcome for your home as well as achieving a good environmental compromise in energy usage. Our home is not perfect but we are, in all senses, comfortable with it.

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CHRISTMAS HILLS



To give a GRID REFERENCE on this map quote
the EAST co-ordinate first followed by the
NORTH co-ordinate

Example: Oxley Bridge

EAST		NORTH	
Locate grid line immediately to the LEFT of the point and read the number shown for this line in the top or bottom margin	46	Locate grid line immediately BELOW the point and read the number shown for this line in the left or right margin	25
Estimate tenths Eastward (to the right side of map)	9	Estimate tenths Northward (towards the top of map)	6
Adding	469	Nothing	256
REFERENCE: 469256			

SCALE 1:25000

METRES 500 0 500 1000 1500 2000 2500 3000

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 METRES

AUSTRALIAN MAP GRID ZONE 56 - GRID INTERVAL 1000 METRES

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